

Direct object marking and interface legibility  
 Brian Gravely— University of Georgia

**GOAL:** In this investigation, I examine the use of direct object marking (DOM) in Galician. I show that the stringent use of DOM is due to the interface condition Richards (2010) deemed the Distinctness condition and, in turn, dictates the type of object shift (or lack thereof) in different Romance varieties. Specifically, I focus on DOM VSO/VOS orders with animate arguments.

**DATA:** Both the study of non-canonical word orders (Belletti 2004, Ordóñez 2007, Gallego 2013) and that of DOM (Rodríguez Madoño 2007, Khouja 2019, Ormazabal & Romero 2019) in Romance have been studied extensively in recent generative literature, resulting in various theoretical connections. These phenomena have been shown to correlate in that languages without DOM (Catalan & Italian) (1) also show a more restricted word order (2). Diversely, Spanish has a more variable word order (3a-b), licensing DOM no matter the word order (3a-c).

- (1) a. En Joan porta (\*a) les nenes a l'escola (Catalan)  
 the Joan carry.3SG DOM the girls to the-school
- (2) a. \*Porta en Joan les nenes a l'escola (VSO)  
 carry.3SG the Joan the girls to the-school  
 b. Porta les nenes en Joan a l'escola (VOS)  
 carry.3SG the girls the Joan to the-school
- (3) a. Lleva Juan a las niñas a la escuela (VSO) (Spanish)  
 carry.3SG Juan DOM the girls to the school  
 b. Lleva a las niñas Juan a la escuela (VOS)  
 carry.3SG DOM the girls Juan to the school  
 c. Juan lleva a las niñas a la escuela (SVO)  
 Juan carry.3SG DOM the girls to the school

Like Spanish, Galician licenses both VSO and VOS orders (4); however, DOM is only employed in VOS orders in which both postverbal DPs are [+ANIMATE] (5). Philological accounts attribute this contrast to VSO being the 'default' word order when both constituents are postverbal and marked [+ANIMATE] (Freixeiro 2006). The aforementioned constraints under which DOM are employed in Galician are confirmed upon observing the lack of DOM when the object but not the subject is marked [+ANIMATE] in VOS order (6).

- (4) a. Podou [o pexegueiro] [o xardineiro] (VOS)  
 prune.3SG the peach-tree the gardener  
 b. Podou [o xardineiro] [o pexegueiro] (VSO)  
 prune.3SG the gardener the peach-tree
- (5) a. Reñen [os pais] [os fillos] (VSO)  
 scold.3PL the parents the children  
 b. Reñen [ós fillos] [os pais] (VOS)  
 scold.3PL DOM-the children the parents
- (6) Asustou [o presidente] [a nova] (VOS)  
 scare.PST.3SG the president the news

**THEORETICAL CONTRIBUTION:** Richards' (2010) Distinctness condition holds that two constituents with identical labels <DP, DP> or sublabels (i.e. features) < $\phi_1$ ,  $\phi_1$ > within the same phase provoke ill-formed linearization statements that result in crashing at the interfaces. I claim that this should have a direct correlation to object shift in Romance, specifically, to Gallego's (2013) *VOS-VSO Generalization*, which states that any Romance language that licenses VSO

also licenses VOS. For Gallego, this generalization inherently implies the availability of object shift to a peripheral specifier of  $v^*P$  (7).

- (7) a. Pintamos os cadros os artistas  
 paint.1PL the paintings the artists  
 ‘*Us artists paint paintings.*’

b. [TP [T [ $v^*$  [V pintamos]]] [ $v^*P$  os cadros [ $v^*P$  os artistas [ $v^*$   $t_{\text{pintamos}}$  [VP  $t_{\text{pintamos}}$   $t_{\text{os cadros}}$ ]]]]]]

Assuming that preverbal subjects in Western Iberian are base-generated topics (cf. Barbosa 1995, Raposo 2000, Fernández Rubiera 2013), only in postverbal subject constructions do subjects appear in [Spec, $v^*P$ ]. Also assuming Chomsky’s (2008 *et seq.*) notion of phases, it follows that canonical SVO orders differ from Gallego’s VSO/VOS approach in that in SVO orders the subject is transferred in a different phase than the object (8). With respect to the Distinctness condition, I claim that specific features of DP arguments in the same phase cause crashing at the interfaces in Romance. In the case of Galician, this feature is [+ANIMATE], which creates a problem for the movement in (8d) based on Gallego’s generalization; therefore, I claim that short internal  $v^*P$  scrambling to an intermediate projection (López’s (2012)  $\alpha P$ ) is available in Galician in VSO orders in which both arguments are full DPs and [+ANIMATE] (9).

- (8) a. Xan<sub>[+ANIMATE]</sub> axudou o neno<sub>[+ANIMATE]</sub>  
 Xan help.3SG.PST the boy  
 b. [TopicP Xan]... ||*Transfer*|| [TP [T [ $v^*$  [V axudou]]] [ $v^*P$  o neno] [ $v^*$   $t_{\text{axudou}}$  ...]]  
 c. Axudou Xan<sub>[+ANIMATE]</sub> o neno<sub>[+ANIMATE]</sub>  
 help.3SG.PST Xan the boy  
 d. [TP [T [ $v^*$  [V axudou]]] [ $v^*P$  Xan [ $v^*P$  o neno [ $v^*$   $t_{\text{axudou}}$  [VP  $t_{\text{axudou}}$   $t_{\text{ono neno}}$ ]]]]]]]

(9) [TP [T [ $v^*$  [V axudou]]] [ $v^*P$  Xan [ $v^*$   $t_{\text{axudou}}$ ]] ||*Transfer*|| [ $\alpha P$  o neno] [VP  $t_{\text{axudou}}$   $t_{\text{ono neno}}$ ]]

In (9) each argument is transferred in a different phase, resulting in no distinctness violation.

Gallego’s object shift to [Spec, $v^*P$ ] seems obligatory in VOS orders, however, considering the Internal Subject Hypothesis (McCloskey 1997). Without DOM, I hypothesize that the two DPs marked [+ANIMATE] would be transferred in the same phase, resulting in a distinctness violation; therefore, in SOV orders, I claim that DOs marked [+ANIMATE] show DOM when the external argument is also [+ANIMATE] in order to prevent this violation. Following López (2009) and Ledgeway et al. (2019), I claim that the Spell-Out of DOM is *a*, heading KP (10).

- (10) a. Berraron ós rapaces os mestres  
 yell.PST.3PL DOM-the boys the teachers  
 b. [TP [T [ $v^*$  [V berraron]]] [ $v^*P$  [KP [K a [DP os rapaces]]] [ $v^*P$  os mestres [ $v^*$   $t_{\text{berraron}}$  [VP  $t_{\text{berraron}}$   $t_{\text{as rapaces}}$ ]]]]]]]

Furthermore, my claim that DOM in Galician is specifically linked to the [+ANIMATE] feature holds true when we take into account other featural constraints (e.g. [+SPECIFIC]) to which some languages (e.g. Spanish) are sensitive with respect to DOM, but Galician is not (10).

- (10) a. Busca a<sub>[+SPEC]/Ø<sub>[-SPEC]</sub></sub> una trabajadora María  
 search.3SG.PRS DOM/Ø a worker María  
 b. Procura a<sub>[±SPEC]/\*Ø</sub> unha traballadora María  
 search.3SG.PRS DOM/Ø a worker María  
 ‘*María is looking for a worker.*’

**SELECTED REFERENCES:** Gallego, A. 2013. Object shift in Romance. *Natural Language and Linguistic Theory* 31, 409-451. López, L. 2012. *Indefinite objects: Scrambling, Choice Functions, and Differential Object Marking*. Cambridge: MIT Press. Richards, N. 2010. *Uttering Trees*. Cambridge: MIT Press.