

(De)-Focusing and Object Raising in Romanian *

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This article argues that VOS structures in Romanian are derived from a basic VSO word order and consequently, involve raising of the object out of the VP, across the subject left in-situ. Such an approach contradicts analyses which derive VOS in Romance through subject extraposition (see Rizzi 1982, Burzio 1986, among others) or a Spec-last VP structure (for example, Contreras 1991). A more traditional analysis of VS structures, in which the subject NP right-adjoins to VP/IP, is shown to be untenable for Romanian. Rather, post-verbal subject positions are L-related and there is no ‘inverted’ subject (see also Dobrovie-Sorin 1994, Cornilescu in press).

Evidence for clause-medial object raising in Romanian comes from the unmarked VSO word order, binding interactions, and quantifier float licensing. The availability of raising quantified NPs, lack of weak crossover effects and the reversal of binding phenomena, provide solid syntactic support for an A-movement analysis of the raised object.

The implications of an object movement approach for VOS constructions in Romanian is further discussed in view of the particulars of object raising in a more general perspective. In contrast to other languages that allow (or require) movement of objects to argumental positions, it is argued that in Romanian VOS structures, the object does not move for the purposes of Case

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checking. Nor does object raising entail (or require) a strong, definite interpretation of the moved NP. Rather, the raised object is interpreted as de-focused (in the sense of ‘de-rhematicized’), while the in-situ subject acquires maximal rhematic prominence. It is proposed that, in Romanian, object raising in VOS constructions is triggered by information structure together with a strong N-feature on the light verb \bar{v} (following Chomsky 1995).

The article is organized as follows. Section 1 tackles the status of Romanian postverbal subjects. Section 2 introduces Romanian VOS constructions and discusses their interpretation. Section 3 provides syntactic evidence for an object raising analysis. Section 4 discusses Romanian object raising from a cross-linguistic perspective and provides an analysis for the Romanian data. Section 5 offers some concluding remarks.

1. Subject positions in Romanian

Subject positions are crucial in establishing the mechanism for obtaining the VOS word order. In a language that permits the subject to remain in-situ in VSO constructions, the question of object movement immediately arises for VOS constructions. In other words, it is important to establish whether VOS in Romanian is derived from VSO, or whether it is derived from SVO with subsequent subject right-adjunction. In the following section we survey the literature that discusses the status of postverbal subjects in Romanian and conclude that Nominative Case assignment/checking can be postverbal in Romanian, or, in Minimalist terms, it is reduced exclusively to raising of formal features. Consequently, since the subject does not need to raise to Spec,IP for Nominative Case prior to Spell-Out, there is no immediate need to assume a subject right-adjunction analysis for postverbal subjects in Romanian.

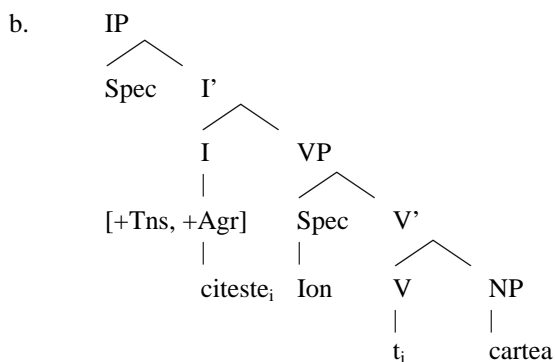
1.1. Romanian postverbal subjects

In the Generative framework, an NP is licensed (i.e. ‘visible’), if it is theta-marked and Case marked. Subjects are generally assumed to be base-generated in Spec,VP (Koopman and Sportiche 1991), which is a theta-marked, Case-less position. In a language such as English, the subject NP moves to the Specifier of IP where it is assigned Nominative Case in a Spec-Head agreement configuration, which is a form of “feature sharing” (Chomsky 1986: 24).

In Romanian, however, the thematic and Case position of the subject NP may coincide. According to Dobrovie-Sorin (1994), and Motapanyane (1995), the subject NP is base-generated in the specifier of VP where it can be assigned Nominative Case under government by the verb that has raised to Inflection. In a sentence like (1a), the simplified representation would be as in (1b);

- (1) a. Citeste Ion cartea .¹ (Romanian)
 read.3SG. Ion book-the
 ‘Ion is reading the book’

¹ Romanian uses the following phonetic symbols not found in IPA: [ã] – a stressed scwaha; [â], [î] – a back unrounded closed vowel; [s] – a voiceless postalveolar fricative; [t] – a voiceless alveolar affricate.



In (1a), the material residing within the VP, namely the subject and object noun phrases, is interpreted as rhematic, and understood as new information focus.²

In Romanian the lexical verb always raises out of the VP to the highest Infl projection, irrespective of whether it is finite or non-finite, or whether there is an auxiliary present.³ Arguments in support of consistent verb raising in Romanian have been discussed elsewhere (see Dobrovie-Sorin 1994, among others), two of the most salient being the fact that the Romanian

² Romanian subjects can also precede the verb that has raised to Infl, yielding an SVO word order.

Consider the example below;

- (i) Ion citeste cartea. (Romanian)
 Ion read.3SG book-the
 'Ion is reading the book.'

While (i) is perfectly grammatical, the subject NP 'Ion' cannot be understood as representing new information, but only as old (in the sense of given) information.

³ With the notable exception of Long Head Movement constructions, there is no asymmetry between root and embedded clauses with overt complementizers in Romanian, so the position to which the lexical verb raises has to be lower than C. Under a split IP analysis, the Romanian verb is assumed to have raised to the Mood head (cf. Cornilescu in press, and Rivero 1994 for other languages of the Balkan sprachbund).

auxiliary cannot combine with Tense affixes and can never be separated from the lexical verb by intervening non-clitic material. Consider (2a), in which both a pronominal and a lexical subject inserted between the auxiliary and the lexical verb would render the utterance ungrammatical. The subject NP can only precede or follow the auxiliary and lexical verb complex, as in (2b). In contrast to the Romanian situation, examples (2c-e) show that French, Italian and Spanish, all license at least some contexts in which the subject NP is legitimate between the auxiliary and the lexical verb.

- (2) a. * A Victor / el venit ieri.
 AUX.3SG Victor / he come yesterday
 ‘Victor/He came yesterday.’
- b. (Victor / el) A venit (Victor / el) ieri.
 Victor / he AUX.3SG come Victor / he yesterday
 ‘Victor/He came yesterday.’
- c. Est-il_venu?
 ‘has he come?’
- d. Avendo Mario accettato di aiutarci, potremo risolvere il problema...
 ‘having Mario accepted to help, we could solve the problem...’
 (Italian, Rizzi 1982:83)
- e. ... pues ya lo estaba yo diciendo ...
 ... well already it was I saying...
 ‘well, I was already saying it’
 (Spanish - Suñer 1994:344)

The ‘particle’ status of the Romanian auxiliary has long been recognized by traditional grammars; Dobrovie-Sorin argues that the Romanian auxiliary is a syntactic clitic which explains the consistent lexical verb raising in the language.

Since the subject can be assigned Nominative Case in its base-generated position, postverbal subjects are freely available in Romanian once the verb has moved to Infl⁴. VSO word order is then simply derived by verb raising, with no subject right-adjunction necessary.⁵

1.2. Further evidence against subject right-adjunction in Romanian

However, the fact that, in Romanian, the NP subject can stay in-situ, does not in and of itself imply that it cannot be right-adjoined. It only shows that it need not. In this section, we use licensing of CP objects and extraction from clausal objects as arguments to support the absence of subject right-adjunction in both Romanian VOS and VSO constructions.

⁴ Postverbal subjects are available in all null subject Romance languages; however, in the latter case they are a marked option since they are context sensitive (i.e., in the sense that they are dependent on the material intervening between the raised verb and the postverbal subject). For this reason, VS structures should not necessarily be analysed in the same manner in all Romance languages.

⁵ The traditional analysis for VS in Romance is either to base-generate the subject NP in an SVO underlying structure and have the subject raise and right-adjoin to the VP/IP (cf. Rizzi 1982, Burzio 1986, etc), or to base-generate the subject NP already in a VP/IP right-adjoined position (Contreras 1991, etc.). A right-adjunction analysis is probably correct for a language such as Italian in which VSO sequences are highly marked but is highly improbable for Romanian (cf. also Dobrovie-Sorin 1994, Motapanyane 1995, among others).

1.2.1. Against subject right-adjunction: VSO and extraction from clausal objects

Extraction phenomena suggest that the clausal direct object resides in its base-generated position in VSO structures. Ross (1967) claims that ‘rightward movements create ISLANDS ‘ (i.e. constituents out of which no extraction is possible) and later Cinque (1990) claims that XPs which are not in a position locally selected by a [+V] category are always barriers; this indeed is no novelty. If in Romanian the clausal objects in VSO structures undergoes movement to an A-bar position, we would expect extraction out of the clausal direct object to be ruled out. In (3), the [wh]-phrase has been extracted from a clausal DO situated in an VSO configuration. Since, (3) is perfectly grammatical, this indicates that the sentential direct object is base-generated to the right of the subject rather than having been moved there. Consequently, the postverbal subject cannot have been right-adjoined.

- (3) Cu cine_j i_i-a spus Petre Mariei_i [cã vine t_j Ion] ?
 With who her.DAT-AUX.3SG said Peter Mary.DAT [that comes t Ion] ?
 ‘With whom did Peter tell Mary Ion was coming?’

Consider also the examples in (4) through (7). The (b) versions represent instances of extraction out of the clausal objects of the (a) versions.

- (4) a. Petre a spus [cã Ion s-a purtat ca un domn].
 Peter AUX.3SG said [that John REFL-AUX.3SG. behaved as a gentleman]
 ‘Peter said that John had behaved like a gentleman].’
- b. Cum_i a spus Petre [cã s-a purtat Ion t_i]?
 How AUX.3SG said Petre [that REFL-AUX.3SG. behaved John t]
 ‘How did Peter say John had behaved?’

- (5) a. Băiatul păsea linistit [de câte ori venea acasă].
 Boy-the stepped calmly [whenever came home]
 ‘The boy would walk calmly whenever he came home.’
- b. * Unde_i păsea băiatul linistit [de câte ori venea t_i]?
 Where stepped boy-the calmly [whenever came t]
 ‘* Where would the boy walk calmly whenever he came ?’
- (6) a. Erau capabili [să ucidă [fără să tresară noaptea]].
 were capable [SUBJ kill [without SUBJ start night]]
 ‘They were capable of killing without having sleepless nights.’
- b. * Când_i erau capabili [să ucidă [fără să tresară t_i]?
 when were capable [SUBJ kill [without SUBJ start t]
 ‘* What were they capable of killing without having sleepless t ?’
- (7) a. Erau capabili [să spună [că au văzut-o_i pe Ana_i în parc]]
 were capable [SUBJ say [that AUX.3PL. seen-her.ACC. PE Ana in park]] ⁶
 ‘They were capable of saying they had seen Ana in the park.’
- b. Pe cine_i erau capabili [să spună [că au văzut t_i în parc]]?
 PE who were capable [SUBJ say [that AUX.3PL. seen in park]]
 ‘Whom were they capable of saying they had seen in the park?’
- c. Unde_j erau capabili [să spună [că au văzut-o_i pe Ana_i t_j]]
 where were capable [SUBJ say [that AUX.3PL. seen-her.ACC. PE Ana t]]

⁶ ‘PE’ is a dummy preposition associated with Romanian [+ human] direct objects. Authors disagree whether it marks Accusative, specificity, presuppositionality, or a combination thereof. Languages often make use of object agreement markers when the object is [+ animate], or [+ human] (see also the ‘ra’ marker in Persian, cf. Ghomeshi p.c.). This presumably signals the fact that languages perceive these objects as definite or D-linked, just as is the case with pronouns. In Romanian, PE objects are always clitic doubled.

‘Where were they capable of saying they had seen Ana ?’

The grammaticality of (4b) specifically shows that the VSO word order is base-generated, since it is possible to extract from within the clausal direct object. Examples (5b) and (6b) are ungrammatical precisely because the clausal objects are adjuncts (i.e., VP-adjoined rather than arguments), and, as such, create islands for movement. Examples (7b-c) involve cases of long distance extraction. Since such extraction is permitted, we need to assume that none of the clausal DOs has been right-adjoined via movement and, as such, none represents an island for extraction phenomena. The extraction facts presented above provide further evidence that in VSO structures, the subject NP has not right-adjoined to the VP, since the clausal direct object is in its base-generated position. Consequently, an object raising analysis should be the only possibility in VOS word order sequences.

1.2.2. Against subject right-adjunction: VOS and sentential objects

All arguments of the predicate have to be generated VP-internally, including complement clauses and subjects. Therefore, if VOS involved subject right-adjunction across the object left in-situ, we would expect to see the sequence, lexical verb - object - subject NP, irrespective of whether the object were an NP or a CP. However, while an object NP is grammatical in VOS constructions, a CP object is excluded in this sequence. Consider the example in (8), involving a direct object NP, in contrast to the ungrammatical ones in (9) and (10).

(8) VOS with object NP:

Au	mâncat	fursecuri	toti	copiii.
AUX.3PL	eat	cookies	all	children-the

‘All the children ate cookies.’

(9) VOS with CP object in a simple transitive:

- a. * Zic [cã ai dreptate] eu.
 say [that have truth] I
 'I say that you are right.'
- b. * Întrebã [dacã merge Mihai] Maria.
 asks [if goes Mihai] Maria
 'Maria is asking whether Mihai is coming.'

(10) VOS with CP object in ditransitive:

- a. VO₂SO₁: * I_i-a spus [cã Alex întârzie] Mircea Ioanei_i.
 her.DAT.-AUX.3SG. said [that Alex is late] Mircea Ioanei-DAT.
- b. VO₁O₂S: * I_i-a spus Ioanei_i [cã Alex întârzie] Mircea.
 her.DAT.-AUX.3SG. said Ioanei-DAT [that Alex is late] Mircea
- c. VO₂O₁S: * I_i-a spus [cã Alex întârzie] Ioanei_i Mircea.
 her.DAT -AUX.3SG. said [that Alex is late] oanei-DAT Mircea
 'Mircea told Ioana that Alex was going to be late.'

Both with simple transitives, in (9), and with a ditransitive, in (10), VOS proves ungrammatical with clausal objects. Since it is important for the encoding of thematic relations to base-generate arguments in identical syntactic structures, irrespective of their categorial status, the examples in (8)-(10) show that VOS in Romanian cannot involve subject right-adjunction across the object left in-situ.

2. VOS structures in Romanian

The assumption that VS structures in Romanian do not involve adjunction, rather a subject NP in a VP internal position raises interesting possibilities with regards to the syntactic status of VOS

structures. We explore the possibility of deriving VOS in Romanian as a consequence of object raising rather than subject movement.⁷ To support this claim, we bring arguments in section 3 from binding and quantifier float phenomena in Romanian.⁸ However, before pursuing the analysis, let us first consider some examples involving VOS structures in Romanian.

- (11) **V** **O** **S**
- a. A scris o carte prietena mea.
 AUX.3SG written a book friend-the my
 ‘The act of book-writing has been performed by my friend.’
- b. Au luat notă mare toti elevii.
 AUX.3.PL taken mark high all students-the
 ‘All the students have received a good grade.’
- c. Si-au luat masină prietenii mei.
 REFL-AUX.3PL taken car friends-the mine
 ‘My friends have bought themselves a car.’
- d. Ieri i-a cusut o rochitămama.
 Yesterday her.DAT.-AUX.3SG sewn a dress mother-the
 ‘My/her mother sewed her a dress yesterday.’
- e. Mereu îi_i ceartă pe copii_i amândoi părintii.
 always them.ACC scold.3P PE children both parents-the

⁷ A similar claim has been put forth for modern Greek (in Alexiadou 1994), for Catalan (in Vallduví 1995), for Czech (in Kotalik 1996), and is mentioned in Cornilescu (in press). Object movement to SpecAgrOP in Romanian is also independently argued for on different grounds in Gierling (1997); Gierling (1997), however, correlates movement out of the VP with clitic doubling structures.

⁸ Unless absolutely necessary, we do not use a split IP configuration; lexical movement to the highest Infl (presumably the Mood head) will be represented as $V > I$.

'It's always both parents that scold the children.'

- f. A spart usa hotul.
 AUX.3SG broken door-the thief-the
 'The thief has broken the door.'
- g. Le-a dat bomboane mama.
 Them.DAT.-AUX.3SG given sweets mother-the
 'It was mother that gave them sweets.'
- h. Joacă sah amândoi copiii.
 play.3PL chess both children-the
 'Both children play chess.'

In (11), the direct object NPs are marked as indefinite (11a,d), specific (11e), and definite (11f), or appear unmarked, as bare singulars (11b,c), and bare plurals (11g). However, in the VOS word order sequences displayed in (11), the objects, if not stressed, are all de-focused and understood as part of the presupposition, together with the verb.⁹ In contrast, in the basic VSO word order, the object is understood rhematically, together with the subject (see section 1), as part of the presentational focus. Object de-focusing that accompanies the shift from VSO to VOS is a strong intuitive argument in favour of the hypothesis that it is the object NP that moves. The subject NP, on the other hand, retains its rhematic interpretation irrespective of whether the word order is VSO or VOS, with the difference that, in VOS constructions, the deeply embedded subject is under maximal rhematic prominence, being the exclusive new information focus. This suggests

⁹ While the event is presupposed as a whole, for example, the act of book-writing in (11a), the event of getting good grades in (11b), and so on, the object NP in the examples in (11) is not independently understood as topical. We return to this issue in section 4, where we discuss object raising from a more general perspective.

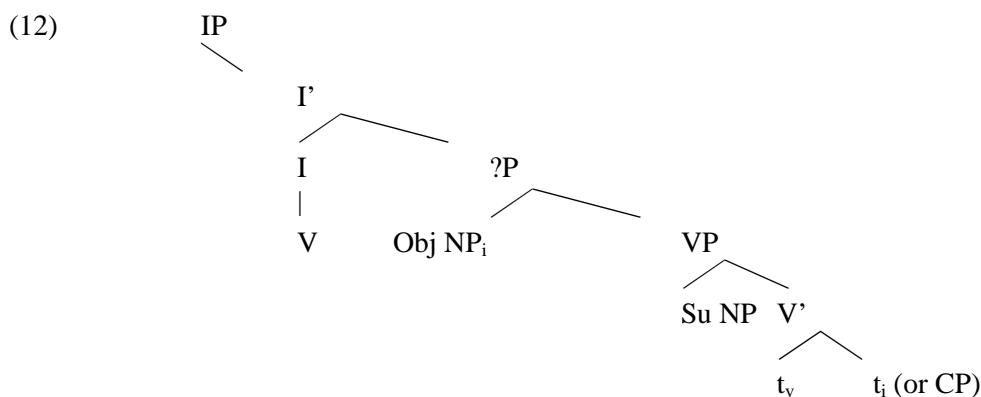
that the subject stays in-situ in both structures, a conclusion which neatly parallels the syntactic evidence presented in section 1.¹⁰ Moreover, under an object raising analysis, the contrasts presented in section 1.2.2 are not unexpected either. To the best of our knowledge, leftward raising of clausal objects is not attested in any of the languages that allow for clause-medial object raising. In what follows, we offer syntactic evidence that supports an object-raising analysis above and to the left of the subject NP left in-situ.

3. Object Raising

In this section we use syntactic tests, such as the reversal of binding interactions (section 3.1.) and licensing of floated quantifiers (section 3.2.) to argue for object raising in Romanian VOS constructions. An object raising analysis will result in a structure as in (12), in which the landing site of the raised object is left unlabelled for the time being. We return to this issue in section 4.

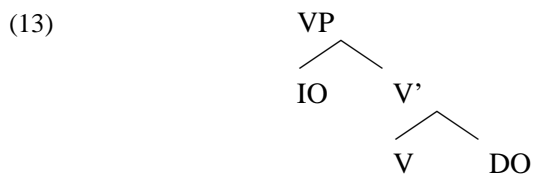
¹⁰ In effect, whatever material is left in-situ within the VP is focused in the sense of new information focus. When prosodically marked as such, the subject in VOS constructions can be interpreted as a contrastive focus, as in (i), where contrastive focus is indicated via capital letters.

- (i) Le-a dat bomboane MAMA. (Romanian)
 them.DAT.-AUX.3SG. given sweets mother-the
 ‘It was mother that gave them sweets.’



3.1. Binding in support of an object raising analysis in Romanian VOS constructions

Binding phenomena provide solid syntactic evidence that points towards a movement analysis of the object past the subject NP in Romanian VOS constructions. Our line of argumentation follows that of Collins/Thráinsson (1993) for Icelandic ditransitive structures. Following Larson (1988), they assume a structure as in (13) for the double object construction, in which the indirect object asymmetrically binds the direct object.

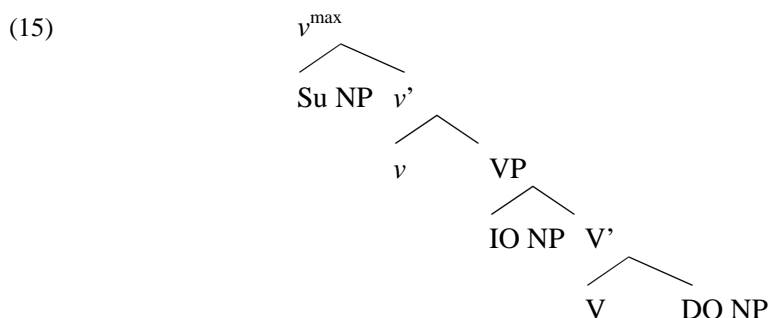


Collins and Thráinsson show that binding phenomena stay the same when the indirect object is extraposed over the direct object since the same c-commanding relationship continues to hold between the two objects. This accounts for the ungrammaticality in (14c);

- (14) a. Sjórinns svipti konuna_i manni sínum_i.
 the sea deprived the woman (A) husband her (REFL.)
 'The sea deprived the woman of her husband.'

- b. ? Sjórinna svipti manninum [gomlu konuna sem allir vorkenndu svo mikið].
 the sea deprived the husband (D) old the woman who everybody felt sorry for so much
 ‘The sea deprived of the husband the old woman who everybody felt so sorry for.’
- c. * Sjórinna svipti manninum; [gomlu konuna sína; sem allir vorkenndu svo mikið].
 the sea deprived the husband (D) old woman his (REFL) everybody felt sorry for so much
 ‘The sea deprived of the husband his (REFL) old woman who everybody felt so sorry for.’
 (Icelandic, Collins/Thrainsson 1993:151)

Following the same line of thought and assuming the subject NP to c-command both the direct and the indirect object in a structure as in (15) (cf. Chomsky 1995), we discuss binding interactions in VSO and VOS structures.



Under an inversion analysis involving subject right-adjunction, we would expect unaltered binding relations, irrespective of whether the word order is VSO or VOS. The Romanian data, however, disproves this claim, as illustrated in (16).

- (16) a. [Îndrăgostitii]_i au promis t_{subject} [unul altuia]_i luna de pe cer.
 [lovers-the] AUX.3P promised [each other] moon-the from on sky
- b. * Au promis [unul altuia]_i [îndrăgostitii]_i luna de pe cer.
 AUX.3PL promised [each other] [lovers-the] moon-the from on sky
 ‘The sweethearts promised each other the moon on the sky.’

In (16), the indirect object anaphor unul altuia ('each other') is licensed in the VSO structure in (16a), but excluded in the VOS structure in (16b). Since the reciprocal is illicit in the (b) example, it follows that it is no longer c-commanded by the subject.

Consider next the binding relations between the quantified subject and the object noun phrases in the examples in (17).

- (17) a. V S (= quantified NP) DO
 I-a chemat [fiecare mamã]_i [pe copiii ei]_i la masã.
 them.ACC.-AUX.3SG. called [each mother] [PE children-the her] at table
 'Each mother called her children to dinner.'
- b. V DO S (= quantified NP)
 * I-a chemat [pe copiii ei]_i [fiecare mamã]_i la masã.
 them.ACC.-AUX.3SG. called [PE children-the her] [each mother] at table
 'Each mother called her children to dinner.'
- c. S (= quantified NP) V IO
 [Fiecare mamã]_i a dat t_{subject} [copiilor ei]_i ceva.
 [each mother] AUX.3SG. given [children-DAT. her] something
 'Each mother gave her children something.'
- d. V IO S (= quantified NP)
 * (Le)-a dat [copiilor ei]_i [fiecare mamã]_i ceva.
 (them.DAT.)-AUX.3SG. given [children-DAT. her] [each mother] something
 'Each mother gave her children something.'

In (17a) and (17c) the word order is VSO, respectively SVO.¹¹ Both the direct object (17a) and the indirect object (17c) are felicitously bound by the quantified subject NP of the respective sentence. In these structures then, there is evidence that the objects are c-commanded by the

¹¹ What is crucial here is that in both instances the subject NP precedes the object NP.

subject NP.¹² (17b) and (17d) involve VOS structures, in which the quantified subject NP fails to bind the objects to its left. The ungrammaticality of these sentences can only be explained by assuming that the subject NP no longer c-commands the object NP. Consequently, subject right-adjunction is a priori excluded since such movement would leave unaffected the c-command relations between the subject and the object and we would expect to see unaltered binding relations in a manner similar to the Icelandic examples. This leaves open the unique option of object raising. In Romanian VOS structures, it is the object NP that moves (direct or indirect), raising to a position above that of the subject NP.

An object raising analysis further makes the correct prediction for the examples in (18).

- (18) a. V DO (= quantified NP) S (Romanian)
 L_i-a chemat [pe fiecare copil]_i [mama lui_i] la masă.
 him.ACC.-AUX.3SG. called [PE each child] [mother-the his] at table
 ‘* His mother called each child to the table.’
- b. V S DO (= quantified NP)
 * L_i-a chemat [mama lui_i] [pe fiecare copil]_i la masă.
 him.ACC.-AUX.3SG. called [mothers-the its] [PE each child] at table
 ‘* His mother called each child to the table.’

¹² That these examples involve binding, rather than coreference, is made obvious by the use of quantifiers. While NPs can be coreferential with a pronoun, as in (i), a quantified NP has to bind a pronoun, it cannot simply be coreferential with it (see (ii)).

- (i) Mary_i was intelligent and she_i was beautiful.
 (ii) * [Every girl]_i was intelligent and she_i was beautiful.

- c. V IO (= quantified NP) S
 I_i-a dat [fiecărui copil]_i [mama lui_i] ceva.
 him.DAT.-AUX.3SG. given [each-DAT. child] [mother-the his] something
 ‘*His mother gave each child something.’
- d. V S IO (= quantified NP)
 * I_i-a dat [mama lui_i] [fiecărui copil]_i ceva.
 him.DAT.-AUX.3SG. given [mother-the his] [each-DAT. child] something
 ‘*His mother gave each child something.’

In (18a) and (18c), the object, now a quantified NP, felicitously binds the subject to its right. Under an object raising analysis, the reversal of binding relations is readily explained since the raised object is now in a position to c-command the subject noun phrase. Moreover, it is imperative that we view object raising in VOS constructions as an instance of A-movement, in order to be able to account for lack of weak crossover effects in (18a) and (18c). However, since binding interactions are sensitive to c-command relations, the subject cannot be bound by a quantified object NP unless object raising applies. In VSO structures, assumed to be basic, the in-situ quantified object NP cannot bind the subject, and the expected ungrammatical results are illustrated in (18b) and (18d).

We conclude that the reversal of binding phenomena from VSO to VOS structures provide important (and sufficient) evidence for adopting an object raising analysis.¹³ The altered

¹³ The examples in (i) parallel the ones in (18), only that the anaphor propriu (‘self/own’) is used instead of the possessive. The same results obtain: in VSO structures the object is c-commanded by the subject, while in VOS structures, the object c-commands the subject.

- (i) a. (Le_i)-au oferit [mamelor]_i flori [proprii, copii].
 ‘(them.DAT.)-AUX.3PL. offered [mothers-DAT.] flowers [own children]’
- b. * (Le_i)-au oferit flori [proprii, copii] [mamelor]_i.
 ‘(them.DAT.)-AUX.3PL. offered flowers [own children] [mothers-DAT.]’

binding relations, the absence of weak crossover effects, as well as the option of raising quantified NPs, all point to the fact that the objects raise to an L-related (argumental) position in Romanian VOS structures.

3.2. Quantifier Float phenomena in support of object raising

Binding phenomena, however, can only be tested with definite objects; on the other hand, in (11) we showed that VOS constructions are not sensitive to semantic object type. The question then is whether all VOS structures are consistent with an object raising analysis. This section shows that quantifier float phenomena provide further support for an object raising analysis, and that Romanian VOS constructions should be analysed uniformly, irrespective of whether the object NP is marked or unmarked for definiteness. Consider the examples in (19), in which the objects appear to the left of the floated quantifiers.

- (19) a. [IP [Elevii] au luat notă mare [VP [SPEC toti t_s] t_v t_o]].
 students-the AUX.3PL taken high mark all
 ‘The students have all received a good grade.’
- b. [IP [Copiii] joacă sah [VP [SPEC amândoi t_s] t_v t_o]].
 children-the play.3PL chess both
 ‘The children both play chess.’

In both (19a) and (19b), the floated quantifier appears lower than the object NP. On the assumption that a floated quantifier associated with a subject is in a local relation with the trace of the respective subject (see Sportiche 1988, Shlonsky 1991), the examples in (19) show that the object has raised over the subject’s base-generated position. Since floated quantifiers are licensed

* Their own children offered flowers to the mothers.’

in (19) irrespective of the nature of the object NP, we assume uniform object raising in Romanian VOS constructions.

The difference between the examples in (19) with a stranded quantifier and those in (11 b & h) resides in the fact that in (11), emphasis is placed on the subject and quantifier as a unit, whereas in (19), it is the stranded quantifier that is rhematically focused.

4. Object raising: cross-linguistic evidence, triggers and landing site

In section 3, we argued for an analysis of Romanian VOS constructions which involves raising of the object NP above the subject. It was further shown that the type of movement involved is A-movement. In section 4, we look at object raising from a cross-linguistic perspective and propose an account of the Romanian data capable of accommodating its idiosyncrasies.

4.1. The specificity constraint on object raising

Clause-medial object raising is not rare across languages. Hindi and all of the Germanic languages (except English) license it in some form or other. In Faroese and Mainland Scandinavian weak pronominal objects are obligatorily moved leftward out of the VP (cf. Holmberg 1986, Vikner 1992, Bobaljik and Jonas 1996, among many others), probably for similar reasons that weak pronominal subjects have to be preverbal in French and Italian (cf. Cardinaletti 1996). In the other Germanic languages, lexical NPs have the option of overtly raising out of the VP, provided they are definite or, if indefinite (weak), can acquire a strong interpretation.¹⁴ Consider (20a) for Icelandic from Collins and Thráinsson (1993:136) and (20b) for Dutch from Zwart (1997:30).

¹⁴ De Hoop (1996:51) illustrates the following strong readings of indefinite (weak) NPs:

- (20) a. I gær máluðu strakárnir_j * hús_i / husið_i [VP allir_j t_v t_i rautt].
 yesterday painted boys-the house / house-the all red
 ‘Yesterday all the boys painted the house red.’
- b. Jan heeft Marie_i [VP gisteren [VP t_i gekust].
 John has Mary yesterday kissed
 ‘John kissed Mary yesterday.’

In (20a-b), the object arguments have crossed some element denoting the left edge of the VP (i.e., floated quantifier, adverbial), but within IP. Using a number of syntactic tests, Déprez (1991) argues that this movement is A-movement to Spec, AgrOP. In addition, for German, Dutch, and Frisian, IP-internal A-bar movement has also been argued for (Webelhuth 1989, Bobaljik and Jonas 1996, among others); the example in (21), borrowed from Vikner (1992:291), illustrates scrambling (i.e., A-bar movement) in German.

- (21) Er wird [die Bücher_i [ohne Zweifel [alle_i [nicht [lesen]]]]]].
 he will the books without doubt all not read
 ‘Without a doubt, he will not read all the books.’

The scrambled object in (21) strands a quantifier between two adverbials following initial object shift (i.e., A-movement) to that position.

-
- (i) specific (or referential): ‘A friend of mine is a paleontologist.’;
 (ii) partitive: ‘Two fishes are black.’;
 (iii) generic: ‘Fishes are vertebrae.’
 (iv) generic collective: ‘Three fossils are more expensive than two.’.

The author further argues that in Dutch raising an object into the position before an adverb (i.e., clause-medially) triggers all possible strong readings.

As a result of the specificity constraint on object raising to argumental positions in Germanic (i.e., object shift), object raising has often been analysed as an instance of semantically driven movement (cf. Diesing 1992, de Hoop 1996, among others). These analyses view object shift as a result of interpretation conditions applying in the syntax-semantics mapping which induce movement of NPs with an intrinsic or acquired definite/strong/specific interpretation out of the nuclear scope (i.e., the VP). De Hoop (1996:134) proposes an analysis in which NP interpretation is associated with Case type. Structural Case is divided as in (22);

- (22) (i) WEAK Case - the default structural Case, assigned at D-structure in a specific syntactic configuration and dependent upon verb-adjacency;
- (ii) STRONG Case - the structural Case assigned at S-structure and acquired as a result of movement (i.e. DP raising).

Under this analysis, NPs assigned weak Case will have a WEAK semantic interpretation and will reside within the VP throughout the derivation. NPs with a strong Case will raise (out of the VP to AGRO) and will bear a STRONG reading (i.e. referential, partitive, generic, and generic collective). In this system, Case is viewed as a ‘type-shifter’, since, by definition, NPs that raise out of their base-generated position will be interpreted as semantically strong. Mahajan (1991) also suggests there is a link between object specificity and structural Case. Due to the fact that AGR is pronominal (and thus specific), the author argues that “only specific NPs can (and must) be structurally Case marked by AGR. Non-specific NPs must receive structural case in some other manner.” (1991: 265).

In section 3.1., we showed that object raising in Romanian involves A-movement, due to lack of weak crossover effects, changing of binding interactions and availability of raising quantified object NPs. Consequently, VOS structures in Romanian involve object shift, rather

than object scrambling. However, clause-medial object raising in Romanian is not as restricted as in Germanic, since there is no definiteness requirement involved (see section 2). Both definite and indefinite objects can yield the VOS word order. While it is true that object raising in Romanian VOS constructions entails de-focusing of the object, a strong, topical interpretation (see footnote 14) is neither required nor acquired by indefinite objects. What is crucial is that the raised object be understood as part of the presupposition together with the verb; it cannot be understood as topical in and of itself. In order for an indefinite object to be interpreted as topical, it has to raise to a preverbal position, whereby it yields an OV(S) word order. Needless to say, an analysis of Romanian OV(S) structures and preverbal object raising is beyond the scope of this article. However, since the distinction is non-trivial and bears interestingly on the Germanic data, we illustrate the contrast in (23) for clarification.

(23) a. VOS in the embedded clause:

Mioara nu avea deloc rochite,
 Mioara not had at all dresses.DIM.,
 [asa că i-a cusut o rochită mama].
 [so that CL.3SG.DAT.-AUX.3SG sewn a dress.DIM mother-the]
 ‘Mioara didn’t have any dresses, so mum sewed her one / a dress.’

b. OVS in the embedded clause:

* Mioara nu avea deloc rochite,
 Mioara not had at all dresses.DIM.,
 [asa că o rochită_i i-a cusut t_i mama].
 [so that a dress.DIM_i CL.3SG.DAT.-AUX.3SG sewn t_i mother-the]
 ‘Mioara didn’t have any dresses, so mum sewed her a dress.’

- c. OVS in the embedded clause:
 Mioara are două rochite,
 Mioara has two dresses.DIM.,
 [asa că o rochită_i i-a cusut t_i mama].
 [so that a dress.DIM_i CL.3SG.DAT.-AUX.3SG sewn t_i mother-the]
 ‘Mioara has two dresses, so mum must have sewn one of them.’

In (23a) the indefinite object ‘o rochită’/‘a dress’ is understood as part of the presupposed act of sewing dresses. This event is potentially presupposed, being entailed by Maria’s need for dresses (it is ‘inferentially’ accessible in Lambrecht’s 1994 terms). The entailment follows from the statement in the main clause: ‘Mary didn’t have any dresses.’. Consequently, the indefinite object ‘o rochită’/‘a dress’ can raise into the presupposition, deriving VOS word order, with the effect of focusing the subject.¹⁵ The raised indefinite object does not acquire a strong reading in (23a) since such an interpretation is not made available by previous discourse (i.e., the preceding main clause). That this is indeed the case, is made clear by the ungrammaticality of (23b). As mentioned above, in Romanian OV structures, the raised object has to be definite or interpretable as specific, on a par with the object shift structures in Germanic.¹⁶ Since a strong, topical interpretation is unavailable for the embedded object in (23b), the sentence is ungrammatical. On the other hand, preverbal object raising is grammatical in (23c), since, in this case, the embedded object is understood as specific information (partitive reading), in the sense that it refers to a

¹⁵ Notice that the unmarked VSO word order is also grammatical in (23a).

- (i) Mioara nu avea deloc rochite,
 Mioara not had at all dresses.DIM.,
 [asa că i-a cusut mama o rochită].
 [so that her.DAT -AUX.3SG sewn mother-the a dress.DIM]
 ‘Mioara didn’t have any dresses, so mum sewed her a dress.’

In this case, both the object and the subject are understood as rhematic.

previously established referent (i.e., the set of two dresses). The strong interpretation of the embedded object is made available by the information provided in the main clause (i.e., ‘Mary has two dresses’).

To conclude, the examples in (23) illustrate two types of object raising in Romanian, sensitive to different interpretation requirements. On the one hand, the VOS construction under discussion, in which the raised object is not under any specificity constraints, but simply interpreted as de-focused and as part of the presupposition. On the other hand, raising that yields OVS structures in Romanian, in which the moved object needs to be interpretable as definite or strong, in a manner similar to clause-medial object raising in Germanic. While nothing more will be said about preverbal object raising in Romanian, we return to our discussion of VOS constructions.

4.2. The nature and locus of object movement in Romanian VOS constructions

Let us summarize our findings so far. Object raising in Romanian VOS constructions occurs prior to Spell-Out to an L-related position (since binding is affected and there are no weak crossover effects). The object raises to a position above the position in which the subject is merged. While this type of object movement is similar in spirit to object shift in Germanic, being clause-medial and to an argumental position, it is different from the former in that it does not impose any definiteness/specificity constraints on the raised NP. VOS constructions seem to be triggered in Romanian by a requirement to de-focus the object, in favour of the subject, stranded quantifier, or other VP-internal material left in-situ. Since no definite or specific constraint is associated with the raised object in Romanian VOS constructions, the question that immediately begs itself whether there is any evidence for analysing object raising as movement to Spec,AgrOP. As we

¹⁶ Preverbal object NPs can be indefinite provided they are understood as contrastive focus.

mentioned above, such an analysis is standardly used by a number of authors which relate Case checking with a strong interpretation of the raised object (de Hoop 1996, Mahajan 1991, Collins and Thráinsson 1993, among others).¹⁷

We further argue that there is no evidence in Romanian to suggest that movement of the raised objects in VOS constructions is to Spec,AgrOP, or indeed to any functional projection outside the highest predicate.¹⁸ By looking at the interaction between negative and VP-adjoined adverbs with the raised object NP, we can only conclude that movement is above the subject NP but predicate internal. Consider the examples provided in (24)-(27) below.

- (24) a. ? N-a semnat [contracte [niciodatã domnul director t_v t_o]].
 not-AUX.3SG. signed contracts never mister-the director
- b. N-a semnat [niciodatã [contracte domnul director t_v t_o]].
 not-AUX.3SG. signed never contracts mister-the director
 ‘The manager has never signed contracts.’
- (25) a. ? Nu le dã [bomboane [deloc vecina t_v t_o]].
 not them.ACC. gives sweets at all neighbour-the
- b. Nu le dã [deloc [bomboane vecina t_v t_o]].
 not them.ACC. gives at all sweets neighbour-the
 ‘The neighbour never gives them sweets.’
- (26) a. ? Si-au luat [masinã [precis amicii mei. t_v t_o]]
 REFL.-AUX.3PL. bought car for sure friends-the mine
- b. Si-au luat [precis [masinã amicii mei t_v t_o]].
 REFL.-AUX.3PL. bought for sure car friends-the mine
 ‘My friends have certainly bought a car.’

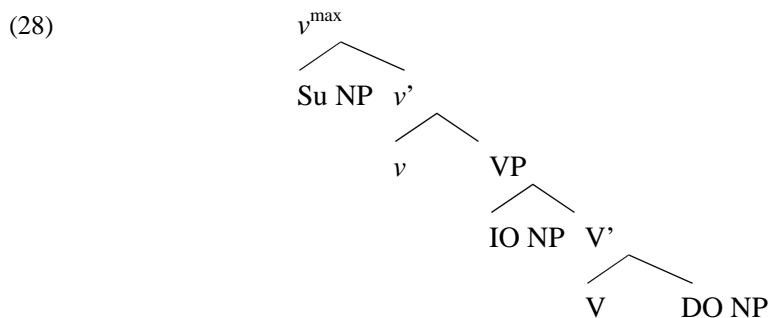
¹⁷ Though see Chomsky (1995) for a different analysis.

¹⁸ In Alboiu (1998) we had argued for object raising to Spec,AgrOP. However, in keeping with recent theoretical developments and new empirical support, we restate AgrO as v°.

- (27) a. ? Le-a citit[o poezie [adesea însusi profesorul t_v t_o]].
 them.DAT.-AUX.3SG read a poem often EMPH profesor-the
- b. Le-a citit[adesea [o poezie însusi profesorul t_v t_o]].
 Them.DAT.-AUX.3SG read often a poem EMPH profesor-the
 ‘The professor himself has often read them a poem.’

The examples in (24)-(27) show that negative and VP-adverbials can both precede and follow the raised object. While both pairs of examples are grammatical, the (a) versions, with object raising across the adverbials, are perceived as less natural, even awkward. Interestingly however, the (a) examples become natural once we interpret the adverbial as rhematically focused, together with the subject. Consequently, we take it that the object need raise only across the focused material (usually, the subject NP), while presumably still remaining within the predicate (since it does not always appear to the left of the adverbials).

In order to be able to account for the above language-specific idiosyncrasies related to object raising in VOS structures, we propose an analysis along the lines of Chomsky (1995) and subsequent work. Chomsky (1995), following Larson (1988), suggests for transitive predicates the structure in (15), repeated here as (28);



The predicate consists of two VP-shells, the lower VP with a direct object merged as a complement, and (possibly) an indirect object merged as its specifier, and the higher VP, the light verb \underline{v} , with the lower VP as its complement, and the subject NP merged in its specifier position. Moreover, a crucial assumption in Minimalism is that heads can have multiple specifiers.

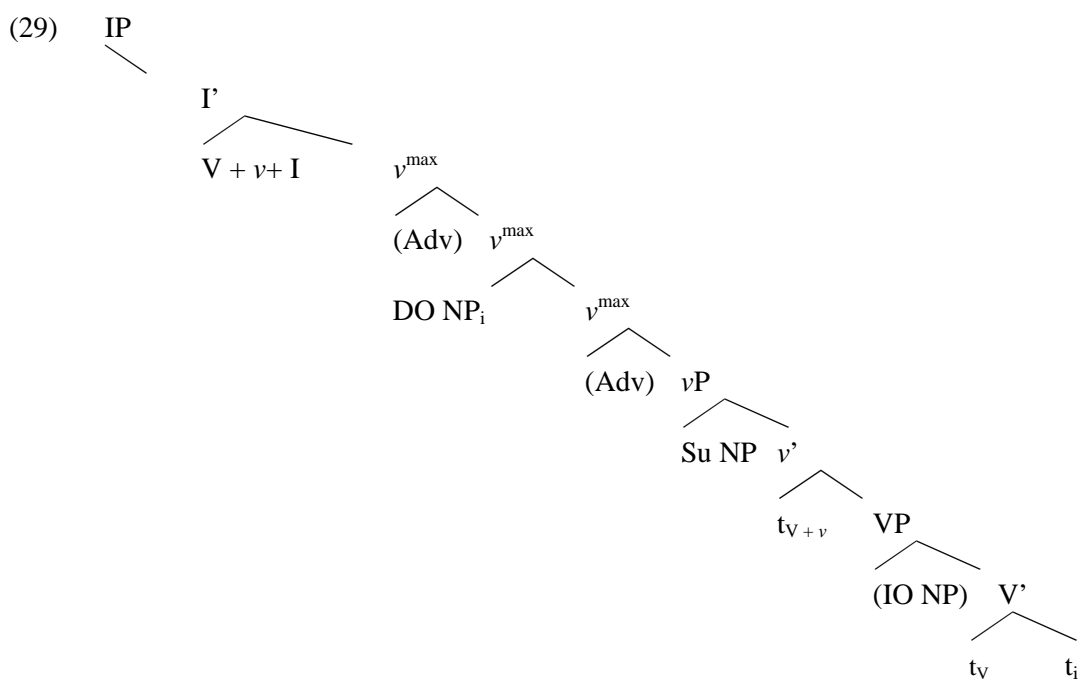
Let us assume that in Romanian VOS constructions, the light verb \underline{v} that heads the transitive construction is assigned a strong N-feature as it is drawn from the lexicon and placed in the numeration.¹⁹ Let us further assume that this choice is forced whenever the direct object NP (residing in the lower VP) needs to be interpreted within the presupposition (i.e., de-focused). Such a strong feature will require overt substitution in the ‘outer Spec’ of the light verb \underline{v} BEFORE a higher category is created, or the derivation will crash. Since Move is costlier than Merge, the subject NP will be merged in the Spec of the light verb \underline{v} prior to object raising. However, the subject NP will not be able to check the light verb’s strong N-feature, since it is not in a licit checking relation.²⁰ Consequently, in structures involving clause-medial object shift in Romanian, the object NP will raise to the outer-Spec to check the light verb’s strong N-feature. Raising of the object NP forms a non-trivial chain (OB, t) which is in the checking domain of \underline{v} . The strong N-feature is thus checked and the derivation can proceed.

Such an analysis can also account for the two types of adverb placement illustrated in (24)-(27). Since the adverbs precede the subject NP in both cases, we assume they are adjoined to

¹⁹ Chomsky (1995) calls this a strong ‘D-feature’, though he does note that the more neutral strong [nominal] feature might be preferable. We choose to refer to it as a strong N-feature, in view of the fact that in Romanian it does not attract exclusive raising of definite noun phrases.

²⁰ Chomsky (1995) stipulates a requirement whereby a non-trivial chain is essential for feature checking. Since the subject NP in Spec, \underline{v} does not head a non-trivial chain, it will be unable to check the strong N-feature on the light verb.

the higher VP, namely \underline{v}^{\max} . When the adverbial needs to be interpreted as part of the focus, it will be merged prior to object raising, yielding the word order, VOAvS. Otherwise, it will be merged after the object NP checks the strong N-feature on the light verb, yielding the word order VAvOS, perceived as less awkward. Both options are permitted, since adjunction does not create a higher category, nor does it check the strong N-feature on the light verb \underline{v} . The landing site of the raised object in Romanian VOS constructions is represented in (29) below, with the adverbials optionally present preceding or following the object.



The analysis presented above does not rely on Case as the trigger of movement in Romanian object raising structures. This is desirable on two grounds. First, movement for Case has been assumed to be accompanied by an interpretational shift, from weak to strong, of the moved object NP (see de Hoop 1996, Mahajan 1991). Second, current research (Bittner and Hale 1996, Chomsky 1998) inclines to view Case as a syntactic feature that is incapable of inducing

movement, but that gets assigned/checked as a result of structural factors that exist independently of Case itself. Consequently, the shift, from focused to de-focused that accompanies the object NP when it raises from VSO to VOS in Romanian, can be interpreted as the result of movement out of the lower VP (namely, out of its base-generated position).

The trigger for object raising is the strong N-feature on the light verb \bar{v} . Informally, the object raises as a consequence of the fact that Romanian can tailor its sentences to encode information structure, thus allowing for interpretation with minimal processing effort. NP objects that are identifiable (in the sense of Lambrecht 1994), be they textually, situationally, or inferentially accessible, will raise out of the lower VP, thus escaping a rhematic interpretation. Since it can be accessible situationally or inferentially, the raised object need not be marked as definite. Due to object raising from VSO to VOS, the subject NP acquires maximal rhematic prominence, being the sole element in focus.

5. Conclusion

In this paper we have argued for an object raising analysis in Romanian VOS constructions. The object NP raises across the postverbal subject left-in-situ, irrespective of whether it is definite/indefinite. The reversal of binding interactions between the subject and the object NP, lack of weak crossover effects, as well as stranded quantifiers support such an analysis, while simultaneously showing that clause-medial object movement forms an A-chain. Consequently, Romanian VOS constructions exhibit object shift rather than object scrambling. If left unaccented, the raised object NP is interpreted as part of the presupposition, being in effect, de-focused. At the same time, whatever material is left in-situ in the predicate acquires maximal focus/rhematic prominence as a result of object raising.

The implications of an object raising analysis in Romanian VOS constructions is of interesting theoretical import in view of cross-linguistic particulars of object shift. It was shown that, in Germanic, object shift is constrained by a definiteness effect or a strong interpretation of the IP-internal object NP, as well as by movement across VP material (floated quantifiers or adverbials). In Romanian VOS constructions such interpretational effects are not present, unless the object NP is a priori marked as definite. We have argued that strong (discourse-linked) interpretations are limited to indefinite objects in OVS word order sequences, not analysed in any detail here.

We have also shown that the Romanian object NP can raise both to the left and to the right of VP-adverbials in VOS constructions. Due to these language particular idiosyncrasies, we concluded that we cannot analyse movement of clause-medial objects in Romanian as an instance of raising to [Spec,AgrOP]. Instead, we offered an analysis along Minimalist lines which can felicitously account for variations in adverb placement with VOS word orders. Following Chomsky (1995), we view transitive constructions as consisting of a VP-shell, accommodating a lower VP and a light verb \bar{v} . In VOS constructions, the light verb has strong N-features which attract object raising. VP-adverbs can be adjoined either preceding or following object movement since adjunction does not form a higher category (which is illicit prior to checking of strong features). The locus of adverbial VP-adjunction will be determined by information structure. The adverbial will only follow the raised object when it needs to be interpreted as part of the focus together with the subject NP.

This study highlights an important theoretical issue in terms of NP movement more generally. While, NPs are usually assumed to undergo A-movement for the purposes of Case checking, we have shown, that in Romanian VOS constructions, object NPs undergo A-movement in order to escape the domain of presentational focus. These results bear interestingly

on the relatively unexplored relationship between syntax and sentence-pragmatics and invite further cross-linguistic research.

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