

WEAK OBJECTS AND NOMINAL LICENSING

LSRL 52

University of Madison-Wisconsin

21-23 April, 2022



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Spanish & Portuguese

Introduction

- Recent work on differential object marking (DOM) has uncovered new theoretical pathways in order to explain the vast cross-linguistic variation found
- Approaches are largely divided into two perspectives:
 - Agree-based: DOM is assigned via Agree with a functional head (e.g., v^o) (e.g., Irimia 2020, 2021)
 - Last Resort strategies: DOM is assigned as a Last Resort mechanism due to the lack of available functional head for Agree (e.g., Kalin 2018)
 - Few proposals combine the two concepts, taking the insertion of DOM to be a Last Resort strategy based on proper syntax configurations (Irimia 2022)
- These approaches focus on full DPs with no immediate predictable power for DOM on pronouns

Introduction

- Using data from Galician, I focus on how and why DOM surfaces on weak objects (i.e., X° elements)
- I show that Galician DOM with weak nominal objects pair differently than DOM with full DPs, owing their behavior to the status of X°
- These claims are based on comparative observations by Ledgeway et al. (2019) for a variety of Calabrese (Italian)

Presentation Overview

- i. Review the Calabrese data
- ii. Present Galician data & theoretical assumptions for full DPs
- iii. Show contrasts between XPs/X°s
- iv. Present theory to account for DOM pattern in weak nominals
- v. Conclusions and future considerations



Calabrese DOM (Ledgeway et al. 2019)

- These authors claim there are two dialects of Calabria (Calabrese₁ & Calabrese₂)
- Focusing on Calabrese₂, they claim that DOM is found “whenever the head D° is lexicalised by a pronoun or a raised N” (Ledgeway et al. 2019:6)

(1) Stamatina nt'â chiazza no vitti a **nujiu**
this.morning in.the square NEG see.PST.1SG DOM nobody
'This morning I saw nobody in the square.'

Calabrese DOM (Ledgeway et al. 2019)

- This proposal extends to demonstratives that do not select an NP complement

(2) Vitti $\star(a)$ *idu* / $\star(a)$ *chidu* / $\star(a)$ *chistu*
see.PST.1SG DOM him DOM that DOM this
'I saw him/that man/this man.'

- However, when these demonstratives refer to inanimate objects, DOM does not surface

(3) Vitti $(\star a)$ *chidu* / $(\star a)$ *chistu*
see.PST.1SG DOM that DOM this
'I saw this (thing)/that (thing).'

Calabrese DOM (Ledgeway et al. 2019)

- Full DPs, however, are not marked with DOM

(4) Mazzau u gattu neru
 kill.PST.3SG the cat black
 ‘S/He killed the black cat.’

- This includes proper names which usually carry a definite determiner

(5) Vitti u Petru e a Maria
 see.PST.1SG the Petru and the Maria
 ‘I saw Petro and Maria.’



Calabrese DOM (Ledgeway et al. 2019)

- There are parallels to the use of DOM in Corsican (Neuburger & Stark 2014), although the system there seems more extensive (e.g., proper names do bear DOM)
- Taking the idea that there may exist systems in which X^0 and XPs require distinct DOM licensing strategies, the question that arises is:

??? — What are the relevant features that make X^0 elements targets for DOM?

- For Calabrese₂, this was [+HUMAN]

Galician DOM

- Full DP object nominals typically go unmarked in Galician

(6) *SVO*

- a. O Xan bicou a Uxía
the Xan kiss.PST.3SG the Uxía
'Xan kissed Uxía.'

VSO

- b. Puñirán os pais os nenos
punish.FUT.3PL the parents the children
'The parents will punish the children.'

CLLD

- c. Meu pai, atopamo-lo morto onte
my father find.PST.1PL-CL dead yesterday
'My dad, we found him dead yesterday.'



Galician DOM

- DOM only arises on full DP objects in VOS order and when the object bears a higher animacy than the subject

(7) Segue *ó* neno o can [+HUMAN] > [+ANIMATE]
follow.PRS.3SG DOM-the boy the dog
‘The dog chases the boy.’

(8) Segue o can o neno [+ANIMATE] > [+HUMAN]
follow.PRS.3SG the dog the boy
‘The boy chases the dog.’

Galician DOM

- In Gravely (2021, 2022), I claimed that Galician is licensed by a Last Resort strategy in order to block the object from agreeing with T^o
 - When DOM does not arise on the shifted object, T^o agrees with the highest nominal
- Following this analysis, v^o does not appear to enter into an agreement relation with object nominals
- Thus, I tentatively reject the idea that it is v^o that assigns DOM to weak objects

Galician DOM

- With weak objects, however, we see a similar system as in Calabrese₂
- Regardless of word order, all strong pronouns must bear DOM (Freixeiro 2006)

(9) *SVO*

- a. Teus pais viron **★(a)** *eles*
 your parents see.PST.3PL DOM they
 ‘Your parents saw them.’

CLLD

- b. **★(A)** *eles*, viron-os teus pais
 DOM they see.PST.3PL-CL your parents

VSO

- c. Viron teus pais **★(a)** *eles*
 see.PST.3PL your parents DOM they
 ‘Your parents saw them.’



Galician DOM

- Compare the X° vs. XP data in (10-12)

(10) *Quantifiers*

- a. Tocou ***(a)** *todos* ó pasaren
touch.PST.3SG DOM all COMP pass.INF.3PL
'He touched everyone as they passed by.'
- b. Atopamos ***(a)** *todo-los rapaces*
find.PST.1PL DOM all-the boys
'We found all of the boys.'

(11) *Demonstratives*

- a. Axudaron ***(a)** *esas*
help.PST.3PL DOM those
'They helped those (women).'
- b. Axudaron ***(a)** *esas mulleres*
help.PST.3PL DOM those women
'They helped those (women).'



Galician DOM

(12) *Indefinite DPs*

- a. Mataron **★(a)** *un* sen querer
kill.PST.3PL DOM one without want.INF.

‘They killed a man on accident.’

- b. Mataron **(★a)** *un* *home* feitiño
kill.PST.3PL DOM one man kind

‘They killed a kind man.’



Galician DOM

- As in Calabrese₂, DOM does not surface when the X^o element does not bear [+ANIMATE]

(13) *Quantifiers*

a. Tocou **★(a)** **todos** ó pasaren [+HUMAN]
touch.PST.3SG DOM all COMP pass.INF.3PL

‘He touched everyone as they passed by.’

b. Tocou (**★a**) **todos** cando chegou [-HUMAN]
find.PST.1PL DOM all when arrive.PST.3SG

‘He touched all of them (e.g., the figurines) when he arrived.’

Galician DOM

- There is an additional group of X° elements that have not been identified as such (Monica Irimia p.c.): *alguén* ('someone'), *ninguén* ('nobody'), and *quen* ('who')

(14) a. Viches **★(a)** *alguén* na beira?
 see.PST.2SG DOM someone in-the shore
 'Did you see someone along the shoreline?'

 b. Non che vin **★(a)** *ninguén*
 NEG CL see.PST.1SG DOM nobody
 'I didn't see anyone, I tell you.'



Galician DOM

- The generalization seems to be that lone syntactic heads (e.g., D° or $Quant^\circ$) must be marked with DOM
 - When these same heads form part of a phrase (i.e., when they select an XP complement of some size), DOM is no longer obligatory
- As in Calabrese₂, the licensing of DOM on X° elements is predicated on them bearing certain features
 - In Galician, DOM surfaces on those that (minimally) have [+ANIMATE]



Nominal Licensing

- The approach that I take to DOM makes several key assumptions drawing on claims by Kalin (2018):
 - Not all objects require licensing (i.e., not all DPs in a given derivation must enter into an Agree relation with a functional head; see also Ormazabal & Romero 2007, Levin 2019, *i.a.*)
 - Those object nominals that do require licensing (i.e., DOM) indicate something about licensing more generally in a given language
 - There is nothing about the base-generated position of a nominal argument that makes it a subject or object (cf. Preminger 2021)

Nominal Licensing

- I claim that there are parallels between different types of weak nominal objects (X° s)
 - In particular, clitic pronouns and (what I refer to as) weak objects
- Unlike full DP nominals, both clitics and weak nominals require licensing of some kind in Galician
 - i.e., either Agree with a functional head (clitics) or oblique marking (weak objects)

Nominal Licensing

- With the theoretical assumptions given, we may make several predictions:
 - Neither cliticization nor differential marking should arise on subjects in Galician
 - ✓ This is borne out; Galician does not have differential subject marking (cf. Arkadiev & Testelets 2019 for Circassian languages)
- As X^0 elements, weak nominals should participate in other processes known to be exclusive to heads in Galician
- ✓ This is borne out; we find the same morpho-phonological variation with these X^0 elements in constructions known to show sensitivity to heads but not phrases

Nominal Licensing

- Cross-linguistically, subject nominals show more consistent agreement due to locality
 - i.e., they are the closest nominal to the probing head (e.g., T^0)
- In every case of DOM shown thus far, the same syntactic items never require further licensing requirements when selected by T^0 as subjects

(15) *Ela* / *Alguén* / *Aquela* tivo tempo dabondo
she / someone / that.one have.PST.3SG time sufficient
'She/Someone/That one (over there) had sufficient time.'



Nominal Licensing

- According to the analysis in Kalin (2018), this would confirm that these syntactic elements must be formally licensed in some way, regardless of their taxonomic label
- Argumental DPs, on the other hand, do not have this requirement
 - While they may agree with T° , this is because they are the closest viable goal to the probe on T°
 - Outside of this structural relationship, however, only those DPs that must avoid agreeing with T° are marked (see Gravely 2021, 2022 for an exhaustive analysis on this point)

Further Evidence for X° Status

- Although the lexical items applicable in these contexts are limited, I claim that there is additional morpho-phonological evidence that arises based on the underlying syntactic structure
- Many cliticization patterns in Galician show either suppletive allomorphy or syllabic reconstruction when the prosodic host is a head (but not a phrase)
- This observation was first made in Gupton (2010) who claimed that *non* ('no') had clitic-like behavior when serving as a host for clitic pronouns
- Further investigation (Gravely & Gupton 2020, Gravely 2021) showed that this is the result of a head-to-head adjacency relationship within the syntax proper

Further Evidence for X° Status

- $-r / -s$ (infinitives, 1PL, 2SG, 2PL): $o, a, os, as \rightarrow lo, la, los, las$

(16) Falamos $o \rightarrow$ Falamo= lo ‘*We talk about it*’

- $-n$ (1SG, 3SG, 3PL):

(17) Fixeron $o \rightarrow$ Fixeron= o ‘*They did it*’
[fi.ʃe.roŋ.u] [fi.ʃe.ro.nu]



Further Evidence for X° Status

- Upon substituting phrasal constituents for these heads, this morpho-phonological alternation disappears
- $-r / -s$ (infinitives, 1PL, 2SG, 2PL): $o, a, os, as \rightarrow lo, la, los, las$

(18) *As amigas a forzaron* \rightarrow **As amiga=la forzaron* ‘*The friends forced it*’

- $-n$ (1SG, 3SG, 3PL):

(19) *No chan o atopei* \rightarrow **No chan=o atopei* ‘*I found it on the ground*’
[nu.tʃaŋ.u] *[nu.tʃa.nu]

Further Evidence for X° Status

- When *ninguén* ('no one'), *alguén* ('someone'), or *quen* ('who') host a clitic, we find the same morpho-phonological alternation shown in (17)

(20) Ninguén o merca

nobody CL buy.PRS.3SG

'Nobody buys it.'

[niŋ.ɣe.nu.mer.ka] (★[niŋ.ɣeŋ.u.mer.ka])



Theoretical Proposal

- I claim that structurally deficient nominals enter the derivation as X^0 elements, not XPs
- With the parallels shown regarding their licensing requirements, I propose that cliticization and DOM on weak object nominals may show similar derivational movement
- Weak objects such as *ninguén* ('nobody') that may not be substituted or doubled by a clitic may differ in this respect

Theoretical Proposal

- As the locus for cliticization in Western Iberian is high in the phrase marker (above TP), I claim that the position for DOM licensing in weak objects must be out of the search space of the probe for cliticization
- This is necessary under the approach that cliticization occurs obligatorily when possible (Deal 2022; Rezac 2010)
- I propose the DOM of weak objects in Galician is licensed in a head that relies on short A'-scrambling akin to López' (2012) α P

Theoretical Proposal

- In the cases of clitic doubling of DOMed weak objects (cf. 21), we should expect further movement in which the nominal vacates the νP and is able to be probed by the head responsible for cliticization

(21) Recolleu-nas a elas
collect.PST.3SG-CL DOM they
'She picked them up.'

Theoretical Proposal

- This proposal in particular supports an approach that takes clitic doubling to be the realization of the same φ -set on both X^0 s in two different positions within the derivation (i.e., the ‘double-pronunciation’ problem)
- This anti-lexicalist idea is at the heart of Preminger’s (2019) *Conditions on Phonological Chain Reduction of Head Movement* (inspired by the Copy Theory of Movement; Nunes (2004) & Boskovic & Nunes (2007))

Conclusions

- Argumental X° and XPs in Galician show significantly different constraints regarding DOM
- X° elements are true heads; they are not phrases that undergo head movement only
- Unlike argumental XPs in Galician, X° elements require licensing of some sort
 - Either via Agree or via oblique marking
- The oblique marking weak object nominals receive must happen lower in the phrase marker than that of XPs in Galician (the latter being akin to Gallego's (2020) 'X' projection that selects vP)

Gracias!

(Full list of references will be found on uploaded handout at www.brian-gravely.com)

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