<u>Western Romance Differential Object Marking (*ad*): analogical generalization and feature 'simplification':</u>

Although Spanish is the most famous Romance language to have Differential Object Marking (DOM), namely the use of preposition *ad* for marking certain types of objects (animate/referential), this type of DOM is actually widely attested throughout Romance in its history and geography (Rolhfs (1971)), and while attempts have been made to unify Romance DOM in reconstructing proto-Romance (Sornicola (1997, 1998)), less attention has been paid to the microparametric variation between different Romance varieties. In this paper I propose a comparative analysis of Romance DOM which seeks to deepen our understanding of Spanish DOM and Case theory.

Medieval Romance shows that *ad* is used mainly with individual human/animate objects which show tendencies of referentiality and individuality (Nocentini (1985), Sornicola (1998), Zamboni (1994)), and *ad* is even obligatory with strong (tonic) pronominal objects (Sornicola (1998:422)) which entails three parameters for Romance DOM: animacy, referentiality and pronominal. In Romance dialects, Spanish DOM is primarily determined by animacy (1a)) whereas in other dialects referentiality/definiteness is a prerequisite (1b)):

1a)   busco   (a)   un   empleado   que   sep-a   usa-r   la   computadora

        search-PRES.1SG   AD   one   employee REL.PRO know-SUBJ.3SG   use-INF   the   computer

        'I am looking for an employee (hypothetical) who might know how to use the computer.' (Zamboni (1994:790))

1b)   anti   piga-u   *(a)   una   piciocca

        have-PRES.3PL   snatch-PERF.PART AD   one   girl

        'They have snatched a girl (indefinite).' (Sardinian, in Iemmolo (2007:348))

Furthermore, in almost all Romance varieties DOM is only obligatory with personal pronouns (cf Nocentini (1992:228)):

2a)   nun   ti   vitti   *(a)   ttia

        NEG   PRO.2SG see-PRET.1SG   AD   PRO.2SG

        'I did not see you.' (Sicilian, in Guardiano (2000:90))

2b)   am-o-o   *(a)   ele

        love-PRES.1SG-PRO.3SG   AD   PRO.3SG

        'I love him' (Portuguese, in Roegiest (1979:39))

2c)   vió   *(a)   mi

        see-PRET.3SG   AD   me

        'He saw me.' (Spanish, in Laca (1995:66))

Finally, Spanish DOM has developed one step further in that *ad* also marks inanimate objects with animate associations (cf Company-Company (2004)):

3)   …se   v-a   a   procura-r…   toca-r   mucho   a   Beethoven?

        REFL.PRO   go-PRES.3SG   AD   try-INF   play   much   AD   Beethoven

        '… is one going to try to play Beethoven a lot?' (Laca (1995:62))

Romance DOM may hence be arranged hierarchically in terms of features (cf Aissen (2002)): *ad* is obligatory with pronouns ([i-pronominal]), strongly associated with human/animate objects ([i-animate]) of which referentiality ([i-D]) is retained as a secondary factor from Medieval Romance. Spanish has generalized DOM to all human/animate objects (ex. 1a)) and even beyond (ex. 3 (cf Heusinger and Kaiser (2005))), which may be seen as 'structural simplification' ('reduction in feature syncretisms' (Roberts and Roussou (2003:200)), since while in Spanish *ad* is used with all human/animate objects ([i-human/animate]), in other varieties *ad* is used with objects that are human/animate **and** referential/definite ([i-human/animate], [i-D]).

<u>Select References:</u>

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