Notes on RE-prefixation in English and Romanian

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1. Introduction

Talmy (1985, 2000) proposed that English and the Romance languages differ in that the latter generally express “path” in verb roots, whereas the former expresses “path” in satellite morphemes such as prepositions.

- English \textit{put} is a suppletive form expressing a “non-directional ‘putting’ notion,” its directional component being “determined completely by the particular Path particle and/or preposition present” (Talmy 1985:71, 2000:51).

- By contrast, Romance languages generally incorporate a directional notion directly into \textit{put} verbs, but are unable to encode “manner” and direction at the same time.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spanish ‘putting’ verbs, differing according to distinctions of Path (A = Agent, F = Figure object, G = Ground object)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A poner F en G</td>
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<tr>
<td>A meter F a G</td>
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<tr>
<td>A subir F a G</td>
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<tr>
<td>A juntar F\textsubscript{1} y F\textsubscript{2}</td>
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<tr>
<td>A quitar F de G</td>
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<tr>
<td>A sacar F de G</td>
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<tr>
<td>A bajar F de G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A separar F\textsubscript{1} y F\textsubscript{2}</td>
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Talmy 2000:52

- Compare also \textit{float} verbs: While the Romanian example in (1) is unambiguously locative, its English counterpart can be interpreted as directional.

\textsuperscript{1} All the Romanian data come from the first author’s native speaker intuitions in consultation with other speakers and the Icelandic data come from the second author’s fieldwork with Icelandic speakers in New York City. Thanks to our informants for their time and energy. In addition, we would like to thank Alec Marantz and the participants of NELS 41 and LSA 2011 for helpful comments. Part of this work was partially supported by the strategic grant POSDRU/89/1.5/S/62259, Project “Applied social, human and political sciences” cofinanced by the European Social Fund within the Sectorial Operational Program Human Resources Development 2007-2013”, obtained by the first author.
(1) a. The bottle is floating under the bridge.  
   (i) The bottle is under the bridge  
   (ii) The bottle is moving towards the bridge, by (the manner of) floating  
   (i) + locative  
   (ii) + directional  

b. Sticla va pluti sub pod.  
   ‘The bottle will float AT/TO a location under the bridge.’

• In this paper, we present novel data from Romanian re- prefixation, arguing that it provides support for a structural difference between certain English and Romanian constructions with put and related verbs:

(2) A repus radioul în funcțiune  
    vs  
    He put the radio into use again’  
(3) Am (*re)pus cartea pe raft.  
    vs  
    have reput book.the on shelf‘  
    ‘I put the book back on the shelf’

(4) He (*re)put the radio into use.  
(5) He (*re)put the book on the shelf

• We show that the contrasts between Romanian (2)-(3), on the one hand, and between Romanian (2) and English (4) necessitate a syntactic, non-lexical approach to both re- prefixation and to Talmý’s distinction between Romance and English “path” incorporation.

Roadmap

(i) Setting the Stage: Re-Prefixation in English/Icelandic/Romania vs French/Italian (Section 2)  
(ii) A Romanian quirk (Section 3)  
(iii) The Analysis (Section 4)
2. **Re-Prefixation in English/Icelandic/Romanian vs French/Italian**

- Romance languages such as French and Italian have been shown to have a *re-* morpheme whose properties differ from English and Romanian *re-* and Icelandic –*endur* in certain dramatic ways.

- English and Romanian *re-* and Icelandic –*endur* cannot attach to psych-predicates (6-7), while Italian *ri-* can (8) (Cardinaletti 2003:8).

(6)  

   a. *This reamazes/reshocks me every time.*  

   b. *Dessi mynd hefur endurhneykslað margar.*  

(7)  

   *Acest film mă re-uimește/re-șochează de fiecare dată.*  

(8)  

   *Questo mi ristupisce ogni volta.*

- In English, Romanian and Icelandic, *re-* cannot attach to auxiliaries (9-10), whereas this is possible in French (11).

(9)  

   a. *John has rebeen seen.*  

   b. *John would rebe right.*  

   c. *Myndin hefur endurverið sínd.*  

   d. *María myndi endurhafa rétt fyrir sér.*

(10)  

   a. *Filmul a re-fost difuzat.*  

   b. *Maria ar fi reavut dreptate.*

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2 In this paper, all Italian data on *ri-* comes from Cardinaletti (2003). The French data on *re-* comes from Sportiche (2008), as well as from Stéphanie Malet (pc), to whom we are grateful.
(11)  a.  Jean a re été vu.
    Jean has been seen

   b.  Marie aurait re eu raison.
    Marie would have reason
    ‘Marie would have been right again.’

   ▶ In English, Icelandic and Romanian, concrete uses of put-type verbs, which take two obligatory internal arguments (a DP and a PP), do not allow re-/endur- (12-13), whereas Italian put-type verbs do (14).

(12)  a.  *John will reput the book on the shelf.
   b.  *John will regive the book to Mary.
   c.  *María ætlar að endurláta bókina þar.
    Mary intends to reput book.the there

(13)  ??/?*Am repus cartea pe raft.
    have reput book.the on shelf
    INTENDED: ‘I put the book back on the shelf.’

(14)  Gianni ha rimesso la palla sullo scaffale.
    Gianni has reput the ball on.the shelf

   ▶ Weshler’s (1989) generalization, in Marantz (2009): English obeys the Sole Complement Generalization (Levin and Rappaport 1986; Marantz 2009; see also Horn 1980).

   o  Re- only attaches to verbs that take one and only one obligatory internal argument. It thus cannot attach to unergative activity verbs (15)

(15)  a.  *John has resnored/reworked.
   o  This rules out small clauses, double complements verbs like ‘put’, etc.
   o  re – thus behaves crucially differently from restitutive again, which is fine in the above constructions³:

³ re- prefixation yields, in most dialects of English, only the restitutive interpretation: the presupposition that the direct object had been in the end state of the accomplishment:

(i) Someone caught the cat, then I recought him (returned the cat to the ‘prisoner’ state)
(ii) The door was built open, then the wind blew it closed. I re-opened the door. (returned door to open –state) (Marantz 2009)
(i) John entered the room for the very first time and saw a folder hanging dangerously over the edge of a table. The folder fell, and John put the folder on the table again/*re-put the folder on the table.

(ii) The first discussion group emptied the tea kettle but re-filled it before they left the room. The new discussants entered and drank the teapot dry again/*redrank the teapot dry.

- Romanian and Icelandic, as the examples above show, seem to obey the Sole Complement Generalization as well. Unergative activity verbs are also ruled out:

(16)  
   a. *Am resforăit.  
        have.1.SG resnored  
   b. Jón hefur endurhrotið.  
        John has resnored

- Italian again seems to differ in this respect, to judge by (17), though the data in Cardinaletti (2003) does not provide an obvious minimal pair.

(17) Mi piace ritradurre.  
    [it] to-me pleases re-translate  
    ‘I like to translate again (something)’

- English *re- attaches to a verb with an underlying direct object*—it need not be a surface direct object (i.e. unaccusatives are fine). Same for Romanian and Icelandic

(18)  
   a. The owner has reopened the door. (end state: open)  
   b. The door has reopened.

(19)  
   a. Am redeschis ușa.  
       have.1.SG reopened door.  
       ‘I have reopened the door.’  
   b. Eigandinn hefur enduropnað hurðina.  
       owner.the has reopened door.the  
       ‘The owner has reopened the door.’

This is in opposition with the data documented by Sportiche (2008) regarding the French cognate re, in which the repetitive reading is more readily available.
However, as pointed out in Marantz (2009) for English, not just any direct object will do; the direct object must undergo a change of state. The same facts hold for Romanian and Icelandic.

(20)  

(a) *Mary reticked me.

(b) *Maria m-a regâdilat.

Mary me has reticked

(c) *Maria endurkitlaði mig.

Mary retickled me

In sum, English and Romanian re- and differ from their etymologically related counterparts in French and Italian in a number of ways, and we have touched only on a few of them. Icelandic – endur also behaves like English and Romanian.

The French/Italian vs. English/Icelandic facts are important for the conclusion that the similarities between English and Romanian shown above are not the result of a historical accident relating to sharing cognate morphemes. Rather, they reflect a genuine syntactic similarity at some level.

The properties characterizing English and Romanian are summarized in (21) below

(21)

Re- requires a verb which:

a. Takes an underlying direct object which undergoes a change of state.

b. Does not take more than one obligatory internal argument.

3. A Romanian Quirk

Taking stock: For the most part, Romanian re- prefixation seems to behave like English re-, and not like French and Italian.

- It allows a direct object undergoing a change of state (19, repeated as 22a),
- It disallows unergative activities (16, repeated as 22b)
- It disallows put-type verbs with two obligatory internal arguments (13, repeated as 22c).
(22)  a. Am redeschis uşa.
    have.1SG reopened door.
    ‘I have reopened the door.’

    b. *Am resforăit.
    have.1SG resnored

    c. ??/*Am repus cartea pe raft.
    have reput book.the on shelf
    INTENDED: ‘I put the book back on the shelf.’

However, there is a coherent class of exceptions where Romanian (24) differs from English (23). The sentences in (24) appear to violate the sole complement generalization.

(23)  a. I (*re)put the radio to use. vs (I put the radio to use again)
    b. I (*re)put it on sale. vs (I put it on sale again)

(24)  a. Am repus radioul în funcțiune.
    have.1SG reput radio.the in function
    ‘I made the radio work again.’

    b. L- am repus în vânzare.
    CL.3ACC.M have.1SG reput in sale
    ‘I made it available for sale again.’

Questions we are addressing in this talk

1. Why does Romanian re- attach to put in some cases (24) but not others (22c)?
2. Why does English differ from Romanian in not allowing examples like (24)?

4. The Analysis

• We propose the following empirical generalization regarding when Romanian allows re- on verbs with two internal arguments.

(25) Romanian re- is allowed on verbs with two obligatory internal arguments if:
    a. The verb in question is a “light” verb.
    b. The relation between the two internal arguments is such that one specifies a change of state and the other specifies the nature of that state.
• *Re*- itself does not seem to be different in English and Romanian—it obeys the same sorts of restrictions.

• *Re*- is closely tied in with change-of-state subevents, which *put*-verbs are capable of expressing.

• (i) Since Romanian/Romance and English/Germanic differ with respect to Talmy’s (1985) parameter:
  o Romanian: verb framed (PATH on v)
  o English: satellite framed: (PATH on P)

• (ii) Since *re*- makes a distinction within *put*-verbs, which have been independently argued to have different properties in the two languages

  ➢ a connection between *re*- and Talmy’s parameter would be easily acquirable.
  ➢ it is this connection that we are pursuing to account for the difference (i) internal to Romanian and (ii) between Romanian and English with respect to the behavior of *re* and *put*-verbs

More on Talmy’s Parameter

• Most recent formal approaches to this distinction involve, in one form or another, the claim that Romanian-type languages express a PATH component on the verb (Fábregas 2007; Gehrke 2008; Mateu and Rigau 2010).

• English-type languages, on the other hand, involve a PATH component related to extended projection of PPs (Koopman 2000, Svenonius 2003, 2007, 2008, den Dikken 2010 and other papers in Cinque and Rizzi 2010).

• “This is an intense area of ongoing research, but as of this moment it does seem plausible that the difference that Talmy observed between Spanish on the one hand and English on the other could be stated in terms of a functional head [‘Path’ (OS&JW)] that Spanish lacks and English has.” (Svenonius 2008:81)

In this talk…


• Linguistic features are universal but differ in the way they bundle together in languages (Sigurðsson 2004, Zanuttini 2010)
The Talmian difference should not be the presence or lack of PATH per se, but rather in how PATH relates to other functional structure.

For present purposes, we adopt the view that categorial functional heads are subtyped (cf. Folli and Harley 2007) with privative subfeatures, e.g. v_{CAUS}, v_{DO}, etc. (cf. Adger and Svenonius to appear).

We propose that PATH can be a subfeature of v (v_{PATH}) or of p (p_{PATH}), and that this is subject to parametric variation cross-linguistically.\(^4\)

4.1 Change of Location

Question to answer: Why cannot RE attach to concrete uses of put in either Romanian or English?

(22c) ??/\*Am repus cartea pe raft.
    have reput book.the on shelf

(12) a. *John will reput the book on the shelf

- Prepositions are functional heads which become ‘locative’ with the help of a PLACE morpheme (den Dikken 2010 a.o.).

- Here, we represent this as a flavor of p (p_{PLACE}), which introduces the ‘Figure’ in its specifier. It is analogous to the Voice/v head that introduces verbal external arguments.\(^5\) p_{PLACE} mediates a locative relation between the two entities.

(26)

\[ \text{PP} \]
\[ \text{DP} \]
\[ \text{the radio} \]
\[ p_{\text{PLACE}} \]
\[ P_i \text{ on } t_i \text{ DP} \]
\[ P \text{ PP} \]

\(^4\) One might pursue related versions of this hypothesis, e.g. where PATH ‘incorporates’ syntactically in one language but not another, or where PATH ‘bundles’ with v in one language but p in another.

\(^5\) We assume that P raises to p_{PLACE} to license the latter, as in den Dikken (2010). Similarly, in English, we assume that p_{PLACE}+P raises to p_{PATH} for the same reason.
• In English path expressions, $p_{\text{PATH}}$ merges on top of this $pP$, followed by little $v$ (27a). In Romanian path expressions, $v_{\text{PATH}}$ merges (27b).\footnote{We assume that the ‘figure’ argument in SpecP raises to SpecvP for licensing as in Chomsky (2008).}

(27)

a. English

```
vP
   \(v_{\text{CAUS}}\) ‘put’
     pP
        p_{\text{PATH}}
           p_{\text{PLACE}}
              P_i on
          p_{\text{PLACE}}
              \(\text{to}\)
          DP
               the radio
       p' p_{\text{PLACE}}
           \(t_j\)
       DP
           P \(t_i\)
               \(\text{the shelf}\)
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b. Romanian

```
vP
   \(v_{\text{PATH}}\) ‘put’
     pP
        p_{\text{PLACE}}
              \(\text{to}\)
          DP
               the radio
       p' p_{\text{PLACE}}
           \(t_j\)
       DP
           P \(t_i\)
               \(\text{the shelf}\)
```
Why not *reput the radio on the shelf?

- In agreement with Marantz (2009):
  - *re- selects syntactically for a DP and semantically for a change of state event (x becomes s).
  - Semantically, *re adds the presupposition that x is/was s

- *re- cannot attach to the DP in SpecP, because it would force that DP to be interpreted as a stative eventuality.
  - This is inconsistent with the semantic predication introduced by \( p_{\text{PLACE}} \), which is a relation between an entity and (the set of locations occupied by) another entity.
  - This holds in both Romanian and English.

| ➢ Re- prefixation is ruled out with concrete put verbs on the basis of the properties of their complement: |
| ➢ If the DPs in the complement need to be interpreted as entities (in this case due to \( p_{\text{PLACE}} \)), *re- will not be possible. |

4.2 Change of State

Question to answer: Why cannot RE attach to English put in *reput the radio into use, unlike in Romanian?

- The previous explanation does not extend to ungrammatical cases in English such as (4), repeated here.

(23a) He (*re)put the radio into use.

- Here, there is no location, and no entity ‘use’ to which the radio is related. Following the kind of reasoning in den Dikken (2010), we might say that \( p_{\text{PLACE}} \) is absent in such non-locative uses.

- Since the radio undergoes a change of state, what we are looking at is the end-state of the radio; no functional head relating an entity to the PP is necessary. A DP in SpecPP will be interpreted as a set of states, as will its sister P’. These will compose by predicate modification to yield their conjunction: the set of ‘in use’ states which are the end-states of the radio.
Without an entity-introducing head, the DP in SpecPP must be interpreted as a set of states in order to combine semantically with P’.

Change-of-state and change-of-location expressions have been argued to share a common formal basis, namely a set of points along some scale (Snyder 2001; Gehrke 2008). We propose that PATH underlies both. In the absence of PLACE, some scale other than a set of contiguous points in space results.

In neither language is there a problem in combining at the PP level; the radio must denote a set of states, and it does. Composing this with PATH shouldn’t be a problem either; PATH should take a point and return a set of (contiguous) points for which that point is an endpoint.
5. Conclusion

• We have presented novel data from Romanian re- prefixation, arguing that it provides support for a structural difference between certain English and Romanian constructions with put-verbs.
• Romanian re- can attach to verbs taking two obligatory arguments, but only if they express a change of state – otherwise, it behaves like English.
• RE- disallows concrete uses of put in the two languages because RE- requires a DP which semantically denotes a change of state. We have shown that such a DO is unavailable with concrete put.
• The fact that re- combines with put in light verb constructions like put into use in Romanian but not in English is related to a structural difference between the two languages. This difference is due to the way in which Romanian and English encode PATH.
• The fact that this is not an isolated fact about put-verbs, but a more general phenomenon is supported by the following examples involving give (a da) and take out (a scoate), other subeventive verbs:
(30) I-a redat fetei libertatea
    cl has regiven girl.dat freedom.the
    ‘(He) gave the girl back her freedom’

(31) I-am (*re)dat cartea
    cl have regiven book.the
    ‘I gave him the book back’

vs

(32) He (*re)gave the girl her freedom
(33) He (*re)gave him the book

(34) a. Am (*re)scos cartea din ghizdan.
    have.1sg retook out the book from backpack
    'I took the book out from the backpack'

a. Au rescos cartea lui Păunescu din circulație
    have retook out book of Păunescu from circulation
    They stopped circulating Păunescu's book again.
References


Marantz, Alec. 2009. Resultatives and re-resultatives: Direct objects may construct events by themselves. Paper presented at PLC.


