Dative displacement in Romance Clitic Constructions.

Dative Shift Transfomation –as laid out by Larsson (1988)- splits into two more basic components: (i) Direct Object (DO) demotion and (ii) placement of the Recipient argument into the syntactic position regularly occupied by the DO. In this paper I will propose that -at least- DO demotion is required to account for certain clitic alternations in Romance Double Object Constructions (DOC). In particular, I will show that DAT(ive) displacement –the realization of a IO argument with ACC morphology- in Romanian, Spanish and Sardinian Clitic Constructions requires the DO to have been demoted first.

Romanian distinguishes morphologically between third person ACC and DAT clitics. The occurrence of a DAT clitic –doubling the Recipient argument- has been extensively proven to share the same formal properties of DOCs in English (Diaconescu&Rivero 2007).

(1)   Mihaela îi   trimite Mariei   o scrisoare
          M.   3sg.DAT sends   Mary.to a letter
          'Mihaela sends Mary a letter'   [Diaconescu&Rivero: 2007 (1)]

However, a handful of Romanian ditransitive verbs cross-references the Recipient argument with an ACC clitic (2a), instead of a DAT one. Two main properties characterize this construction in Rom: (i) the Theme argument cannot be cliticized onto the verb (2b) and (ii) the Recipient argument mandatorily becomes the NOM subject of the corresponding passive sentence (2c).

(2)   a. Ion   îl   învata   [pe   Petre]$_{sg.msc}$ [o   poezie]$_{sg.fem}$
             I.   3sg.msc.ACC teaches   DOM P.   the poem
             'Ion is teaching Peter the poem'
          b. *Ion o   învata   pe   Petre
             I.   3sg.fem.ACC teaches DOM P.
             'Ion is teaching it to Petre.'
          c. Copilul   a   fost învatata   si limba   mamei
             Children.the   have been taught   the language mather.of
             "The children have been taught his mother's language" [Pana Dindelegal 2013: (137)]

My analysis of ACC displacement in Romanian (2a) runs as follows. The lexical verb 'teach' is initially merged with the Theme argument and assigns it Lexical Case (Wooldford 1999). The Recipient argument is introduced as the Specifier of a higher verbal head and gets ACC Case from the *voice°* head introducing the external argument (Kratzer 1996).

(3)   [$_{voiceP}$ DP$_{ext}$ [voice°$_{[ACC]}$ [$_{vP}$ DP$_{Recip}$ [v° [$_{VP}$ V$_{[LEX]}$ DP$_{Theme}$]]]]]

This analysis has two positive consequences: (i) it explains why this particular argument realization is only available with a handful of verbs in Rom (i.e. assigning lexical case is an idiosyncratic property of certain verbs) and (ii) accounts for the lack of cliticization of the Theme argument. Lexical Case assignment to the DP$_{Theme}$ in (3) renders it inaccessible to further syntactic operations (i.e. cliticization and Object-to-Subject raising in Passives) by the Activity Condition (Chomsky 2000). **Spanish&Sardinian Dialects**. There is a similar pattern of DO demotion in Spanish and Sardinian Dialects. In Spanish and certain Sardinian Dialects (Manzini&Savoia 2005), when two third person clitics form a cluster, the DAT clitic gets a reflexive spellout (4b). Let's call this cluster Spurious-Se (SpuSe) I.

(4) a. Juan le   compró un libro.   b. Juan se   lo   compró. (→* Juan le lo compró)
       Juan 3sIO bought a book   Juan 3refl 3smO   bought
       'Juan bought him/her a book.'   'Juan bought him/her it.'

However, in (non-standard) Spanish and several Sardinian Dialects, when the DAT clitic is plural, the plural feature of this clitic can 'float' to the ACC clitic. Let's call this cluster SpuSe II.

(5)a. el poco tiempo que me queda estoy con mis hijos y se los entrego totalmente a ellos.
      'With the little time I have, I am with my children and I dedicate it enterily to them.'[Company (2003: 15a)]
b. [su ddʒər'nalɛ] si ɖɖɔz   appɔ   ˈja-ɔzɔ
   [the journal.sg] SI 3pl.ACC   have.1sS given-pl
   'I have given them the journal.'   Ardaùli (Sardinian) [Manzini&Savoia 2005]

Traditionally, the existence of SpuSe II has been related to SpuSe I via some sort of readjustment rule in Morphology (Bonet 1991). However, I will show that SpuSe II is a syntactically autonomous construction with respect to SpuSe I. In particular, I will show that SpuSe II is case of DAT displacement via DO demotion, similar (but not identical) to the Rom Clitic Construction in (2).

SpuSe I vs. SpuSe II. Firstly, in Spanish SpuSe II the Recipient argument can only surface as a strong pronoun, not as a full DP (6a). SpuSe I lacks this type of restriction altogether (6b). Indeed, the same restriction is found in third person accusative clitic doubling with transitive verbs (6c). This show that the third person accusative clitic in (6a) is crossreferring the Recipient argument and not the Theme argument.

(6)   a. [El libro]   se los   entregaré a {ellos/*tus amigos}   SpuSe II
            [The book] se 3pl.ACC sent.1sg.S to them/your friends   SpuSe I
        b. [El libro]   se lo   entragaré a {ellos/tus amigos}
            'I will sent them the book.'
        c. Juan los vió a {ellos/*tus amigos}   Transitive
            J.   3pl.ACC saw to them/your friends

Secondary predication cannot be construed with the Recipient argument in SpuSe I (7a), but it is possible in SpuSe II (7b) and in regular transitive sentences (7c).

(7)   a.*Se$_1$ lo   dije [PRO$_1$ borrachos]   c. Los$_1$ ví   [PRO$_1$ borrachos]
        b. Se los$_1$ dije [PRO$_1$ borrachos]   3pl.Acc saw.1sgS   drunk
            (Lit.) 'I told them it being drunk.'   'I saw them drunk.'

Summarizing, (6) and (7) show that SpuSe II behaves as a transitive verb with the Recipient argument 'substituting' the Theme argument. Convergent evidence to this conclusion can be also found in Sardinian. The verb 'talk' in Sardinian selects an (unique) internal argument with DAT case (8a). The crucial difference between the DAT preposition 'a' and DOM 'a' in Sardinian is that DAT is mandatory with indefinite IOs (8a), but DOM 'a' is forbidden with indefinite DOs (8b). We can safely conclude that the preposition 'a' in (8a) is DAT, not DOM. [Jones 1999: (64)]

(8)   a. Appo faeddatu *(a) unu duttore   b. Appo   vistu (*a) una pitzinna.
            Have.I talked   to a doctor   Have.I seen   to a   girl
            'I have talked to a doctor.'   'I have seen a girl.'

Crucially, the internal argument of the verb 'talk' in Sardinian must be cliticized with a third person accusative clitic (9a). Accusative cliticization of a dative argument with regular ditransitive verbs leads to severe ungrammaticality in Sardinian (9b). The generalization in Sardinian runs as follows: whenever a dative argument is the only internal argument of a verb, it can be cliticized with an ACC clitic; otherwise, the clitic must be DAT. This generalization can be straightforwardly extended to SpuSe II in (5b).

(9)   a. los   appo faeddat-os   b. {*Los/lis}   appo dat-{*os/u} frores
            3pl.ACC have talked-pl   3pl.ACC/3pl.DAT have given-pl/sg flowers
            'I have talked them.'   'I have given them flowers.'

Given the evidence above, I analyze the clitic *se* in SpuSe II as an argument-reducing morpheme. Extending the structure in (3) to SpuSe II, the clitic *se* in both (non-standard) Sp and Sardinian Dialects is taken as the realization of the verbal head v°, whose function consists on absorbing the Theme Θ-Role of the lexical verb. A positive consequence of this analysis is the unification of the clitic *se* in SpuSe II with other argument-reducing uses of the same clitic in Romance (i.e. Reflexive *se*, Middle *se*, Ergative *se*, etc.)

(10)   [$_{voiceP}$ DP$_{ext}$ [voice°$_{[ACC]}$ [$_{vP}$ DP$_{Recip}$ [v°<se> [$_{VP}$ V$_{[Theme]}$]]]]]

I have accounted for ACC displacement in Clitic Constructions as the result of DO demotion in Romanian, Spanish and Sardinian Dialects. However, this DO demotion can vary crosslinguistically: Lexical Case assignment in Romanian and argument-reducing morphology in (non-standard) Spanish and Sardinian Dialects.