

An experimental approach to case marking in Romanian elliptical comparatives

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Abstract: The main goal of this paper is to experimentally assess the case marking alternation on the subject remnant in Romanian gapped comparatives, in order to illustrate the limits of introspective informal judgments as the sole source of data and to show the importance of more formal methods, which provide more reliable and richer data. In particular, this study aims to show the role of the second remnant (i.e., the direct object) with respect to the case marking options on the first (pronominal subject) remnant. Crucially, our experimental approach allows us to observe the interaction between the semantic factor of animacy and case marking in Romanian gapped comparatives. In order to account for the gradience observed in our experimental data, we propose an approach based on acceptability rather than grammaticality. From a theoretical perspective, the case alternation on the subject remnant challenges the deletion-based syntactic analysis and argues for a constructionist approach in terms of fragments.

Key words: gapping, comparatives, case marking, animacy, acceptability judgments.