

DOM, OBJECT SHIFT, AND THE DISTINCTNESS CONDITION  
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 Colloquium on Generative Grammar 30 (CGG30)  
 30 June, 2021

**1. INTRODUCTION**

Differential object marking (DOM) remains a topic of much cross-linguistic investigation

- Scales related to animacy and specificity have been at the forefront of determining when DOM arises (e.g. Aissen 2003, *i.a.*)
- DOM has also been shown to be specific to a particular position in the clause (e.g. Belletti 2018; Escandell Vidal 2009)
- The status of a nominal as a D<sup>o</sup> or DP may also determine whether DOM surfaces (e.g. Ledgeway, Schifano, & Silvestri 2019; Gravelly 2021c)

The mechanism by which it surfaces also varies

- A head (or series of heads) that check certain  $\phi$ -feature related to the DP (e.g. Irimia 2020)
- Last Resort (e.g. Kalin 2018)

I focus on a Richards' (2010) *Distinctness Condition* as a potential third plausible mechanism, having been applied to Spanish (Richards 2010: §2) and Catalan (Colomina 2019)

**QUESTIONS**

- What  $\phi$ -features trigger DOM in Galician?
- How does word order impact the implementation of DOM?
- Can the *Distinctness Condition* account for DOM in Galician?

**GOALS**

- To show when Galician DOM arises
- To tie in DP movement to the features of both the object and the subject with respect to DOM
- To demonstrate how the *Distinctness Condition* falls short in accounting for all of differential object marking patterns in Galician, owing to the fact that DOM may not be based solely on linearization statements

**2. GALICIAN AND DOM**

Objects in Galician typically go unmarked<sup>1</sup>

- |        |   |                                     |                   |         |
|--------|---|-------------------------------------|-------------------|---------|
| (1) a. | Xan                                       | viu                                 | Maruxa            | (SVO)   |
|        | Xan                                       | see.PST.3SG                         | Maruxa            |         |
|        | 'Xan saw Maruxa.'                         |                                     |                   |         |
| b.     | Tocaban                                   | os alumnos                          | a gaita           | (VSO)   |
|        | play.IMPV.3PL                             | the students                        | the bagpipes      |         |
|        | 'The students were playing the bagpipes.' |                                     |                   |         |
| c.     | Comera                                    | o óso                               | o can             | (VOS)   |
|        | eat.PST-PRT.3SG                           | the bone                            | the dog           |         |
|        | 'The dog had eaten the bone.'             |                                     |                   |         |
| d.     | Meus pais <sub>i</sub> ,                  | recolleramo-los <sub>i</sub>        | nós               | (CLLD)  |
|        | my parents                                | retrieve.PST.1PL-CL <sub>M.PL</sub> | we                |         |
|        | 'My parents, we picked them up.'          |                                     |                   |         |
| e.     | O cacique                                 | a terra                             | asoballara        | ((S)OV) |
|        | the chief                                 | the land                            | dominate.IMPV.3SG |         |
|        | 'The chief dominated the land.'           |                                     |                   |         |

In Gravelly (2021a), I showed that DOM does arise in certain instances of VOS order, however:

- |     |                                    |         |       |             |
|-----|------------------------------------|---------|-------|-------------|
| (2) | Axudan                             | ós      | nenos | os pais     |
|     | help.PRS.3PL                       | DOM-the | kids  | the parents |
|     | 'The parents help their children.' |         |       |             |

When the appellative *a* ('to') combines with a definite determiner, the result is

- |        |  |
|--------|--|
| (3) a. | /ʊs/ → /ɔs/ (unstressed close-mid vowel → open-mid vowel)        |
| b.     | /as/ → /a:s/ (unstressed central vowel → stressed central vowel) |

<sup>1</sup> I focused on full DPs only in this investigation.

When the determiner is indefinite (4) or a quantifier (5), the differential marker is phonologically distinct

- (4) Po-la beira levou **a** un desconhecido  
by-the bank carry.PST.3SG **DOM** a stranger  
meu curman  
my cousin  
'My cousin carried a stranger along the riverbank.'

- (5) Despedistes **a** toda-las enfermeiras os médicos  
release.PST.2PL **DOM** all-the nurses the doctors  
'You doctors sent home all the nurses.'

In addition, I claimed that animacy was the only relevant feature

- This is clear by the fact that specificity in both the semantics/pragmatics sense (Heusinger 2011) as well as its reflection in the morphosyntax plays no role
- (6) a. Procura **a** / \* $\emptyset$  unha traballadora María  
search.PRS.3SG **DOM**  $\emptyset$  a worker María  
b. Busca **a** /  $\emptyset$  una trabadora María  
search.PRS.3SG **DOM**  $\emptyset$  a worker María  
'María is looking for a worker.'
- (7) Viron **a** / \* $\emptyset$  nenos as nenas  
see.PST.3PL **DOM**  $\emptyset$  boys the girls  
'The girls saw boys.'

Whereas Spanish resorts to DOM based on the pragmatic specificity of its object DP (6b), Galician obligatorily marks its DP based on the features and position of the object

In (7), with no overt determiner, the bare NP object still requires oblique marking

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? What  $\phi$ -features trigger DOM in Galician?

**ANIMACY TRIGGERS DOM IN GALICIAN**

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There is a scale with respect to the animacy effects

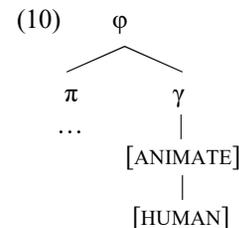
- In particular, these effects occur with constituents bearing both [ANIMATE] and [HUMAN]

→ However, this is only when *both* the subject and the object bear one of these features

- When both the object bears the same or a higher scaled animacy feature than the subject in a VOS construction, the object must be marked (9b-9c)
- When the subject bears a higher animacy feature than the object in a VOS construction, the object is not marked

- (9) a. Seguiu o can o neno  
follow.PST.3SG the dog the boy  
'The dog chased the boy'
- b. Seguiu \*o neno o can  
follow.PST.3SG The boy the dog  
Intended: 'The dog chased the boy' (✓ 'The boy chased the dog')
- c. Seguiu **o** **nenos** o can  
follow.PST.3SG **DOM-the** **boy** the dog  
'The dog chased the boy.'

In a theoretical approach based on Agree (Gravely 2021a), this is explained by accounting for privative features (Preminger 2014) in a feature geometry (Harley & Ritter 2002, McGinnis 2005)



→ But the *Distinctness Condition* (§3) is related to interface legibility at Spell-Out, rendering featural hierarchies and agree-based systems of this kind futile

Let's turn to word order:

- VOS strings may arise by two derivational movements:
  - object shift to a peripheral vP site
  - pied-piping of the VP (i.e., V and its sister DP)

Whether a language resorts to one or the other has been shown to have a direct correlation to whether said language licenses VSO

- (11) *VOS-VSO Generalization* (Gallego 2013:440)  
If a Romance language licenses VOS through object shift, then it licenses VSO.

This is true for Galician (Gravely 2021a):

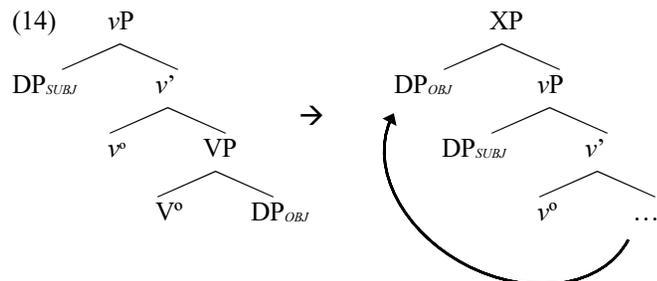
- (12) Colleron os mariñeiros todo-los percebeos  
catch.PST.3PL the fishermen all-the barnacles  
'The fishermen caught all of the barnacles.'

Furthermore, Gallego (2013) takes object shift to be obligatory when VOS is licensed in these languages<sup>2</sup>

- In Gravely (2021c), I claim that this is indeed an A-position in Galician from which the object may bind into the subject

- (13) Recolleu toda-las novelas<sub>i</sub> o seu<sub>i</sub> autor  
collect.PST.3SG all-the novels the his author  
'The author picked up all of her novels.'

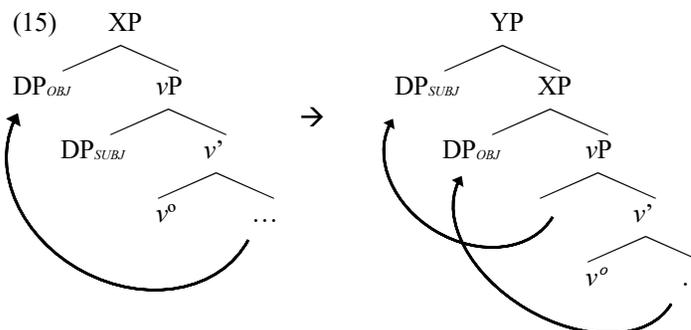
Therefore, I take object shift to be obligatory, derived as in (14)



<sup>2</sup> But see Gallego (2020) for a minor retreat from this idea.

This becomes even more important when considering how VSO order is derived

- Like Ordoñez (2007), although on slightly different theoretical grounds, Gallego (2013) takes this to be movement of the subject from its base-generated position to in between the shifted object and T (what I label YP for expository purposes)



As we see, DOM **does not** arise in VSO order; only in VOS where it is obligatory per the featural specifications discussed above

- (16) a. Axudan os pais (\*a) seus fillos (VSO)  
help.PRS.3PL the parents DOM their children  
b. Axudan \*(a) seus fillos os pais (VOS)  
help.PRS.3PL DOM their children the parents  
'Parents help their children.'

? How does word order impact the implementation of DOM?

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**DOM ONLY ARISES IN VOS ORDER**

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Let's see if the *Distinctness Condition* makes the correct predictions...

**3. THE DISTINCTNESS CONDITION AND WHERE IT FAILS**

Richards (2010) claims that any pair of nodes that arrive at Spell-Out together and cannot be distinguished from one another will cause the derivation to crash

(17) *Distinctness* (Richards 2010:5)

If a linearization statement  $\langle \alpha, \alpha \rangle$  is generated, the derivation crashes

This linearization statement has two stipulations

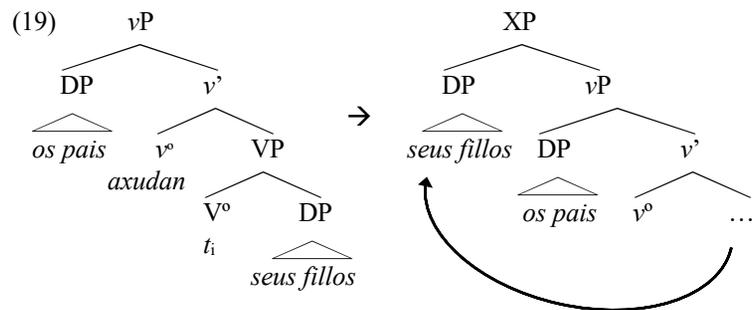
- $\langle \alpha, \alpha \rangle$  must be within the same phase
- $\langle \alpha, \alpha \rangle$  may be nondistinct if they share the same label or  $\phi$ -set<sup>3</sup>

In agreement with Richards (2010:41), I take it that simple category labels are not enough; it is the  $\phi$ -features of each constituent that cause a distinctness effect

? How does this fare with the Galician data seen above?

For instances in which differential marking appears, this seems to be an accurate model

(18) Axudan \*(a) seus fillos os pais (VOS)  
 help.PRS.3PL DOM their children the parents  
 ‘Parents help their children.’



Were the derivation Spelled-Out as in (19), both DPs would be in the same phase, linearly read as  $\langle DP_\phi, DP_\phi \rangle$  with each DP bearing [ANIMATE], [PLURAL], [DEFINITE], and some [PARTICIPANT] feature

Therefore, following Kalin (2018), the Last Resort mechanism I resorted to in Gravely (2021) seems necessary here

- The object must be differentially marked in order to be Spelled-Out as a KP/PP
- The addition of this functional material, thus, prevents a crash per Richards’ account

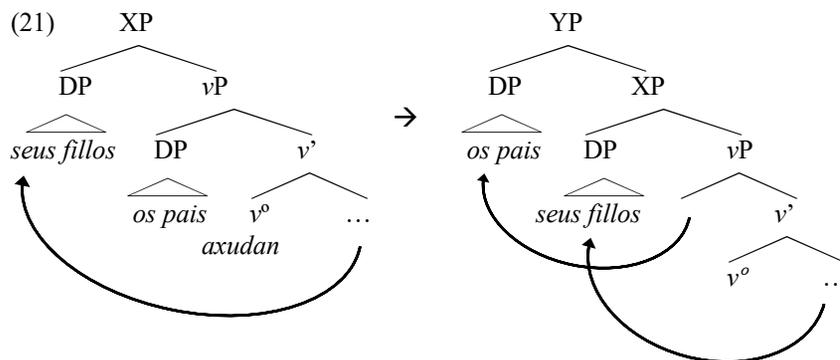
→ This account fails to account for three distinct patterns related to word order and DOM in Galician that **do not** make the correct predictions, however

**PATTERN 1:** VSO order in which both the subject and object bear the same  $\phi$ -set

As we saw in (16), repeated here as (20), DOM is required in VOS strings, but it is illicit in VSO strings with the same constituents

(20) a. Axudan os pais (\*a) seus fillos (VSO)  
 help.PRS.3PL the parents DOM their children  
 b. Axudan \*(a) seus fillos os pais (VOS)  
 help.PRS.3PL DOM their children the parents  
 ‘Parents help their children.’

In (15), I showed that VSO in Galician is licensed by movement of the subject from its base-generated position to a position above the shifted object



Much like in (19), (21) would be linearized  $\langle DP_\phi, DP_\phi \rangle$  with both DPs bearing the same features ([ANIMATE], [PLURAL], [PARTICIPANT])

→ However, DOM is not licensed here, and yet the derivation does not crash

**PATTERN 2:** OVS order in which the object is focused

In more recently collected data (Gravely 2021c), I have shown that DOM also arises in SOV (27a) and OVS (27b) word orders when adhering to the same featural specifications as VOS configurations

- These constructions both adhere to many of the properties Leonetti & Escandell Vidal (2009) refer to as *veerum focus*<sup>4</sup>

- (27) a. Seus pais **ós** **nenos** recolleron  
their parents **DOM-the** **children** collect.PST.3PL  
'THE CHILDREN, their parents picked up.'
- b. **Ós** **pobres** han protexe-las leis  
**DOM-the** **poor** have.PRS.3PL protect.INF-CL<sub>FEM.PL</sub> laws  
'THE POOR, laws must protect.'

DOM in (27a) is expected if we imagine both the subject and the object are Spelled-Out in the same phase above T (CP for Chomsky 2008 or FP for Fernández Rubiera 2013)<sup>5</sup>

→ However, the object is clearly in a focused position (arguably in [Spec,C]/[Spec,F]), and would be Spelled-Out in a different phase than the subject *as leis* ('the laws')

? What requires the object to be differentially marked if not for distinctness purposes with respect to the linearization statement?

**PATTERN 3:** VOS strings in which the object is a bare NP

Contrary to the claims in López (2012: §2.2.7), in Gravely (2021c) I showed the bare nouns in Galician may undergo object shift above the subject

- (28) Viron a / \*Ø nenos as nenas  
see.PST.3PL **DOM** Ø boys the girls  
'The girls saw boys.'

<sup>4</sup> I would like to thank Tim Gup-ton for in depth discussion on this phenomenon in Galician.

If bare NPs only project until #<sup>o</sup> and lack D<sup>o</sup> entirely (Danon 2006), the linearization statement of (28) would be as in (29)

- (29) <NP<sub>φ: [ANIMATE], [PL], [PART]}</sub>, DP<sub>φ: [ANIMATE], [PL], [PART], [DEF]}</sub>>

As in (15), the subject and object would be Spelled-Out together, but, as is the case in PATTERN 2, the need for additional structure (K<sup>o</sup> or P<sup>o</sup>) in order for the derivation to converge is unclear if DOM is based on the linearization statement in (29)

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- Can the *Distinctness Condition* account for DOM in Galician?

SOME BUT NOT ALL OF IT

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**5. CONCLUSION**

- Although the *Distinctness Condition* is able to account for some of the data on differential marking and the effects of said phenomenon due to object shift, it falls short in explaining three important scenarios: one related to subject movement without a DOMed object and two related to differential marking in non-canonical word orders
- If we understand DOM to be the realization of additional functional structure (K<sup>o</sup> or P<sup>o</sup> in Galician) in the DP, the fact that some objects are differentially marked when they are
  - not featurally identical to another DP in their Spell-Out domain
  - Spelled-Out in a different domain than all other DPs in the derivation
 makes poor predictions as to how and when the objects should be marked if this is indeed a *Distinctness Condition* phenomenon

<sup>5</sup> Nothing hinges on adopting one proposal over the other. Therefore, I leave this technicality aside.

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I would like to thank Laura Kalin and Monica Irimia for much discussion on several ideas that led me to consider the ideas put forth here. I would also like to give special thanks to Paula Cousillas, Miguel Giadás, and Fernando Torreiro for their native Galician intuitions. This would not have been possible without them. Any and all errors in data or interpretation are my own.

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