

THE DIFFERENTIAL OBJECT MARKING OF DEFINITES IN ROMANIAN. AN EXPERIMENTAL STUDY*

Abstract. Romanian differential object marking (DOM) is a complex phenomenon, based on the interaction of several triggers, depending on which DOM may be obligatory or optional. Optional DOM is correlated with semantic effects which are usually described in terms of specificity. For definites, previous studies have identified presupposition of existence as a pre-condition for DOM, a strong preference for absence of DOM for generics, and a strong preference for DOM in the case of anaphoric definites and definites embedding pronominal and human proper name possessors. We tested these generalizations by means of three experiments: a production experiment, using translations from English, an experiment testing the acceptability of continuations of a given sentence, and an experiment testing the acceptability of single sentences. Our results show that DOM is indeed preferred with anaphoric definites, but it is not obligatory. A similar level of preference is observed with certain types of non-anaphoric familiar definites. For definites lacking epistemic or scopal specificity, there is no preference for DOM, but DOM is not excluded. The same situation is found with definites that arguably obtain an ‘attributive reading’, where only the function of the referent is relevant. Moreover, definites embedding a pronominal or (human) proper name possessor came out as marginal without DOM and always received DOM in the production experiment. The fact that DOM, a phenomenon that is usually governed by formal properties, is sensitive to the semantic type of definite expression, provides support for those analyses in which the semantic differences between the relevant types of definites have a structural correlate, rather than being a mere by-product of pragmatics.

Keywords: differential object marking (DOM), definites, anaphoric, specificity, Romanian

1. INTRODUCTION. THE MAIN FEATURES OF ROMANIAN DOM

The differential marking of direct objects in Romanian (henceforth, DOM) is a very complex phenomenon, involving the interplay of several triggering factors. Depending on these factors, DOM can be obligatory, optional or impossible. The realm of ‘optional DOM’ is somewhat elusive: more in-depth research can uncover further semantic or configurational properties that may force or inhibit DOM for certain types of DPs described as involving ‘optional DOM’ in more course-grained studies. Our study will address an instance of this type, namely the optional DOM of human-referring definite DPs with overt common nouns.

The differential marking phenomenon currently called ‘DOM’ in studies on Romanian involves the preposition *pe* (which, as a locative preposition, means ‘on’), which

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can (and sometimes must) be accompanied by clitic doubling. Another phenomenon that qualifies as differential marking concerns *preverbal* direct objects. Such objects must be clitic-doubled if they are definite or specific (the type of specificity involved is usually partitive specificity¹), regardless of the type of fronting (whether *wh*-movement, focalization or topicalization). This phenomenon which can be called *preverbal DOM*, is much less problematic from a descriptive point of view, the only triggering factors being definiteness and specificity. The DOM realized via *pe*-marking is independent on the position of the object with respect to the verb. As such, it may be labelled *general DOM*. This is the type of DOM that will be treated further on in this article. For the sake of brevity, we will refer to it as ‘DOM’ *tout court*, omitting ‘general’ or any other qualification.

In the rest of this section we will briefly present the broad generalizations concerning DOM, for which there is a rich literature (see Niculescu 1965, Farkas 1987, Dobrovie-Sorin 1987, 1994, Cornilescu 2000, von Heusinger & Onea 2008, Mardale 2008, Chiriacescu & von Heusinger 2009, 2010, von Heusinger & Chiriacescu 2009, Tigău 2010, 2011, 2014, 2020, Pană-Dindelegan 2013, Cornilescu & Tigău 2022, Irimia 2020a,b, 2023, Croitor & Giurgea 2023). The feature combinations [+pronominal +definite] and [+animate +propername] trigger obligatory DOM² (e.g. *pe acela* ‘DOM that-one’, *pe ele* ‘DOM they.FP’, *pe Maria* ‘DOM Maria’). Among DPs without an overt noun, a relevant distinction is whether there is NP-ellipsis (contextual recovery of the nominal property from a salient antecedent) or not: [+definite +N-ellipsis] triggers obligatory DOM irrespective of animacy (e.g. *pe ultimul* ‘DOM last-the’ = ‘the last one’, possible contextual interpretations ‘the last train’, ‘the last movie’ etc.) and, for indefinites, [+specific +N-ellipsis] may trigger DOM irrespective of animacy, while in what we may call ‘true pronouns’, which are not interpreted by means of N-ellipsis, DOM is normally absent with inanimates (e.g. *știi asta* ‘know.1S this’ = ‘I know this’) and obligatory with person-referring DPs, irrespective of definiteness and specificity (e.g. *pe nimeni* ‘DOM nobody’, *pe cine* ‘DOM who’). In DPs with overt nouns, DOM is optional with humans and animals, especially when treated as persons³. It is here that the semantic properties of the object play a role, in particular specificity, whose status as a condition for DOM of indefinites was observed by Farkas (1978), Dobrovie-Sorin (1994) but is still debated (see Tigău 2014). Optional DOM correlated with specificity is also found with indefinite objects with NP-ellipsis, including inanimates (e.g. *l-am pierdut pe unul* ‘CL.3MS.ACC have.1 lost DOM one.MS’ = ‘I lost one’, contextually interpreted as ‘... one of the tickets’). DOM is impossible with bare NPs and with DPs with overt inanimate nouns.

Regarding bare nominals, one should take into account the fact that the definite article is dropped after accusative-taking prepositions, including the differential marker *pe*, if the noun phrase consists of the noun alone (see Dobrovie-Sorin 2007, Giurgea 2022, 2024 for discussion). Thus, the DP in (1) is not a bare noun, but a definite DP whose definite D is not spelled-out⁴ – see the interpretation, which is necessarily definite in this case, because count

¹ On types of specificity, see Farkas (1994; 2002).

² Except for inanimate ‘neuter pronouns’ such as *asta* ‘this (thing)’, *aia* ‘that (thing)’, which do not rely on N-ellipsis.

³ See Coteanu (1963:244), Croitor&Giurgea (2023). This use is more widespread in regional varieties, see GA²:156.

⁴ The definite article drop rule can be formulated as imposing a null spell-out of the definiteness morpheme iff (i) this morpheme belongs to a DP that has acquired word-level (X⁰) status (as it consists only of N⁰ and [D+def]) and (ii) it lacks Case (on the assumption that inflectional case involves a case

bare singulars are severely restricted in Romanian. Thus, (1) is the DOM-ed counterpart of (2)a, not of (2)b; for an indefinite interpretation, the indefinite article is necessary in this case, see (2)b, and the indefinite article is not dropped, therefore (1) can only be read as definite. As soon as the DP contains more elements than N and D_{def} , the definite article can no longer be dropped, see (2)c.

- (1) (L-)am invitat pe băiat.
 (CL.3MS-ACC)-have.1 invited DOM boy
 ‘I invited the boy/*a boy.’
- (2) a. Am invitat băiatul.
 have.1 invited boy-the
 ‘I invited the boy.’
 b. Am invitat *(un) băiat.
 have.1 invited (a) boy
 ‘I invited a boy.’
 c. (L-)am invitat pe băiat*(ul) străin.
 (CL.3MS-ACC)-have.1 invited DOM boy(-the) foreign
 ‘I invited the foreign boy.’

Besides properties of the object DP, DOM can be triggered by properties of the syntactic configuration: quirky subjects (such as the Experiencer of *durea* ‘feel pain’) require DOM; certain comparative constructions, mostly with *ca* ‘as’, allow or even require DOM even if the object is inanimate and the noun is overt (see Pană-Dindelegan 2013:131, Irimia 2018, Croitor & Giurgea 2023). Objects associated to an external dative possessor rule out DOM.

Pe-marking can, and sometimes must, be accompanied by clitic-doubling (henceforth CID), which is thus a second way of differential marking. In principle, whenever definiteness or specificity is among the triggers of DOM, CID is used. For indefinite animate pronouns, where neither of these features comes into play, CID is excluded (see (3)a)⁵. In the other instances of obligatory DOM, CID is normally obligatory, see (3)b.

- (3) a. Nu-(*I) aștept pe nimeni.
 not(-CL.3MS.ACC) wait.1S DOM nobody
 ‘I’m not waiting for anybody’
 b. *(Îl) aștept pe el /pe Ion.
 CL.3MS.ACC wait.1S DOM him/DOM Ion
 ‘I’m waiting him/Ion.’

With optional DOM, CID has been on the rise during the last century. Nowadays, for definites it is already obligatory for many speakers, including us, see (4) (a similar judgment is found in Dobrovie-Sorin 1987:32). For some speakers, CID has also become obligatory

feature on D whereas with prepositional case markers as well as most *bona fide* prepositions take a DP complement, Ps playing the role of Ks; see Giurgea 2022, 2024).

⁵ The reason for excluding CID with the pronouns *cineva* ‘somebody’, *cine* ‘who’, *nimeni* ‘nobody’ might be the absence of valued ϕ -features on the object, on the assumption that doubling clitics receive their ϕ -features via agreement with the object.

with *pe*-marked indefinites, in case of optional DOM (see Avram 2014, von Heusinger & Tigău 2019).

- (4) *(L-)am sunat pe profesor.
 3MS.ACC-have.1 called DOM teacher
 ‘I called the teacher.’

Given this tendency to generalize CID to *pe*-marked definites, we only employed CIDed DOs in the Romanian sentences we tested in our experiments on DOM of definites. Nevertheless, a few speakers still allow absence of CID, a situation which we encountered in the translation experiment (see Table XI below).

Optional DOM has been mainly studied for indefinites (see Dobrovie-Sorin 1994, Hill & Tasmowski (2008), Tigău 2011), where the semantic differences between DOM-ed and bare objects are clearer. In this paper, we address the issue of optional DOM of definites, reporting experimental results. The paper is organized as follows: section 2 dwells on the semantic correlates of optional DOM discussing aspects related to specificity and definiteness; section 3 describes three experiments we carried out, testing the use of DOM with human definites; section 4 presents the results of the experiments; section 5 discusses the results and also contains the general conclusions of this paper.

2. ON THE SEMANTIC CORRELATES OF OPTIONAL DOM: STATE OF THE ART

2.1. Optional DOM and specificity

Studies on indefinites⁶ have shown that optional DOM is sensitive to two semantic features: epistemic specificity, understood either with respect to the speaker or with respect to a prominent discourse referent, and partitivity (or ‘partitive specificity’, see Farkas 1994, Enç 1991). Epistemic specificity with respect to the speaker is illustrated in (5)a-b. If the speaker wants to report seeing a boy he is not acquainted with, only (5)a is appropriate. Using DOM, as in (5)b, indicates that the speaker is acquainted with the boy. This requirement can be described in terms of epistemic specificity: the speaker could have provided more information about the individual he saw, e.g. naming him. Note that in both sentences the object is a particular entity, as the indefinite is not in the scope of any operator that may induce referential variability. This shows that scopal specificity is not sufficient for licensing DOM.

- (5) a. Am văzut un băiat.
 have.1 seen a boy
 ‘I saw a boy.’
 b. L-am văzut pe un băiat.
 CL.3MS.ACC-have.1 seen DOM a boy
 ‘I saw a boy.’

⁶ See Hill & Tasmowski (2008), Tigău (2011, 2014, 2016).

Epistemic specificity usually implies scopal specificity. However, there are instances of DOM which violate scopal specificity (see Tigău 2016b). For instance, (6) allows a reading in which every person invited a different friend. What licenses DOM in this type of examples is epistemic specificity related to the subject⁷: for each of the inviters, the invited person is an entity familiar to the inviter.

- (6) Fiecare l-a invitat pe un prieten. ($\checkmark \forall > \exists$, $\checkmark \exists > \forall$)
 everybody CL.3MS.ACC-has invited DOM a friend
 ‘Everybody invited a friend.’

Partitivity, or partitive specificity, may also license DOM, independently of epistemic specificity. This is clear in the attested example in (7). Here, the object *cel puțin doi dintre aceștia* ‘at least two of them’ is neither scopally specific nor epistemically specific. What licenses DOM is the fact that the variable introduced by the object is part of a plural entity that is discourse-given.

- (7) pentru femeile care au născut doi sau mai mulți copii la o singură
 for women-the which have given-birth two or more many children at a single
 naștere și care îi îngrijesc pe cel puțin doi dintre aceștia (...)
 birth and which CL.3MP.ACC care-for DOM the least two of these.MP
 ‘for women who gave birth to two or more children at a single birth and who look after
 at least two of them...’ (<https://ec.europa.eu/>)

In (7), the part-of relation is overtly expressed by the partitive phrase *dintre aceștia* ‘of them’, but the relation can also remain unexpressed, being inferred from the context – this is called *covert partitivity*. This type of partitivity may account for the use of DOM in (8), an example where the object, being headed by the existential free-choice determiner *vreun* ‘some or other, any’⁸, is neither scopally nor epistemically specific. However, the context provides the existence of a sum of candidates – the article from which this example is reproduced is about the elections in a regional organization of a Romanian political party. The variable introduced by the object is related to the context by being part of this plural entity (the candidates).

- (8) Ludovic Orban nu a dorit să spună dacă va susține pe vreun candidat la
 Ludovic Orba not has wanted SBJV says if will.3S support DOM any candidate to
 președinția Organizației Județene Hunedoara a PNL
 presidency-the Organization-the.GEN County.ADJ Hunedoara GEN PNL
 ‘Ludovic Orban did not want to say whether he would support any candidate
 for the presidency of the Hunedoara County Organization of the Liberal National
 Party’ (https://servuspress.ro/desi-nu-este-inca-oficial-liberalii-hunedoreni-il-vor-sustine-pe-ludovic-orban-la-presedintia-pnl_137384.html)

The licensing effect of partitivity may be taken to show that DOM introduces a presupposition of existence. Indeed, for each choice for the variable introduced by the indefinite, the fact that the entity belongs to a plurality provided by the context implies that

⁷ For this type of specificity, see Kennelly (1999), von Heusinger (2002, 2011), Tigău (2016).

⁸ On *vreun*, see Farkas (2002, 2006), Fălăuș (2014).

the existence of the entity is presupposed. Scopally non-specific indefinites that lack such a presupposition of existence (introduced either via partitivity or via argument-related epistemic specificity as in (6) above), do not allow DOM⁹:

- (9) * (* O) caut pe o secretară care să vorbească germana.
 CL.3FS.ACC look-for.1S DOM a secretary which SBJV speak.3 German-the.FS
 ‘I’m looking for a secretary who should speak German.’

DOM may also occur with indefinites used in the restriction of generic operators:

- (10) E greu să-(l) convingi pe un om care se crede superior tuturor.
 is hard SBJV-3MS.ACC convince.2S DOM a person who REFL believes superior all.DAT
 ‘It’s hard to convince somebody who thinks he’s superior to everybody.’

The proposal that DOM is licensed by a presupposition of existence might be extended to this use if we assume that the restrictor sets behave as presuppositions of generic sentences and sentences with adverbs of quantification, in general – see Krifka (2002) for an account along these lines, in which indefinites inside restrictors are argued to be ‘non-novel’¹⁰.

2.2 Optional DOM of definites

As definites normally introduce a presupposition of existence (see Elbourne 2005, 2013, who summarizes the evidence in favor of the Fregean theory of definite descriptions), we expect DOM to be quite common, which is indeed the case. As long as the presupposition of existence is satisfied, epistemic specificity is not required for DOM, as can be concluded from our production experiment. In translating an example with a clear epistemically non-specific direct object, *They haven’t yet found the perpetrators of the robbery*, 11 out of 24 informants used DOM, 8 of whom used it in an optional DOM configuration (see (11) for an example of this type), and 3 speakers employed it in an obligatory DOM configuration (definite without an overt N, e.g. *încă nu i-au găsit pe cei vinovați pentru jaf* ‘They still haven’t found those guilty for the robbery’; 11 used an unmarked object and 2 used a passive construction).

- (11) Ei încă nu i-au găsit pe autorii jafului.
 they still not CL.3MP.ACC-have found DOM perpetrators-the robbery-the.GEN

Definites that do not introduce a presupposition of existence nevertheless do exist, and in this case DOM is not acceptable, according to Tigău (2010), Croitor & Giurgea (2023), Giurgea (2023). A case in point are definite descriptions in the scope of intensional verbs such as ‘look for’ or negation + ‘find’:

⁹ We should keep in mind that the claims in this section hold for the environments where DOM is *optional*, in particular, DPs with overt animate nouns. Animate indefinite (non-elliptical) pronouns, for which DOM is obligatory, such as *cineva* ‘somebody’, *nimeni* ‘nobody’, are immune to the specificity requirement.

¹⁰ Krifka (2002) indicates other languages where DOM correlated with specificity occurs on indefinites inside restrictors of generic sentences: Persian and Turkish.

- (12) N-am găsit-(*o) încă (*pe) persoana potrivită pentru acest post.
not-have.1 found(-3FS.ACC) yet (DOM) person-the appropriate for this job
'We haven't found the suitable/right person for this job yet.'
- (13) N-am găsit-(*o) încă (*pe) persoana care să îndrăznească să
not-have.1 found(-3FS.ACC) yet (DOM) person-the who SBJV dares SBJV
i se opună. (Croitor & Giurgea 2023)
3S.DAT REFL opposes
'We haven't yet found the person who may dare to oppose him.'

The same generalization holds for the types of non-presuppositional definites discussed in Coppock & Beaver (2012, 2015): those with *same* and attributive *only* (Ro. *singur*) taking sentential scope, see (14) (which is equivalent to *(S)he's not the only one to have a child with problems*), and those with the superlative operator taking sentential scope – the so-called 'relative superlatives', which are known to behave like indefinites (Szabolcsi 1986), see (15).

- (14) Nu (*îl) are (*pe) singurul copil cu probleme.
not (CL.3MS.ACC) has DOM only-the child with problems
'(S)he doesn't have the only child with problems'
- (15) Cine (*îl) are (*pe) tatăl cel mai bogat?
who (CL.3MS.ACC) has (DOM) father-the SUP COMP rich
'Who has the richest father?'

Other definites that are semantically very close to indefinites are the so-called 'weak definites' (see Carlson and Sussman 2005, Aguilar-Guevara 2014): they are new, non-unique, showing variable reference and narrowest scope in various environments. They are subject to lexical constraints, requiring that the Predicate+Noun complex should refer to a well-established activity. In the rare cases of animates used as weak definites, DOM is indeed ruled out (Cornilescu & Tigău 2022, Croitor & Giurgea 2023), see the expression *call the plumber* in (16) – under the weak interpretation, the example is not about a specific plumber (each may have called a different plumber, there is no plumber among the discourse referents available in the context):

- (16) [context: no specific plumber]
Ambii {au chemat instalatorul / # l-au chemat pe instalator}.
both have called plumber-the 3MS.ACC-have called DOM plumber
'Both called the plumber.'

Less clear is the behavior of DOM with generic definites. By this term, we do not refer to DPs in the restrictor of a generic operator provided by the sentence, like for the indefinite generics discussed in section 2.1 above, but to DPs that introduce genericity themselves, being able to refer to kinds. English uses a null D in the case of plural and mass nouns of this sort, whereas Romanian (like all modern Romance languages) uses the definite article.

DOM with generics is claimed to be impossible by Hill & Tasmowski (2008) and Mardale (2008), whereas Cornilescu (2000) finds it sometimes infelicitous (as in (17)) but sometimes acceptable, as in (18), where the configuration inanimate subject – animate object is argued to trigger a strong preference for DOM.

- (17) Ion iubește femeile / # le iubește pe femei. (Cornilescu 2000: ex. 40c-d)
 Ion loves women-the 3FP.ACC loves DOM women
 ‘Ion loves women.’
- (18) Mânia îl orbește pe om.
 anger-the 3MS.ACC blinds DOM man
 ‘Anger makes man blind.’

Beyond these environments, DOM is always allowed. A recent study (Croitor & Giurgea 2023) claimed that further differences can be found in this realm of non-generic presuppositional definites: DOM is said to be strongly preferred with anaphoric definites¹¹:

- (19) Am întâlnit acolo un scriitor, un critic și alte persoane. L-am invitat
 have.1 met there a writer a critic and other people 3MS.ACC-have.1 invited
 pe scriitor la cină / ? Am invitat scriitorul la cină.
 DOM writer to dinner have.1 invited writer-the to dinner
 ‘I met there a writer, a critic and other people. I asked the writer to dinner.’
 (Croitor & Giurgea 2023: 284, ex. 47)

For non-anaphoric definites referring to particular individuals, according to Croitor & Giurgea (2023) DOM is strongly preferred when an epistemically non-specific reading is possible. Thus, (20)b below is appropriate if the reported intention is to invite the manager no matter who this is, i.e., being the manager is the only reason for inviting that person. This is what is called an ‘attributive reading’ (see the discussion in Wolter (2006) of Donellan’s attributive vs. referential distinction in non-intensional contexts). Variant (20)a can be used in such a situation but also when the invitation was aimed at a specific person (thus, in (20)a those who made the invitation may not know that the invited person was a manager, which is not possible for (20)b).

- (20) a. L-au invitat pe director. (✓ attributive, ✓ referential)
 3MS.ACC-have.3P invited DOM manager
 b. Au invitat directorul. (attributive only)
 have.3P invited manager-the
 ‘They invite the manager.’ (modelled after ex. 46 in Croitor & Giurgea 2023)

But this preference does not hold for all referential readings: with familiar definites that do not refer to functions, absence of DOM is perfectly acceptable, according to this study:

- (21) Am adus fata acasă.
 have.1 brought girl-the home
 ‘I brought the girl home.’ (Croitor & Giurgea 2023: 284, ex. 45)

¹¹ The same judgment is reported in Chiriacescu & von Heusinger (2009:5, ex. (6)) and von Heusinger & Chiriacescu (2009:64, ex. (1)). The authors refer to definites in general, but the examples for which DOM is claimed to be preferred contain anaphoric definites.

Finally, DOM is claimed to be obligatory if a pronominal possessor or human proper name possessor is embedded in the definite object, see (22)a (vs. (22)b, with a definite possessor which is not a pronoun or a proper name). Strikingly, these are DPs that would require DOM if used as direct objects, which suggests that the feature triggering obligatory DOM (possibly a Person feature, see Cornilescu & Tigău 2022) may percolate from the possessor to the matrix DP.

- (22) a. *(Îi) vom întreba *(pe) părinții lui/ tăi/ Mariei
 3MP.ACC will.1P ask DOM parents-the his/your/Maria.GEN
 ‘We will ask your/his/Maria’s parents.’ (Croitor & Giurgea 2023:275, ex. 14)
- b. (Îi) vom întreba (pe) părinții copilului.
 3MP.ACC will.1P ask DOM parents-the child-the.GEN

A somewhat different picture emerges from Onea & Hole (2017). Based on a corpus study, the authors claim that optional DOM with human definites tends to be replaced by obligatory DOM. Among instances of impossible DOM of definites, besides weak definites and definites related to an external dative possessor, they include generics, treated as an instance of ‘weak definites’. Their account for the impossibility of DOM is that DOM-ed definites raise out of the VP, while structures with external dative possessors as well as weak definites require the object to remain VP-internal. The authors claim that very few examples of absence of DOM with human definites can be found in other configurations, where DOM is not disallowed. A clear predominance of DOM vs. unmarked objects has also been found in the smaller-scale corpus searches reported in von Heusinger & Chiriacescu (2009): 9 unmarked vs. 51 DOM for unmodified definites and 8 unmarked vs. 254 DOM for modified definites (looking only at situations where there was no constraint against one or the other of the variants).

3. THE DESIGN OF THE EXPERIMENTS

We conducted several experiments in order to test the claims regarding optional DOM with human definites, especially the finer distinctions found among non-generic presuppositional definites in Croitor & Giurgea (2023).

3.1 Experiment 1: Translation

Because acceptability judgments may be influenced by normative grammar (which does not formulate rules requiring forbidding DOM in the situations at hand) and by exposure to the written language, we used, besides questionnaires checking acceptability, a production experiment, in which the informants were asked to translate 25 English sentences into Romanian. 53 native speakers of Romanian, students at the University of Bucharest, participated in the experiment. They were divided into two groups, each group receiving a different list of sentences. Each list contained 16 experimental items and 9 fillers. As the two lists contain different experimental items, the total number of experimental items tested is 32. They were of the following types: (i) 4 items with anaphoric definites, (ii) 4 items with unmodified familiar definites, (iii) 4 items with DOs containing non-specific indefinite

possessors, (iv) 8 items with DOs containing specific and definite possessors: 1 with a specific indefinite possessor, 7 with definite possessors (1 with a proper name, 6 with other definite DOs); among those, 3 had clear or possible (epistemic or scopal) non-specificity (e.g. *they didn't find the perpetrators of the robbery*); (v) 4 items with weak definites; (vi) 4 items with other DOs that may exhibit an attributive reading (3 unmodified, 1 with a relative clause); (vii) 4 items with generic definites. In analyzing the results, we calculated percentages for DOM and NO-DOM with respect to the total number of translations that used a direct object (some of the answers employed other constructions, e.g. a passive or a PP object).

3.2 Experiment 2: acceptability of continuations

In order to test the claim that anaphoric definites show a higher preference for DOM, we checked the acceptability of two possible continuations of a given sentence, one containing a DOM-ed object and the other one, an unmarked object – see (23), where the context supports an anaphoric reading of the object *pe antrenor/antrenorul* ‘the coach’.

- (23) Antrenorul Chiriac a fost destul de criticat, dar și mulți jucători au jucat prost. Până la urmă,
 ‘The coach Chiriac was quite criticized, but also a lot of players had a bad play. Eventually...’
- (a) Clubul a decis să-l demită pe antrenor.
 club-the has decided SBJV-3MS.ACC fire.3 DOM coach
- (b) Clubul a decis să demită antrenorul.
 club-the has decided SBJV fire.3 coach-the
 ‘The club decided to fire the coach.’

The respondents first had to indicate which of the two continuations is more suitable. They had three choices: (a), (b) or both. Then they were asked to indicate whether one (or both) of the continuations is impossible – again, there were three choices: (a), (b) or both.

In the examples included under ‘non-anaphoric’, there was no possible antecedent for the definite in the first sentence. In this category, we included several sub-types, because we wanted to test the relevance of other factors – the attributive vs. referential distinction, epistemic and scopal specificity. An example of a specific definite, unique in the restricted situation suggested by the antecedent, is (24) – this is an instance of the so-called ‘bridging’ or ‘associative anaphora’, but it does not qualify as ‘anaphoric’ *stricto sensu*, because the discourse referent referred to by the definite is new¹². A definite with narrow scope under a modal, satisfying the presupposition of existence in each of the worlds quantified over (car accidents involve drivers), is illustrated in (25).

¹² Admittedly, if the definite has specific reference, as in (24), we cannot totally exclude the possibility that the informant imagines a context where the definite is anaphoric to a referent introduced in the previous discourse, but we tried to create contexts which easily allow for a new referent to be introduced by a definite, like in (24), where *the captain* is related by bridging anaphora to *the ship*, or in (i), where under the most prominent reading *the children* refer to the children of the subject:

- (i) Având carnetul suspendat, a trebuit să {îi ia pe copiii/ia copiii} de la școală cu taxiul.
 ‘With his/her driving license suspended, (s)he had to take the children from school by taxi.’

- (24) A: Câte persoane poate duce nava asta?
 ‘How many people can this ship carry?’
 B: (a) Nu știu, trebuie să-l întrebăm pe căpitan.
 not know.1S must SBJV-3MS.ACC ask.1P DOM captain
 (b) Nu știu, trebuie să întrebăm căpitanul.
 not know.1S must SBJV ask.1P captain-the
 ‘I don’t know, we must ask the captain.’
- (25) Când se întâmplă accidente de acest fel,
 ‘When accidents of this sort take place,’
 (a) polițiștii trebuie să ducă șoferul la secție.
 policemen-the must SBJV take.3 driver-the to station
 (b) polițiștii trebuie să-l ducă pe șofer la secție.
 policemen-the must SBJV-3MS.ACC take.3 DOM driver at station
 ‘the police have to take the driver to the station.’

The experiment included 48 experimental items: 24 with anaphoric definite objects and 24 with non-anaphoric ones. For each type, half of the examples contained singular objects and the other half featured plural objects. The items were evenly divided into 3 lists, such that each list contained 16 experimental items (4 for each sub-type: anaph. sg., anaph. pl., non-anaph. sg., non-anaph. pl.) and 17 fillers. Each lists was assessed by 25 informants, the total number of informants being 75. The lists were randomized and formatted as Google forms in such a way that the respondents could only see one item at a time. Most of the informants were students at the University of Bucharest.

3.3 Experiment 3: acceptability of single sentences

In this experiment we tested the acceptability of single sentences without context (as opposed to Exp2 where we tested continuations), on a scale of 4 degrees of acceptability: (a) acceptable, (b) almost acceptable, (c) rather unacceptable, (d) unacceptable. The experimental items were: (i) 7 definites with possessors, (ii) 4 non-specific definites modified by a subjunctive relative clause, (iii) 4 non-specific indefinites modified by a subjunctive relative clause, (iv) 1 non-specific definite DO in the scope of a modal. Each type of experimental item contained two variants: one containing a DOM-ed DP, another one featuring the unmarked correspondent. Exceptionally, for (iii) we included clitic-doubling (CID) as a further parameter, given that for indefinites CID is not as compulsory as for definites. This resulted in three series of examples in this case: unmarked, DOM+CID, DOM without CID. The experimental items were evenly distributed across 2 lists in such a way that each item only appeared in one of the lists. Each list was assessed by 20 respondents, with a total of 40 respondents participating in the experiment, mostly students at the University of Bucharest. The lists included 20 fillers distributed into 5 unacceptable sentences, 5 acceptable sentences, 6 sentences of average acceptability, plus 4 sentences tested for a different study (demonstratives in contexts involving bridging and covariation). Based on control examples, we eliminated 1 out of the 40 respondents.

4. THE RESULTS OF THE EXPERIMENTS

4.1. DOM and the presupposition of existence

The existence of a presupposition of existence requirement for DOM of definites (see §2.2 above) was not the main focus of our experimental study, because the data seemed clear to us. Nevertheless, we included a number of items testing predictions of this hypothesis, in the single sentence acceptability experiment (Exp3) and in the translation experiment (Exp1).

We tested objects whose existential scopes under negation. With definites, we can obtain this effect with subjunctive relative clauses, see the examples in (26), tested in Exp3:

- (26) a. N-am găsit-o încă pe secretara care să facă și cafea bună
not-have.1 found-3FS.ACC yet DOM secretary-the who SBJV does also coffee good
și să știe și două limbi străine.
and SBJV knows also two languages foreign
'We/I haven't yet found the secretary who could make good coffee and also know two foreign languages'
- b. Nu l-am întâlnit încă pe politicianul care să fie și cinstit și bogat.
not CL.ACC-have.1 found yet DOM politician-the who SBJV be and honest and rich
'We/I haven't yet found the politician who should be both honest and rich.'
- c. Încă îl caut pe șoferul care să mă ducă la Brașov sâmbătă.
yet CL.ACC look-for.1S DOM driver-the who SBJV me lead.3 to Brașov Saturday
'I'm still looking for the driver who should give me a ride to Brașov on Saturday.'
- d. N-am găsit-o încă pe secretara care să știe Excel.
not-have.1 found-CL.ACC yet DOM secretary-the who SBJV know.3 Excel
'We/I haven't yet found the secretary who should know Excel.'

These sentences, which are not acceptable according to our intuitions, were compared with sentences with unmarked definites and with corresponding sentences with indefinites (e.g. 'I haven't yet found a secretary who should know Excel'), each with three variants: unmarked object, DOM, DOM+CID. The results, displayed in Table 1, show the expected reduced acceptability for indefinites (31% for DOM without CID, 21% for DOM+CID) but an unexpected higher level of acceptability for definites (a mean of 65%). The letters in the first column refer to the examples in (26) (for which we also tested the unmarked version and the indefinite versions +DOM, +DOM+CID, -DOM, as explained above, e.g. *N(u l)-am întâlnit încă (pe) un politician care să fie și cinstit și bogat* 'We/I haven't yet found a politician who should be both honest and rich'):

Table 1: DPs with subjunctive relative clauses (acceptability)

	def+DOM(+CID)	def unm.	indef+DOM-CID	indef+DOM+CID	indef unm.
a	74%	84%	28%	22%	72%
b	68%	86%	40%	19%	82%
c	68%	84%	35%	21%	100%
d	48%	67%	21%	23%	81%
mean	65%	80%	31%	21%	84%

In order to explain this result, we have to look closer into the interpretation of such sentences, of which an acceptable version, i.e. without DOM, is given in (27), which received a 86% acceptability score (see b, 2nd column, in Table I).

- (27) N-am întâlnit încă politicianul care să fie și cinstit și bogat.
 not-have.1 found yet politician-the who SBJV be also honest also rich
 ‘We/I haven’t yet found the politician who should be both honest and rich.’

What is the semantic effect of using a definite here, instead of an indefinite? We hypothesize that the definite may trigger a type or sub-kind interpretation – e.g., for a, ‘I have not found an instantiation of the type honest-and-rich-politician’. This may explain why the definite is more acceptable in a-b, where the required property is remarkable, than in d. Under this hypothesis, those who find an example such as (26)b acceptable treat this example as an instance of DOM with generics, which is known to be sometimes acceptable (see the discussion around (18) above as well as 4.3 below). Presumably, kinds are treated as endowed with existence, even if they lack realizations in the real world. As for (26)c, where the subjunctive clause describes a specific situation, it is possible that the speakers who allow DOM imagine a situation where a specific driver was contacted for the planned trip, in which case the subjunctive in the relative indicates the fact that the trip event obtains in the worlds of the speaker’s intentions (we thank an anonymous reviewer for this suggestion).

In the translation experiment (Exp1), we tested whether the use of a non-specific indefinite possessor may lead to impossibility of DOM due to failure of the existential presupposition, as had been suggested in Croitor & Giurgea (2023). The results were negative. As shown in table II, there were many translations using DOM¹³, except for the example IIb, where the reason may be the fact that the example is interpreted as a concealed question – ‘There is no song x for which they recognized who the author of x was’. DPs interpreted as concealed questions, even if they contain a human noun, do not allow DOM because they do not refer to humans, as shown in Croitor & Giurgea (2023). In (28) we provide some examples of translations corresponding to the examples in Table II.

Table II: DPs with non-specific possessors (translations)

	non-specific possessor (intended)	+DOM+CID	+DOM-CID	unm.
a	He should ask the coach of a basketball team.	4(26.7%)	-	11(73.3%)
b	He did not recognize the author of any song.	0 (0%)	-	19(100%)
c	We should also invite the director of some research institute.	11(50%)	2 (9%)	9 (41%)

- (28) a. Ar trebui să(-l) întrebe (pe) antrenorul unei echipe de baschet
 would.3 must SBJV-(3MS.ACC) ask.3 (DOM) coach-the a.GEN team of basketball
 b. El nu a recunoscut autorul niciunui cântec.
 he not has recognized author-the no.GEN song
 c. Ar trebui să(-l) invităm și (pe) directorul unui institut
 would.3 must SBJV-(3MS.ACC) invite.1P also (DOM) director-the a.GEN institute

¹³ We did not count examples where the translation used a definite possessor (e.g. *echipei* ‘of the team’ instead of *unei echipe* ‘of a/some team’) or an indefinite object (e.g. *un antrenor al unei echipe* ‘a coach of a/some team’ instead of *antrenorul unei echipe* ‘the coach of a/some team’).

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We may explain these results by the hypothesis that in this type of DPs, the presupposition of existence can be accommodated. It is also possible that some informants did not construe the possessor as non-specific, as suggested by the fact that some translations used a definite possessor for the a and c examples of Table II (we did not count such erroneous translations in the results, but they show that the informants can make this type of error).

4.2 Weak definites

In the translation experiment we also tested weak definites, claimed to disallow DOM (Onea & Hole 2017, Cornilescu & Tigău 2022, Croitor & Giurgea 2023). The results, presented in Table III, show indeed a predominance of unmarked objects, but in b and c we got a few translations with DOM. It is possible that the respondents who used DOM in these examples have imagined that the speaker had a specific doctor in mind, or a specific group of fire fighters, respectively.

Table III: weak definites (translations)

		+DOM	unmarked
a	We cannot fix it ourselves, we have to call the plumber.	0	19
b	You shouldn't take this pill without asking the doctor.	5 (25%)	15 (75%)
c	Did they call the fire fighters?	5 (24%)	16 (76%)
d	I had to visit the dentist as I had a terrible toothache.	0	3
	total	12%	88%

Although they resemble indefinites in many respects, weak definites are not fully equivalent with indefinites – which is expected, as otherwise it would be mysterious why so many different languages use a definite article for this type of arguments. Schwarz (2014) argues that the stereotypical activities that license weak definites as arguments also imply that entities of the relevant type should be at one's disposal. This is why, although *getting someone to the hospital* is such a stereotypical activity which licenses a weak definite, in the scenario of a cruise ship on the Atlantic, (29)a is inappropriate, unlike a version with an indefinite instead of the weak definite, see (29)b:

- (29) a. # We have to get you to the hospital somehow!
b. We have to get you to a hospital somehow!

This suggests that an *iota* operator, bringing a presupposition of existence, may be involved at some level in the composition of meaning. However, according to Schwarz (2014), this is a very low level, namely, the description of a kind of events, at the level of the VP. The particular event introduced by the clause is obtained at a further step of the composition, based on this event kind description. In a similar vein, Krifka & Modarresi (2016) and Krifka (2021) analyze weak definites as definites dependent on the event variable and, as a consequence, bound by VP-level existential closure – see (30), where 'hospital-of(e₃)' translates as 'the unique hospital associated to e₃':

- (30) Mary took John **to the hospital**. (Krifka & Modarresi 2016: ex. 35)
 $[x_1 x_2 \mid x_1 = \text{Mary}, x_2 = \text{John}]$
 $\exists[e_3 x_4 \mid x_4 = \text{hospital-of}(e_3), \text{take-to}(x_1, x_2, x_4, e_3)]]$

Given these analyses of weak definites, the reason for the impossibility of DOM is not simply the absence of existential presupposition. We will propose an account in section 5, using situation semantics.

4.3 Generic definites

The four examples of generics tested in the translation experiment showed an overwhelming predominance of unmarked definite objects, see table IV. There are nevertheless a few examples with DOM, which show that DOM is not totally excluded, at least for some speakers (example IVc is the English translation of a Romanian example for which DOM was claimed to be impossible Hill & Tasmowski (2008): *Toate țările democratice aleg președintele prin vot universal*).

Table IV: generic definites (translations)

		+DOM	unmrkd.
a	Too many students don't respect teachers nowadays.	5 (24%)	16 (76%)
b	I came to hate taxi drivers.	1 (4%)	23 (96%)
c	All the democratic countries elect the president by universal vote.	1 (5%)	21 (95%)
d	This plate represents the Neanderthal man.	2 (7%)	26 (93%)
	total	10%	90%

4.4 Anaphoric definites and various types of non-anaphoric definites

The experiments showed that there is a preference for DOM in anaphoric definites, as compared to non-anaphoric definites, but DOM is by and large not obligatory. A minority of speakers did find DOM obligatory in certain examples, but no informant found DOM to be obligatory in *all* instances of anaphoric definites.

In the translation experiment, 45% of the answers used the unmarked form for the anaphoric definite object, see Table V (for readability, we mark the anaphoric definite with bold and we underline its antecedent; of course, no such marking was used in the experiment). It is possible that in the example d, which stands out by having received more translations with unmarked objects than translations with DOM, the intended anaphoric link was not perceived by all the informants. But even if we eliminate this example, we are still left with 35% translations featuring an unmarked object.

For specific non-anaphoric definites, the respondents used less DOM in translations if the object was unmodified, see Table VI part 1. But for objects containing familiar possessors we got much more translations with DOM, see Table VI part 2. This may be the result of an increased preference for DOM in the case of *modified* definites, at least for some speakers (such a preference has been reported by von Heusinger & Chiriacescu 2009:73).

Table V: anaphoric definites in translations (Exp1)

	(unmodified definites)	+DOM	unmarked
a	Among the guests, there was <u>a politician</u> and several journalists. I asked the politician if he supported the tax increase proposals.	19 (83%)	4 (17%)
b	They discussed some of <u>Cărtărescu's</u> novels. They compared the author to some South American writers.	8 (47%)	9 (53%)
c	It was hard to find tickets at <u>Eminem's</u> concert, because many people appreciate and admire the singer , even though not necessarily his music.	13(65%)	7 (35%)
d	The first to come were <u>Mary and her boyfriend</u> . While I was leading the guests into the garden, I got a phone call from Alice.	7 (25%)	21 (75%)
	total	54.9%	45.1%
	total eliminating (d), maybe understood as non-anaphoric	64.9%	35.1%

Table VI: non-anaphoric familiar definites in translations (Exp1)

(1)	unmodified definites:	+DOM	unmrkd.
a	I left the children at home.	6 (25%)	18 (75%)
b	What are you waiting for, invite the girl to dinner!	2 (10%)	19 (90%)
c	I brought the girl home.	12 (41%)	18 (59%)
d	I'm still waiting for the guests .	2 (8%)	24 (92%)
	total	21%	79%
(2)	definites with familiar possessors:		
e	She saw the manager of the company .	80%	20%
f	They summoned the boy's parents to a meeting on Monday.	85%	15%
g	They also invited the president's wife .	89%	11%
h	We finally found the director of the institute .	64%	36%
	total	79.6%	20.4%
	General mean 1 & 2	50.3%	49.7%

In Exp2, we had much more items (48) and participants (75) in order to ensure statistical relevance. We also included an equal number of singular and plural objects (24), to test the possible influence of number. Because unmodified nouns are more appropriate for the anaphoric use, we only used unmodified nouns (both in the anaphoric and non-anaphoric versions), except for two examples with a cardinal (one anaphoric and one non-anaphoric). Among the tested items we included 10 pairs of an anaphoric and a non-anaphoric item in which the same verb and noun were used¹⁴, in order to control for potential influences of the lexical choices¹⁵. The overall results are shown in Table VII. The question about the

¹⁴ The entire sentences were not always identical, for reasons of content plausibility.

¹⁵ A clear influence of the lexical choice appeared for the combination/VP *recomanda autorul* 'recommend the author': unlike for the other anaphoric examples, most of the informants (56%) preferred the unmarked version (24% opted for DOM and 20% had no preference). The reason is probably the fact that 'to recommend an author' is understood as 'to recommend that author's work',

impossibility of one of the versions followed the question about preference, so the items in the last two columns are included in the items of the first two columns (i.e., some of those who preferred DOM added the information that the unmarked version is impossible, and likewise for those who preferred the unmarked version).

Table VII: anaphoric vs. non-anaphoric definites in the acceptability experiment Exp2

	preferred version:			unmarked impossible:	DOM impossible:
	DOM	unmarked	no preference		
anaphoric total	286 (47.7%)	83 (13.8%)	231 (38.5%)	48 (8%)	12 (2%)
non-anaphoric total	152 (25.3%)	143 (23.8%)	305 (50.9%)	16 (2.7%)	14 (2.3%)
anaphoric sg.	153 (51%)	39 (13%)	108 (36%)	25 (8.3%)	5 (1.6%)
non-anaphoric sg.	82 (27.3%)	55 (18.3%)	163 (54.4%)	5 (1.7%)	7 (2.3%)
anaphoric pl.	133 (44.3%)	44 (14.7%)	123 (41%)	23 (7.7%)	7 (2.3%)
non-anaphoric pl.	70 (23.3%)	88 (29.3%)	142 (47.4%)	11 (3.7%)	7 (2.3%)

The preference towards DOM marking of anaphoric definites holds for both singular and plural definites. There is a small difference related to number, more instances of preference for DOM occurring in the singular, but the statistical analysis showed that the differences are not significant in the case of anaphoric definites.

The difference between anaphoric and non-anaphoric definites is clear for both numbers. Although there were more answers rejecting the unmarked version completely for the anaphoric condition (8%, compared to 2.7% for the non-anaphoric condition), no informant rejected the unmarked version consistently (24 informants rejected the unmarked version in 1 to 3 out of the 8 anaphoric examples, and one informant rejected it in 5 examples). In all the pairs of examples where the same verb and noun were used in the anaphoric and non-anaphoric condition, the preference for DOM was higher for the anaphoric version than for the non-anaphoric one.

We performed a statistical analysis of the data in Table VII. The following differences proved to be statistically relevant ($p < 0.05$): (i) DOM anaphoric > DOM non-anaphoric; (ii) unmarked non-anaphoric > unmarked anaphoric; (iii) no preference non-anaphoric > no preference anaphoric. In the anaphoric type, (iv) DOM > no-preference > unmarked, with one exception: for plurals, the difference between DOM and no-preference is not statistically relevant. In the non-anaphoric type, (v) no-preference > DOM and (vi) no-preference > unmarked, while the difference between DOM and unmarked is not significant.

If we only compare answers which indicated a preference for one or the other of the two versions, the higher preference for DOM in the anaphoric condition remains obvious, see Table VIII:

Table VIII: answers which indicated a preference in Exp2

	DOM	unmarked
anaphoric	286 (77.5%)	83 (22.5%)
non-anaphoric	152 (51.5%)	143 (48.5%)

and for some speakers this means that the object is not actually animate. DOM was indeed rejected by 4 informants (=16%). Fortunately, the combination 'recommend the author' was also used in the non-anaphoric condition, so the overall results were not substantially influenced.

The non-anaphoric items can be divided into several semantic types. First, in 14 examples the definite clearly has particular reference (it is scopally specific) and in 8 it has variable reference (it is scopally non-specific) – for the latter, see ex. (31).

- (31) După un asemenea șir de înfrângeri, de obicei
 ‘After such a series of defeat, usually’
 a. clubul **îl** demite **pe antrenor**. b. Clubul demite **antrenorul**.
 club-the 3MS.ACC fires DOM coach club-the fires coach-the
 ‘the club fires the coach.’

Two examples are ambiguous between variable and particular reference.

Among the 14 examples of definites with clear particular reference, there are differences regarding the hearer’s and speaker’s familiarity with the referent. In two examples, the object can only be interpreted as epistemically non-specific: the existence of a person satisfying the nominal description is inferred from the situation, but this identity is unknown, see (32) and (33).

- (32) Acolo e o mașină. Farurile sunt aprinse,
 ‘There’s a car over there. The headlights are on,’
 a. dar nu văd **șoferul**. b. dar nu-**l** văd **pe șofer**.
 but not see.1S driver-the but not-3MS.ACC see.1S DOM driver
 ‘but I can’t see the driver’
- (33) A fost un accident mortal la Onești. ‘There has been a deadly accident in Onești.’
 a. Poliția **îl** caută **pe făptaș**. b. Poliția caută **făptașul**.
 policemen-the CL.ACC looks-for DOM perpetrator policemen-the looks-for perpetrator-the
 ‘The police are looking for the perpetrator.’

In one example, this type of reading is possible, but not obligatory: for (34), we may imagine a situation in which the discourse participants only have direct experience of the ship and have no knowledge about the captain, but a scenario where they have met or can see the captain is also possible.

- (34) Câte persoane poate duce nava asta? ‘How many people can this ship carry?’
 Nu știu, trebuie {să-**l** întrebăm **pe căpitan**/ să întrebăm **căpitanul**.
 not know.1S must SBJV-3MS.ACC ask.1P DOM captain/ SBJV ask.1P captain-the
 ‘I don’t know, we had better ask the captain.’

Two examples (see (35)-(36)) allow a reading in which the referent is new for the hearer. The definite is possible because the existence of a person or group characterized by the nominal property is inferable from the situation (bridging). Unlike in (32)-(33), the speaker has direct knowledge of the referent, which was a participant in an event which included the speaker or was perceived by the speaker.

- (35) Ne-a prins o ploaie mare în gara din Ploiești. Până au reușit să elibereze o sală de
 așteptare ‘We got caught in a heavy rain at the train station in Ploiesti. Until they
 managed to clear a waiting room,’

- {au lăsat **călătorii** / i-au lăsat **pe călători**} să aștepte în ploaie.
 have.3P left travelers-the / CL.ACC-have.3P left DOM travelers SBJV wait.3 in rain
 ‘they left the travelers waiting in the rain.’
- (36) Am stat până seara la căpătașul bolnavului, la spital. ‘I stayed by the bedside of the sick man until evening, at the hospital.’
 {Am întrebat **asistenta**/Am întrebat-**o pe asistentă**} când îl mai pot vedea.
 have.1 asked nurse-the/have.1 asked-CL.ACC DOM nurse when him more can.1S see
 ‘I asked the nurse when I could see him again.’

In the remaining 9 examples, the referent is likely to be hearer-old (i.e. the hearer knows about the existence of the referent). This is clear for cases such as (37), where the context does not support the bridging use exemplified in (34).

- (37) Cred că în curând o să înceapă o furtună ‘I think a storm is about to break out’
 {Cheamă-**i pe copii** / Cheamă **copiii**} în casă.
 call.IMPV.2S-3P.ACC DOM children / call.IMPV.2S children-the in house
 ‘Call the children inside!’

We included in this category names of officials that the hearer is probably familiar with, as in (38) (the context indicates that the governor referred to is the governor of the National Bank).

- (38) De ce erau echipe de televiziune în fața Băncii Naționale? ‘Why were there television crews in front of the National Bank?’
 {**Îl** așteptau **pe guvernator** / Așteptau **guvernatorul**}, care urma să dea o declarație despre criza cu care ne confruntăm.
 ‘They were waiting for the governor, who was going to make a statement about the crisis we are facing’

A somewhat less clear case is (39). In the contextual setting, the factory must be old-information for the hearer. This may provide the basis for considering the factory’s employees hearer-old as well.

- (39) Pentru că s-au semnalat mai multe furturi de materiale, ‘Because several thefts of materials have been reported,’
 conducerea a decis ca paznicii {să **îi** controleze **pe angajați**/ să controleze **angajații**} la plecarea din fabrică.
 ‘the management has decided that the guards should check the employees when they leave the factory.’

Among the 9 examples of probable hearer-familiarity, one is special in that it allows an ‘attributive’ reading, with narrow scope under the modal, see (40):

- (40) Acesta e un caz grav, ce ține de securitatea națională. ‘This is a serious national security case.’
 Trebuiau {să-**l** informeze **pe președinte** / să informeze **președintele**}.
 ‘They should have informed the president.’

This is not an instance of particular vs. variable ambiguity, because in both readings the obligation referred to the president in function at that particular moment. As discussed in Wolter (2006), what is felt as an ‘attributive reading’ here (in the sense of Donnellan’s (1966) ‘attributive’ vs. ‘referential’ distinction) involves counterfactual reasoning: it was a situation such that no matter who would have been the president, that person should have been informed. We included this example in a particular type because the attributive reading becomes particularly salient if the unmarked version is used.

In Table IX we present the results for these subtypes. We eliminated the examples exhibiting ambiguity between variable and particular reading or between familiar and inferable, epistemically non-specific (see ex. (34)), because for these examples we cannot guess the construal the informant had in mind, which results in the impossibility of being included in one of the particular classes in Table IX.

Table IX: types of non-anaphoric definites in the acceptability experiment Exp2

	preferred version:			unmarked impossible:	DOM impossible:
	DOM	unmarked	no preference		
(i) particular, hearer-old (ex.(37), (38), (39); 8 ex.)	66 (33%)	53 (26.5%)	81 (40.5%)	8 (4%)	6 (3%)
(ii) particular, possibly hearer-new, speaker-old (ex. (35)-(36))	9 (18%)	12 (24%)	29 (58%)	1 (2%)	0
(iii) particular, epist. non-spec. for both hearer and speaker (ex. (32)-(33))	10 (20%)	5 (10%)	35 (70%)	1 (2%)	0
(iv) particular, possibly attributive (ex. (40))	6 (24%)	5 (20%)	14 (56%)	1 (4%)	2 (8%)
(v) variable (ex. (31); 8 ex.)	39 (19.5%)	57 (28.5%)	104 (52%)	3 (1.5%)	5 (2.5%)
Total (ii)+(iii)+(v)	58 (19.3%)	74 (24.7%)	168 (56%)	4 (1.3%)	5 (1.7%)

We may see that for various types of non-specificity – variable reading (scopal specificity), hearer-new, and new for both discourse participants – the preference for DOM drops at around 20%, and for most informants there is no preference (between 52% and 70%). The rates of preference for the unmarked version are similar to those for DOM. The preference for the unmarked version is higher than the one for DOM for definites with variable reference (28.5% vs. 19.5% based on 8 examples with 25 informants for each; the difference is statistically relevant, $p < 0.05$), but most answers (52%) indicate no preference also in this case. Total rejection of one or the other variant is very rare (see the last two columns of Table IX).

An important conclusion is that absence of epistemic or scopal specificity does not rule out DOM. This supports the hypothesis that the only requirement for DOM is presupposition of existence (see section 2.1 above and Croitor & Giurgea 2023), the specificity effects seen with indefinites being consequences of this requirement. The non-specific definites tested in this experiment satisfy this presupposition, therefore DOM is not ruled out (for definites that do not satisfy the presupposition, see sections 2.2 and 4.1 above).

In examples with fully specific definites (hearer-old and speaker-old, see (i) in Table IX), the preference for DOM increases. Comparing the values for fully specific definites (the first row in Table IX) with the total of the three types of non-specificity (eliminating the ambiguous (iv)), see the last row in Table IX, we may see statistically significant differences in the preference for DOM (33% in 200 answers vs. 19.3% in 300 answers, $p < 0.05$) and in the absence of preference (40.5% in 200 answers vs. 56% in 300 answers, $p < 0.05$), but not in the preference for the unmarked version, which remains around 25%.

The preference for DOM with fully specific definites remains lower than for anaphoric definites, see Table X (the difference is statistically relevant, $p < 0.05$), correlated to a higher preference for the unmarked version (26.5% vs. 13.8%, a difference that is statistically relevant). Between the no-preference answers, the difference is insignificant.

Table X: anaphoric definites vs. fully specific non-anaphoric definites

	preferred version:			unmarked impossible:	DOM impossible:
	DOM	unmarked	no preference		
non-anaphoric, particular, hearer-old (8 ex.)	66 (33%)	53 (26.5%)	81 (40.5%)	8 (4%)	6 (3%)
anaphoric (24 ex.)	286(47.7%)	83 (13.8%)	231 (38.5%)	48 (8%)	12 (2%)

But there are differences between the various examples in the particular hearer-old class (first row in Table IX). The three examples with ‘the children/the girl’ (see (37)) received a lower preference for DOM (at a mean of 22.7%, vs. 25.3% preference for the unmarked version and 52% no preference), and the two examples with names of professions (ex. (38) and an example with ‘the two consuls’, referring to Ancient Rome) received a high preference for DOM (at a mean of 56%, vs. 22% for the unmarked version and 22% no preference). A lower preference for DOM (22%, vs. 32% unmarked and 46% no-preference) was also obtained with two examples with possible associative anaphora, (39) above (*management – employees*) and (41) below (*elections – candidates*):

- (41) Pentru că nu mai e mult până la alegeri, ‘Because it is not long until the elections, {i-au invitat **pe candidați**/au invitat **candidații**} la o conferință de presă ‘they invited the candidates to a press conference.’

Interestingly, example (40), although it also has a name of profession (‘the president’), shows a lower preference for DOM (24%, vs. 20% for the unmarked version and 56% no preference), and two informants even considered DOM unacceptable. This supports our intuition that this example has an attributive reading which is correlated with the absence of DOM (see also ex. (20) above).

The high preference for the unmarked version in (42) may indicate the existence of a weak definite reading for some speakers: taking the children (i.e. one’s own children) from school is a routinized daily activity, like the classical examples of weak definites (read the newspaper, go to the market).

- (42) Având carnetul suspendat, ‘With his/her driving license suspended,’
 a trebuit {să îi ia pe copiii / să ia copiii} de la școală
 has must.PTCP SBJV CL.ACC take.3 DOM children/ SBJV take.3 children-the from school
 cu taxiul.
 with taxi-the
 ‘(s)he had to take the children from school by taxi.’

4.5. DOM of definites containing possessors

The fact that lack of epistemic or scopal specificity reduces the preference for DOM also resulted from the translation experiment (Exp1). In a number of items, we tested definites with possessors, in which variable readings or epistemically non-specific readings can be triggered by using indefinite possessors. The results are presented in Table XI. A few respondents used *pe*-marking without CID. We counted this separately, because absence of CID might be correlated with a semantic effect (see Tigău 2016a, who argues that the specificity import comes from CID). One item tested a definite with a proper noun possessor, where DOM is obligatory according to Croitor & Giurgea (2023). We may see that the unmarked version is the most frequent for objects with variable readings (71.4%), for particular objects with epistemic non-specificity the percentage of DOM is a bit over 50%, while for other definites the rate of DOM increases to a mean of 80%. In the example with a genitive proper name, no informant used the unmarked version, as expected.

Table XI: DOM in definites containing possessors, in the translation experiment

		DOM+CID	DOM- CID	unmarked
	<i>variable reading (scopally non-specific)</i>			
a	He should ask the coach of a basketball team.	4 (26.7%)	0	11 (73.3%)
b	He did not recognize the author of any song.	0	0	19 (100%)
c	We should also invite the director of some research institute.	11 (50%)	2 (9%)	9 (41%)
	mean percentage	25.6%	3%	71.4%
	<i>probably variable, but also interpretable as particular (wide scope)</i>			
d	In such occasions, you should also inform the director of the institution.	12 (54.5%)	0	10 (4.5%)
	<i>particular, epistemically non-specific</i>			
e	They haven’t found the perpetrators of the robbery yet.	7 (42%)	0	10 (58%)
f	They interviewed the dean of some faculty.	11 (68.7%)	1 (6.3%)	4 (25%)
	mean percentage	55%	3%	42%
	<i>particular, hearer-non-specific (indef. possessor)</i>			
g	They invited the wife of a well-known poet.	15 (53.6%)	0	13 (46.4%)
	<i>particular, speaker-specific, possibly hearer-specific (definite possessor)</i>			
h	We finally found the director of the institute.	17 (63%)	1 (3.7%)	9 (33.3%)
i	She saw the manager of the company.	20 (80%)	0	5 (20%)
j	They summoned the boy’s parents to a meeting on Monday.	17 (89.5%)	0	2 (10.5%)

k	They also invited the president's wife.	24 (88.9%)	1 (3.7%)	2 (7.4%)
	mean percentage	80.3%	1.9%	17.8%
	<i>with a proper name possessor</i>			
l	They called John's father, but he didn't answer.	23	0	0

In the acceptability experiment without continuations (Exp3), 6 examples with unmarked definite objects containing pronominal possessors and genitive proper names were tested. As there were two lists, each informant only answered to 3 items. The results showed speaker variation: 7 speakers found all three examples unacceptable or almost unacceptable, 8 found only 2 examples unacceptable or almost unacceptable and found one of them almost acceptable, 13 informants found the examples acceptable or almost acceptable, and 3 gave inconsistent answers. This may show that the rule is not yet generalized in the linguistic community. In any case, there is a clear contrast between examples with proper name genitives and pronominal possessors and examples with other familiar possessors: in the latter case, DOM is not required – see the lines h-k in Table X and example (43) below (tested in Exp3), which was found acceptable or almost acceptable by 20 informants and rather unacceptable by only one.

- (43) Am informat **părinții băiatului** despre ce s-a întâmplat.
 have.1 informed parents-the boy-the.GEN about what REFL-has happened
 'I/We informed the boy's parents about what happened.'

Unlike the other factors examined by our experiments, which were semantic in nature, the constraint related to possessors is formal – from a semantic point of view, the common noun genitive in (43) is no less familiar than a proper name or a personal pronoun.

5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Our experiments show that epistemic or scopal specificity are not required for DOM of definites with overt human common nouns. This is predicted by the hypothesis that the semantic condition for DOM which is responsible for the specificity effects found with indefinites is *presupposition of existence*. Definites normally introduce a presupposition of existence even if they have variable reference, being under the scope of an operator, or are inferred entities, unfamiliar to both discourse participants or to the hearer. This explains why DOM is allowed with these types of non-specific definites. There are exceptional instances of definites lacking presupposition of existence, and in this case DOM is indeed degraded – see section 2.2, ex. (12)-(15). We tested experimentally only one type of non-presuppositional definites, those that embed a subjunctive relative and are in the scope of negation or of the modal *seek*. The results showed decreased acceptability for DOM but not ungrammaticality, and a higher level of acceptability than for indefinites with DOM in the same environment (section 4.1). We suggested that such definites may have a type-reading, the presupposition condition being satisfied at the level of kinds.

Among definites that do satisfy the presupposition of existence, scopal and epistemic specificity are nevertheless relevant, in the sense that in the absence of these types of specificity, there is no preference for DOM: in the acceptability experiment Exp2, most answers indicated both variants as equally acceptable (between 52% and 70%, see Table IX),

and the rest of the preference went equally to DOM and to the unmarked version (around 20% for each); in the translation experiment, where we tested objects modified by possessors, we got 62% unmarked versions for variable definites and 42% for definites with epistemic non-specificity, vs. just unmarked versions 20% for the specific definites.

Among specific definites, the experiments have shown a higher preference for DOM in the case of anaphoric definites. However, the unmarked version was very rarely judged as totally unacceptable (only 8%, in Exp2) and did occur in a significant number of translations (36%, if we eliminate a potentially ambiguous example). In Exp2, the mean preference for DOM of anaphoric definites did not exceed 50% (47.7%, vs. 38.5% no preference and 13.8% unmarked). Some examples of specific definites with no anaphoric antecedent provided by the contexts given in the experiment showed a similar level of preference for DOM as anaphoric definites. It is possible that the factor involved be *discourse prominence*, as proposed by Chiriacescu & von Heusinger (2009, 2010). They measure discourse prominence by the number of mentions in the subsequent discourse (“referential persistence”) and by the potential of becoming a discourse topic. This notion can be extended to cover anaphoric definites, which are also an instance of repeated mention across a portion of discourse.

The idea that optional DOM in general signals discourse prominence might seem problematic in view of the use of DOM with narrow scope definites: although DOM is rather dispreferred in this case, it is not ruled out (see (v) in Table IX which shows that 19.5% of the answers even prefer DOM, and only 2.5% judge the DOM variant impossible; see also Table XI a and c for translations). However, most of the narrow scope definites in our examples allow anaphoric uptake: they occur in contexts involving generalizations about situations or in modal contexts, and these situations/context may further be elaborated in the discourse, allowing anaphoric links to referents within the individual situations in the scope of a habitual or modal operator in the previous sentence (this is known as ‘modal subordination’, see Roberts 1987, 1989) – see e.g. (44), where the first sentence is the DOM variant of an example in Exp2 (chosen as the preferred variant by 44% of the informants). The second sentence in (44) contains a demonstrative anaphoric to the narrow scope definite in the first sentence.

- (44) De câte ori vizita o colonie, regele îl informa **pe guvernator**_i
 of how-many times visited.IMPF.3s a colony king-the CL.ACC informed DOM governor
 cu mai multe săptămâni înainte. **Acesta**_i dădea ordinele necesare pentru
 with several weeks before this.MS gave.IMPF.3s orders-the necessary for
 asigurarea securității, pregătea paradele, (...)
 ensuring-the security-the.GEN prepared.IMPF.3S
 ‘Whenever he visited a colony, the king informed the governor several weeks in
 advance. The governor would give the necessary orders to ensure security, would
 prepare the parades (...)’

Note that in the translation example where the definite was dependent on a negative quantifier (b in Table XI: *He did not recognize the author of any song*), no informant used DOM. This is expected under the discourse prominence view because in this case no situations that can be further elaborated are introduced in the sentence at hand.

The idea that DOM marks discourse prominence may also explain why weak definites disallow DOM (see section 2.2 above, ex. (16), and section 4.2): weak definites are known

for reduced anaphoric potential (see Aguilar-Guevara 2011, Krifka & Modarresi 2016, Krifka 2021).

The main problem of the explanation based on discourse prominence is that this notion does not have a precise definition in formal terms. It seems to be useful as a descriptive term for some empirical generalizations, but it is possible that these generalizations result from some formal properties yet to be discovered. We will suggest a possible account along these lines, which remains to be developed in further studies.

The account runs as follows: (i) unmarked definites are allowed for a special type of definites, illustrated by weak definites but also by other types of narrow scope DPs, while DOM-ed definites are impossible in these cases. (ii) Unmarked definites are not restricted to these cases, but may also be used in situations which allow DOM-ed definites. (iii) However, in such situations DOM-ed definites are preferred, because, as a result of (i), they are more informative, signaling the fact that the type of definite used does not belong to the uses under (i).

Many studies on weak definites agree on the fact that they are semantically different from regular definites (see Carlson & Sussman 2005, Carlson et al. 2005, Aguilar-Guevara & Zwarts 2011, Aguilar-Guevara 2014, Schwarz 2014, Krifka & Modarresi 2016, Krifka 2021). As we have seen in section 4.2 above, there is evidence that they do involve a iota operator, but the scope of this operator is very low, falling within the event description associated to the main predicate. This is a common point of the analyses proposed by Schwarz (2014) and by Krifka & Modarresi (2016). We propose that this event-dependency is reflected by the structural make-up of the definite.

We adopt a situation-based semantics of definites, in which contextual domain restrictions as well as the temporal and modal interpretation of the descriptive content of the DP are encoded using a *situation* argument of Ns and all other predicates (see Heim 1990, 2011, Percus 2000, Kratzer 2004, Recanati 2004, Elbourne 2005, 2013, Wolter 2006, Schwarz 2009). As argued in detail by Schwarz (2009), there is evidence that, at least for strong DPs, the situation argument, which is syntactically represented (as proposed by Percus 2000), is saturated at the D-level (as proposed by Büring 2004), via a null situation pronoun that may be bound by some higher operator (yielding narrow scope/opaque readings) or may remain free, taking a value in the context (yielding transparent, wide scope readings). Schwarz also notes that the situation argument of weak indefinites is necessarily identified with the situation argument of the main predicate, which explains why (45)a is contradictory, as opposed to (45)b, which has a non-contradictory reading because the DP is strong and it can be evaluated with respect to a situation distinct from the one described by the clause (including a different time).

- (45) a. There is a fugitive in jail.
 b. Every fugitive is in jail. (Schwarz 2009:91, citing Musan 1995, Keshet 2008)

A straightforward formalization of the situational dependency of weak indefinites is to let the s-argument unsaturated at the DP-level, instead of inserting a null situation pronoun. This means that the indefinite in (45) will have the denotation in (46) (in this representation, we follow Wolter 2006 and Schwarz 2009 in the order of combining entity and situations

arguments with predicates, but this is immaterial for the proposal, the important thing is that situation arguments should have a structural representation).¹⁶

$$(46) \llbracket a_{\text{weak}} \text{ fugitive} \rrbracket = \lambda P_{\langle e, st \rangle} . \lambda s . \exists x . (\text{fugitive}(x)(s) \wedge P(x)(s))$$

Now, the fact that the iota operator of weak definites falls within the event description associated with the main predicate may be formalized in the same way, assuming that events and situations are ontologically similar. For instance, the weak definite *the plumber* used in the context *Call the plumber* (see Table III, a) will have the denotation in (47).

$$(47) \llbracket \text{the}_{\text{weak}} \text{ plumber} \rrbracket = \lambda s . \iota x . \text{plumber}(x)(s)$$

Weak definites are restricted to Predicate+DP combinations that refer to stereotypical activities. This is why if we replace *plumber* with *boy* in the example, or *call* with *look at*, the weak interpretation disappears (consider *Call the boy!* or *Look at the plumber!*). In the analyses of Schwarz (2009) and Krifka and Modarresi (2016), this follows from the fact that only for certain event descriptions is an argument of a certain type considered as available, i.e., satisfying the presupposition of the iota operator.

But the type of definite represented in (47) may extend beyond weak definites. We propose that this type of interpretation is responsible for the salient *attributive* reading of the unmarked version of (40), reproduced in (48) below:

- (48) Acesta e un caz grav, ce ține de securitatea națională. ‘This is a serious national security case.’
- a. Trebuiau să informeze **președintele**. (attributive)
 must.IMPF.3P SBJV inform.3 president-the
- b. Trebuiau să-l informeze **pe președinte**. (referential)
 must.IMPF.3P SBJV-CL.3MS.ACC inform.3 DOM president
 ‘They should have informed the president.’

As we explained in 4.4 above, in the attributive reading the example can be paraphrased as ‘this was a situation of a type S such that in any situation of type S, they had to inform the president in S’. In the referential reading, the object refers to the president in the current situation. Discussing similar examples, Wolter (2006) claims that the two versions are not truth-conditionally distinct. Indeed, in a simple analysis of (48), the worlds of evaluation of the modal extend a particular situation in the real world, the one introduced in the preceding clause – a situation containing the serious national security case referred to. The sentence ‘They had to inform the president’ claims that in all possible situations *s*’ close to some ideal which (minimally) extend the particular situation described in the previous sentence, they inform the president in *s*’. Since the considered situations extend the particular situation in the preceding sentence, they will all contain the same referent as the president, the actual president in the real world. In other words, the descriptions ‘the president in *s*’ (where *s*’ is bound by the modal) and ‘the president in *s*’ (where *s* is the contextual situation described in

¹⁶ A similar proposal for weak indefinites was put forth in Dobrovie-Sorin & Giurgea (2015), modulo the fact that they use an unsaturated *event* argument instead of a situation argument.

the previous sentence) will end up having the same extension. Wolter (2006:126) claims that, in spite of the lack of truth value differences, the distinction between the two readings is real and has a structural correlate: in the attributive reading, the situation argument of the DP is bound by the operator that binds the situation argument of the main predicate, whereas in the referential reading, the situation argument is set independently, to the discourse context/topic situation.¹⁷

Adopting this analysis of attributive readings, we may extend to them the proposal we have made for weak definites. The fact that the situation argument must be bound by the operator that binds the situation argument of the clausal predicate will be represented by making the situation argument of the definite unsaturated at the DP-level, forcing it to be identified with the situation argument of the clausal predicate that takes the DP as a thematic argument, see (49). Instead of *the_{weak}*, we will use the notation *the₀*, in order to avoid confusions with Schwarz's (2009) weak *the*, which refers to the D used in non-anaphoric definites. The index zero refers to the fact that this D does not introduce an s-argument, as opposed to *the_s* which comes with a null situation pronoun (as proposed by Schwarz 2009 for all types of *the*).

- (49) a. $\llbracket \text{the}_0 \text{ president} \rrbracket = \lambda s. \iota x. \text{president}(x)(s)$
 b. $\llbracket \text{inform} [\text{the}_0 \text{ president}] \rrbracket = \lambda y. \lambda e. \lambda s. [\text{inform}(e)(s) \wedge \text{Theme}(e)(s) = \iota x. \text{president}(x)(s) \wedge \text{Ag}(e)(s) = y]$

The referential reading relies on the normal definite D which comes with a saturated s-argument (the contextually salient situation introduced as a free pronoun in D is represented by *s** in (50) below):

- (50) a. $\llbracket [s^* \text{-the}_s] \text{ president} \rrbracket = \iota x. \text{president}(x)(s^*)$
 b. $\llbracket \text{inform} [[s^* \text{-the}_s] \text{ president}] \rrbracket = \lambda y. \lambda e. \lambda s. [\text{inform}(e)(s) \wedge \text{Theme}(e)(s) = \iota x. \text{president}(x)(s^*) \wedge \text{Ag}(e)(s) = y]$

Our proposal is that unmarked definites can display either *the₀* or *the_s*, whereas DOM-ed definites only have *the_s*. Using selection between an object case head K and DP in order to represent the various parameters of DOM, as in Croitor & Giurgea (2023), we may say that the DOM-K selects for *the_s* (at least for the cases under discussion here, DPs with overt animate nouns; for other possible selectional patterns, see Croitor & Giurgea 2023).

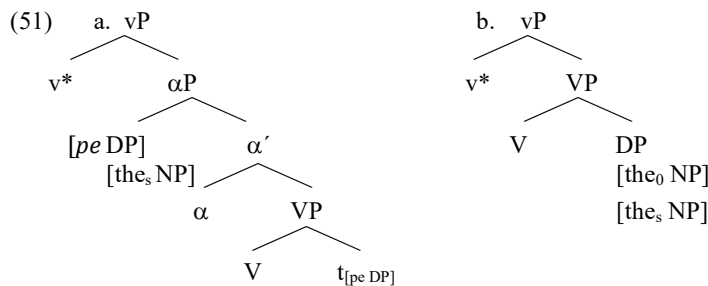
Using *the₀* is just one way of achieving narrow scope readings. Such readings can also be obtained by using the standard definite article with a saturated s-argument, *the_s*, by allowing this argument to be bound by operators over situations that c-command the definite. This is how narrow scope readings of DOM-ed definites are achieved.

Our proposal requires that main predicates should allow two ways of semantic composition with their arguments, one for $\langle s, e \rangle$ denotations and one for $\langle e \rangle$ denotations.

¹⁷ One might argue that if the attributive reading actually makes reference to *types of situations*, there will be a difference in truth conditions between the two readings. We cannot examine this issue here. For our purposes, it is sufficient to notice that in an analysis including types of situations, the situation argument of the DP will be identified with the situation argument of the main predicate and bound by the operator that creates a type of situations.

This could involve different levels of structural attachment or different rules of semantic composition. This is a complex issue that cannot be pursued in the space of this article.

It is nevertheless worth noticing that some studies have proposed that DOM-ed definites always move to some position higher than the thematic, external Merge position in the VP (see Onea & Hole 2017¹⁸, Irimia 2020b, Tigău 2020, Cornilescu & Tigău 2022). Assuming that the structural requirement for the semantic composition of DPs headed by *the*₀ is a low position, possibly the thematic position, our proposal is compatible with this view. For example, adopting the idea that differentially marked objects occupy the specifier of a projection intermediate between vP and VP, called α P by López 2012 (see Tigău 2020, Cornilescu & Tigău 2022), the aforementioned constraint rules out *the*₀ in Spec α P, allowing only the patterns represented in (51):



Within this proposal, the fact that discourse prominence is marked by using DOM can be explained without using a [discourse-prominence]-feature: assuming that discourse-prominent entities are parametrized to the current discourse situation, which requires *the*_s, the tendency of using DOM follows from the fact that DOM disambiguates between *the*₀ and *the*_s, since it cannot combine with *the*₀.

Compared to the corpus studies on DOM of definites reported in von Heusinger & Chiriacescu (2009) and Onea & Hole (2017), our experiments have revealed a much larger rate of unmarked versions. Onea & Hole (2017) claimed that when DOM is not prohibited for semantic reasons, as in the case of weak definites, DOM tends to become obligatory, the examples of unmarked versions being very few. In part this discrepancy may come from the fact that our tests included various type of non-specific definites and such definites have a lower frequency in corpora. But even in the case of anaphoric definites and clearly familiar definites, the results show that the preference for DOM is not overwhelming. For the acceptability experiment, this may be due to the fact that speakers could choose the ‘no preference’ variant, and some informants chose this answer because they knew that both variants are in principle grammatical. But we also obtained a significant rate of unmarked versions in the translation experiment, where a choice had to be made (36% for clearly anaphoric definites, 50% for familiar definites that were not presented as anaphoric, see Table VI).

¹⁸ This study proposes that DOM-ed constituents must undergo raising at LF.

Our results are interesting for the general issue of the representation of the various types of definites. Given that Romanian DOM, in general, is sensitive to grammatical features or structural properties, the fact that optional DOM is sensitive to certain semantic distinctions among definites (attributive vs. referential reading, weak vs. regular definite) supports analyses in which these distinctions are represented in the syntactic structure, rather than being established at the level of use. We proposed such an account, based on the situation-semantic treatment of definites, distinguishing between a definite D that leaves the situation argument unsaturated (*the*₀) and the standard one, which saturates this argument with a null situation pronoun (*the*_s).

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