

Co-occurrence restrictions and DOM: the view from Ragusa

Cristina Guardiano and Monica Alexandrina Irimia
Università degli Studi di Modena e Reggio Emilia

Setting the stage. Although less understood, a crucial trait of differential object marking (DOM) in many Romance languages is its sensitivity to the sentential syntactic configuration, going beyond better studied interactions with traits such as an *animacy*, *humanness*, *referentiality*, etc. For example, it has been shown that DOM leads to ungrammaticality when the structure contains a dative which is clitic doubled using a dative clitic in several varieties of Spanish (see especially Ormazabal and Romero 2013a, b, 2019, López 2012, Bleam 2000, or Zdrojewski 2008, a.o.), in Galician (Gravely and Irimia 2022) or Catalan (Irimia and Pineda 2021). In Romanian, instead, if a clitic doubled dative might produce ungrammaticality with DOM in some contexts (Cornilescu 2020, Tigău 2021), accusative clitic doubling of DOM acts as a repair strategy (Irimia 2021). Here, we discuss available, as well as novel data from the Sicilian dialect of Ragusa (Guardiano 1999, 2000, 2010, 2022). The guiding question is: what role does Ragusa DOM play in sentential syntax, as shown by co-occurrence restrictions?

The data. First, a few general notes are in order regarding Ragusa DOM. As seen from the examples below, Ragusa is similar to standard Spanish in that DOM uses *a* (homophonous with the ‘dative’ preposition) which is obligatory not only on personal pronouns and human proper names, but also on all referential definite human DPs. Guardiano (2022) has demonstrated that, in the dialect of Ragusa, marked objects must project at least a D head (DOM is excluded on bare nouns). On the other hand, Ragusa is similar to Romanian in that accusative clitic doubling of human referential DPs is possible.

DOM, D, licensing, and Case. For Romance languages with robust DOM, numerous accounts have pointed to the syntactic nature of this phenomenon, which manipulates objects with a complex internal structure (e.g., KP for López 2012 or Ormazabal and Romero 2013a, b, a [PERSON] specification in Cornilescu 2000, or a special feature in the extended nominal projection for Romanian – Hill and Mardale 2021, a.o.). We show that Ragusa DOM is indeed a syntactic mechanism because it triggers co-occurrence restrictions which cannot be easily derived in the morphology. Moreover, the data under analysis allow us to make remarks about the licensing position of marked and unmarked objects.

(i) **DOM and co-occurrence restrictions.** In (1), we see that DOM cannot co-occur with a clitic doubled dative (unless DOM is clitic doubled too, as in 2).

(1) (*cci) mannamu **a** stu malatu o dditturi. (Ragusa)
CL.DAT3 send.1PL DOM this sick person DAT.DEF.M.SG doctor
Intended: ‘We are sending this sick person to the doctor.’

(2) cc’u mannamu **a** stu malatu o dditturi. (Ragusa)
CL.DAT3.ACC.3 send.1PL DOM this sick person DAT.DEF.M.SG doctor
‘We are sending this sick person to the doctor.’

As mentioned above, similar data have been discussed for other Romance languages, with the clash being attributed to both DOM and clitic doubled datives needing to undergo licensing in a domain in which there is only one licenser available. These results might, in turn, be taken to confirm recent analyses (López 2012, Ledgeway et al. 2019, a.o.), under which DOM can be unified as signaling a type of accusative which needs obligatory licensing (in terms of Case), by functional heads in the clausal spine (*v*, T, C, etc.). Generally, such licensing is assumed to impose raising of DOM to a higher position than unmarked nominals (see especially López 2012, Baker 2015, a.o.). For López (2012), DOM implies licensing after raising to a position above VP, but below *v*; the latter licenses the [uC] feature on DOM which needs to raise to Spec, α (α a functional head encoding a bundle of animacy, specificity, goal-related and telicity

features). In this line of reasoning, the problem with example (1) is that the clitic doubled dative also needs licensing, but only one relevant licenser is available in this configuration (3). In turn, unmarked direct objects might not need licensing, as they might not contain [uC].

- (3)[ν ...[α_P DOM_[uC] [α IO_{DAT} α =Cl_{DAT} [ν_P V <DOM>]]]] (adapting López 2012)
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(ii) **DOM and raising.** Although examples such as (1) support the syntactic licensing accounts for DOM, an examination of the structural constraints on direct objects in the language does not grant the conclusion that there is a difference in raising between DOM and unmarked objects. For example, unmarked and marked nominals can equally bind into indirect objects (IOs), irrespective of whether they precede or follow the IO overtly, as in (4) or (5). This indicates that both classes can be found higher than the IO (as opposed to Spanish, where only DOM has been claimed to be able to bind into the IO; see López 2012).

- (4) Puttamu tutti_i i kani e so_i patruni/(a) tutti_i i picciridi e so_i maistri.
bring.1PL all DEF dogs DAT.DEF their owners/DOM all DEF kids DAT.DEF their teachers
'We bring all the dogs to their owners/all the kids to their teachers.' (Ragusa)
- (5) Puttamu e so_i patruni (a) tutti_i i kani.
bring.1PL DAT.DEF their owners (DOM) all DEF dogs
'We bring all the dogs to their owners.'

Generally, Ragusa unmarked nominals can be seen in high positions in the clause, just like DOM and do not pass tests supporting pseudo-incorporation (no V-Obj adjacency, etc.), suggesting that they are equally subject to licensing (in terms of Case), and the split is *not* between objects that require sentential licensing (DOM) and objects that do not [or between Case-checked (=DOM) and Caseless nominals (Ormazabal and Romero 2013, López 2012, Rodríguez-Mondoñedo 2007, etc.)]. All these facts motivate an analysis according to which, in Ragusa, DOM signals a *supplementary licensing operation* on objects containing more than one *feature* that requires licensing. Such an account has been shown to provide better results for Romanian, where DOM is similarly not signaled by a higher position; as Irimia (2020, 2021) or Hill and Mardale (2021) have shown, Romanian DOM objects contain an additional ([PERSON]) feature needing licensing beyond Case per se.

(iii) **Accusative clitic doubling on DOM as a repair strategy.** Why does clitic doubling of DOM acts as a repair strategy? We follow some insight from Cornilescu (2020) for Romanian: clitic doubling of DOM involves DOM licensing in a position above ν_P . This is further confirmed by binding: only clitic doubled DOM can bind into the external argument (as in (6)), indicating that it is licensed above ν_P . Licensing of clitic doubled DOM above ν_P leaves the ν licenser available for the licensing of the clitic doubled indirect object.

- (6) u so_i (știssu) viliènu i mmazzàu a ttutti_i.
DEF.M.SG POSS3 self poison CL.3M.PL.ACC killed.3SG DOM all.M.PL
'Their own poison killed them all.' (Ragusa; talking about snakes)

In turn, the fact that DOM without clitic doubling is *not* licensed above ν_P is demonstrated in another context, namely its well-formedness with high applicatives, for example affected possessors as in (7), which tend to be licensed above ν_P . Examples of this type also indicate that possessor SE is not generated DP-internally (as seems to be the case for Romanian, where examples similar to (7) are ungrammatical, see Irimia 2022). DP-internal merge would lead to competition for licensing with the differential marker.

- (7) Ogni matina si porta a tutti i picciridi a scola (Ragusa)
every morning SE bring DOM all DEF.M.PL kids to.DEF.F.SG school
Lit. 'Every morning she drives to herself all the kids to school.'

Lastly, mapping licensing positions can address Ragusa differences from languages where clitic doubling of DOM does not act as a repair strategy in contexts similar to (2), for example Argentine Spanish. As Saab (2022) has shown, in this language both clitic doubled DOM and clitic doubled datives need licensing above vP and thus compete for the same licenser but in a higher position.

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