DIFFERENTIAL OBJECT MARKING: THE CASE OF BRAZILIAN PORTUGUESE

SETTING THE STAGE. As is well known, many Romance varieties exhibit differential object marking (DOM), which encodes splits in the morpho-syntactic shape of direct objects (Bossong 1991, 1998, Torrego 1998, López 2012, Ormazabal and Romero 2013, a.o.). A typical case is standard Spanish, where definite animate objects (that are also interpreted specific) need the locative/dative preposition *a,* as in (1)a. Inanimates, on the other hand, do not normally take the same marker (1)b.

(1)   DOM IN STANDARD SPANISH   (Ormazabal and Romero 2013, ex, 1a/b)
a. He   encontrado ***(a)**   **la   niña**.   b. He   encontrado **(*a)**   **el libro**.
   have.1SG   found   DAT=DOM the girl   have.1SG   found   DAT=DOM the book
   'I have found the girl.'   'I have found the book.'

It has also been noticed that a second DOM pattern is active across Romance, namely the presence of an (obligatory) preposition with those objects that undergo displacement to the left periphery under topicalization (Leonetti 2008, Iemmolo 2010, d'Alessandro 2017, Belletti 2018, Kouja 2019, a.o.). This can be seen in the contrast in (2) from Italian (Belletti 2018, ex. 4a/2a):

(2)   TOPICAL DOM IN ITALIAN
     a. Questi argomenti non hanno   convinto   **(*a)**   **Gianni**.
        these arguments not   have   convinced   DAT=DOM Gianni
        Intended: 'These arguments have not convinced Gianni.'
     b. **(A)**   **Gianni,** questi argomenti non hanno convinto.
        DAT=DOM Gianni these arguments not   have   convinced
        'These arguments have not convinced Gianni.'

Our paper takes further steps towards the typology of DOM in Romance by examining DOM configurations, which, descriptively, do not follow any of the two patterns above. Our data come from Brazilian Portuguese (BP). We put forward the following observations: i) contrary to widely-held assumptions that classify BP as a DOM-less language, we show that there are some robust contexts where DOM has actually been preserved in the language; ii) the BP DOM configurations can be better captured under an analysis which connects DOM to a licensing condition beyond Case; iii) an exploration of the typology of discourse-related argument licensing strategies is needed in order to derive the differences between Italian-type languages and BP.

1. DOM IN BP. The novel observation we make is that animacy-sensitive DOM is *obligatory* in BP in certain contexts. These include coordinated structures of the type in (3), rarely discussed comparatives as in (4), and the universal quantifier if animate, as in (5). In (3) and (4), DOM is *obligatory* if the DP is an *object*. If the noun in the conjunct/standard is left bare, the conjunction/comparison can only be interpreted as involving subjects.

(3)   Eu vi   o menino e   ***(a)o**   professor também/ ...e o professor também.
      I   saw the boy   and DOM-the   teacher too   /… and the professor too
      'I saw the boy and <I saw> the teacher too /….and the teacher <saw the boy> too.'
(4)   Pedro   ama Rita   como **a**   uma mulher/…..como uma mulher,
      Pedro   loves Rita as   DOM   a   woman/….as   a   woman
      'Pedro loves Rita as <he loves> a woman./Pedro loves Rita as a woman <loves Rita>.'
(5) a. Ele visitou todos. (todos = [± animate])   b. Ele visitou **a todos.** (todos = [+animate])
       he visited all   he visited DOM all
       'He visited everyone/everything.'   'He visited everyone.'

2. ANALYSIS. We provide evidence that both the coordination and comparative structures involve ellipsis. First, in both instances, presence of differential marking varying with grammatical function

(only DOs) can only be derived under the assumption that this special morphology does not signal a *lexical* type of comparative/conjunction. Second, with respect to comparatives in (4), interpretations provided by native speakers reveal covert temporal/modal material (i.e., interpretations of the type 'Pedro loves Rita as if she were a woman' are possible). This also confirms the observations made by Irimia (2018) with respect to DOM comparatives in other Romance varieties. Third, in examples like (3) the conjoined objects cannot construct ECM configurations and cannot be modified by secondary predicates, as demonstrated in (6). This strongly indicates that conjunction is *not* at the DP level.

(6)   *Eu   vi   (a)o   menino$_i$ e   **ao**   professor$_i$ sair(em)$_i$ / juntos$_i$.
          I   saw   DOM-the   boy   and   DOM-the   teacher   leave.3PL/together.PL.M
          Intended: 'I saw the boy and the teacher leave/together.'

The only formal account for DOM comparatives we are aware of is the one proposed by Irimia (2018) for Romanian, Spanish and some Italo-Romance varieties. In this analysis, the obligatory DOM results from the need of certain objects to be licensed in the absence of regular licensers. As the embedded structure in (7) lacks the adequate licenser (due to being a small clause, etc.), a discourse related functional head present in ellipsis, namely the Topic projection, is recruited to license the object. The Topic head mediates the Case/licensing information from the matrix.

(7)   **…. [as [Top$_{[CaseAcc]}$ Obj [$_{vP}$ v [$_{vP}$ V <Obj>]]]**   [for DOM on the standard in (4)]

Licensing by an ellipsis Topic head can also be extended to co-oordination contexts like (3). We propose the structure in (8). As a result of ellipsis, the DP raises out of the coordinated clause and must be licensed by a Topic head – the option of being unlicensed is not possible in this context.

(8) Eu vi o menino e [$_{TOP}$ **a**[o professor] também [$_{TP}$ eu vi [$_{vP}$ … [<o professor>]]]]   [DOM in (3)]

3. TYPES OF DOM IN ROMANCE AND BP. An analysis along these lines explains these puzzling comparative/coordination contexts; but it also raises important questions about the nature and limits of (Romance) DOM. The appeal to Topic heads connects BP DOM to topic DOM languages like Italian or (varieties of) Catalan. But there are, however, non-trivial differences. In BP, left-periphery topic displacement as in (2)b does not give rise to DOM, (9)a. BP DOM is not strictly of the Spanish type either, as animates are not obligatorily DOM-ed in examples like (1)a, see (9)b.

(9) a. **(*A)**o   Pedro, o   professor   viu.   b.   O professor viu **(a)**o   Pedro.
          DOM-the   Pedro   the   teacher   saw   the teacher   saw   DOM-the   Pedro
    Intended: '(As for) Pedro, the teacher saw him.'   *Intended:* 'The teacher saw Pedro.'

The other issue is how to extend the analysis to animate strong quantifier configurations similar to (5). These examples clearly demonstrate that the issue is not just one of Case (similarly to the Italian configurations). We follow accounts that connect grammaticalized animacy to the presence of a [PERSON] feature (Rodríguez-Mondoñedo 2007, Richards 2008, a.o.). This [PERSON] feature is merged above a projection that contains the case features, namely D^0. Given that universal quantifiers project beyond D^0, if the animacy [PERSON] feature is merged, it will require *obligatory licensing*. In the absence of relevant licensers, a discourse-related projection (e.g., a Topic head) must be recruited in order to avoid crash due to unvalued features. This suggests that in BP the licensing of the additional [PERSON] specifications requires the recruitment of available functional projections *as a last resort*, contrary to the situation in (2), where a Topic head is not a *last resort,* and the animate DP contains instead a Topic feature. Thus, even though DOM signals a licensing operation beyond Case, a more precise typology of licensing operations is responsible for subtler parametric choices, deriving microvariation points (across Romance).

SELECTED REFERENCES. **Belletti, A. 2018.** On the *a*-marking of object topics in the Italian left periphery. **Irimia, M-A. 2018.** When DOM is obligatory. Some remarks on the role of Case in ellipsis and comparatives. PLC 24(1). **Rodríguez-Mondoñedo, M. 2007.** The syntax of objects: Agree and Differential Object Marking. Ph. D. Diss, UConn.