DIFFERENTIAL OBJECT MARKING IN BASQUE AND SPANISH DIALECTS: A MICRO-COMPARATIVE APPROACH

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Certain southwestern varieties of Basque display *Differential Object Marking* (DOM) (Bossong 1985, Aissen 2003). In these varieties, human and definite objects –specially those of first and second person– tend to bear dative marking (1), instead of the canonical absolutive expected in an ergative language like Basque (2) (Fernández & Rezac 2016, Mounole 2012, Odria 2014 2017, Rodríguez-Ordóñez 2016). Southwestern varieties of Basque are those which are in contact with Spanish, and thus, also with Spanish DOM –i.e., *a*-marking (Torrego 1998, Ormazabal & Romero 2013, a.o.). The Basque varieties situated in the French speaking area are referred as northeastern varieties and, as happens in Standard Basque, they show no DOM, since only the canonical absolutive marking is available for them.

In this talk, I compare the syntactic behavior of Basque and Spanish DOM, paying special attention to the Spanish variety spoken in the Basque speaking area –i.e., *Basque Spanish* (Landa 1995). Additionally, I distinguish the syntax of DOM from dative objects in bivalent unergative predicates both in Basque and Spanish, and conclude that the distinction between these kinds of objects is not only configurational –as has been argued in previous work–, but also categorical.

Basque and Spanish DOM share significant commonalities. Although with different cutting points, the differential marking is determined by animacy and specificity in both languages, and it is morphologically identical to the dative marking in indirect objects. Besides, Basque Spanish is particular in bearing DOM both in the nominal –i.e., *a*-marking– and in the clitic system (3) –i.e., *leísmo* (Landa 1995, Fernández-Ordóñez 1999). This makes Basque Spanish even closer to Basque DOM, where the differential marking is attested not only in the nominal, but also in the finite verbal form.

Besides, in both Basque and Spanish, DOM objects show the same morphology as the dative objects of bivalent unergative predicates of the *lagundu* (Basque) (4) / *ayudar* (Spanish) 'accompany, help' type: (i) dative marking in Basque, (ii) *a*-marking in Spanish, and (iii) cliticization with *le(s)* in (Basque) Spanish. However, in the case of bivalent unergatives, the marking of the object happens to be independent from factors like animacy and specificity and, semantically speaking, the object patterns more akin to the goal in ditransitive predicates. As a consequence, it has been argued that, contrary to the direct object configuration of DOM objects, the dative objects in bivalent unergatives show an indirect object configuration –see Ortiz de Urbina & Fernández (2016) for Basque, Torrego (2010) and Fábregas (2013) for Spanish, and Pineda (2016) for Romance languages in general.

In this talk, I make a further step in the syntactic distinction between DOM and dative objects in bivalent unergative predicates. I claim that apart from their syntactic configuration, these objects are also distinguished by their categorical status. While DOM objects pattern with causee, experiencer and possessor datives in exhibiting a DP syntactic category, the datives in bivalent unergatives behave more akin to goal datives and thus show a PP-like category. This contrast is evidenced by the licensing of depictive secondary predication, which –along with the rest of DPs– is allowed with the former group of datives, but –as happens with PPs of different sort–, is generally rejected with the latter (Odria 2017).

Examples

(1) Zu-k   ni-ri   ikusi   didazu
    you-E   I-D   see   AUX[1sgD-2sgE]

   'You have seen me.'

(2) Zu-k   ni   ikusi   nauzu
    you-E   I.A   see   AUX[1sgA-2sgE]

   'You have seen me.'

(3) Le   vi   (a Jon)   en la calle
    3sgD   saw.1sg   DOM Jon   in the street

   'I saw Jon in the street.'

(4) Jon-i   lagundu/jarraitu   diogu
    Jon-D   help/follow   AUX[3sgD-1plE]

   'We have helped/followed Jon.'

(5) Le   hemos ayudado/seguido   (al niño)
    3sgD   have.1pl helped/followed   to the child.M

   'We have helped/followed to the child.'

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