# Micro-Parameters of Case Displacement:
## Leismo across Spanish Dialects

**1. THE IDEA:** This paper argues that so-called "leismo" (Spa. *Le admiro* – Eng. 'I admire **him'**) is a misnomer for a process whereby a Direct Object (DO) becomes an Indirect Object (IO): In other words, a case of "accusative displacement," (ACC-DIS for short; cf. Rezac 2008). We argue that ACC-DIS is largely restricted to Spanish, as this is a DOM-featuring language (cf. López 2012, Torrego 1998). We therefore establish a direct connection between the dative preposition of Spanish differential objects and the dative Case behind leismo, which (non accidentally) is the same. We consider the different leismo types reported (cf. Fernandez-Ordonez 1999), taking them to correspond to different cases of ACC-DIS, involving dative or locative Cases.

**2. BACKGROUND DATA:** A well-known phenomenon of Spanish dialect syntax is so-called "leismo," a broad cover term for different situations in which a would-be DO displays dative morphology. The most popular cases of leismo are: "animate leismo" and "non-animate leismo," in (1) and (2) respectively:

(1)     A     Trump, **le**       votan    los de la asociacion del   rifle       ANIMATE LEISMO
        ACC Trump  CL.sg.dat  vote-3.pl  the of  the association of-the rifle    (North-Iberian Spanish)
        'Trump, the members of the Rifle Association vote him'

(2)     El  rifle, Trump **le**      compro      antes  del   meeting       NON-ANIMATE LEISMO
        the rifle  Trump CL.sg.dat  bought-3.sg  before of-the meeting       (Castillian Spanish)
        'The rifle, Trump bought it before the meeting'

A third case of leismo is deployed in Basque Country Spanish, where the dative pronoun "le" has two important properties: It can double the DOM-ed DO, and it can also be used for (animate) femenine NPs:

(3)     **Le**        vieron     a {Obama / Hillary} por la    television              (Basque Country Spanish)
        CL.sg.dat  saw-3.pl  to Obama  Hillary   for  the   television
        'They saw Obama / Hillary on TV'

In brief, we see that leismo actually hides different uses of the clitic "le" for DOs. In some cases, it replaces animate NPs, non-animates in others, and it can also double (and cover) both masculine and femenine NPs.

**3. GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION:** Interestingly (and rather puzzlingly), leismo is for the most part restricted to Spanish: It is barred in Italian, French, Catalan, and Galician, as the data in (4) show:

(4)     a. ***Gli**        ho        visto    (Italian)    b. ***Je  lui**      ai      vu       (French)
            CL. sg.dat  have-1.sg  seen                     I   CL.sg.dat  have-1.sg  seen
        c. ***Li**        he        vist     (Catalan)    d. ***Le**        vin            (Galician)
            CL.sg.dat  have-1.sg  seen                     CL.sg.dat  saw-1.sg
            'I have seen him'                              'I have seen him'

Given the proposal we put forward here, these facts fit with the absence of DOM in the above languages. Unexpectedly, leismo is also impossible in Romanian, which does feature DOM. This also falls into place, though, since Romanian DOM makes us of a particle (*pe*) that, unlike Spanish *a*, is not a dative marker.

   Now, if we go back to Spanish, leismo is also restricted, particularly in America, where it can only be used in North Argentina and Quito (Ecuador). There are some circumstances where American (i.e., non-leista) Spanish must use "le" for DOs: That's the case of non-paradigmatic SE sentences IN (5) (cf. Ordóñez & Treviño 2007):

(5)     a. A Maradona, se {**le** / *lo}          adora     en Argentina              (non-leista Spanish)
            to Maradona SE  CL.sg.{dat/acc} adore-3.sg in  Argentina
            'Maradona is adored in Argentina'
        b. A Messi, se {**le** / *lo}           ha        criticado duramente         (non-leista Spanish)
            to Messi SE  CL.sg.{dat/acc} have-3.sg  criticized harshly
            'Messi has been severely criticized'

What is remarkable about (5) is that "le" is used in non-leista varieties: In Mexico, Colombia, Peru, and some areas of the Iberian Peninsula too. What this indicates is that certain dialects can be forced into the "leismo" mode when the Case-assigning properties of the verb are tampered with, which is precisely what SE does.

**4. PROPOSAL:** The idea we put forward in this paper is that leismo should be approached as a case of accusative Case displacement: ACC DIS (cf. Rezac 2008). In particular, we argue that leismo builds down to (6):

(6)     LEISMO: DP$_{ACC}$ → DP$_{OBL}$

The process behind (6) submits that a DP that is supposed to receive accusative obtains a different (oblique) Case. This raises three questions: (i) How/Why is ACC lost?, (ii) What type of Case obtains instead?, and (iii)

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Why is (6) almost exclusive of Spanish? Questions (i) and (iii) have a common answer, since the Case that replaces ACC is typically dative, which is also the Case that has been attributed to DOM (cf. Torrego 2010). This follows if cases like (7) are analyzed as in (8), assuming a complex (locatum-like, cf. Hale & Keyser 2002) syntax:

(7)      Castigaron    a  Cameron                                        (Spanish)
        punished-3.sg  to  Cameron
        'They punished Cameron

(8)      [$_{vP}$ they [ PROVIDE [ Cameron [ WITH PUNISHMENT ]]]]

Under (8), DOM involves a ditransitive configuration in which the surface DO (namely, *Cameron*) is actually a second object (introduced by an applicative head; cf. Pylkännen 2002): ACC is assigned to the first (innermost) object, and *Cameron* must receive a different Case in order to be licensed. Given standard Case hierarchies (cf. Marantz 1993, Caha 2009, among others), the first option for the replacement is dative, which fits with the presence of the dative Case marker *par excellence* (Spanish *a*) and the availability of the dative pronoun (*le*). However, given the intricacies noted in sections 2 and 3, it is unlikely that <u>all cases</u> of leismo involve dativization.

**5. ACCUSATIVE REPLACEMENTS: DAT / LOC.** The claim in (6) is certainly sound for Basque Country Spanish leismo, which shows a robust dative nature (it allows for clitic doubling and is not gender-sensitive). Plausibly, (6) is also responsible for animate leismo, further explaining the source of DOM. For the punch line, consider the example in (9), from a on-line corpus, which shows that certain varieties of sub-standard Catalan (from areas in strong contact with Spanish) can also manifest leismo if the structure contains a predicative, thus making the complex structure (like that of double objects).

(9)      A   en Joan, se **li**          veu       *(cansat)                 (sub-standard Catalan)
        ACC the Joan  SE CL.sg.dat see-3.sg    tired
        Joan, one sees him tired

The final situation is non-animate leismo, which is not obviously an instance of dativization. To begin with, non-animate NPs cannot be replaced (nor doubled) with a dative pronoun:

(10)     Enviamos los regalos a {Maria / *Madrid} → **Le**      enviamos los regalos     (Spanish)
        sent-1.pl  the presents to Maria  Madrid    CL.sg.dat sent-1.pl  the presents
        'We sent the presents to Maria / Madrid'      'We sent to-her the presents'

The data in (10) indicate that dativization is not a good fit for non-animate leismo. We argue that those cases, which are the most restricted ones, involve locative Case. This possibility is supported by the data in (11), where locative PPs can be replaced by dative pronouns (in (11a)) and non-animate leismo circumvents PCC effects (in (11c)), like locative *hi* does in Catalan (cf. Bonet 2008):

(11)    a. Puse    el mantel  en la mesa → **Le**        puse    el  mantel  (a la mesa)
           put-1.sg the tablecloth on the table    CL.sg.dat put-3.sg  the tablecloth to the table
           'I put the tablecloth on the table'      'I put on-it the tablecloth'
      b. El estudiante, te    {**\*le** / lo}      enviaron    c. El regalo, te    **le**        enviaron
           the students    CL.sg.1 CL.sg.dat/acc send-3.pl     the present CL.sg.1 CL.sg.dat  send.3.pl
           'The student, they sent him to-you'        'The present, they sent it to-you'

**6. CONCLUSIONS:** This paper has argued that leismo is a cover label for cases whereby the accusative Case of a DO is *displaced* (just like dative is in "laismo;" cf. Romero 1997), and substituted by an alternative Case. The relevant replacement takes dative first, but other oblique Cases (locative) seem to be involved too, thus accounting for the different types of leismo and their geographic complexities. The analysis also tackles the lack of leismo in most Romance languages, taking DOM to be a key factor.

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