



Utrecht University

# *Dynamic syntax:*

What dialects and heritage languages can tell us about grammar that we wouldn't know otherwise

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# Roadmap

- Some observations on the nature of DOM
- Some observations on Verb movement
- HL and dialects: what they can tell us about verb movement and its interaction with DOM



lemmolo, Giorgio. 2009. La marcatura differenziale dell'oggetto in siciliano antico. *Archivio Glottologico Italiano* 94(2). 185–225.

lemmolo, Giorgio. 2010. Topicality and differential object marking: Evidence from Romance and beyond. *Studies in Language* 34(2). 239–272. DOI: <http://doi.org/10.1075/sl.34.2.01iem>

# What is DOM?

Marking of the direct object when animate/definite/topical/"more prominent"

- (1) Talia a ssu piccilidru [SICILIAN]  
look DOM this.2 little  
'Watch this child' (lemmolo 2010: 344)

**DOM** (Bossong 1985, 1991, but already known in Romance as *prepositional accusative*, Diez 1874; Meyer-Lubke 1890-1895, Moravcsik 1978)

# Differential Object Marking

- a. “Differential case-assignment to subjects and direct objects serves the function of distinguishing subjects from direct objects... [Some] languages have differential case-assignment only where confusion between subject and direct object is particularly likely...” (Comrie 1977: 16)
- b. “it is those direct objects which are most in need of being distinguished from subjects that get overtly case-marked” (Aissen 2003: 437)
- c. “Many analyses of asymmetric differential object marking ... argue that those objects which look too much like prototypical subjects are marked in order to distinguish them from the subject.” (Malchukov and de Swart 2009: 348)

In Haspelmath (2019:329)

# DOM in Galician

## (2) *Galician DOM*

Saudaron      **ós**      nenos      as nenas  
greet.PST.3PL    DOM.the    boys      the girls  
'The girls greeted the boys.'

Only in VOS constructions (when the O has the same or higher animacy than the S)

Gravely & Irimia (2022:12)

# Two main functions

**Melis, Chantal. 2021.** From topic marking to definite object marking. Focusing on the beginnings of Spanish DOM. In Kabatek, Obris and Wall (eds), Differential object marking in Romance. The third wave. Berlin: De Gruyter.

**de Swart, Peter. 2007.** Cross-linguistic variation in object marking. PhD Thesis, Radboud University, Nijmegen, LOT Publications.

- DISCRIMINATORY FUNCTION (objects that look like subjects need to be discriminated from subjects)
- INDEXING FUNCTION (prototypical objects - Case forms of this nature encode semantic roles and are normally associated with oblique arguments -- DOM has a preference for objects which conform to the canon of high transitivity, the property of **high affectedness** being what defines the semantic role of such objects)

(De Swart 2007, Melis 2021)

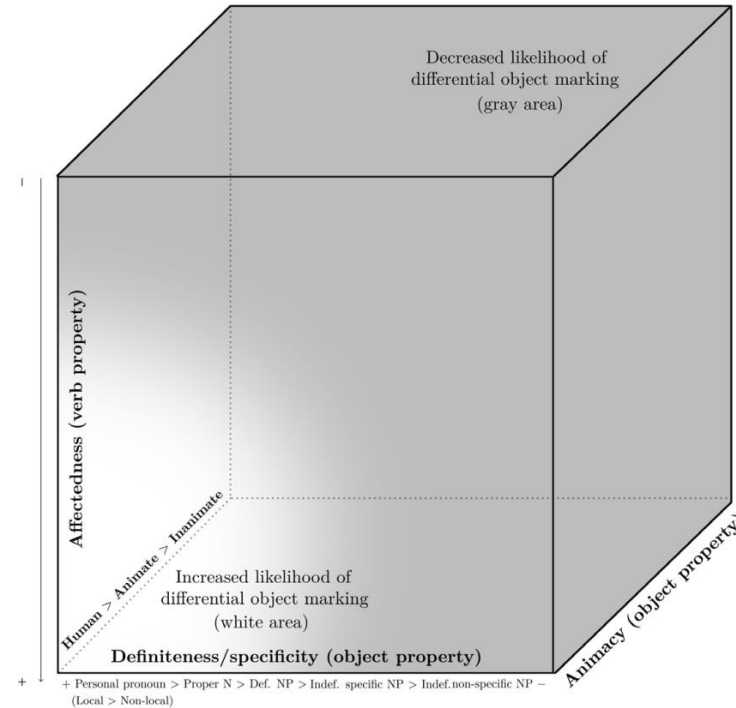


# DOM

Marking triggers:

- Animacy
- Definiteness
- Affectedness
- Topicality

(topics take up definiteness)

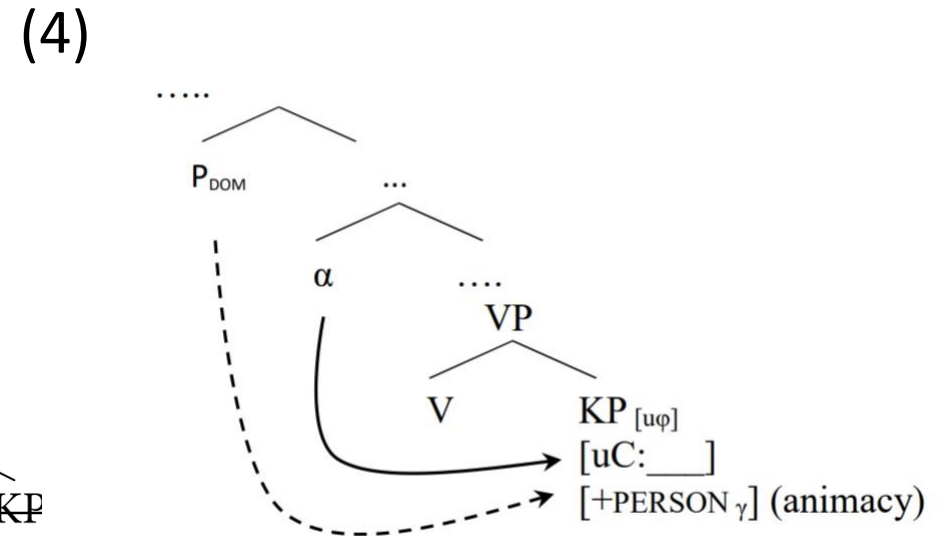
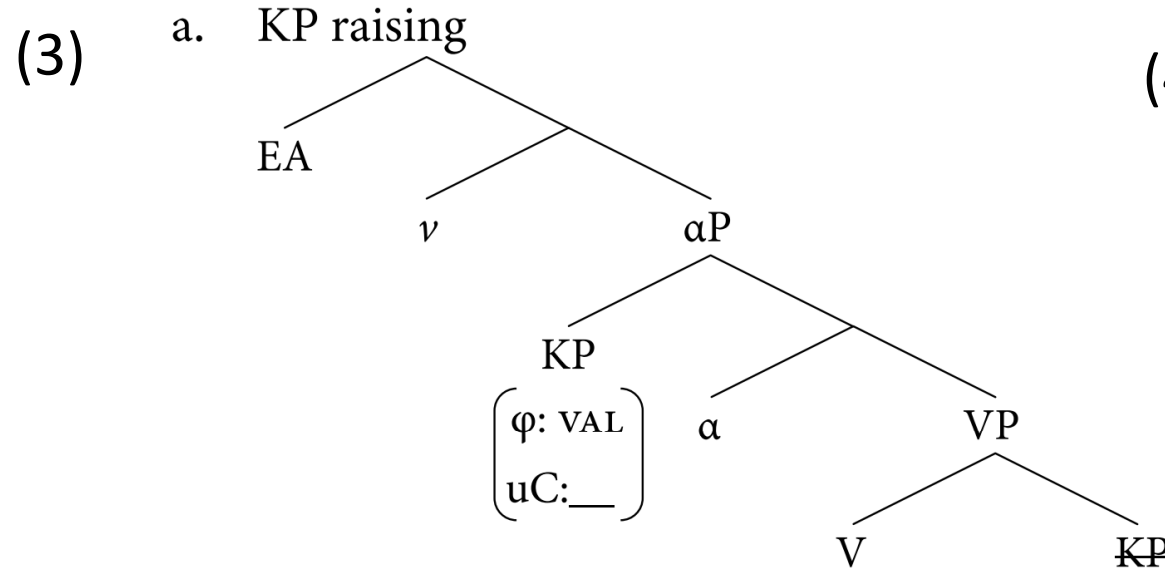


(Wikipedia)

# DOM in extended v

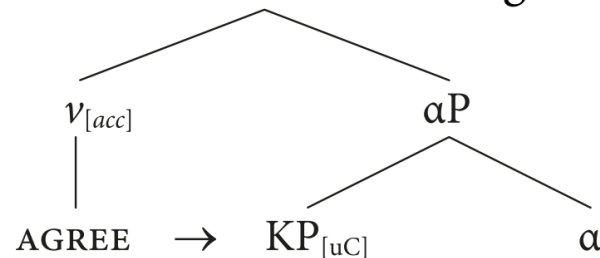
Irimia, Monica A. & Anna Pineda. 2021. Differential object marking in Catalan. Descriptive and theoretical aspects. *Linguistic Variation* 22, 325 – 385.

Torrego, Esther. 1998. *The dependencies of objects*. MIT Press.



Extended v (Pineda & Irimia 2018:7)

b. Accusative Case checking via Local Agree

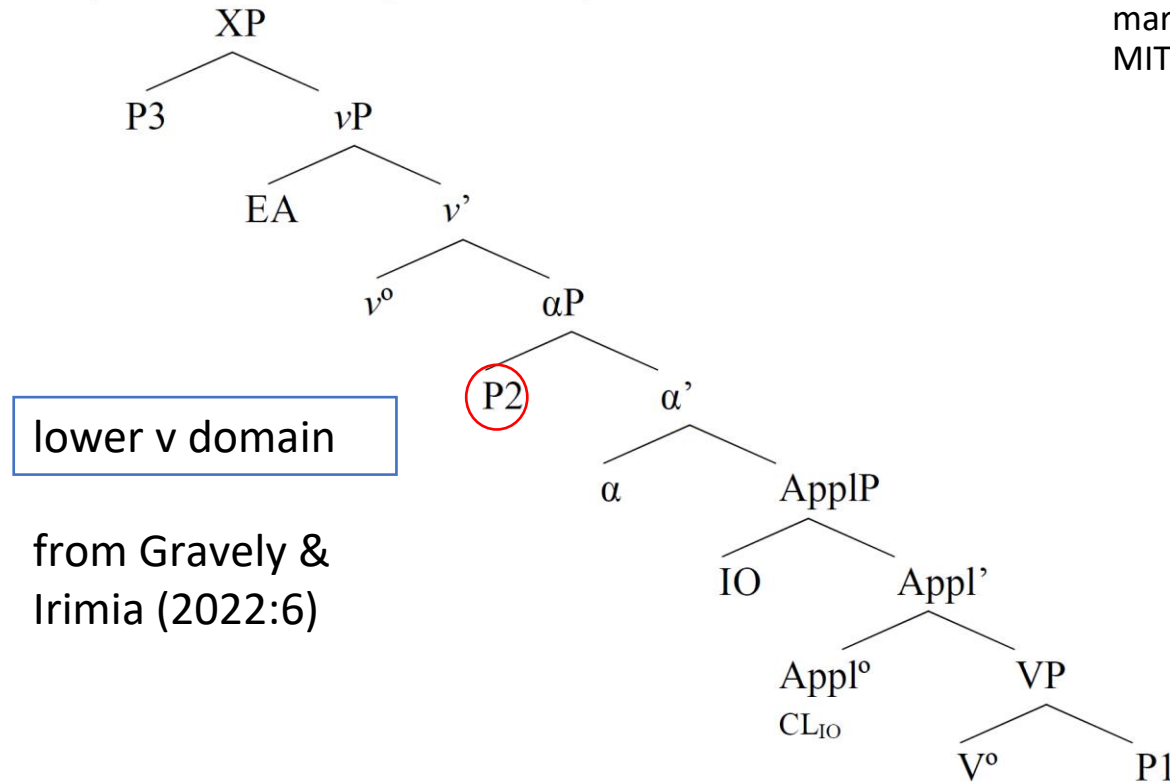


López (2012) in Irimia & Pineda (2021), see also Torrego (1998)



# Full Romance vP

(5) *vP shell* (modified from López 2012:45)



**Gravely, Brian & Monica Alexandrina Irimia. 2022.** DOM co-occurrence restrictions and their repair strategies: evidence from Romanian and Galician. RLLT18, eds. Jonathan MacDonald, Zsuzsanna Fagyal, Ander Beristain & Robin Turner. Special Issue of *Isogloss*. *Open Journal of Romance Linguistics* 8(4)/9, 1-30.

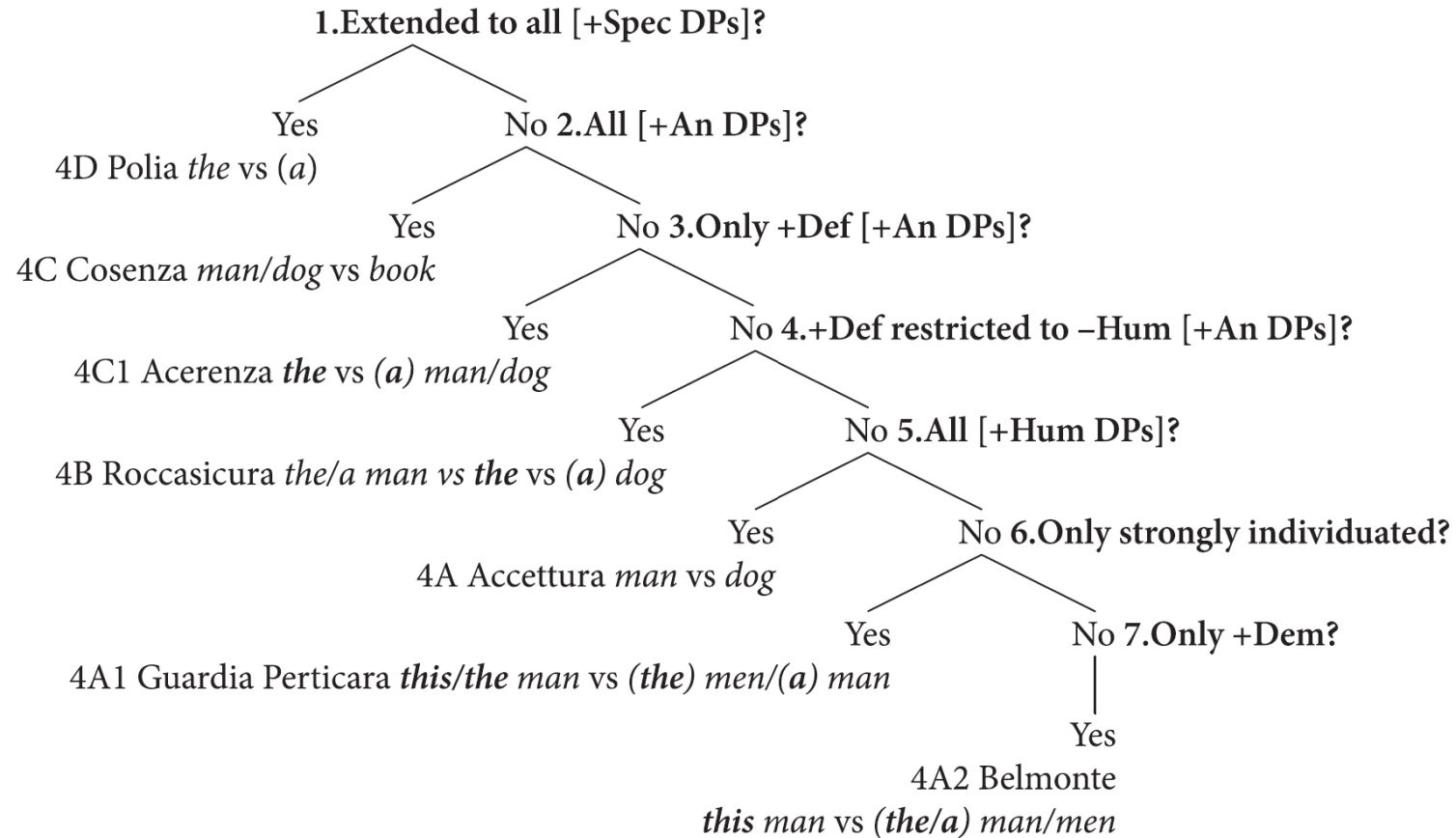
**Lopez, Luis. 2012.** Indefinite objects: scrambling, choice functions and differential marking. Cambridge, MA /London, England: MIT Press.



A parametric view  
on DOM

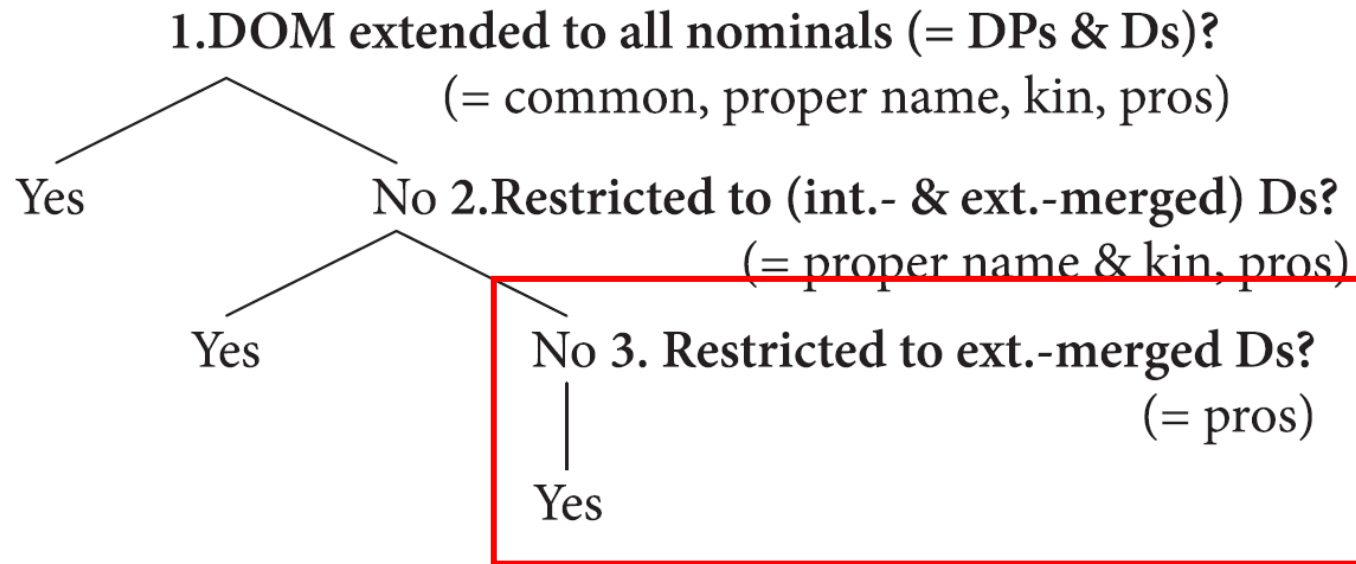
# A parametric view on DOM

(6)



# Another (more interesting) parameter

(7)

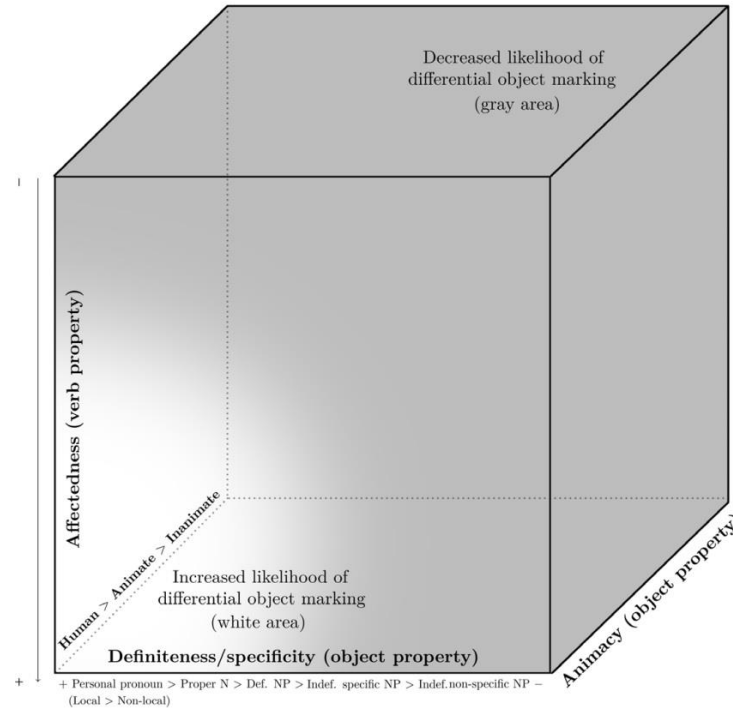




# DOM

Marking triggers:

- Animacy
- Definiteness
- Affectedness
- **Topicality > long-distance dependency**



(Wikipedia)



# The emergence of DOM

# Emergence of DOM

lemmolo (2009, 2020): overview of > 100 languages  
Topics are DOM-ed

- Emergence in different syntactic environments (Irimia & Pineda 2021)
- Relevance of **TOPICALITY**

- (8) 14<sup>th</sup>-c. Neapolitan *Romanzo di Francia* (Ledgeway 2009:834-36)
- a E a **mene** me 'de volleva mandare in outramare (1SG, C-top)  
and DOM me me= hence want.PST.3SG send.INF in oversea  
'And he wanted to send me overseas'
- b vóy fare morire **mene** (1SG, v-top)  
want.PRS.2SG make.INF die me  
'you want to have me die'

# Balearic Catalan

‘In Balearic there is no marking when human direct objects appear in their canonical position, but the preposition may appear when they are left-dislocated and must appear when right-dislocated’

(Escandell-Vidal 2009: 846)



# DOM and dislocation

Spoken Italian

- (9) Hai visto me \\*a me  
have.2SG seen.M.SG me.1SG.ACC DOM me.1SG.ACC  
'You saw me'
- (10) A me / \*me mi hai visto  
DOM me.1SG.ACC me.1SG.ACC have.2SG seen

# BTW

- ~~DISCRIMINATORY FUNCTION (objects that look like subjects need to be discriminated from subjects)~~

- (11) a. Io-NOM / me-ACC  
b. tu-NOM / te-ACC

Not just topicality, but **DISLOCATION**

# What is actually happening?

What do all these marking strategies of the objects have in common?

- **Movement**

Topic marking in Romance starts out as a marker of movement (**outside the phase**)



Verb movement



# Indirect evidence of DOM's function

- Verb movement signals enlargement of the domains of syntactic computation
- Loss of verb movement signals shrinking domains of syntactic computation (some operations are no longer possible > loss of DOM)
- Loss of verb movement also creates the need for resumption mechanisms (some elements that get lost in situ reappear ex situ as repair) > emergence of DOM

# Germanic V2

(12) a. [<sub>CP</sub> Bókina keypti [Jón ekki]] Icelandic

books bought John not

b. [<sub>CP</sub> Dos bukh shik [ikh avek]] Yiddish

the book send I away

c. [<sub>CP</sub> Boken köpte [Ulf inte]] Swedish

books bought Ulf not

d. [<sub>CP</sub> Denne film har [børnene set]] Danish

this film have the children see

Koeneman (2000:9)

# V-to-C

**Koster, Jan. 1975.** Dutch as an SOV language. *Linguistic Analysis* 1 (2): 111–136.

**Thiersch, Craig. 1978.** Topics in German syntax. PhD dissertation, MIT, Cambridge, MA.

**Den Besten, Hans. 1983.** On the interaction of root transformations and lexical deletive rules. In Werner Abraham (ed.), *On the formal syntax of the West Germanic*, 47–131. Amsterdam: John Benjamins. doi:10.1075/la.3.03bes.

- (13) Ik geloof            [CP **dat** [IP     Jan de waarheid     spreekt]]  
I believe            that            Jan the truth            speaks  
'I believe that Jan speaks the truth'

V2 can't happen in embedded clauses because C is filled

Koster (1975), Tiersch (1978), Den Besten (1983)

# V-to-T (v-to-T)

(14) Jean **embrasse** souvent Marie

(15) John always **kisses** Mary Pollock (1989)

Since the subject is in Spec, TP and *always* is a VP adverb > the finite V is in T



Why is there  
verb  
movement?

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# Rich Agreement Hypothesis

- RAH: movement for inflection (rich agreement & verb movement)
- Movement for agreement
- Generalized Verb Movement (Belletti 1990)

**Kosmeijer, Wim. 1986.** The status of the finite inflection in Icelandic and Swedish. Working Papers in Scandinavian Syntax 26:1–41.

**Platzack, Christer, and Anders Holmberg. 1989.** The role of AGR and finiteness. Working Papers in Scandinavian Syntax 44:101–117

**Holmberg, Anders, and Christer Platzack. 1991.** On the role of inflection in Scandinavian syntax. In Issues in Germanic syntax, ed. Abraham, Kosmeijer & Eric Reuland, 93–118. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.

**Holmberg, Anders, and Christer Platzack. 1995.** The role of inflection in Scandinavian syntax. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

**Koeneman, Olaf & Hedde Zeijlstra. 2014.** The Rich Agreement Hypothesis Rehabilitated. Linguistic Inquiry, 45(4), 571–615. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/43695>

**Roberts, Ian. 1993.** Verbs and diachronic syntax. Dordrecht: Kluwer

**Rohrbacher, Bernhard. 1994.** The Germanic languages and the full paradigm. Doctoral dissertation, University of Massachusetts, Amherst.

**Vikner, Sten. 1995.** Verb movement and expletive subjects in the Germanic languages. Oxford: Oxford University Press

**Vikner, Sten. 1997.** V to I movement and inflection for person in all tenses. In The new comparative syntax, ed. by Liliane Haegeman, 189–213. London: Longman.

**Bobaljik, Jonathan David. 1995.** Morphosyntax: The syntax of verbal inflection. Doctoral dissertation, MIT, Cambridge, MA.

**Bobaljik, Jonathan David, and Höskuldur Thráinsson. 1998.** Two heads aren't always better than one. Syntax 1:37–71.

**Belletti, Adriana 1990.** Generalized verb movement: aspects of verb syntax. Turin: Rosenberg & Sellier.

# Morphology, syntax, or neither?

- V- movement is extra syntactic (head-mvt not permitted)
- Just a matter of linearization
- Not our problem (Chomsky 2001 ff.)
- But is V-mvt really doing nothing, syntactically? Is it really just morphology or linearization?

# The fourth way

**Chomsky, Noam. 1986.** *Barriers*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

**Chomsky, Noam. 1993.** A minimalist program for linguistic theory. In Kenneth Hale & Samuel Jay Keyser (eds.), *The View From Building 20: Essays in Linguistics in Honor of Sylvain Bromberger*. MIT Press.

**Gallego, Ángel. 2007.** *Phase theory and parametric variation*. Ph.D. dissertation, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona.

**Gallego, Ángel. 2010.** *Phase theory*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

## Verb movement as **domain** delimiter

- V mvt corresponds to an **increased computational space**
- > Nothing new, this is **phase sliding** (Chomsky 1986, 1993, Gallego 2007, 2010)



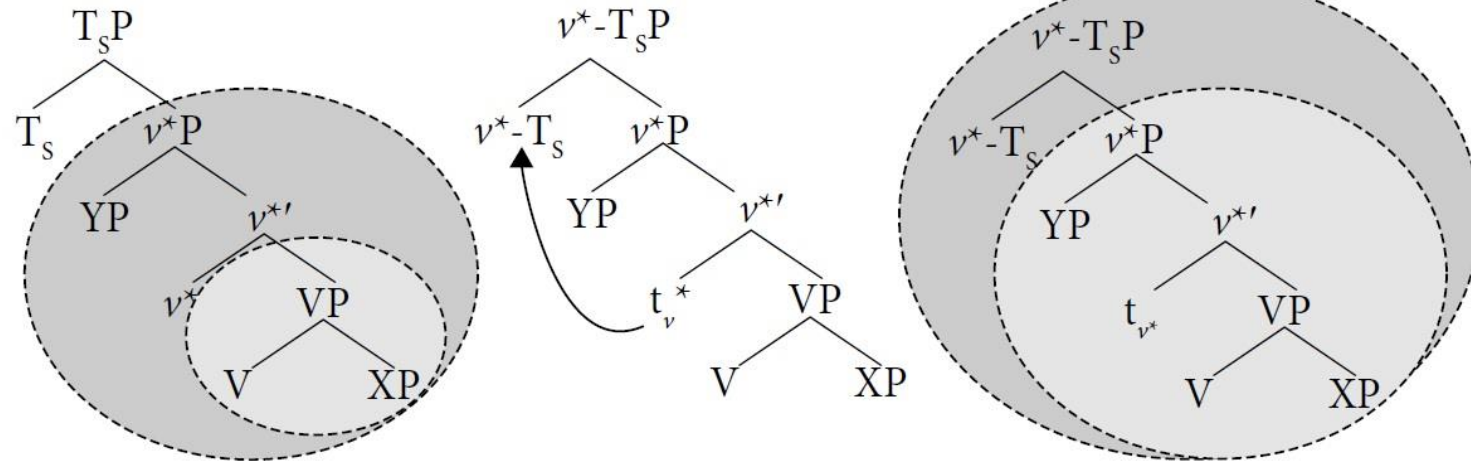
# Sliding the phase, enlarging the domain

- Chomsky (1986, *Barriers*):
- V-to-INFL (v-to-T) results in  $V_1$ , removing its “barrierhood”.
- vP is not L-marked (i.e. governed by a lexical category). It is a barrier.  
**V-to-T removes this barrierhood**

# Phase sliding

Gallego  
(2010: 108)

## (16) Phase Sliding



edge

complement

# Romance extended v domain

Romance languages, v-to-T (to a different extent)

- **DOM**
- Leísmo
- VSO order
- Doubling
- V2 > lower left periphery

# Indirect evidence

- **Verb movement signals enlarged domains of syntactic computation**

➤ How can we check this?

**Through observing syntax “dynamically”; heritage and non-standardized languages offer the perfect viewpoint to uncover syntactic structure**

# Observing syntax in motion



# Verb movement

- Verb movement enlarges domains of syntactic computation
  - Loss of verb movement shrinks domains of syntactic computation (DOM is no longer possible)
  - Loss of verb movement also creates the need for resumption mechanisms (some elements that get lost in situ reappear ex situ as repair)

# PP and DOM

**D'Alessandro, R. & I. Roberts. 2010.** Past participle agreement in Abruzzese: Split auxiliary selection and the null-subject parameter. *Natural Language and Linguistic Theory* 28: 41-72.

**Salvà i Puig, Sebastià. 2021.** *La concordança del participi en el català de Mallorca: marcatge de l'estructura informativa i de l'aspecte*. PhD dissertation, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona.

- Italian Low PP, No DOM (*sempre fatto*)
- Abruzzese: High PP, DOM (*fatte sembre*) (D'Alessandro & Roberts 2010)
- Catalan: High PP, DOM (Salvà 2021)

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Loss of Verb movement >  
Loss of DOM





# Loss of V-to-T in H Italo-Romance

H Apulian/NYC

(17) Mammə **sembə è ffatte** la secretariə pə ppapà  
mum always is done the secretary for dad

Baseline: Mammə è sembə fattə

(18) **Sembrə rispettava** quel gende qqui  
always respected that people here  
'S/he always respected those people here'

Andriani & D'Alessandro (to appear)

# Loss of V-to-T in H Italo-Romance

Microcontact database

H Venetan/Argentina

(19) **Sempre ga** (sempre) **bevuo** ben e      sempre gà    lavorà    ben  
always    has always    drunk well and      always    has worked well

H Venetan/Brazil

(20) I noni                    cantava, i **sempre**      **cantava**      (sempre)  
the grandpas           sang    they always           sang           always

(21) La                    **anca**    ze (anca)      na storia longa  
she.F.SCL also    is also           a story long  
'That's also a long story'

# Loss of V-to-T: loss of DOM

Andriani, D'Alessandro, Frasson, Van Osch, Sorgini & Terenghi. 2022a. Adding the microdimension to the study of language change in contact. Three case studies. *Glossa: a journal of general linguistics* 7(1).

- (22) *Heritage Cilentano in New York City*
- a. Edda ha vvist'a **mme**.  
she has seen DOM me  
'she saw me.'
- b. Ajerə ho vvisto Ø **mi fijjə**.  
yesterday have.1SG seen DOM my son  
'yesterday I saw my son.'
- c. Oh, salutə Ø **questo qqua**, salutə Ø **questa persona qqua**.  
hey greet.2SG DOM this here greet.2SG DOM this person here  
'hey, say hi to this one here, say hi to this person here.'
- d. Mi zio [...] portato Ø **tutta la famijja** là.  
my uncle brought DOM all the family there  
'my uncle [...] brought all his family there.'
- e. Io conosciuto Ø **tuttəquandə**.  
I met DOM everyone  
'I've met everyone.'

Loss of V-to-T

Andriani et al (2022a)

# Weakening or disappearance of DOM

- In contact DOM tends to disappear (Silva-Corvalán 1994; Montrul 2004; Luján & Parodi 1996; Montrul & Bowles 2009; Montrul & Sánchez-Walker 2013; Montrul, Bhatt & Girju 2015) have shown that DOM weakens in Heritage Spanish spoken in the US.
- Italo-Romance in NYC: same (Andriani et al, 2022a)

(23) Oh, salutə Ø questo qqua, salutə Ø questa persona qqua.  
hey greet.2SG DOM this here greet.2SG DOM this person here  
'hey, say hi to this one here, say hi to this person here.'

(24) Mi zio [...] portato Ø tutta la famijja là.  
my uncle brought DOM all the family there  
'my uncle [...] brought all his family there.'

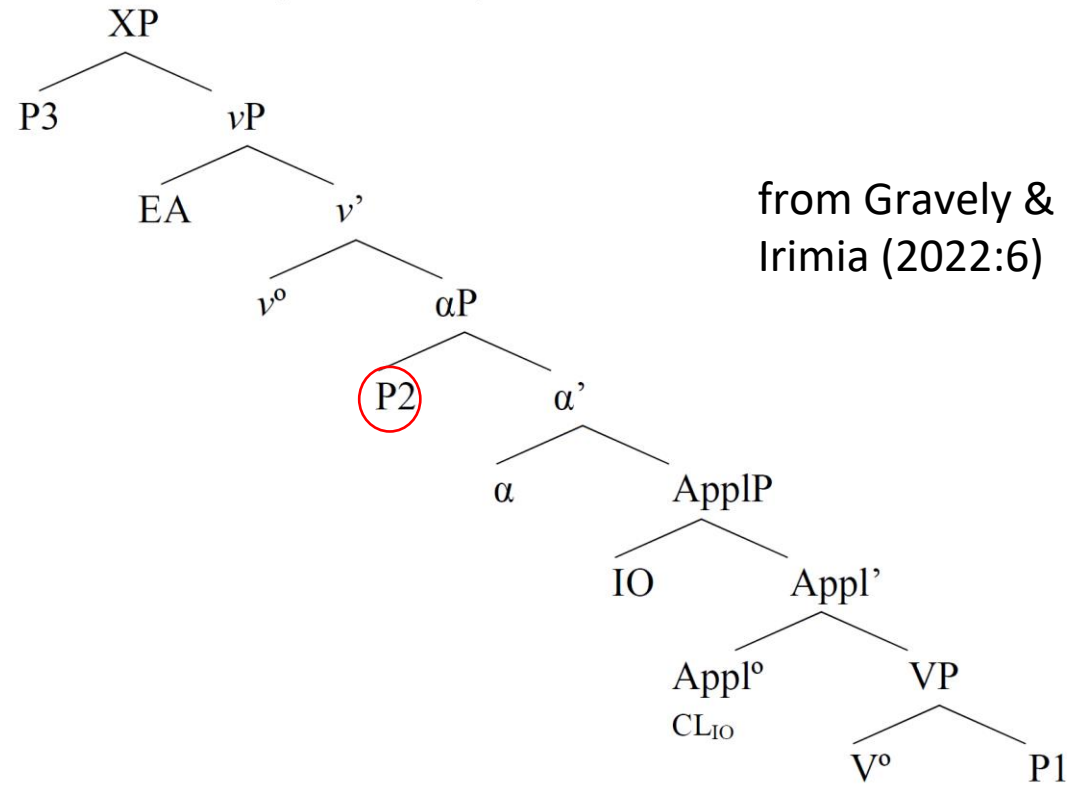
**Montrul, Silvina. 2004.** Subject and object expression in Spanish heritage speakers: A case of morphosyntactic convergence. *Bilingualism: Language and cognition* 7(2). 125–142.

**Silva-Corvalán, Carmen. 1994.** *Language contact and change: Spanish in Los Angeles*. Oxford: Clarendon.

# Full Romance vP

lower v domain

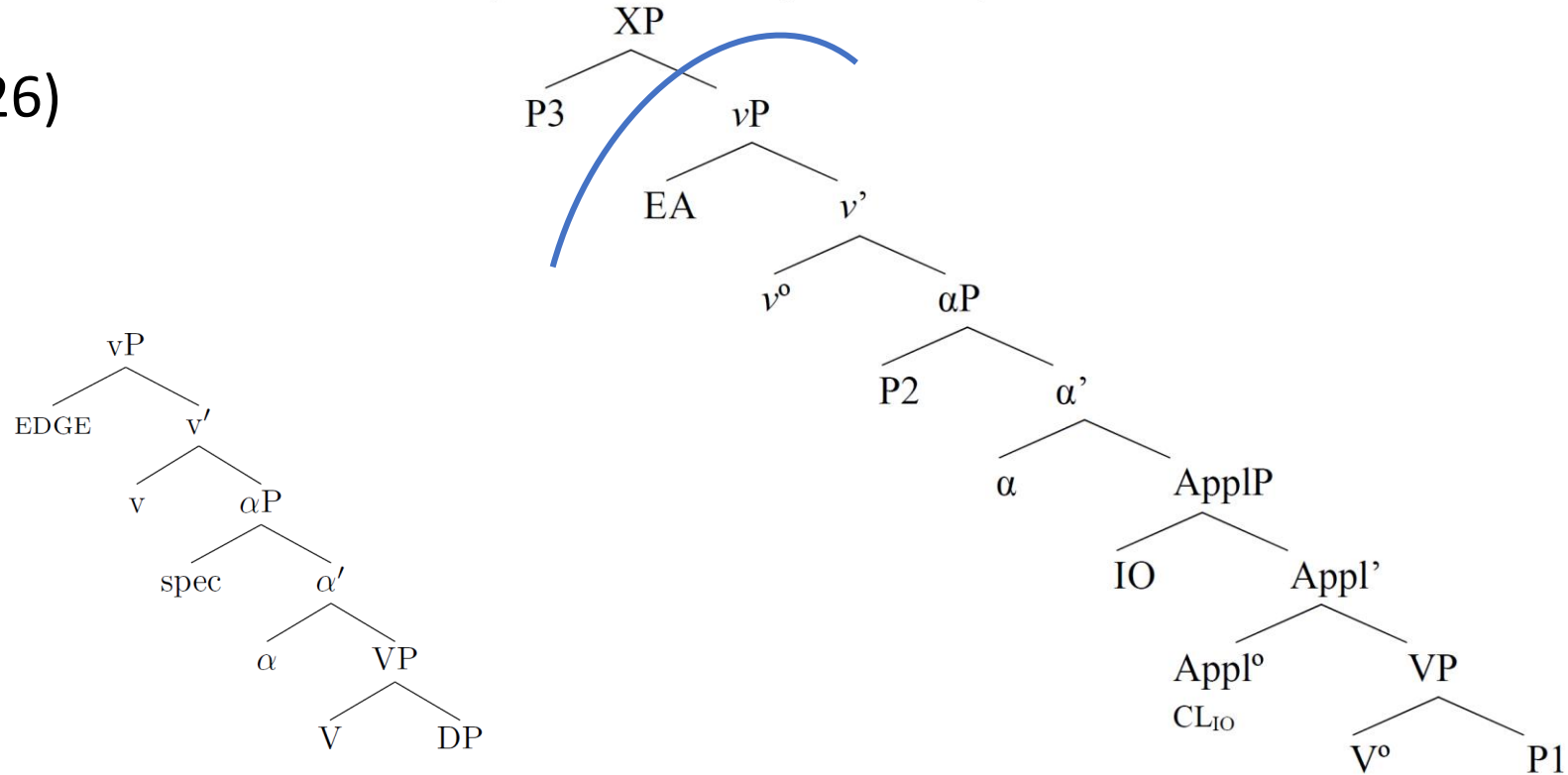
(25) *vP shell* (modified from López 2012:45)



# Shrinking domains

*vP shell* (modified from López 2012:45)

(26)

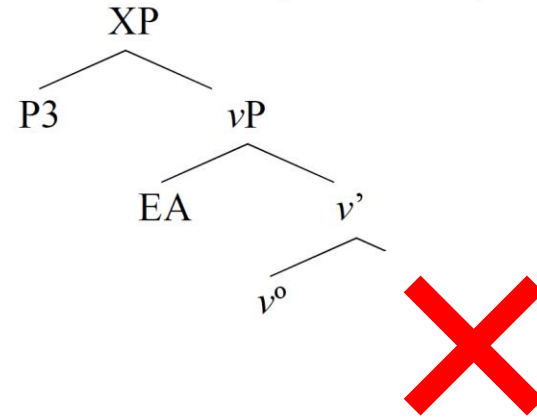


Torrego (1998) in Vinke  
(2024:40)

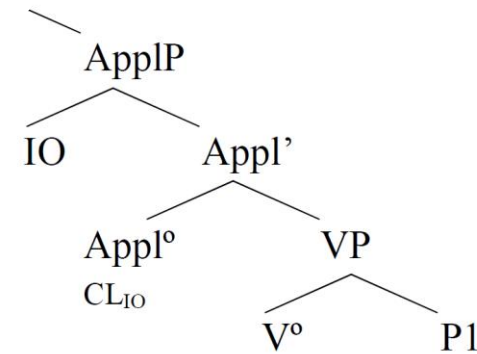
# Shrinking domains

(27)

*vP shell* (modified from López 2012:45)



Loss of DOM in situ



Further evidence:  
loss of V2, loss of OS





# Loss of V-to-C in Heritage Germanic

**Westergaard, Lohndahl & Lundquist.** 2023. Variable V2 in Norwegian heritage language. *Linguistic Approaches to Bilingualism* 13:2. 133–162.

... in Heritage Germanic

- Hopp & Putnam (2015)
- Westergaard, Lohndahl & Lundquist (2023) on American Heritage Norwegian

# Holmberg's generalization

**Holmberg, Anders. 1986.** Word Order and Syntactic Features in the Scandinavian Languages and English. PhD Dissertation, University of Stockholm.

**Holmberg, Anders. 1997.** The true nature of Holmberg's generalization. *Proceedings of NELS 27*, , 203-217.

- (28) a. Jag kysste **henne** inte [VP t<sub>v</sub> t<sub>o</sub>]  
I kissed her not  
b. \*Jag har **henne** inte [VP kysst t<sub>o</sub>].  
I have her not kissed  
c. \*...att jag **henne** inte [VP kysste t<sub>o</sub>].  
that I her not kissed

Holmberg (1997: 203)

Holmberg's Generalization (original version)

Object shift of an element  $\alpha$  from the complement domain of a verb  $\beta$  occurs only if  $\beta$  has moved out of VP

Holmberg (1986: 176)

# Object shift in AHN

Anderssen, M. & Westergaard, M. 2020. Word order variation in heritage languages: Subject shift and object shift in Norwegian. In *Lost in Transmission: The role of attrition and input in heritage language development*, B. Brehmer & J. Treffers Daller (eds.). Studies in Bilingualism, 59. John Benjamins, 100-124.

the distribution of the shifted and non-shifted

position is significantly different from that of non-heritage speakers: For heritage speakers,

61% of pronominal objects with nominal antecedents shift, while for Norwegian speakers

in Norway the equivalent proportion is 87% ( $p < 0.001$ ).

Andersen & Westergaard (2020; ex 26)

(29) *Nå prøver jeg å finnet et ord, men jeg finner **det ikke**.*

now try I to find a word but I find it not.

“I’m trying to find a word, but I can’t.”

Loss of V-mvt  
and its  
consequences:  
re-establishing  
LDD



# Indirect evidence

- Verb movement enlarges domains of syntactic computation
  - Loss of verb movement shrinks domains of syntactic computation (DOM is no longer possible)
  - Loss of verb movement also creates the need for resumption mechanisms (some elements that get lost in situ re-appear ex situ as repair)



What heritage  
speakers can't do

# Difficulty with long-distance dependencies

Heritage language speakers show difficulty with long-distance dependency in the form of:

- Agreement
- Wh- movement
- Long distance binding

# Difficulty with LDA

- (30)
- a. \*El niño considera la noticia en las revistas terriblemente aburridas.  
the.M.SG boy consider.PRS.3SG the.F.SG news.item.F.SG in the.F.PL  
magazine.F.PL terribly boring.F.PL  
Intended: 'The boy considers the news item in the magazines to be terribly boring.'
- b. \*El niño considera la noticia en los periódicos terriblemente aburridos.  
the.M.SG boy consider.PRS.3SG the.F.SG news.item.F.SG in the.M.PL  
magazine.M.PL terribly boring.M.PL  
Intended: 'The boy considers the news item in the magazines to be terribly boring.'

Both fine in heritage Spanish but  
to a different extent  
> Different feature clusters

Polinsky (2018)



# Wh- movement

Hopp, Holger, Putnam, Michael T. & Vosburg, Nora.  
2019. Derivational complexity vs. transfer effects: Long-  
distance wh-movement in heritage and L2 grammars.  
*Linguistic Approaches to Bilingualism*. 2019 ; Vol. 9, No.  
3. pp. 341-375.

Heritage German in America:

Hopp, Putnam & Vosburg (2019: 359)

- (31) Wua jlewst du wua John es?  
Where think you where John is?  
'Where do you think John is?'

- (32) Wää jleewst du wää ekj han no de Stua jeschekjt toom Scheffel  
who think you who I have to the store sent to-the shovel  
kjeepen? (Participant 12)  
buy  
'Who do you think I sent to the store to buy a shovel?'

# Long-distance binding

Putnam, Michael T. & Arnbjörnsdóttir, Birna. 2015. Minimizing (interface) domains : The loss of long-distance binding in North American Icelandic. In: *Moribund Germanic Heritage Languages in North America: Theoretical Perspectives and Empirical Findings*, eds Richard Page & Michael T. Putnam. Brill Academic Publishers. pp. 203-223 (Empirical Approaches to Linguistic Theory).

## Heritage Icelandic

(33) Hann<sub>1</sub> segir alltaf að mamma hafi verið svo vond  
He says always that mom had been so mean

við mig<sub>1</sub> (sig<sub>1</sub>)  
to me

'He always says that mom was so mean to him.'

Putnam & Arnbjörnsdóttir (2015)

# Re-establishing LDD

- CLLD is a strategy in use in Romance to mark object topic constructions
- Classical description: whenever you dislocate **an object** you must use a resumptive clitic

## ITALIAN

(34) **Quelle ragazze** ieri **le** ho incontrate  
[those girls]**TOP.F.PL** yesterday them.**CL.F.PL.ACC** I-have met.**PTCP.F.PL**  
'As for those girls, I met them yesterday'

# Re-establishing LDD

- If a domain shrinks, some operations disappear

But what happens if LDD is necessary, for instance in topicalization structures?

# Emergence of DOM

lemmolo (2009, 2020): overview of > 100 languages  
Topics are DOM-ed

- Emergence in different syntactic environments (Irimia & Pineda 2021)
- Relevance of **TOPICALITY**

(35) 14<sup>th</sup>-c. Neapolitan *Romanzo di Francia* (Ledgeway 2009:834-36)

a E a **mene** me 'de volleva mandare in outramare (1SG, C-top)  
and DOM me me= hence want.PST.3SG send.INF in oversea

‘And he wanted to send me overseas’

b vóy fare morire **mene** (1SG, v-top)  
want.PRS.2SG make.INF die me

‘you want to have me die’

# DOM and dislocation

## Spoken Italian

- (36) Hai visto me \\*a me  
have.2SG seen.M.SG me.1SG.ACC DOM me.1SG.ACC  
'You saw me'
- (37) A me / \*me mi hai visto  
DOM me.1SG.ACC me.1SG.ACC have.2SG seen

# No resumption with topic shift iatv in Old Italo-Romance

Immediate adjacency to the verb:

**no clitic resumption needed** (Vanelli 1986, 1999, Ciconte 2018)

- (38) Lo vino \_\_\_ fanno di riso. La moneta \_\_\_ hanno d'oro  
the wine make of rice the coin have of.gold  
'As for the wine, they make it with rice. The coin, they have it of  
gold.'

**Vanelli, Laura. 1986.** Strutture tematiche in italiano antico, in Harro Stammerjohann (ed.), *Tema-Rema in Italiano, Theme-Rheme in Italian, Thema-Rhema im Italienischen*, Tübingen, Gunter Narr Verlag, pp. 249-273.

**Vanelli, Laura. 1999.** Ordine delle parole e articolazione pragmatica dell'italiano antico: la 'prominenza' pragmatica della prima posizione nella frase, in *Medioevo Romano*, 23, pp. 229-246.

**Ciconte, Francesco Maria. 2018.** Soggetto e oggetto nell'italo-romanzo antico. *Studi e Saggi Linguistici*, 56(1): 97-136.

# Topic marking in Italo-Romance

In old Italo-Romance, object clitics emerge first in context with a highly referential **dislocated** Topic (Ciconte 2020a,b)

(39) La bona femina    per nullo modo    tu non **la**    devi    gelosare  
the good wife. **SG.F** for no    way    you not her. OCL.SG.F    must make= jealous  
'A for the good wife, by no means you should make her jealous'

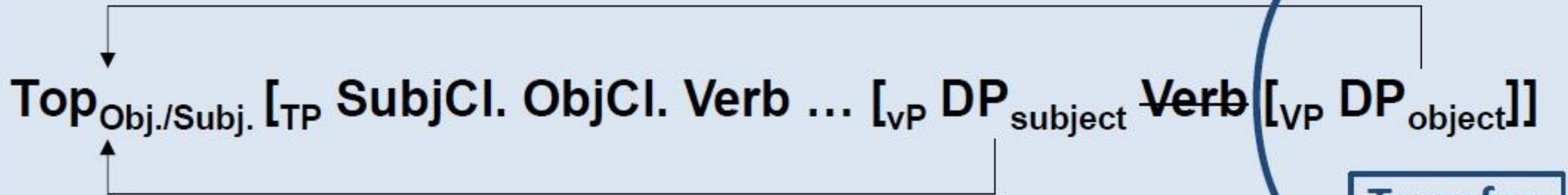
BUT ALSO

(38) Lo vino    \_\_\_ fanno di riso.    La moneta \_\_\_    hanno d'oro  
the wine    make of rice    the coin    have of.gold  
'As for the wine, they make it with rice. The coin, they have it of gold.'



Crossing  
domains





Object topicalization involves crossing a Transfer boundary, Subject topicalization does not

Transfer boundary

Marking the crossing

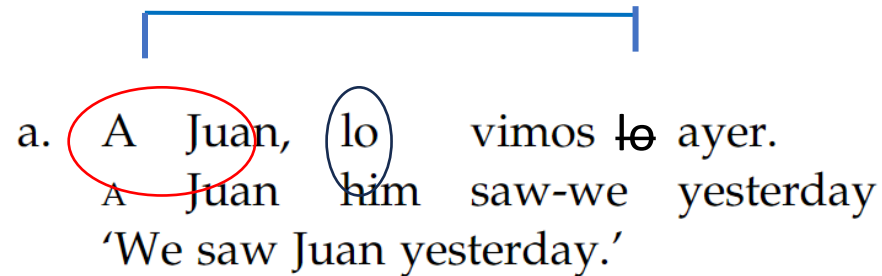
- Crossing PIC-induced boundaries requires resumption or a marker of the movement that has happened

Casalicchio, Ciconte & D'Alessandro (2018), D'Alessandro (2023)

# Establishing a long-distance dependency

(41) ... A Juan, lo vimos  $\emptyset$  ayer.  
A Juan him saw-we yesterday  
'We saw Juan yesterday.'

# Clitics and DOM have the same function

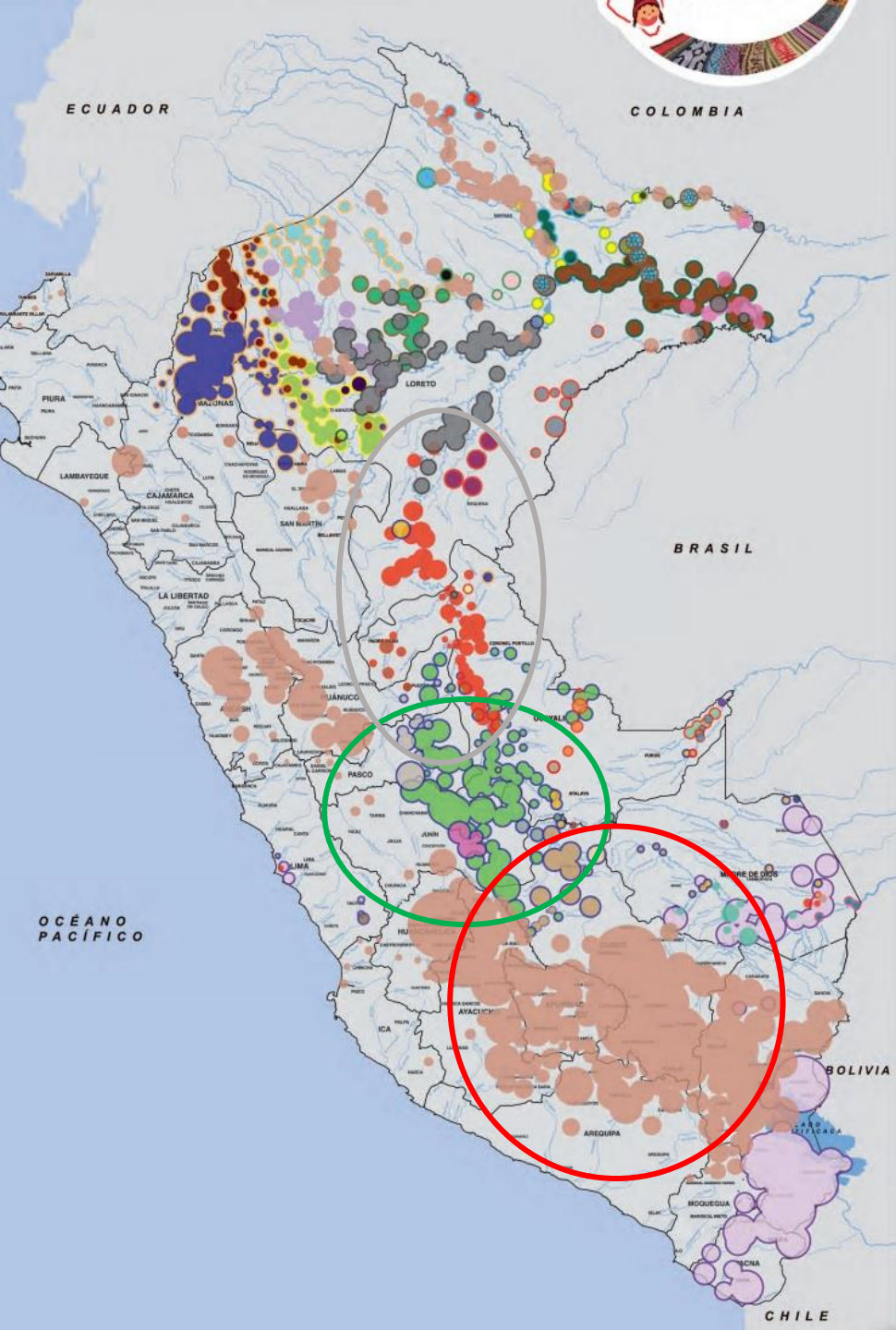


Marking a long-distance dependency

- **Kayne's generalization** (original formulation):  
An object NP may be doubled only if it is preceded by a special preposition

> there is a link between the  $\alpha$  marker and the clitic





# DOM and clitics

- Extending the domain
- DOM and clitic doubling (in CLLD?) > often co-occur
- Either or (more DOM less CD) (Argentinian Spanish: DOM extends to inanimates, CD is restricted to animates; Peruvian Spanish: the opposite holds – Sánchez, Mayer, Zdrojewski 2022)
- Same function: marking domain extension (D'Alessandro 2022)

# Emergence contexts of topic marking

- Heritage languages
- Old Italian / with highly definite dislocated objects
- Spoken language

# Heritage languages

## HFriulian in Argentina

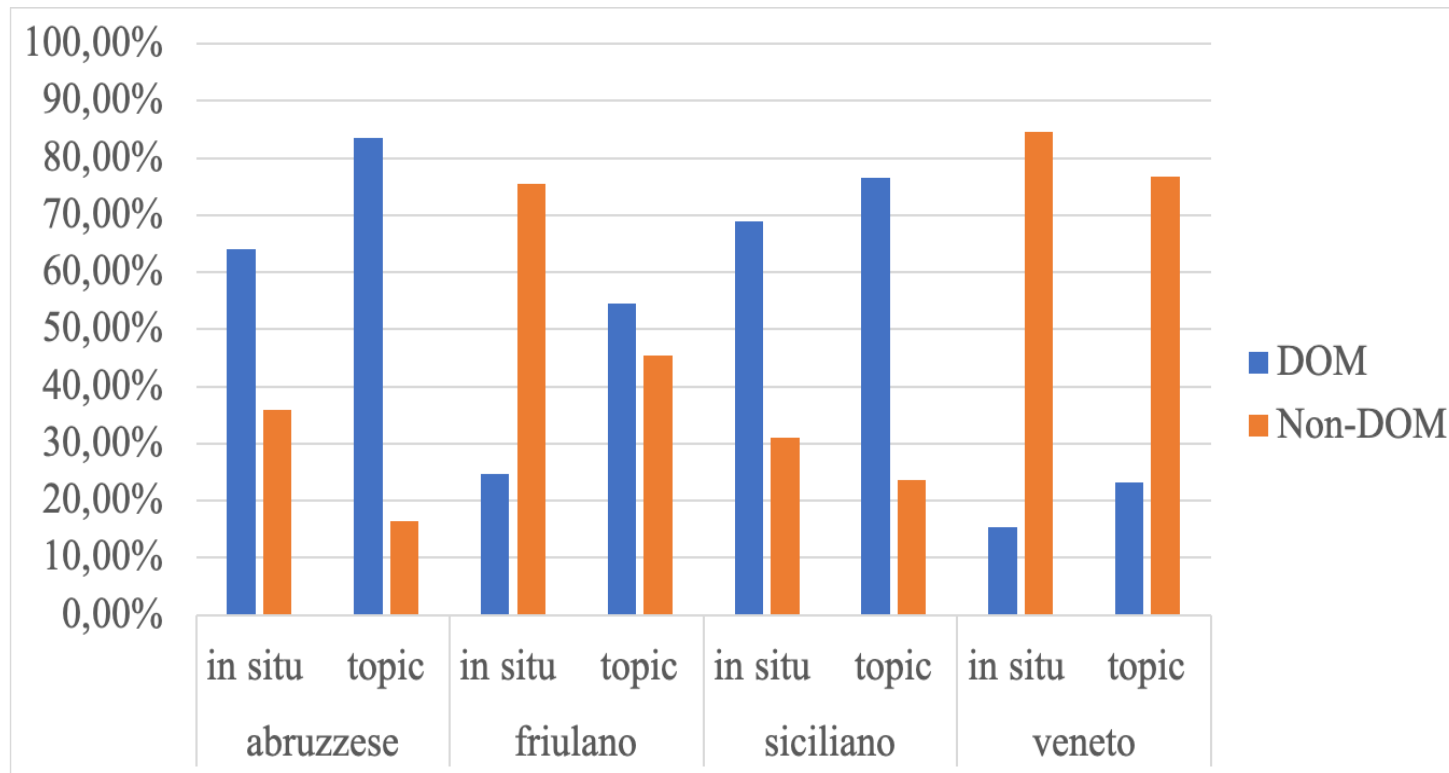
- (42) ... parcè che a mi el fret no mi iude  
because that DOM me the cold not me= help.3sg  
'... because the cold doesn't help me.'

(43) Heritage Friulian in Argentina (from [Andriani et al. 2022](#): 21, 19)

- a. **A** une cjantant, îr, la=ai bussade  
DOM a singer yesterday her=AUX kissed  
'As for a singer, I kissed one yesterday'

# Emergence of DOM in HLs

(44)



Sorgini (in progress),  
Andriani et al  
(2022b)

How is this  
possible?



# Emergence of DOM

(45)

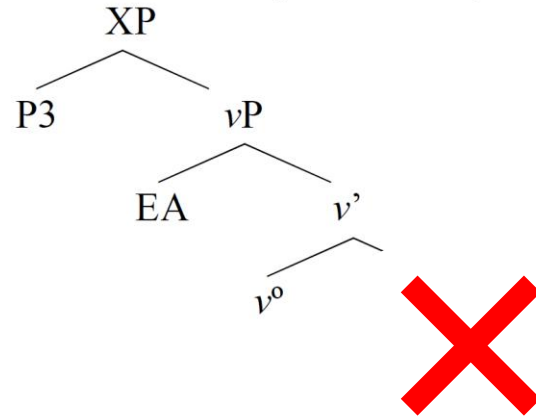
Table 4.24: *DOM preference with Full DPs in Heritage Friulian spoken in Argentina*

Row Labels	DOM	Non-DOM	Grand Total
<b>anim. def.</b>	<b>62, 50%</b>	<b>37, 50%</b>	<b>100, 00%</b>
in situ	25, 00%	75, 00%	100, 00%
C- topic	100, 00%	0, 00%	100, 00%
<b>hum. indef.</b>	<b>100, 00%</b>	<b>0, 00%</b>	<b>100, 00%</b>
C-topic	100, 00%	0, 00%	100, 00%
<b>Kinship</b>	<b>75, 00%</b>	<b>25, 00%</b>	<b>100, 00%</b>
in situ	75, 00%	25, 00%	100, 00%
C- topic	75, 00%	25, 00%	100, 00%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>75, 00%</b>	<b>25, 00%</b>	<b>100, 00%</b>

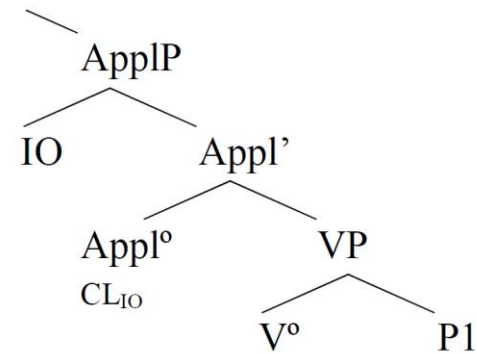
Sorgini (in progress)

# Recall: Shrinking domains

(46) *vP shell* (modified from López 2012:45)



Loss of DOM in situ



# Weakening or disappearance of DOM

- In contact DOM tends to disappear (Silva-Corvalán 1994; Montrul 2004; Luján & Parodi 1996; Montrul & Bowles 2009; Montrul & Sánchez-Walker 2013; Montrul, Bhatt & Girju 2015) have shown that DOM weakens in Heritage Spanish spoken in the US.
- Italo-Romance in NYC: same (Andriani et al, 2022)

(47) Oh, salutə Ø **questo qqua**, salutə Ø **questa persona qqua**.  
hey greet.2SG DOM this here greet.2SG DOM this person here  
'hey, say hi to this one here, say hi to this person here.'

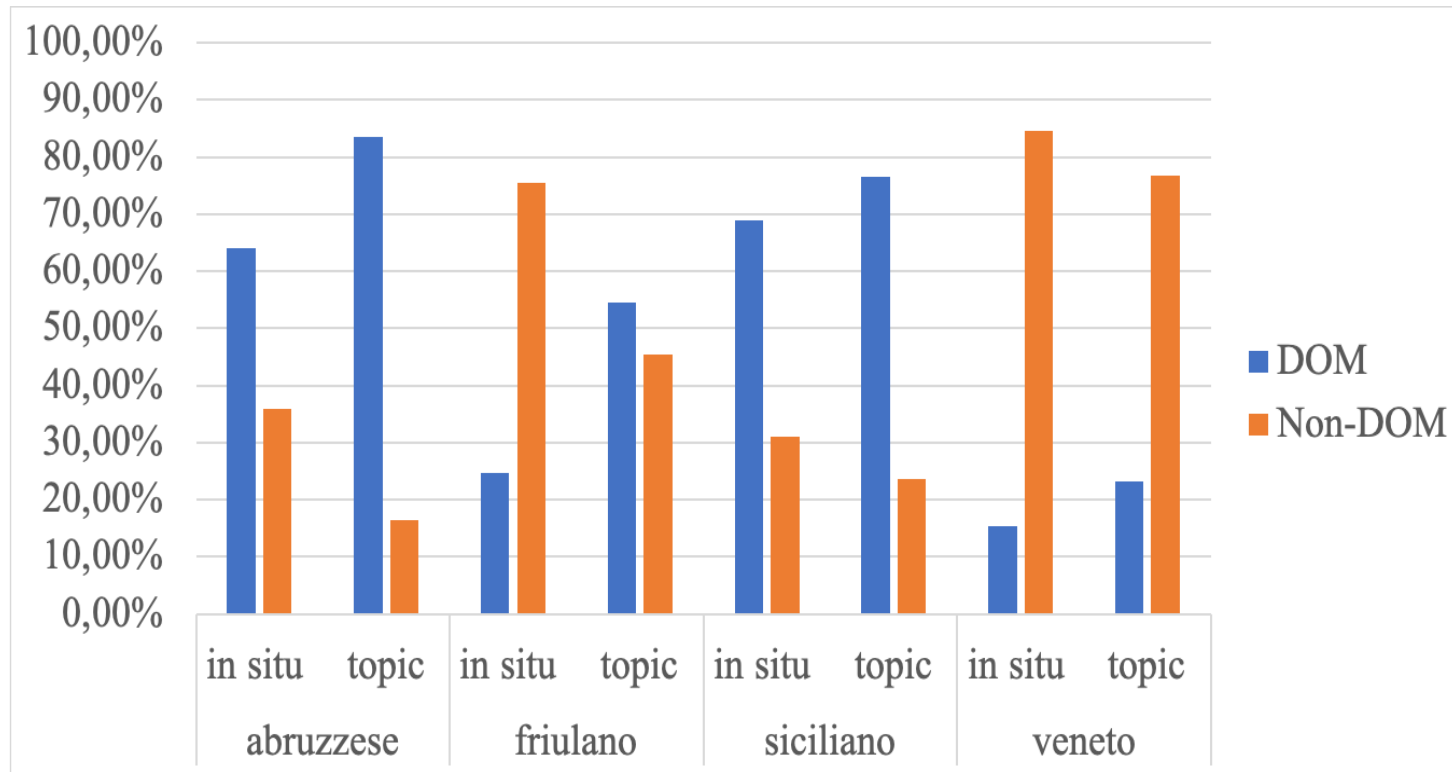
(48) Mi zio [...] portato Ø **tutta la famijja** là.  
my uncle brought DOM all the family there  
'my uncle [...] brought all his family there.'



But wait a minute!

# Emergence of DOM in HLs

(49)



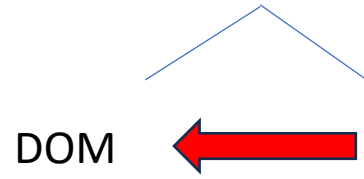
Sorgini (in progress),  
Andriani et al  
(2022b)

How is this  
possible?

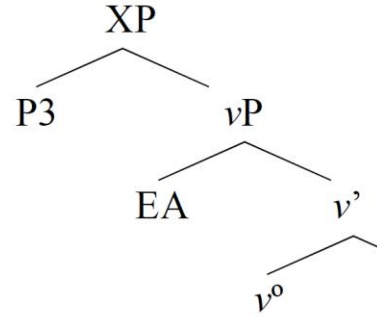
(50)

# DOM ex situ increases

why from here and not from the bottom? > another time

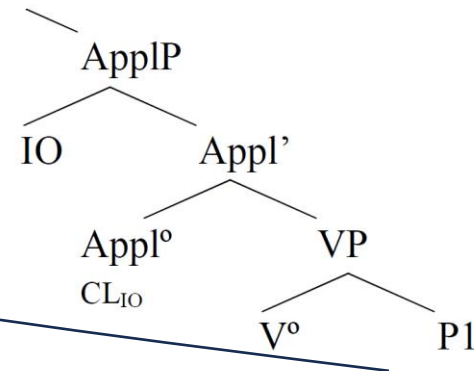


*vP shell* (modified from López 2012:45)



***a*-Marking of Object Topics as a property of the Left periphery: Aspects of their distribution**

Belletti (2018:448)





Is this just  
processing?

DOM as a structural  
phenomenon



# If DOM is structural...

- it will be sensitive to structural similarity
- it will interact with narrow-syntactic phenomena (like alignment)





# If DOM is structural...

- it will be sensitive to structural similarity

**IT IS!**

- it will interact with narrow-syntactic phenomena (like alignment)

**IT DOES**



# Sensitivity to structural similarity

Asháninka-Spanish (NOM/ACC) > DOM is retained and expanded

- (51) *Lo bot-aron a la rana*  
CL.3.M.SG kick-PERF.3PL DOM DET.F.SG frog.F.SG  
'They kicked out the frog.'

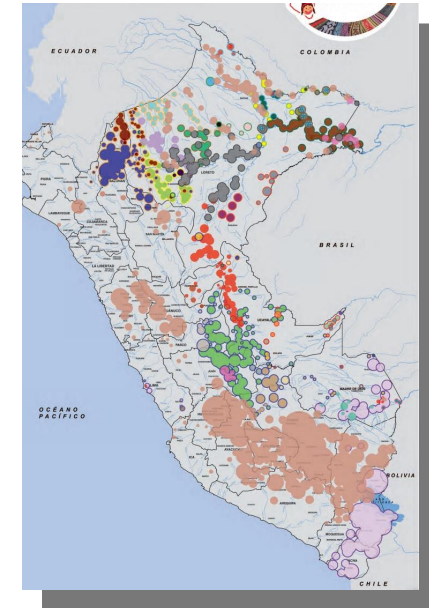
Mayer & Sánchez (2021:108)

Asháninka-Spanish (Mayer Dataset 2016)

Shipibo-Spanish (ERG/ABS) > DOM is weakened

- (52) *Le molest-a Ø el niñ-o*  
CL.3SG bother-PRES.3SG Ø DET.M.SG child-M.SG  
'He bothers the child.'

Shipibo-Spanish (Sánchez Dataset 2002)



# A look from the outside world Suriname

Surinamese Sarnámi > DOM is retained and expanded

(53) U Dew ke már-e hai  
3SG.NOM.DIST Dew DOM hit-3 PRS  
'She hits Dew' (Damsteegt & Narain. 1987:49 in Vinke 2023)

(54) Dewi am (\*ke) ná dekh-is hai  
Dewi mango DOM NEG see-3PRF PRS  
'Dewi sees no mango' (Vinke 2024)

Vinke (2024): Sarnámi (East-IndoAryan Bhojpuri-based koine spoken in Suriname)

Damsteegt, Theo & Jit Narain. 1987. *Ká Hál, leerboek Sarnami Surinaams Hindostaans*. Nederlands Bibliotheek en Lektuur Centrum, Den Haag  
Vinke, Joeri. 2024. *To(pic) the rescue! Why DOM does not always weaken in Heritage Languages*. Research MA thesis, Utrecht University.



# A look from Indo-Aryan

Heritage Sarnami in NL > DOM is retained

(55)

- a. Kutta \*(ke) ham kál kin-li.  
dog DOM 1.NOM yesterday buy-1.PST  
'It is a dog that I bought yesterday.'
- b. Ita-wa (ke) Ram aj big-is hai.  
stone-DEF DOM Ram today throw-3.PRF PRS  
'It is the stone that Ram has thrown today.'



Vinke (2024)

# Topic marking/DOM in Sarnámi

- Vinke (2024)

(56) *Summary of DOM attrition and preservation*

Languages	DOM	Topicalisation	DOM preservation
L1 (English) / L1 (Hindi)	X/✓	X/✓	X
L1 (Dutch) / L2 (Hindi)	X/✓	✓/✓	X
L1 (Dutch) / L1 (Sarnámi)	X/✓	✓/✓	✓

“In bilingual acquisition of a heritage language with DOM, the availability of a sentence-initial topic position in a local dominant language is crucial in being able to recycle the DOM marker” (Vinke 2024: 39)

# Structure to structure

- Mapping structure on structure > it can't be a pragmatic/prominence/ semantic phenomenon only





Alignment

# Joint work with Pritha Chandra

Surati Gujarati, Ahmedabad,  
Vadodara Gujarati, Shekhawati,  
Bagri, Wagdi, Kutchi, Kutchi  
Gujarati, Udaipur Marwari,  
Jaisalmer Marwari, Marwari,  
Udaipur Mewari, Dhundari,  
Haryanavi, Kashmiri, Gangoli,  
Kumaoni, Garhwali

***Aus dem räumlichen  
Nebeneinander ein  
zeitliches Nacheinander***

By Own work based on Uwe Dederling - Derivative of File:India location map.svg,  
CC BY-SA 3.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=88573176>



# Patterns

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Subj-ne

Obj-**DOM**

V-(obj)

(Hindi)

>

**Subj**

Obj-DOM

V-obj

**T-subj**

(Kutchi Gujarati, Marwari)

# Summing up:

- DOM *in situ* and DOM *ex situ* are two radically different phenomena
- Verb movement extends domains
- DOM is a strategy used to mark LDD/dislocation
- DOM is a structural phenomenon
- Heritage and unstandardized languages are the perfect viewpoint to observe syntax





La mulți ani,  
Institutul de Lingvistică!

Questions and comments: [r.dalessandro@uu.nl](mailto:r.dalessandro@uu.nl)

# “Recycling” of DOM (Polinsky 2018)

“the form that corresponds to the marked accusative case in the baseline is coopted as the dative of the recipient (indirect object) in the heritage language”  
Polinsky (2018:186)

- (77)
- |    |           |            |                   |                         |
|----|-----------|------------|-------------------|-------------------------|
| a. | podarit   | syn-a      | gitara            | <i>Heritage Russian</i> |
|    | will.gift | SON-MARKED | guitar.UNMARKED   |                         |
| b. | podarit   | syn-u      | gitar-u           | <i>Baseline Russian</i> |
|    | will.gift | SON-DAT    | guitar-ACC.MARKED |                         |
- ‘will give the son a guitar as a present’

The dative “adopts a more indexical discourse function, forging a tighter connection between morphosyntax and semantic properties”

“an existing case form is recycled for new use”

(Yager et al. 2015 in Polinsky 2018)

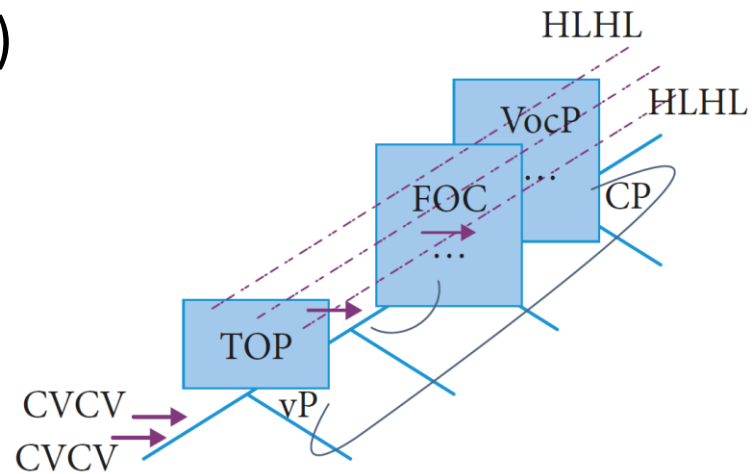


# Why the left periphery?

- That's the locus of interface interaction

D'Alessandro, Roberta & Marc van Oostendorp.  
2016. When imperfections are perfect. Prosody, phi-features and deixis in Central and Southern Italian vocatives. *Romance languages and Linguistic Theory* 10.

(78)



D'Alessandro & Van  
Oostendorp (2016: 71)

# Ergativity (joint work with P.Chandra)

- Phi-agreement between V and argument does not **always** go hand in hand with ergative case marking

(74) *John-ne cidiyaa dekhii thii*  
John-ERG sparrow-F.SG see-PERF.F.SG. be.F.SG  
'John had seen a sparrow'

(Hindi)

Bickel, Balthasar & Yogendra  
Yadava. 2000. A fresh look at  
grammatical relations in Indo-  
Aryan Lingua 110(5):343-373

Chandra, Pritha & Roberta  
D'Alessandro. 2024. Ergativity,  
agreement and alignment shift in  
Western Indo-Aryan. Ms, IIT Delhi  
& Utrecht University

(75) *Mai-le yas pasal-maa patrikaa kin-e*  
I-ERG dem.OBL store-LOC newspaper.NOM. buy.1.SG.PERF  
'I bought the newspaper in this store'

(Nepali: Bickel and Yadav 2000)

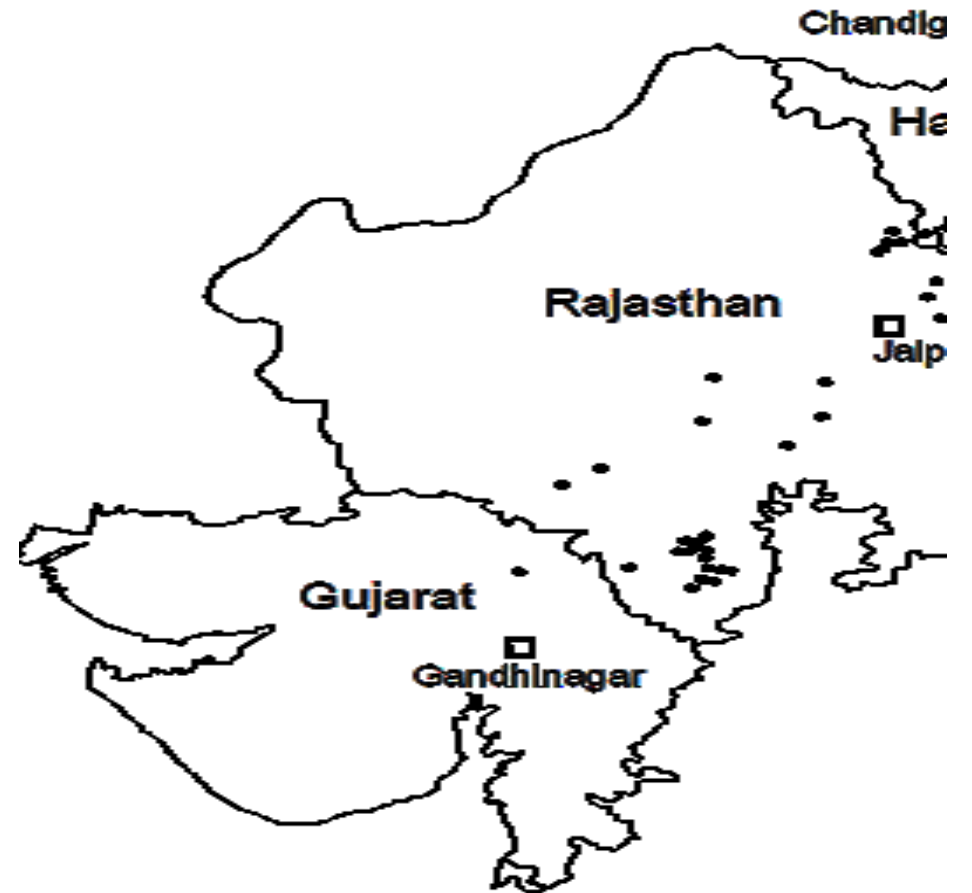
# What we found

- When V starts agreeing with **DOM-marked O ergative case marking starts to disappear**
- We start seeing a shift in ergative alignment > the language moves towards NOM/ACC (though the final NOM/ACC alignment is not reached yet)

# Case, agreement and alignment

- Progressing towards the following?

**DP-NOM**   **DP-ACC**   **V**   **T-subj**





# Patterns

---

Subj-ne

Obj-**DOM**

V-**obj**

(Gujarati)

>

**Subj**

Obj-DOM

V-obj

**T-subj**

(Kutchi Gujarati, Marwari)