

Interpolation in Old Romanian and Istro-Romanian

Background A well-known characteristic of the older stages of the Romance languages is the discontiguity of the elements of the verbal cluster, manifested as: (A) [pronominal clitic – XP – verb] / (B) [(pronominal clitic –) auxiliary verb – XP – lexical verb]. The phenomenon was discussed for the first time by philologist W.H. Chénery (cf. Poole 2007) with reference to Old Spanish under the label *interpolation*; subsequent research showed that interpolation phenomena exist in most of the other Old Romance varieties, and various other terms (which also reflect to a certain degree the analyses put forward) have been employed: (IP)-scrambling, dislocation of auxiliary-verb / clitic-verb structures, dislocation of the verbal nexus, etc.

Aim of the paper The aim of the paper is twofold, descriptive and explanatory.

Descriptively, we endeavour to delineate the extension of the phenomenon on the basis of a representative Old Romanian and (contemporary) Istro-Romanian corpus.

With reference to Old Romanian (centuries 16–18), some researchers consider that interpolation phenomena are due to contact with Old Church Slavonic (and Hungarian) (see Stan 2013 and references therein), while others consider that interpolation is very rare and hence not representative for the syntax of Old Romanian (Hill and Alboiu 2016). Our corpus analysis will invalidate both points of view: interpolation will be shown not to result from language contact (it is attested in structures in which a foreign, Slavonic or Hungarian, model is not available), but rather has a common Romance source (it is attested in many other old Romance varieties, see Martins 2002, Poole 2007, Poletto 2014, Sitaridou 2014, Dragomirescu 2015); interpolation is a representative phenomenon of Old Romanian, richly attested in original texts and in translations (Dragomirescu 2013).

On the other hand, little is known about interpolation in Istro-Romanian (cf. Zegrean 2012), hence one of the goals of the present paper is provide a better understanding of the extension of this phenomenon in this Romance variety.

Preliminary data assessment Old Romanian features both types of interpolated structures: (A) pronominal clitic – XP – verb (1a,c) and (B) auxiliary verb – XP – lexical verb (1b,d); interpolation is not limited to finite forms (cf. (1c)), and multiple constituents may intervene within the cluster (1d). On the other hand, the preliminary assessment of the data indicates that (contemporary) Istro-Romanian possesses only interpolation of type (B) auxiliary verb – XP – lexical verb (2).

(1) Old Romanian

- a. *aşa* *ne* *tare pedepseş<ti>* (FT.1571–5: 3^v)
like.this CL.ACC.1PL hard punish.PRES.2PL
'you punish us hard'
- b. *până vor* *mai bine* *înţelege* *creştinii* (CM.1567: 263^r)
until AUX.FUT.3PL more well understand.INF Christians
'until the Christians will understand better'
- c. *aşa* *fu* *a* *se* *toţi mântui* (CV.1563–83: 48^r)
like.this be.PS.3SG A_{INF} CL.REFL.3PL all redeem.INF
'and it happened that they all got redeemed'
- d. *deaca nu va* *omul pre ceastă lume, în viaţa sa,* *purta grije*
if not AUX.FUT.3SG man on this world in life.DEF his take.INF care
pre ispăşenia *sufletului* *său* (CC¹.1567: 241^r)
for redemption.DEF soul.DEF.GEN his
'if the man won't take care of the redemption of his soul in this world'

(2) Istro-Romanian

- a. *Ier-am* *mușat* *cantat* (in Zegrean 2012)
 yesterday=AUX.PC.1SG beautifully sung
 ‘Yesterday I sang beautifully’
- b. *Ie* *n-a* *cea nicad* *vezut* (DR, 281)
 and not-AUX.PERF never see.PPLE
 ‘And he never saw (something like this)’
- c. *Pac a* *svachea* *muncat* *ân camere* (DR, 281)
 then aux.perf wedding eat.PPLE in rooms
 ‘Then the participants to the wedding have eaten in the rooms’

Analysis Starting from the results on Old Romanian presented in Dragomirescu (2013, 2015) and Nicolae (2015), we show that Old Romanian interpolation is best analysed as involving low verb movement (the lexical verb does not raise out of the Voice-*v*P domain in interpolated structures) and *Long Distance Agree* between the verb the functional heads in the IP-domain. Facts pertaining to the internal structure of the verbal cluster showing interpolation and the distribution of interpolated constituents lead to this conclusion: the verb is placed to the **right** of *v*P-edge adverbials (Cinque 1999) (1a,b) and of subject-floating quantifiers (1c); very rarely, ellipsis licensed by non-passive auxiliaries is attested in Old Romanian (just like in low verb movement languages like English). The interpolation of multiple constituents will be analysed with the help of Belletti's (2004) *low IP area* (i.e. the periphery of the *v** phase in more recent analyses). An analysis along these lines unequivocally leads to the conclusion that (at least in Old Romanian) interpolation is a residue of an older stage in which V-to-I movement is not obligatory (the fact that V-to-I movement is not available in Latin and gradually emerges in the transition from Latin to Romance is well-known, cf. Ledgeway 2012); previous accounts invoked in analyses of other old Romance languages (e.g. C-oriented clitics, cf. Rivero 1997, Poole 2007; multiple specifiers of IP-domain functional heads, Martins 2002) may be thus discarded.

The syntactic diagnostics employed for the analysis of Old Romanian will be extended to Istro-Romanian; an important question we aim to address is whether interpolation in Istro-Romanian may be given a similar analysis.

References

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