

# Licensing contexts for null objects in Rioplatense Spanish and Brazilian Portuguese (and the Object Agreement Cycle)

Matthew L. Maddox<sup>1</sup>

University of Nebraska-Lincoln & Nebraska Wesleyan University

*Null objects from a crosslinguistic and developmental perspective*  
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## Introduction<sup>2</sup>

Main data: Null objects (1b), accusative clitic doubling (2), clitic left dislocation (3).

(1) a.    ¿Compraste café? you-bought coffee 'Did you buy coffee?'	(1) b.    Sí, compré Ø. yes I-bought 'Yes, I bought some.'
(2) *(Lo <sub>i</sub> ) vimos a él <sub>i</sub> . him we-saw DOM he 'We saw him.'	(3)    Las flores <sub>i</sub> las <sub>i</sub> compré ayer. the flowers them I-bought yesterday 'The flowers, I bought them yesterday.'

-Conservative Modern Spanish exhibits clitic left-dislocation (CLLD) and accusative clitic doubling (ACD).<sup>3</sup> CLLD occurs in Old Spanish; ACD appears in 15th century.

-Conservative Modern Spanish allows some non-referential null objects but lacks null referential objects (NROs). NROs do occur in Rioplatense Spanish.<sup>4</sup>

**Main claim**: CLLD, ACD, and NROs become available diachronically as a result of the grammaticalization of object clitics; i.e., van Gelderen's (2011) Object Agreement Cycle.

- Analysis preview -- I extend Holmberg et al's (2009) D-in-T analysis of null *subjects* to null *objects*. I propose that the D-feature that licenses null objects on *v* is there due to the cycle; i.e., reanalysis of object clitics.
  - This accounts for the distribution of CLLD, ACD, and NROs and it leads to the prediction that a language with NROs will have developed less restricted accusative clitic doubling first.

<sup>1</sup> Email: [mmaddox@unl.edu](mailto:mmaddox@unl.edu); website: [www.matthewmaddox.org](http://www.matthewmaddox.org)

<sup>2</sup> This talk is based on Maddox (In press), which is set to appear in the *Journal of Historical Syntax*.

<sup>3</sup> The label 'Conservative Modern Spanish' refers to varieties that have an etymological direct object clitic system. Thus, *leísta* varieties are not included.

<sup>4</sup> Rioplatense or Porteño is a variety of Spanish spoken in the River Plate region in South America.

Presentation format: Section 1-Background; Section 2-Spanish null objects; 3-Interim summary; 4-Analysis; 5-Prediction and Portuguese variation; 6-Recap

## 1. Background

### 1.1 Language change and grammaticalization

-Van Gelderen -- (2004, 2011) linguistic cycles framework, based in the Minimalist Program (Chomsky 1995, 2001, 2004); change motivated by principles of economy.

(4) Head Preference Principle (HPP):  
Be a head rather than a phrase.

-The HPP motivates reanalysis of phrases (XP) to heads (X); e.g., demonstrative pronouns > complementizers, adverbs > aspect markers, pronouns > agreement, etc.

-Language change is cyclic; once an element is reanalyzed as a head or features on a head, a new element can merge to contribute (renew) the features that have been lost.

(5) a. *jeo ne dis* (Old French)  
b. *je ne dis pas* (Conservative Modern French)  
c. *je dis pas* (Colloquial Modern French)

- Different elements may be at distinct stages of a cycle depending on the categorial status; i.e., head or phrase.
  - Diagnostics for distinguishing heads and phrases: phonological reduction, coordination, modification, and separation from the verb.<sup>5</sup>

Object Agreement Cycle: direct object pronouns > object agreement morphology.

(6) *zri-x-t umcic.*<sup>6</sup> (Taqbaylit Berber)  
saw-I-OBJ the-cat  
'I saw the cat.'

-Object agreement morphology is absent from Latin and most varieties of modern Romance. DO clitics in Spanish are currently undergoing grammaticalization into object agreement morphology via the OAC (Maddox 2019).

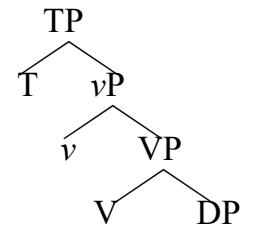
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<sup>5</sup> These diagnostics are based in part on previous work by Zwicky & Pullum (1983), Cardinaletti & Starke (1999), and Mithun (1991, 2003).

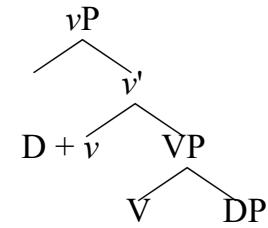
<sup>6</sup> From van Gelderen (2011) and references therein.

(7) **Stages of the Object Agreement Cycle**

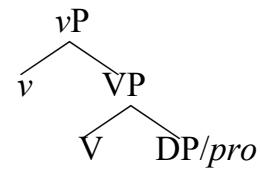
Stage (a) --

Object pronoun = DP [i $\phi$ , uAsp]  
v [u $\phi$ , iAsp]

Stage (b) --

Object pronoun/clitic = DP/D [i $\phi$ , uAsp]  
v [u $\phi$ , iAsp]

Stage (c) --

Object clitic = v [u $\phi$ , iAsp]  
Lexical DP or *pro* merges as argument**1.2 Null subjects**

-Holmberg (2005, 2010): D-feature in T licenses null subjects in consistent null subject languages.

- The null subject is a deficient  $\phi$ P with an unvalued D-feature. T has a valued D-feature. D-in-T values the  $\phi$ P's D-feature resulting in a definite, referential interpretation.
- To derive a non-referential, generic null subject, languages with D-in-T have to resort to other mechanisms such as impersonal reflexives.<sup>7</sup>

(8) Juan<sub>i</sub> compró el libro. Luego, *pro*<sub>i</sub> leyó el libro en el tren.  
 Juan bought the book later he read the book on the train.  
 'Juan bought the book. Later, he read it on the train.'

-Holmberg et al (2009): the unvalued D-in-T is valued by an overt subject or, following Frascarelli (2007), by a based-generated null Aboutness topic.

(9) Sentence 1: [ CP Juan<sub>i</sub> C [ TP <Juan><sub>i</sub> T [ vP <Juan><sub>i</sub> compró el libro ] ] ]  
 Sentence 2: [ CP Juan<sub>i</sub> C [ TP T [ vP φP<sub>i</sub> leyó el libro ... ] ] ]

<sup>7</sup> Maddox (2018) shows that, contra Holmberg (2005, 2010), consistent null subject languages such as Spanish and Italian actually do allow null generic subjects when discourse-licensed by an overt generic pronoun such as *uno*, English *one*.

## 1.3 Variation in Spanish object clitic constructions

### 1.3.1 Accusative clitic doubling

-Maddox (2019:69ff) -- patterns of interpolation, omission in VP conjuncts, and ACD can be used to identify the different stages of the OAC from Latin to Spanish. Latin and Old Spanish (OldS) were at stage (a), Conservative Modern Spanish (ModS) is at stage (b), and Rioplatense Spanish (RioS) is at stage (c) of the cycle.

-In OldS, ACD starts in the 15<sup>th</sup> century but is not the majority pattern until the 16<sup>th</sup> century (Gabriel & Rinke 2010).

(10) e matáronlo a él e a uno de los que yvan con él.  
and they-killed-him DOM he and DOM one of those that went with he  
'And they killed him and one of those that went with him.'

(Anonymous, *Crónica de Juan II de Castilla*, para. 201; 1406–1411)

(11) y después lo prendieron a él, como diremos...  
and afterwards him they-captured DOM he as we-will-tell  
'And afterwards they captured him, as we will tell...'

(Pedro Cieza de León, *Las guerras civiles peruanas*, para. 577; c. 1553–1584)

-OldS ACD was not obligatory and may be clitic right dislocation (Fontana 1993, Eberenz 2000, Gabriel & Rinke 2010).

(12) y ella muy bien veía a él.  
and she very well saw DOM he  
'And she saw him very well.'

(Anon., *Libro del conde Partinuplés*; c. 1500)

(13) Otrosy, sy matare a él & non a la muger...  
however if he-kill DOM he and not DOM the woman  
'However, if he shall kill him and not the woman...'

(Anon., *Fuero de Úbeda*; 1251–1285)

-Conservative Modern Spanish exhibits restricted ACD.

-Rioplatense Spanish allows much less restricted ACD.

- Zdrojewski (2008): there are two licensing conditions on RioS ACD.
  - The presence of differential object marking (DOM), the preposition *a*. Thus, RioS obeys Kayne's (1975) Generalization; i.e., ACD is allowed when the doubled DP is preceded by a preposition.

- The doubled DP must be [+definite]. Other features such as [+human] and [+specific] are irrelevant since all DPs preceded by DOM already include those features.<sup>8</sup>

### 1.3.2 Clitic-left dislocation

-Old Spanish -- canonical CLLD

(16) [La tierra del Rey Alfonso]<sub>i</sub> esta noch la<sub>i</sub> podemos quitar.  
 the land of-the king Alfonso this night it we-can leave  
 'Tonight we can leave King Alfonso's land.'

(Anonymous, *El Cid*, l. 423; c. 1207)

(17) [vuestras mannas]<sub>i</sub> bien las<sub>i</sub> sabemos.  
 your abilities well them we-know  
 'We know your abilities well.'

(Anonymous, *Razones d'Amor*, l. 175; c. 1205)

-Conservative Modern Spanish -- canonical CLLD<sup>9</sup>

(18) a. Las flores<sub>i</sub> las<sub>i</sub> compré ayer.  
 the flowers them I-bought yesterday  
 'The flowers, I bought them yesterday.'

b. \*(A) Juan<sub>i</sub> lo<sub>i</sub> vimos en la fiesta.  
 DOM Juan him we-saw at the party  
 'Juan, we saw him at the party.'

-Rioplatense Spanish -- CLLD + epithets

(19) [A mi mejor amiga]<sub>i</sub>, la<sub>i</sub> vi [a esa loca linda]<sub>i</sub> el jueves.  
 DOM my best friend her I-saw DOM that crazy beautiful the Thurs.  
 'I saw my best friend, that crazy beautiful girl, on Thursday.'

(20) [A Menem]<sub>i</sub>, nadie lo<sub>i</sub> votará [a ese estafador sinvergüenza]<sub>i</sub>.  
 DOM Menem no-one him will-vote DOM that swindler shameless  
 'Menem, no one will vote for that shameless swindler.'

<sup>8</sup> See Zdrojewski (2008:22ff) for a critique of Suñer's (1988) claim that specificity is the critical feature licensing ACD.

<sup>9</sup> The data in (18) are adapted from Olarrea (2012). Examples (19) and (20) are from Suñer (2006).

- Suñer (2006): CLLD with epithets in RioS patterns like canonical CLLD. Both are recursive in that more than one dislocate is allowed. Both may occur in matrix or embedded clauses. They are both sensitive to selective islands. They do not license parasitic gaps or display Weak Crossover Effects. And, finally, both pattern the same vis-à-vis reconstruction.
  - Analysis -- the dislocate is base-generated in a Topic Phrase. The clitic heads a BigDP with the epithet as its complement. In CLLDs without epithets, *pro* is the complement of the D-clitic head. The dislocate, the clitic, and the epithet are all connected via long-distance agreement.<sup>10</sup>

## 2. Spanish null objects

### 2.1 Conservative Modern Spanish null objects

-ModS -- some null objects allowed under certain conditions.

(21) a. *¿Compraste un/el libro<sub>i</sub>?*<sup>11</sup>  
           you-bought a/the book  
           ‘Did you buy a/the book?’

      b. *Sí, \*(lo<sub>i</sub>) compré.*  
           it I-bought  
           ‘Yes, I bought it.’

(22) a. *¿Compraste café?*  
           you-bought coffee  
           ‘Did you buy coffee?’

      b. *Sí, compré Ø.*  
           yes I-bought  
           ‘Yes, I bought some.’

(23) a. *¿Compraste algunos regalos?*  
           you-bought any gifts  
           ‘Did you buy any gifts?’

      b. *Sí, compré \*(algunos).*  
           yes I-bought some  
           ‘Yes, I bought some.’

- Campos (1986): NOs allowed when indefinite; analysis – trace of an operator.

<sup>10</sup> See López (2009:229) for defense of a movement analysis of CLLD with epithets, *contra* Suñer (2006). For more on CLLD with epithets, see also Estigarribia (2013, 2017).

<sup>11</sup> The data in (21) and (22) are adapted from Campos (1986).

- Clements (1994): NOs must be indefinite but also mass nouns or bare plurals; NOs are null realizations of a partitive pronoun.

-ModS null objects also occur in contexts other than question/answer.<sup>12</sup>

(24) Fui a la tienda a comprar café<sub>i</sub> pero no tenían Ø.  
 I-went to the store to buy coffee but not it they-had  
 'I went to the store to buy coffee but they did not have it.'

(25) Fui a la tienda a comprar el periódico<sub>i</sub> pero no \*(lo<sub>i</sub>) tenían.  
 I-went to the store to buy the newspaper but not it they-had  
 'I went to the store to buy the newspaper but they did not have it.'

## 2.2 Old Spanish null objects

-Putative NOs identified and analyzed as VP-ellipsis in Martins (2003).

(26) a. ¿I traedes uostros escriptos?  
 and you-bring your books  
 'And did you bring your books?  
 b. Rei, si traemos Ø.  
 king yes we-bring  
 'Yes King, we do.'

(12th century; cf. Gifford & Hodcroft 1959:42)

(27) a. Pues ¿quien esta arriba?  
 well who is above  
 'Well, who is upstairs?'  
 b. ¿Quiéreslo saber?  
 you-want-it know  
 'Do you want to know?  
 c. Quiero.  
 I-want  
 'Yes, I do.'

(Late 15th century; Cejador y Frauca 1913:62)

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<sup>12</sup> The data in (24) and (25) are adapted from Schwenter (2006).

(28) a. *¿Sois vos alguno dellos?*  
 you-are you anyone of-them  
 ‘Are you one of them?’

b. *Si soy.*  
 yes I-am  
 ‘Yes, I am.’

(16th century; Cf. Keniston 1937:593)

- Martins (2003): languages with VP-ellipsis have a  $\Sigma$ -head with a strong V-feature; it encodes polarity values like affirmation, negation, and modality.
  - In OldS, V moves to  $\Sigma$ , which licenses the null VP in VP-ellipsis.
  - In ModS,  $\Sigma$  lacks the strong V-feature and thus V only moves as high as AgrS. Thus, null VPs are no longer allowed. *Sí* was reanalyzed as a  $\Sigma$ -head and this triggered the change in the V-feature on  $\Sigma$  from strong to weak.

### 2.3 Null object variation in Latin American Spanish

-Cyrino (2012, 2016) -- “American” or “South American” Spanish allows null objects inside a VP ellipsis (29), cognate null objects (30), omission of the propositional clitic *lo* (31), and null objects with bare plurals or indefinites as antecedents (32).<sup>13</sup>

(29) a. *¿Extrañas mucho a tu papá?*  
 you-miss a-lot DOM your father  
 ‘Do you miss your father a lot?’

b. *Sí, sí extraño Ø.*  
 yes yes I-miss him  
 ‘Yes, yes I miss him.’ (Camacho et al 1997)

(30) *Tienes este mural de cuna o portapañales que se puede colocar en un perchero de pared o en el lateral del cambiador de la cuna.*  
 you-have this board of crib or diaper-holder that Refl can place in a rack of wall or in the side of-the diaper-changer of the crib  
 También se puede adaptar Ø a la barra de la cuna.  
 also Refl can adapt it to the bar of the crib  
 ‘You have this crib board or diaper holder that can be placed on a wall rack or at the side of the diaper changer of the crib. You can also adapt it to the crib bar.

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<sup>13</sup> See Sánchez (1999) for an analysis of null referential objects in Spanish in contact with Quechua.

(31) ...y si te interesa saber quienes leen los blogs y quienes son, and if you it-interests know who read the blogs and who they-are podrías hacer un pequeño esfuerzo e investigar Ø. you-could make a little effort and investigate it 'And if you are interested in knowing who reads blogs and who they are, you could make a little effort and investigate it.'

(32) Quería comprar libros pero no encontraba Ø. I-wanted buy books but not found them 'I wanted to buy books but I didn't find them.'  
(Alamillo & Schwenter 2007)

## 2.4 Rioplatense Spanish null objects

### 2.4.1 Masullo (2003, 2017)

-RioS allows a type of NO whose antecedent must be recovered from the discourse.<sup>14</sup>

(33) a. Mozo, le pedí agua con gas. waiter Cl.Dat.3S I-asked water with gas  
'Waiter, I asked you for water with gas.'

b. Bueno, ahora le cambiamos Ø. okay now Cl.Dat.3S we-change it  
'Okay, we'll change it for you now'  
(Masullo 2003, cited in Cyrino 2012:49)

(34) a. Queremos el postre. b. Ya traigo Ø. we-want the dessert now I-bring it  
'We want dessert.' 'I'm bringing it now.'  
(from Masullo p.c. cited in Schwenter (2006))

(35) a. ¿Dónde guardaste los archivos? where you-placed the files  
'Where did you place the files?'  
b. \*Guardé Ø en el cajón del escritorio. I-placed them in the drawer of-the desk  
'I placed them in the desk drawer.'  
(Masullo 2003, cited in Cyrino 2012:49)

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<sup>14</sup> The data in (36) to (39) are adapted from Masullo (2017).

(36) ¡Tené  $\emptyset$ !  
have.Imp.2S it  
'Have/take it!' (the package)

(37) ¿Ponemos  $\emptyset$  en una bolsa?  
put.Pres.Ind.1P them in a bag  
'Shall we put them in a bag? (articles bought at the supermarket)

(38) ¿Te firmé  $\emptyset$ ?  
Cl.Dat.2S signed.Pret.Ind.1S it  
'Did I sign it for you? (the coupon)

(39) ¡Mozo! Ahí le dejé  $\emptyset$ .  
waiter there Cl.3S.Dat left.Pret.Ind.1S it  
'Waiter! I left it there for you.' (money to pay for the coffee)

- Masullo's (2003) analysis, as summarized in Cyrino (2012) -- the availability of NRO's is grammaticalized in the choice of tense and aspect.
- Masullo (2017): null object in RioS is a variable bound by an operator, following Huang (1984) and Campos (1986). The operator merges as complement to V and moves from there up to the specifier of a focus projection, FocP. Here, the operator is bound by a null topic in TopP.
  - Pragmatic/temporal restrictions -- the referent must be prominent in the situational context; i.e., the antecedent of the null object cannot refer to anything outside of the visual or perceptual field of the speakers.
  - The antecedent has to be anchored in the tense of the utterance. Thus, the majority of the acceptable null objects are in present tense or imperative mood, and what Masullo (p. 66) refers to as "punctual" aspect (*aspeto puntual*). These are the tense and aspect that ensure that the event is anchored in the time. And this allows that the null object, the operator-variable chain, receives a referential index.

(40) [ForceP  $F_i$  [TopP Top<sub>deictic-i</sub> [FocP OP<sub>i</sub> ... [TP T<sub>i</sub> [AspP Asp<sub>punctual-i</sub> [VP  $e_i$  ...]]]]]]]

## 2.4.2 Some additional novel data

-My informants: preterite NROs generally disallowed (41-42) but compare with (43).

(41) a. ¿Dónde encontraste esa camisa?  
       where bought.Pret.Ind.2S that shirt  
       ‘Where did you buy that shirt?’

b. \*Compré Ø en la tienda.  
       bought.Pret.Ind.1S it in the store  
       ‘I bought it in the store.’

(42) a. ¿Viste la nueva película de George Clooney?  
       see.Pret.Ind.2S the new film of George Clooney  
       ‘Did you see the new George Clooney film?’

b. \*Sí, fui a ver Ø con María.  
       yes went.Pret.Ind.2S to see it with María  
       ‘Yes, I went to see it with María.’

(43) Situation: You and your partner are at the dinner table having a conversation. Your partner leaves to check on the children. Your partner observes the children in their room putting their toys in a box. S/he returns to the dinner table and you ask her/him:

a. ¿Guardaron Ø? (the toys)  
       put-away.Pret.Ind.3P them  
       ‘Did they put them away?’

b. ¿Los guardaron?  
       them put-away.Pret.Ind.3P  
       ‘Did they put them away?’

c. \*¿Guardaron Ø en la caja?  
       put-away.Pret.Ind.3P them in the box  
       ‘Did they put them away in the box?’

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### 3. Interim summary

Table 1. Diachronic and synchronic variation in Spanish

	Old Spanish	Conservative Modern Spanish	Rioplatense Spanish
<b>Clitic-left dislocation</b>	✓	✓ Epithets disallowed	✓ Epithets allowed
<b>Accusative clitic doubling</b>	✗	✓ [-pronominal] disallowed	✓ [-pronominal] allowed
<b>Null referential objects</b>	✗	✗	✓

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## 4. Licensing null objects via D-in-*v*

Main claim: the distributional patterns of null objects (as well as ACD and CLLD) are tied to the stages of the Object Agreement Cycle.

(44) Revised stages of the Object Agreement Cycle (Maddox 2019)

Stage (a): the pronoun heads a full DP that merges as complement and can undergo subsequent movement; i.e., object movement.

Stage (b): pronoun merges in DP. In ACD, the whole DP moves to Spec, *v*. M-merger with *v* results in realization of upper copy as a D-clitic; both the high and low copy of the DP object are spelled out.

Stage (c): clitic/pronoun is reanalyzed as features of *v*; *pro* or lexical object can merge to renew cycle. ACD is object agreement between the clitic and the lexical object.

-Stages of the OAC in the history of Spanish

stage (a) -- Old Spanish

stage (b) -- Conservative Modern Spanish

stage (c) -- Rioplatense Spanish.

### 4.1 Previous studies

#### 4.1.1 Harizanov (2014) - Bulgarian clitic doubling

- Clitic doubling is A-movement based on diagnostics of binding and quantifier stranding. The verbal complement is a KP with unvalued Case and  $\phi$ -features. When the KP merges as complement it probes for a goal to have its features valued; i.e., Agree. The *v*-head has an optional EPP-feature which can trigger movement of the KP object to Spec, *v*.
  - Following Matushansky (2006), the K-head m-merges with *v* and the K+*v* compound head is realized as a clitic. Both the clitic and its associate are pronounced in clitic doubling constructions via multiple spell-out.

#### 4.1.2 Kramer (2014) -- Amharic object marker

- The Amharic object marker in ACD is a doubled clitic based on diagnostics such as optionality, number of marker per clause, presence/absence of an obligatory default, etc.; i.e., it is not object agreement in the true sense.

- Morphological properties also suggest it is D rather than *v*, thus instances of ACD are just that, a doubled clitic construction and not object agreement.
  - Since the object marker affects binding relationships, it is subject to A-movement. The “doubled” object merges as DP verbal complement and then object moves to Spec,*v*, where it undergoes m-merger with *v*.
  - In ACD, there are two copies of the DP object: one in argument position and the other in Spec,*v*. Both copies are pronounced; they are distinct at PF.

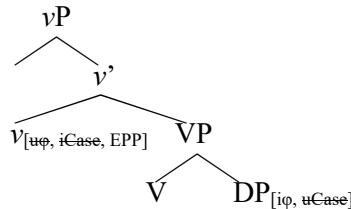
## 4.2 Analysis: Extension of Harizanov (2014) and Kramer (2014)

### 4.2.1 Accusative clitic doubling

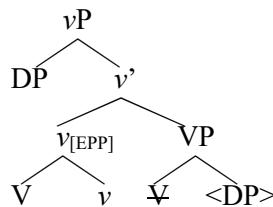
-ACD actually occurs at stages (b) and (c), which though they appear to be superficially identical strings, they are derivationally distinct. I propose a copy analysis for stage (b) ACD; movement of the DP clitic to Spec,*v*, then m-merger.<sup>15</sup>

(45) Stage (b) Accusative clitic doubling – Conservative Modern Spanish

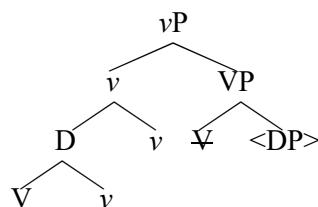
Step 1 → Object DP merges and Agrees with *v*.



Step 2 → V moves to *v*; Object DP moves to Spec,*v*.



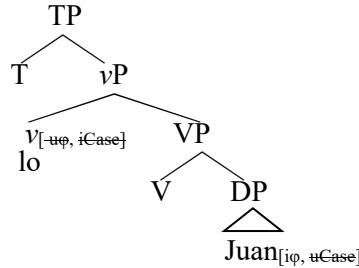
Step 3 → M-merger between object DP and *v*.



<sup>15</sup> See Ledgeway (2000) for a similar analysis of clitic doubling in Neapolitan.

-Stage (c) ACD -- the clitic is the realization of the *v*-head and the doubled object merges as complement; object agreement with renewal via a lexical object.<sup>16</sup>

(46) Stage (c) Accusative clitic doubling – Rioplatense Spanish



-M-merger is the synchronic equivalent of diachronic reanalysis. Stage (b) ACD serves as Primary Linguistic Data to language learners, who reanalyze the complex head formed by the D-clitic and *v* as object agreement (stage c).

#### 4.2.2 Clitic left dislocation

##### 4.2.2.1 Conservative Modern Spanish - stage (b) CLDD

-The dislocated topic *las flores* is base-generated.

(47) [Las flores]<sub>i</sub> yo las<sub>i</sub> compré ayer.  
           the flowers I them bought yesterday  
           ‘The flowers, I bought them yesterday.’

-The clitic head of a DP merges as V complement. It then moves and adjoins to *v*, leaving a copy. There is no m-merger because only the D-head moved. Topic, D-head, and original copy form a chain, resulting in coreferential interpretation.<sup>17</sup>

(48) [H-TopP las flores<sub>i</sub> [TP yo [vP <yo> las<sub>i</sub>-v [ VP compré <las<sub>i</sub>> ]]]]

##### 4.2.2.2 Old Spanish - stage (a) CLLD

-CLLD is actually a base-generated topic with a resumptive DP pronoun.

<sup>16</sup> I assume the differential object marker *a* is the morphological realization of accusative case and is inserted post-syntactically, similar to Zdrojewski (2008).

<sup>17</sup> In an earlier version, I adopted Harizanov’s (2014) analysis of CLLD for Conservative Spanish whereby m-merger still takes place, as in ACD, and the original copy of the object moves to the left periphery. However, as a reviewer points out, this incorrectly predicts that any object should be able to be doubled then since basically any object can occur in CLLD structures. This current analysis better captures the facts since in Conservative Spanish ACD is restricted to pronominal objects.

(49) vuestras manñas<sub>i</sub> bien las<sub>i</sub> sabemos.  
 your abilities well them we-know  
 'We know your abilities well.'  
 (Anonymous, *Razones d'Amor*, l. 175; c. 1205)

-The clitic merges within a DP complement where it checks Case, receives its theta-role, and values the  $\varphi$ -features on *v*. Object movement in OldS is triggered by an optional EPP-feature on *v* (Mackenzie & van der Wurff 2012, Mensching 2012, Maddox 2019). This feature is also at work in OldS CLLD; i.e., the clitic DP moves to Spec,*v*. The dislocated topic is base-generated in the left-periphery.

#### 4.2.2.3 Rioplatense Spanish - stage (c) CLLD

-RioS is at stage (c) of the OAC, where the clitic is the spell-out of *v*. In ACD, the complement position is open for a lexical object or *pro*. This is the same for CLLD, which is why only in RioS that CLLD can occur with epithets.

(50) A mi mejor amiga<sub>i</sub>, la<sub>i</sub> vi a esa loca linda<sub>i</sub> el jueves.  
 DOM my best friend her I-saw DOM that crazy beautiful theThursday  
 'I saw my best friend, that crazy beautiful girl, on Thursday.'

-Topic is base-generated, clitic is the realization of *v*; epithet merges as complement.

(51) [H-TopP a mi mejor amiga [TP *pro* [vP <*pro*> v<sub>la</sub> [VP vi a esa loca linda ]]]]

#### 4.2.3 Null referential objects in Rioplatense: Extension of Holmberg et al (2009)

-RioS NROs are licensed by a D-feature in *v*. The ingredients required for a null argument are as follows: 1) a D-feature on a functional head (T for subjects), 2) incorporation of a  $\varphi$ P, and 3) a base-generated topic.

(52) a. Queremos el postre. we-want the dessert 'We want dessert.'	(52) b. Ya traigo Ø. now I-bring it 'I'm bringing it now.'
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(from Masullo p.c. cited in Schwenter 2006)

- Proposal: unvalued D-feature on *v*;  $\varphi$ P merges as complement and *v* probes the  $\varphi$ P to have its unvalued  $\varphi$ -features valued. The  $\varphi$ P has its Case feature valued by *v*.
  - The  $\varphi$ P is a defective probe since *v*'s features are a superset of the  $\varphi$ P's; i.e. *v* has the unvalued D-feature which the  $\varphi$ P lacks. Since the  $\varphi$ P is defective it incorporates into *v*, chain reduction applies and the  $\varphi$ P is unpronounced.

- The D-feature on  $v$  is valued by a null topic, *el poste*, introduced into the discourse by the interlocutor.

(53)  $[_{L\text{-TopP}} \underline{\text{el poste}}_i [_{vP} v [_{VP} \text{traigo } \varphi P_i ]]]$

Feature makeup of  
the relevant elements.

$v$ , [D: \_\_, φ: \_\_, Case: Acc]  
 $\varphi P$ , [φ: 3S, Case: \_\_]  
 $\text{el poste}$ , [D: i]

-In Holmberg et al (2009), topics are only “definite” in the sense that they have a referential index which is shared between the topic and  $\varphi P$  through Agree. We can assume that if the topic is indefinite, so will the null object be. More importantly, the topic and null object will be coreferential.

(54) a. Tengo un calmante<sub>i</sub> para dormir.  
 I-have a sedative to sleep  
 ‘I have a sedative in order to sleep.’

b. No tomes *pro*<sub>i</sub>. Te va a hacer mal.  
 not take it you it-goes to make ill  
 ‘Don’t take it. It will make you ill.’

(from Schwenter 2006:28)

(55)  $[_{TP} T [_{NegP} \text{no} [_{L\text{-TopP}} \underline{\text{un calmante}}_k [_{vP} v [_{VP} \text{tomes } \varphi P_k ]]]]$

Feature makeup of  
the relevant elements.

$v$ , [D: \_\_, φ: \_\_, Case: Acc]  
 $\varphi P$ , [φ: 3S, Case: \_\_]  
 $\text{un calmante}$ , [D: k]

### 4.3 CLLD, ACD, NROs and stages of the OAC

- Each construction becomes available at a different stage of the cycle as a result of the categorial status of the clitic.
  - In OldS and ModS CLLD, there is no D-feature in  $v$ . In OldS the clitic merges in a DP. In ModS the clitic heads a DP that moves to Spec,  $v$  and undergoes m-merger with  $v$  (DP/D- $v$ ) in ACD. The only D-feature involved is on the clitic itself.
  - It is only at stage (b) ACD where the clitic DP moves to Spec,  $v$ , a position where it is associated with  $v$  via m-merger. Thus, ACD feeds reanalysis of the clitic as  $v$ . Once the clitic is fully reanalyzed as  $v$  (stage c), NROs become possible, as in RioS, because  $v$  now has a D-feature.

- As is expected in grammaticalization cycles, the agreement morphology (the clitic) will eventually disappear through deflection.<sup>18</sup> The overt realization of the D-feature is no longer expressed, but there is still a D-feature on *v* and thus NROs are still licensed.

(56) Stage (a), OldS: clitic = DP; only CLLD allowed  
 Stage (b): ModS clitic = DP/D-*v*; CLLD and restricted ACD allowed  
 Stage (c): RioS clitic = *v*; CLLD + epithets, less restricted ACD, NROs

## 5. A prediction and Portuguese variation<sup>19</sup>

Prediction: If a language allows NROs it will develop less restricted ACD first.<sup>20</sup>

-NROs arise after ACD because it is ACD where m-merger of the object DP and *v* takes place. Since NROs are licensed by D-in-*v*, there must be an operation whereby D becomes associated with *v*; i.e., the m-merger operation.

### 5.1 Old Portuguese

-Old Portuguese -- CLLD (57); ACD apparently restricted to pronominal objects (58).

(57) [A verdade da questa profecia]<sub>i</sub> mais claramente a<sub>i</sub> veemos cadadia...  
 the truth of-this prophecy more clearly it we-see every-day  
 'The truth of this prophecy, we see it more clearly every day.'  
 (*Os Diálogos de São Gregório*, 14th cent.;  
 cited in Ribeiro & Torres Morais 2012:101)

(58) e chagarom-no<sub>i</sub> a el<sub>i</sub> de muitas chagas.  
 and they-injured-him to him of many injuries  
 'and they injured him with many injuries.'  
 (*A Demanda do Santo Graal*, 13th century; cited  
 in Castilho (2005:33)).

Problems: Was ACD in Old Portuguese limited to pronominal objects or not? Was it optional and how frequently does it occur? Could it be clitic right dislocation?

- NROs -- very few examples per Jansen (2016) from the 14th and 15th centuries. If this was prior to the development of unrestricted ACD, it would be consistent with

<sup>18</sup> See van Gelderen (2011:42).

<sup>19</sup> See Maddox (In press) for discussion of variation in Latin, French, Italian, and Romanian.

<sup>20</sup> This prediction does not apply to radical or discourse argument drop languages like Chinese.

my prediction. Nevertheless, it is difficult to make any conclusions without further examination of diachronic patterns of ACD and CLLD.

## 5.2 Brazilian Portuguese (BP)

-CLLD can occur (59a) but the clitic tends to be replaced by a full pronoun like *ela* as in (59b) below. Nevertheless, CLLD with epithets is not acceptable (59c).

(59) a. [A minha amiga]<sub>i</sub>, eu a<sub>i</sub> vi na quinta.<sup>21</sup>  
 the my friend I her saw on-the farm  
 b. [A minha amiga]<sub>i</sub>, eu vi ela<sub>i</sub> na quinta.  
 the my friend I saw her on-the farm  
 ‘My friend, I saw her on the farm.’  
 c. \*[A minha amiga]<sub>i</sub>, eu a<sub>i</sub> vi [aquele menina bonita]<sub>i</sub> na quinta.  
 the my friend I her saw that girl beautiful on-the farm  
 ‘My friend, I saw that beautiful girl on the farm.’

-Machado Rocha & Ramos (2016) show that ACD occurs optionally in conservative written BP (60) and in a variety spoken in Minas Gerais, where it is restricted to first- and second-person pronominal objects (61).

(60) Viu-me a mim. he-saw-me to me ‘He saw me.’	(61) a. Ele me <sub>i</sub> ajuda eu <sub>i</sub> . ‘He helps me.’ b. Eu te <sub>i</sub> ajudo você <sub>i</sub> . ‘I help you.’
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(Machado-Rocha & Ramos 2016)

-Null objects are allowed in a wide variety of contexts. Most frequently the antecedent is third-person and inanimate (Schwenter 2006).

(62) O João comprou [um livro novo]<sub>i</sub>. Ontem ele trouxe Ø<sub>i</sub> à aula.  
 the Juan bought a book new yesterday he brought it to class  
 ‘Juan bought a new book. Yesterday he brought it to class.’

(from Schwenter 2006)

- Cyrino (2012:54ff) -- BP NOs are characterized by the following properties:
  - have an inanimate antecedent and occurring in later coordinate clauses (63).
  - have an inanimate antecedent not related to the lexical content of the object’s verb (64).

<sup>21</sup> I thank Janaina Carvalho for these data via personal communication.

- have a specific interpretation recoverable from an inanimate antecedent (65)
- have a sloppy identity interpretation recoverable from an inanimate antecedent (66).<sup>22</sup>

(63) a. João descascou a banana e Maria comeu Ø.

João peeled the banana and Maria ate it

‘João peeled the banana and Maria ate it.’

b. \*João viu Maria e Pedro beijou Ø.

João saw Maria and Pedro kissed her

‘João saw Maria and Pedro kissed her.’

(64) a. Maria comprou aquela saia quando ela viu Ø na loja.

Maria bought that skirt when she saw it in-the shop

‘Maria bought that skirt when she saw it in the shop.’

b. \*Maria beijou aquele rapaz quando ela viu Ø na escola.

Maria kissed that boy when she saw him in-the school

‘Maria kissed that boy when she saw him in the school.’

(65) Minha avó fez sushis porque seus filhos queriam my grandmother made sushi because her children wanted to-continuar comendo Ø depois que voltaram da praia. continue eating them after that they-returned from-the beach ‘My grandmother made sushi because her children wanted to continue eating them after they returned from the beach.’

(66) Ontem o João pôs o dinheiro no cofre, mas Pedro guardou Ø yesterday the João put the money in-the safe but Pedro kept it na gaveta. in-the drawer

‘Yesterday João put the money in the safe but Pedro kept it in the drawer.’

-BP NOS are distinct from those in American Spanish since only the former allow sloppy readings and have inanimate antecedents (Cyrino 2012).

- BP might be at a late stage of the OAC since NOS are frequent; ACD has been lost. BP may be undergoing deflection.
  - To truly test my prediction in BP, a diachronic analysis of ACD in BP specifically needs to be conducted.

<sup>22</sup> These data are adapted from Cyrino (2012:54-55), examples (33)-(36).

- Expectation: BP would exhibit unrestricted ACD before it began to allow NOS and lose object clitics.

### 5.3 European Portuguese (EP)

-EP exhibits CLLD (67) and patterns ModS with respect to ACD (68).

(67) A sopa<sub>i</sub> comeu-a<sub>i</sub> O Paulo.  
 the soup ate-it the Paul  
 ‘Paul ate the soup.’ (from Farren 2016)

(68) a. Vi-\*(os) a eles  
 I-saw-them DOM them  
 ‘I saw them.’

b. Vi-(\*os) aos meninos  
 I-saw-them DOM-the boys  
 ‘I saw the boys.’

(from Dubert & Galves 2016:434)

c. Vimo-(\*lo) ao João.  
 we-saw-him DOM-the João  
 ‘We saw João.’

(from Magro 2019:33)

-EP also allows NROs (69), but not to the same extent as BP; i.e. one difference is EP NROs cannot occur in islands (70).

(69) A Joana viu Ø na TV ontem.  
 the Joana saw it on-the TV yesterday  
 ‘Joana saw it/him/her/them on TV yesterday.’

(from Raposo 1986)

(70) \*O pirata partiu para as Caraíbas depois de ter guardado Ø no  
 the pirate left for the Caribbean after of having placed it in-the  
 cofre.  
 safe  
 ‘The pirate left for the Caribbean after having placed it in the safe.’

-These patterns suggest EP is at an earlier stage of the OAC. Patterns of omission in VP conjuncts (71) and interpolation (72) also support this.

(71) Apenas a minha mãe me ajudou e (me) incentivou.  
 only the my mother me helped and me encouraged  
 ‘Only my mother helped me and encouraged me.’  
 (from Luís & Kaiser 2016:218)

(72) Se me não engano, ela faz anos a 21 de janeiro.  
 if me not mistake she makes years at 21 of January  
 ‘If I am not mistaken, her birthday is on January 21.’  
 (from Luís & Kaiser 2016:218)

-Compare with OldS (73-74) and ModS (75-76):

(73)  $lo_i$  mató y  $\emptyset_i$  despedaçó...  
 him it-killed and him it-tore-apart  
 ‘It killed him and tore him apart...’  
 (Pedro Mejía, *Silva de varia lección*; c. 1540-1550)

(74) ella si me non engaña, paresce que ama a mí.  
 she if me not deceives it-seems that she-loves DOM me  
 ‘She, if she is not deceiving me, it seems that she loves me.’  
 (Juan Ruiz, *Libro de Buen Amor*; 1330-1343)

(75)  $lo_i$  mató y \*( $lo_i$ ) despedazó.  
 him it-killed and him it-tore-apart  
 ‘It killed him and tore him apart.’

(76) Si (\*me) no \*(me) engaño...  
 if me not me I-deceive  
 ‘If I do not deceive myself.’

Problem: If EP patterns like OldS then why does EP allow NROs but OldS apparently not, at least not to the same extent?

- NROs in EP and the NROs in BP and RioS may not be the same element.
  - There is not currently a consensus on the analysis of null objects in EP and BP (v. Rinke et al 2018), and not much theoretical work has been done on null objects in RioS.
  - EP NROs may be a Latin relic unrelated to the OAC.<sup>23</sup> NROs in BP and RioS may actually be connected to the grammaticalization of object clitics.

<sup>23</sup> This is also inferred in Luraghi (2004:247).

- Alternatively, Ledgeway (2012:74) suggests, following Galves (1993) and Morais (2003), that BP NROs may be an independent development related to the loss of BP null subjects. At this point these suggestions are merely speculative and for now I leave them to be addressed in future research.

## 6. Recap

-Spanish varieties are at different stages of the Object Agreement Cycle. Old Spanish is stage (a), Conservative Modern Spanish is stage (b), Rioplatense Spanish is at stage (c). CLLD, ACD, and NROs become available as the OAC progresses.

-The derivation of CLLD and ACD will vary depending on the stage of the OAC. NROs become available last. I analyzed NROs in Rioplatense as being licensed via a D-feature in *v*. This D-feature is there due to reanalysis of the D-clitic as the *v*-head.

-Different varieties of Spanish and Portuguese are at distinct stages of the OAC.<sup>24</sup>

(77)

OldS	→ Stage (a): clitic = DP; only CLLD
EP, ModS	→ Stage (b): clitic = DP/D- <i>v</i> ; CLLD and ACD
RioS	→ Stage (c): clitic = <i>v</i> ; CLLD + epithets, ACD, NROs

Prediction: If a language allows NROs it will have developed less restricted ACD first. NROs arise after ACD because it is ACD where m-merger of the object DP and *v* takes place. This prediction appears to hold throughout Spanish and Portuguese, though more work needs to be done on the different types of null objects allowed.

-My analysis provides an explanation for CLLD with epithets in Rioplatense since it is only in this variety that the clitic is fully grammaticalized as object agreement, a *v*-head, leaving the verbal complement position open for the epithet to merge.

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<sup>24</sup> I leave out Brazilian Portuguese here because it is difficult to assign a stage to it at this point. A clearer understanding of the diachrony of ACD in this language will shed further light on this problem.

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