

The diachrony of differential object marking in Catalan

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GOAL. The aim of this talk is to offer an account of the emergence and development of differential object marking (DOM) in the diachrony of Catalan, paying especial attention to the dialectal differences that emerge. We do so by means of a large corpus study based on the *Corpus Informatitzat del Català Antic* and comprising the period from the first written texts to the 16th century.

CONTEXT. The existence of DOM is well established for several Romance languages and varieties, such as Spanish and Romanian, where its use extends to several types of DPs. For other languages in the Romance family, such as Catalan, DOM has often considered absent, except for personal pronouns and a few more cases. In sum, if we look at the Catalan normative grammar (Institut d'Estudis Catalans 2016), we may conclude that DOM is a largely restricted phenomenon in Catalan. However, in many non-standard varieties of Catalan DOM applies to human DOs generally. Although there is no exhaustive dialectal survey on the extension of DOM (yet), it seems clear that it is widespread across most dialects:

- (1) a. *He vist {a(l) Joan / a (la) Maria*
have.1SG seen DOM.(the) Joan / DOM (the) Maria
- b. *He vist als meus germans / al president*
have.1SG seen DOM.the my brothers / DOM.the president
'I have seen Joan, Maria, my brothers, the president'

DATA AND ANALYSIS. One may think that the uses in (1) are the result of the **Spanish influence**. However, it may be the case that such instances are actually fruit of the **internal evolution of Catalan**. Very importantly, instances of DOM of the type in (1) were abundant in Old Catalan, although this has gone quite unnoticed (but see Meier 1947, 1948; Perera 1986; Pineda in press, 2021). In other words, as will be shown, instances of DOM with human (and deity) DOs are found in the earlier Catalan texts (13-14th c.) (2), and increase very significantly from the 15th c. on (3), reaching to 50% of occurrences in some texts.

- (2) *conexeràs al malalt*
will.know.2SG DOM.the sick person
'You will know the sick person' (*Avicena*, 14th c.)
- (3) *Tirant cridà als faels*
Tirant call.PST.3SG DOM.the believers
'Tirant called the believers' (*Tirant lo Blanc*, 15th c.)

Interestingly, **geolectal differences** can be observed at this point, with Valencian texts offering the highest number of occurrences. In this context, one must take into consideration the influence of Aragonese in Valencia (people from Aragon repopulated the area) as well as Spanish, whose penetration into the Catalan-speaking area would soon become really severe. Actually, from the 16th c. on, once the influence of Spanish reaches the highest levels (due to sociopolitical events), DOM also becomes much more frequent, and the dialectal constraints (Valencian vs. other varieties) seem to be blurred. As will be presented in detail, our corpus study shows that the emergence and development of DOM in the diachrony Catalan follows the animacy and definiteness/specificity hierarchies (Silverstein 1976, Dixon 1979), see (4) and (5), and resembles in many respects the evolution of DOM in Spanish.

(4) Animacy scale: human > animate > inanimate

(5) Definiteness/Specificity scale: personal pronouns > proper names > definite NPs > specific indefinite NPs > non-specific indefinite NPs (> bare NPs)

However, the paths of extension of DOM in both languages also diverge in many aspects, as we will show: chronology, extension to a wider or narrower range of syntactic categories, import of the different semantic and contextual triggering factors, among others. In general terms, DOM is always consolidated and extended to different categories earlier in Spanish than in Catalan, i.e. DOM in Catalan spreads more slowly.

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