CASE MARKING IN ISTRO-ROMANIAN

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ABSTRACT. *Case Marking in Istro-Romanian*. This paper focuses on the key elements of case marking in Istro-Romanian (IR). Similar to Daco-Romanian, IR has a four-case system (nominative, accusative, genitive, dative), added by the vocative (not to be dealt with specifically in this paper). As a member of the so-called Balkan Sprachbund, IR nouns oppose nominative-accusative to genitive-dative. Pronouns, on the other hand, show a full paradigm, with specific forms for each case (in line with all other Eastern Romance varieties). For the oblique, IR has both stressed/strong and non-stressed/clitic forms, however they have a different distribution than in standard and sub-standard Daco-Romanian. Differential object marking is virtually unheard of (with minor cases in northern IR). Indirect object doubling is rare(r), with possibly different pragmatic values than in Daco-Romanian.

Keywords: Istro-Romanian morphology, IR word order, morphosyntactic innovations, Eastern Romance varieties.

REZUMAT. *Marcarea cazuală în istroromână*. Lucrarea de față se axează pe elementele-cheie ale marcării cazuale în istroromână (IR). La fel ca în dacoromână, IR are patru cazuri (nominativ, acuzativ, genitiv, dativ), la care se adaugă vocativul (de care nu ne vom ocupa în mod special aici). Similar situației din alte varietăți ale uniunii lingvistice balcanice, substantivele din IR opun nominativul și acuzativul genitivului și dativului. Pe de altă parte, pronumele au o paradigmă completă, cu forme specifice pentru fiecare caz (la fel ca în celelalte varietăți romanice orientale). Pentru cazurile oblice, IR are atât forme accentuate/tari, cât și forme neaccentuate/clitice, care au totuși o distribuție diferită față de româna standard și substandard. Marcarea diferențiată a obiectului direct este practic necunoscută în IR (cu mici excepții în varietatea din nord). Dublarea obiectului indirect este (mai) rară, posibil cu valori pragmatice diferite de dacoromână.

Cuvinte-cheie: morfologie istroromână, topică istroromână, inovații morfosintactice, varietăți romanice orientale.

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1. Introduction

With 500 people at most speaking it today, Istro-Romanian (hereinafter referred to as IR) is a severely endangered Eastern Romance variety spoken in two areas in today's Croatia, to the north (the village of Žejane) and south (villages and hamlets around Šušnjevica) of Monte Maggiore (Učka in Croatian). It has never been standardized or used in any public institutions. Istro-Romanians live in a multiethnic and multilingual environment, while language contact with Croatian and, in earlier stages, with Italian and partly Slovenian is admitted; see Caragiu Marioțeanu *et alii* (1977: 213–215), Kovačec (1984: 550–554), Vrzić and Singler (2016: 51).

This paper is part of a larger project, called *Istro-Romanian and Istro-Romanians. Legacy and Heritage*, meant to provide a descriptive account of Istro-Romanian, as spoken today in Croatia and in diaspora, and Istro-Romanians, the people who speak this language, expanding on several dimensions, such as linguistics, sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics, language contact, and multiculturalism. The main objective of this project is to take a closer look at the Istro-Romanian vocabulary and morphosyntax (including clausal structure). The choice for "legacy" and "heritage" for the subtitle of our project does not simply put together two synonymous concepts. Instead, what we mean by them is two separate things: *legacy* means our analysis will take into account both sociolinguistic and psycholinguistic perspectives, i.e. what Istro-Romanians mean (linguistically) to the communities they live in; and *heritage* – à la Kelleher (2010) – implies that our study will also touch upon the language spoken by the children of 'native' Istro-Romanians (of Croatia) that were born abroad or left their country at a very young age.

Typologically, Istro-Romanian is an Eastern Romance variety, alongside Daco-Romanian, Aromanian and Megleno-Romanian. I will not go into the language-dialect dispute, as it is beyond the purposes of my paper; but see the literature: in favour of IR as a (historical) dialect: Caragiu Marioțeanu *et alii* (1977), Rusu (1984); in favour of IR as a separate language: Coteanu (1957: 1958), Vrzić and Singler (2016), Vrzić (2019).

2. Cases in Istro-Romanian

This article will try to formulate answers to three main questions:
I. Is IR nominal morphology different from standard and/or regional Daco-Romanian?
II. Does IR nominal morphology pattern with any other Romance variety?
III. What are (if any) the innovations of IR case marking?

First, let us survey the literature. In broader terms, IR is part of the so-called Balkan Sprachbund and patterns with other Eastern Romance varieties with respect to opposing cases, i.e. nominative-accusative vs dative-genitive, although Caragiu-Marioțeanu, Giosu, Ionescu-Ruxăndoiu, Todoran (hereinafter simply *Manual*) (1977: 219) claim that case oppositions have almost entirely disappeared. The vocative has forms of its own, but the nominative can be equally used with the same function (similar to standard and regional Daco-Romanian). The case system of pronouns is richer than the noun system.

For nouns, the nominative and accusative have the same morphology. Cases of ambiguity may occur in an SVO configuration, because the IR word order is rather unpredictable. The literature usually describes the genitive and the dative together (of course, differentiating between specific syntactic uses). Kovačec (1984: 567–70) distinguishes an analytical genitive-dative in the south, from a both synthetic and analytic genitive-dative in the north (see also a description in Geană 2018).

In the north, all feminine nouns switch to -*e* in the genitive-dative if no definite article in postposition is used; in the singular, IR uses: proclitic *lu* for masculine nouns, *le* for feminine nouns, and rarer enclitic -*lui*, -*l'ei*; in the plural: -*lor* for all genders. If the noun is preceded by an adjective or an adjective is nominalized, then *a* is used to mark the dative and genitive for all persons and genders (Kovaceč 1984: 568).

Case oppositions have almost completely disappeared (*Manual*: 219), with the "apparent" exception of Žejane, opposing -*a* in N/ACC to -*e* in D/G. *lu* is the definite article for the genitive and dative of all nouns for both numbers and genders. However, when describing the definite articles, they are told to be preponderantly proclitic in the D/G singular and plural. *Manual* (220) shows that there are a series of articles that vary in gender, while the entire phrase being preceded by an invariable *a* (more frequent in northern IR), as in Aromanian (AR). The enclitic article in the D/G is very uncommon. No specific notes are given on the use of personal pronouns in D/G.

For pronouns, cf. Kovačec (1984: 568), stressed (*miie* 'me.DAT', *lor* 'them.DAT') and non-stressed dative clitics (*m* 'me.CL.DAT', *l'* 'them.CL.DAT') appear to be similar to standard Romanian (*mie* 'me.DAT', *lor* 'them.DAT' vs *mi* 'me.CL.DAT', *le* 'them.CL.DAT'), but with a different distribution (see section §5 below).

3. The Nominative

3.1. The default case for both nouns and pronouns is the nominative. When it comes to nouns, a vital role is played by the presence of a determiner, often a definite or an indefinite article. The definite article is enclitic in the nominative-accusative (but tends to be proclitic in genitive-dative, see section §3 below), whereas the indefinite is proclitic. This paper will focus more on the use

of the definite article. In IR, nouns are masculine, feminine, or neuter. Neuter nouns are rarer and sometimes with a different distribution than in Daco-Romanian[2].

The Istro-Romanian definite article, whose forms are shown below in Table 1, has mostly the same forms and generally functions as its Daco-Romanian counterpart[3] (but see discussion below on the neutralization of definite/bare/ redundant uses). In IR, the definite article has the following forms (cf. Kovačec 1984: 566–569, Sârbu and Frățilă 1998: 22–23):

Table 1. The IR definite article forms in the nominative and the accusative

Case	Gender	Singular	Plural
N≡ACC	M	**-u, (-u), -le**	**-i, -le**[4]
N≡ACC	F	**-a, -vu**[5]	**-le**

In contrast with standard (cf. 1'), but in line with regional and sub-standard Daco-Romanian (cf. 1"), the IR masculine singular definite article form for nouns ending in a consonant is *-u*:

(1)　*Gospodăru*　　*verit-a*　　　　　　　　*năzat*
　　　gentleman.DEF　come.PPLE=have.AUX.3.SG　back
　　　"The gentleman came back" (TC 86)
(1')　*Gospodarul*　　*a*　　　　　*venit*　　*înapoi*
(1")　*Gospodaru*　　*a*　　　　　*venit*　　*înapoi*
　　　gentleman.DEF　have.AUX.3.SG　come.PPLE　back

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[2] Additionally, for adjectives, IR developed a special form ending in *-o* (following a Croatian pattern), used predicatively, adverbially (*pomalo*) or with a non-specific value (*slåbo*):
Ŭăta vote viḱę　　[...]　　*néca*　　*gonę*　　　　　*pomalo*
other time scream.3.SG.PAST　so.that　run.3.PS.SG　　slowly
che　*rę*　　　　　　*putę*　　*fi*　　*țeva*　　　　*slåbo* (TC 7)
that　AUX.3.SG.COND.PS　can.INF　be.INF　something　　bad
"Other time she screamed he should run slowly, as something bad might occur"

[3] For readers not thoroughly familiar with Daco-Romanian definite articles in the nominative and the accusative: *-(u)l/-le* for masculine and neuter singular, *-a /-ua* for feminine singular, *-i* for masculine plural, *-le* for feminine and neuter plural. Also, the Eastern Romance definite article is an affix, so cases are not realized like in Latin, for example, rather the definite article is the one that inflects for case.

[4] The literature notes – cf., among others, Sârbu (2016: 111–112), Kovačec (1984: 561) – the presence (and generalization) of the *-ure* plural desinence for masculine nouns in the IR variety spoken in Žejane. These nouns would use the *-le* definite article (typically reserved for plural feminine and neuter nouns), which is not to be found for other masculine nouns (nor in the IR varieties spoken in the south): *fețorurle* (son.PL.DEF), *fraturle* (brother.PL.DEF), *bovurle* (bull.PL.DEF). Unfortunately, the corpus we used returned zero occurrences of this sort.

[5] An interesting fact is an innovation in the singular feminine nouns like *stę* 'star', *vițę* 'calf.F', becoming with a definite article *stevu* (star.DEF), *vițevu* (calf.F.DEF) (Sârbu 2016: 114), following a masculine pattern (*bo* 'bull' – *bovu* 'bull.DEF', with *v* occurring for euphonic and syllable structure reasons). Unfortunately, other than the mentions in the literature, we could not find any proper examples in the corpus.

While IR masculine nouns ending in a consonant in the singular do not follow the standard Daco-Romanian pattern[6] of palatalizing the final consonant to form the plural (alongside other phonological changes as well, cf. *ŭomir* 'people' or *betăr* 'old.men') (cf. 2), the occurrence of -*i* with plural masculine nouns is always the centre of the syllable it occurs in and a sign of the presence of the definite article (cf. 2'):

(2)   *Ciuda*   *ŭomir,*   *jensche,* *betăr*   *şi*   *băbe*
      many   men   women old.men and   old.women
      sapăt-av (TC 12)
      dig.PPLE=have.AUX.3.PL
      "A lot of men and women, old men and old women started digging"

(2') *Toţ*   *ŭomiri*   *căntăt-a*   *de mare vesel'e*
      all   people.DEF   sing.PPLE=have.AUX.3.PL   of great joy
      "Everybody was singing with great joy" (TC 15)

With some adjectives, especially with *măre* 'big', the use of the definite article, mostly when the adjective is placed before the noun, is redundant, but not grammaticalized (cf. the co-occurrence of the indefinite article *ăn* 'a' and -*le* 'the' in (3), and of the prenominal demonstrative *čel'i* 'those' and -*le* 'the' in (4)):

(3)   *Fost-a*   *ăn*   *mărle*   *stup* (TC 130)
      be.PPLE=have.AUX.3.SG   INDEF big.DEF   beehive
      "There was a big beehive"

(4)   *Čel'i*   *măi*   *mărle-s*   *nuč* (SF 168)
      those   more   big.DEF.F.PL=are walnuts
      "Those are the biggest walnuts"

Compare with (5), whereby the definite article -*le* is missing (and, for that matter, even the subject noun in this example is bare; this is however rare even in IR, where the use of the article – and of determiners, in general – appears to behave rather chaotically):

(5)   *Iuva-i*   *plamnic*   *măi*   *măre* (SF 250)
      where=is   flame   more   big
      "Where the flame is bigger"

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[6] For example, in Daco-Romanian *pom* '(fruit)tree' has the plural *pomi*, pronounced in one syllable. The plural with a definite article is written *pomii* and it is always pronounced in two syllables (either [po mi] or [po mij] depending on the area or register). In IR, in many cases the singular-plural opposition for bare nouns is neutralized, e.g. *poştar* 'postman', *poştar* 'postmen'; the context or the use of the definite removes ambiguity: *poştaru* 'postman.DEF' vs *poştari* 'postmen.DEF'.

With regard to word order, nominatives do not seem to exhibit any preference whatsoever. In simple tenses, in both main clauses and sub-clauses, subjects can occur in a pre-verbal position (cf. 6a), or a post-verbal position (cf. 6b), with other words frequently occurring between them:

(6) a. *Măia*   *ți-e*   *cu*   *ŭomu*   *l'ei*
     mother.DEF   your.DAT.POS=is with   man.DEF   she.GEN
     "Your mother is with her husband" (TC 104)
     b. *Vire* *sveti* *Petru* *ăn*   *căsę*   (TC 106)
     comes   holy   Peter   in   house
     "Saint Peter comes inside"

In compound tenses, subjects can occur in a pre-verbal position (7), or a post-verbal position (8), and – quite frequently – between an auxiliary and the lexical verb (9a,b):

(7) *Boris*   *mi-åv*   *zis*   (SF 147)
     Boris   me.DAT=have.AUX.3.SG   tell.PPLE
     "Boris told me"
(8) *Ân*   *familie [...] mi-å*   *murit*   *ččåia*
     in   family   me.DAT.POS=have.AUX.3.SG die.PPLE father.DEF
     "In my family, my father died" (SF 151)
(9) a. *O vręme* *când åv*   *ânca*   *Maria*   *Tereziie*   *fost*
     a time   when   have.AUX.3.SG   yet   Maria   Theresa   be.PPLE
     "Once Maria Theresa herself came [to this village]" (SF 45)
     b. *Și cum li*   *s-åv*   *muiåra*
     and how his.DAT.POS   REFL=have.AUX.3.SG   wife.DEF
     kemåt?
     call.PPLE
     "And what was his wife's name?" (SF 48)

3.2. Subject pronouns, on the other hand, are pretty straightforward and similar to Daco-Romanian (or any other Eastern Romance variety) (Kovaceč 1984: 572):

Table 2. Subject pronouns in Istro-Romanian

	1st person	2nd person	3rd person	
			masculine	feminine
singular	i̯o	tu	i̯e	i̯å
plural	noi̯	voi̯	i̯el'	i̯åle

These forms can be found with different spellings and with different phonological realizations. This is expected for more reasons (see §1 and the beginning of §2).

Syntactically, the nominative is employed for subjects, predicatives and appositions. The nominative can also be used as a vocative, although Istro-Romanian does have vocative endings. This is common across Romance.

4. The Accusative

4.1. Differential object marking is supposed to be absent from Istro-Romanian (cf., for example, Kovaceč 1984: 587). This is however not entirely true, as DOM does exist in Istro-Romanian, albeit not generalized, as obvious from the examples below, whereby the direct object is [+Animate] or [+Human]. Its syntactic behaviour is, however, hard to capture, inasmuch as, for example, in (10a,b) the direct object is not doubled, whereas in the examples with pronouns in (11) the direct object is doubled, similar to its Daco-Romanian counterpart (11'). Based on its sporadic use, no general assumptions can be made with regard to the pragmatic or stylistic effect of DOM in Istro-Romanian.

(10) a. *Uåm   ăntrbåt   pre   domnu   che   se*
     have.AUX   ask.PPLE DOM   sir.DEF   that   if
     va   då   cårstu   zalu   ţiåţe
     will.AUX give.INF christening.DEF DAT   father
     "I asked God if he would christen my father" (TC 93)
     b. *N-a   nici   ur   conoscut   pre   ieľ*
     NEG=has.AUX   no   one   know.PPLE   DOM   they.ACC
     "No one knew them" (TC 9)

(11) *Gvårdiia   ľ-a   ucis   pre   ieľ*
     guard.DEF CL.ACC.3PL=has.AUX   kill.PPLE   DOM   they.ACC
     "The guard killed them" (TC 73)

(11')*Gardianul i-a   ucis   pe   ei*
     guard.DEF CL.ACC.3PL=has.AUX   kill.PPLE   DOM   they.ACC

It is worth mentioning again at this point the use of some adjectives in pre-nominal position that can bear a definite article, despite being preceded by a determiner, which normally blocks the multiple articulation:

(12) *Ie a   batut   cu   celå mårle   băt*
     he have.AUX.3.SG beat.PPLE with   that big.DEF   stick
     "He beat [the sword] with that big stick" (TC 123)

Such cases, and even larger contexts where the difference between definite, indefinite or bare use of nouns is neutralized, is explained by Kovaceč (1984: 580) through the strong Croatian influence, as contemporary Croatian does not have articles.

4.2. IR accusative has specific (suppletive) non-clitic forms only for the personal pronoun in the 1st and 2nd person singular. For nouns, as expected across Romance, the same form as the nominative is used (cf. Table 1 above). Pronouns have both a strong or stressed form, and a weak or clitic form. The limit between them is sometimes hard to establish (the opposition is neutralized), with the same pronominal form being employed with both strong and weak functions, even within the same idiolect.

The forms, as identified in the literature (see, among others, Kovaceč 1984: 572), are given below in Table 3. Similarly with the nominative, some forms may show some variation:

Table 3. IR strong pronominal forms

	1st person	2nd person	3rd person masculine	feminine
Singular	**míre**	**tíre**	**i̯e**	**i̯å**
Plural	**nói̯**	**vói̯**	**i̯el**	**i̯åle**

Similar to Daco-Romanian, the 1st (*noi*) and 2nd (*voi*) person plural, and the 3rd person singular (*el/ea* 'he/she') and plural (*ei/ele* 'they.M/they.F') do not have special forms for the accusative, using instead the same form for both the nominative and the accusative (assigned by a preposition, for example *cu* 'with').

Here are some examples with the strong form as a direct object:

(13) a. *N-ŭåi*   *mire*   *scutåt*
NEG=have.AUX.2.SG   me.ACC   listen.PPLE
"You didn't listen to me" (TC 7)
b. *Ver*   *tu*   *mire*   *lå*   *cu*   *tire?*
COND   you.SG   me.ACC   take   with   you.ACC
"Will you take me with you?" (TC 69)
(14) *Av*   *și*   *tire*   *båtu*   *stucit?*
have.AUX.3.SG   and   you.ACC   stick.DEF   hit.PPLE
"Has the stick hit you as well?" (TC 20)

Pronominal clitics, similar to other pronouns, show some degree of phonological variation. They have the following forms (Kovaceč 1984: 572):

Table 4. IR clitic pronominal forms

	1st person	2nd person	3rd person	
			masculine	feminine
Singular	**me**	**te**	**âľ**	**o (vo)**
Plural	**na**	**va**	**âľ**	**le**

Some examples with these pronominal clitics prove that they are in free distribution with their strong counterpart. Compare and contrast (15) and (16) with (13a,b) and (14) above for the use of the IR accusative personal pronoun in the 1st and 2nd person singular:

(15) *Nu   m-a   vrut   ničur   luå*
      NEG   me.ACC=have.AUX.3.SG   want.PPLE   nobody take
      "Nobody wanted to take me" (SF 237)

(16) *Io   t-oi   lå   cu   mire* (TC 69)
      I   you.CL.ACC=FUT   take   with   me.ACC
      "I will take you with me"

Such free distribution never occurs with reflexives. In these cases, only the pronominal clitic is used:

(17) *Zadârjit-m-åm   c-ur   priiatel'*
      spend.PPLE=me.REFL=have.AUX.1.SG   with=INDEF   friend
      "I spent some time with a friend" (SF 225)

(18) *Nu mi   te[7]-åi   vrut   obeči*
      NEG me.DAT you.REFL.ACC=have.AUX.2.SG want.PPLE   promise
      "You didn't want to become my fiancée" (SF 116)

5. The Genitive and the Possessive

5.1. The standard case of a noun complement, the genitive (for nouns and 3rd person personal pronouns) and the possessive (adjective, similar to Daco-Romanian) show a great degree of variation within IR. An excellent recent study and corpus analysis on this subject and also the main source for this section is Dragomirescu and Nicolae (2018: 155–166).

Despite the general claim made in §2 above, namely that IR nouns oppose N≡ACC to G≡D, as one of the key features of the so-called Balkan Sprachbund, slightly different results are obtained when looking at the corpus, and also while carefully going through the literature (see, among others,

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[7] This is a case of clitic climbing. The reflexive is for the verb *obeči* 'promise', under a Croatian influence.

Kovaceč 1984: 567–569, Sârbu and Frățilă 1998: 22). In short, the authors use more caution for this overgeneralization, distinguishing for the genitive and the dative both synthetic and analytical forms, as well as the use of synthetic and/or analytical forms in northern vs southern varieties (as a side note, even in Daco-Romanian the system is not consistent throughout its registers and varieties, showing though a different degree of heterogeneity than in IR). This idea is the starting point for the analysis put forth by Dragomirescu and Nicolae (2018), checking the differences between the way genitives and possessives are used in the north vs the south.

The paradigm of the definite article in the genitive (and dative, for that matter) is given below (cf. Kovačec 1984: 566-569, Sârbu and Frățilă 1998: 22-23):

Table 5. IR definite articles in the genitive and the dative

Gender	Singular	Plural
M	(a) lu(i), (a) -lu(i), a	(a) -lor, a
F	(a) le, lu, -l'ei, a	(a) -lor, a

The proclitic realizations of the masculine definite article in the D≡G show considerable differences between northern and southern varieties. Also, an optional prepositional marker *a* occurs, but in different contexts than in (standard) Daco-Romanian, with again a different productivity between north and south.

Here are some examples with proclitic genitives in (19) and (20); in (21) and (22) the genitive of a noun and a pronoun has an additional prepositional marker *a* (< Lat. *ad* 'to/towards'):

(19) *Čăsta-i* *fil'a* *lu* *frătele* (SF 55)
this.FEM=is daughter.DEF GEN brother.DEF
"This is my brother's daughter"

(20) *Drăga,* *măia* *lu* *Sergio* (SF 55)
Drăga mother.DEF GEN Sergio
"Drăga, Sergio's mother"

(21) *E-a lu* *Sergio* *se* *kiăma* *Iasmina*
and=GEN Sergio REFL.3.SG call.PR.3.SG Iasmina
"And Sergio's [daughter] is called Iasmina" (SF 76)

(22) *Ău* *mes* *ân* *a lui* *păt* *durmit*
have.AUX.3.SG go.PPLE in GEN bed sleep.PPLE
"He went to sleep in his bed" (SF 149)

5.2. The possessive shows a twofold variation (following Dragomirescu and Nicolae 2018: 161–164): on the one hand, in the north it occurs in free variation with or without the prepositional marker *a*, as opposed to the south,

where no *a* possessives have been identified in the corpus; on the other, in both varieties possessives can occur both before and after the noun they determine.

6. The Dative[8]

6.1. With nouns, typical to Eastern Romance, the IR dative is primarily used to express an indirect object (masculine nouns in 23a,b and feminine nouns in 24a,b):

(23) a. *Hlåpeţu*   *lu*   *cesåru ...*   *zice*   *lu*   *gospodåru*
     guard.DEF   GEN   emperor.DEF says   DAT gentleman.DEF
     "The emperor's guard tells the gentleman" (TC 5)
     b. *Ganescu*   *lu*   *Mårtin*
     tell.PS.1SG   DAT   Martin
     "I'm telling Martin" (TC 18)
(24) a. *Cea*   *fraieriţę*   *ganę*   *lu*   *cea*   *båbę*
     DEF   fiancée   told   DAT   DEF   old.lady
     "The fiancée told the old lady" (TC 7)
     b. *Mårtin...*   *ganę*   *lu*   *mul'ęra*
     Martin   told   DAT   woman.DEF
     "Martin told his wife" (TC 19)

Clitic doubling occurs in Istro-Romanian in free variation with contexts where such doubling is absent (cf. also the case of direct objects in §3.1. above). Based on the corpus analysis we have carried out so far, it is not yet clear when and how doubling is obligatory or optional. Compare examples (23a,b) and (24a,b) with (25) and (26) below:

(25) *Guårdiia*   *l'-a*   *dåt*   *cela*
     guard.DEF   CL.DAT.M.3SG=has.AUX   give.PPLE   DEF
     list   *lu*   *cela*   *camaier*
     letter   DAT   DEF   valet
     "The guard gave the letter to the valet" (TC 13)
(26) *L'-av*   *zis*   *lu*   *cela*   *mladichi*
     CL.DAT.M.3SG=has.AUX tell.PPLE   DAT   DEF   young.man
     "He told the young man" (TC 25)

Similar to the morphology of the genitive, the dative can use the prepositional marker *a*, with a higher frequency in northern IR (*Manual* 1977: 220). Here are some examples:

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[8] The section on IR datives is a synthesis of Geană (forthcoming).

(27) a. *Av   zis   a lu   tatu*
they.have.AUX   say.PPLE   DAT   thief.DEF
"They told the thief" (*Manual* 220)
b. *Fiľu   pisę   a lu   ceåia*
son.DEF wrote   DAT   father
"The son told his father" (TC 114)
c. *Atunce av   ceľi   doi   fraț   zis*
then   have.AUX   DEF   two   brothers   tell.PPLE
a lu   Hobo
DAT   Hobo
"Then the two brothers told Hobo" (TC 117)
d. *Zmåiu   a le   måie   spus-a*
dragon.DEF   DAT   mother tell.PPLE=has.AUX
"The dragon told the mother" (TC 129)

Examples (27a–d) above bring IR datives closer to Aromanian (28):

(28) *L'-ḍisirî   al^u   fur^u*
CL.M.DAT.3SG=said   DAT   thief.DEF
'They told the thief' (*Manual* 220)

An innovation in the morphology of IR datives is the use of the *za lu* phrase. For southern Istro-Romanian, datives are additionally marked using a preposition of Croatian origin *za* (normally assigning the accusative). Interesting fact, *za* is used to mark dative-specific contexts in Croatian. Also, in the corpus, there were no IR examples where *za* is used to mark a Recipient/Benefactive. Whenever *za* is used as a dative marker, it never co-occurs with *a*, so the sequences *za a lu* or *a za lu* have not been not attested. We can thus claim that southern IR patterns with sub-standard and regional Romanian (and the vast majority of Romance), where analytical datives are pretty common: *la* and even *lu* – a determiner at origin – for all genders and numbers. Here are some *za lu* datives in IR:

(29) *Va   cumpară   za lu   sę   fiľe*
will.AUX buy.INF   DAT   her   daughter
"She will buy for her daughter" (TC 8)
(30) *Oștaru   nepisęit-a   listu   mușåt*
publican.DEF   write.PPLE=has.AUX   letter.DEF nice
za lu   cesåru
DAT   emperor.DEF
"The publican wrote the nice letter to the emperor" (TC 13)

6.2. With (personal) pronouns, forms can vary considerably (the inventory of allomorphs is very large). However, this also leads to something very interesting, to such a degree that, for southern IR, the corpus reveals –

there is no such mention in the literature, with the exception of the 3ʳᵈ person (Kovačec 1984: 572) – the 1ˢᵗ and 2ⁿᵈ person singular pronominal clitic in the dative (31a,b) to be syncretic with the accusative form (32a,b). Thus, we can talk for southern IR of a full paradigm – albeit definitely not generalized – of syncretic dative-accusative forms:

(31) a. *Pure-m*   *uocľi!*
    put.IMPERATIVE=CL.POS-DAT.1SG   eyes.DEF
    "Put my eyes" (TC 8)
    b. *T-oi*   *spure*   *nuşte*
    you.DAT.2SG=will.AUX   say.INF something
    "I will tell you something" (TC 6)

(32) a. *Preftu*   *m-a-ntrebåt*
    priest.DEF   CL.ACC.1.SG=has.AUX=ask.PPLE
    "The priest asked me" (TC 111)
    b. *Cum t-oi*   *io*   *cea*   *votę*   *conoştę?*
     how you.ACC.2SG=will.AUX I   that   time   know
    "How will I know you then?" (TC 39)

Similar to the allomorphic variation of the personal pronoun in the accusative, as shown in examples (13a,b) and (14) above, southern IR displays a similar variation for the dative[9]:

(33) a. *Miie*   *fost-a*   *sila*
    me.DAT   be.PPLE-has.AUX   hurry.NOM
    "I was in a hurry" (TC 40)
    b. *Nu*   *mń-a*   *niş*   *dåt*
    NEG   me.DAT=has.AUX nothing give.PPLE
    "He gave me nothing" (TC 23)

(34) a. *Fraieriţå*   *lui*   *ganę*
    fiancée.DEF   DAT.3SG told
    "His fiancée told him" (TC 7)
    b. *Ie-ľ*   *ganę*
    he=CL.DAT.3SG   told
    "He told her" (TC 6)

(35) a. *Mårtin*   *le*   *ganę*
    Martin   CL.DAT.3PL   told
    "Martin told them" (TC 18)
    b. *Lucifer*   *ganę*   *lor*
    Lucifer   told   them.DAT
    "Lucifer told them" (TC 19)

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[9] This is impossible in Daco-Romanian, where pronominal clitics are never in free variation with their strong/stressed counterpart.

Doubling with pronouns is also possible:

(36) a. *Čela   mi-e   mǻi   bur   miie*
that   me.CL.DAT=is   more   good   me.DAT
"That one is better for me" (SF 74)
b. *Ie   le   ganę   lor*
he   CL.DAT.3PL   told   them.DAT
"He told them" (TC 89)

7. Conclusions

To answer the questions set in the introduction, *I. Is IR nominal morphology different from standard and/or regional Daco-Romanian?* NO, because IR shows the same genitive-dative syncretism for nouns; has stressed and non-stressed pronominal forms in the accusative and the dative; shows synthetic datives with enclitic articles (rarer). YES, because in the south, stressed and non-stressed forms for dative clitics are at least partly neutralized; the presence of analytical datives with *lu*, *a lu*, *za lu* (some of which are similar to spoken and substandard Romanian).

II. Does IR nominal morphology pattern with any other Romance variety? YES, because at least in part the dative-accusative opposition is neutralized, and IR patterns with Aromanian for *a lu/alᵘ* dative-genitive marking; and NO, because the patterns are inconsistent (explainable given that IR is not standardized).

III. What are (if any) the innovations of IR case marking? Considering the southern IR dative realization with *za lu*, a construction not mentioned in previous literature, the IR case marking proves innovative. At least from the data I had access to, the particularity of the *za lu* dative is unique (and novel) across Romance, in general, and Eastern Romance, in particular (and even across IR varieties), given that a preposition (of Croatian/Slavic origin) combines with a pronominal form (at origin) to mark a dative, whereas in other varieties, for example DR, the dative is formed either synthetically (with an enclitic or proclitic *lui* form), or analytically (substandard) with the preposition *la*, but never combining *la* and *lui*.

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