Clitic doubling of indirect objects in Spanish
considering referential properties of the indirect *and* the direct object

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This paper presents results from a study on clitic doubling (CD) of indirect objects (IO) in Spanish, i.e. the occurrence of an object NP with a coreferential dative clitic:

(1) *Los   servidores   de   Saúl   **le**   comunicaron   estas   noticias   **a   David**.*
    DET.PL servant-PL   POSS   Saúl   DAT.3SG= tell-PAST.3PL   DEM.PL news-PL   C   David
    'Saul's servants delivered this message to David.'

CD is widely regarded as the predominant way of IO-realization (Flores 2006: 671; Givón 1976: 161; Silva-Corvalán 1984: 567). However, the quantitative analysis of this study draws a different picture: It compares two registers represented by bible translations, one formal and one colloquial, and reveals that the occurrence of IO-CD is more widespread in the latter variety. Yet, even in the colloquial version only less than 50% of the IOs appear with a clitic. For 3-participant constructions, the investigation shows that it is not sufficient to consider the IO in isolation to account for the occurrence or absence of CD, but that the same properties have to be explored for the direct object (DO) as well.

CD is mainly regarded as object agreement and its likelihood to occur correlates with the IO's degree of prominence in the topicality hierarchy: CD is obligatory for IO's that are left-dislocated and/or personal pronouns. The otherwise unrestricted possibility of IO-CD is often explained by the IO's high position in the topicality hierarchy (Givón 1976: 152; Silva-Corvalán 1984: 556): IOs usually carry the features [+animate] and [+definite] in contrast to DOs, which are often [-animate] and can only be doubled in topicalized position (von Heusinger & Kaiser 2003: 60; Parodi 1998: 89). Features of high topicality do not have to be present for the availability of IO-CD in each individual case. However, analyses suggest that the frequency of IO-CD increases along this hierarchy (Flores & Melis 2004: 350).

The present study confirms this distribution. However, the data also indicate that even IOs represented by personal pronouns are not doubled in all cases. Personal pronouns exclusively represent [+animate] referents in Spanish and are ranked highest regarding definiteness (Aissen 2003: 357).

For sequences of clitics, it is generally acknowledged that dative clitics precede accusative clitics and that 1st and 2nd person clitics precede those of the 3rd person (Parodi 1998: 96). Hence, a combination of a 1st or 2nd person accusative clitic and a 3rd person dative clitic is not possible:

(2)   [+animate], [+definite], [+specific]   [+animate], [+definite], [+specific]
    [...]***nos***   *mostraremos*   ***a***   ***ellos***.
        AKK.1PL=show-FUT.1PL   C   DAT.3PL
    '[...] we will disclose ourselves to them.'

Since pronouns of the 1st and 2nd person denote discourse participants, i.e. [+animate] referents, we conclude that an [+animate] DO, which ranks equally high on the topicality hierarchy, blocks CD of the IO: Since the DO itself is not available for object agreement, IO-CD might violate the prominence relations in this case. This assumption is confirmed by data in which IO-CD fails to occur although rules of clitic clustering do not block the appearance (a sequence of 3rd person clitics would be grammatical):

(3)   [+animate], [+definite], [+specific]   [+animate], [+definite], [+specific]

   […] lo   *he*   *dedicado*   ***al***   ***Señor***.

        AKK.3SG= AUX.PRS.1SG   dedicate-PTCP C-DET   Lord

   '[…] I dedicated him [this son] to the Lord.'

Diachronically, IO-CD developed as a mean to disambiguate an [+animate] and [+definite] DO – introduced by the preposition *a* – and the IO that is always marked by *a* (Flores 2006: 670). Synchronically, this study reveals that IO-CD is rare when the DO is a sentential complement and the necessity to differentiate the syntactic functions of two NPs is not given:

(4) *Ordene*   *ahora nuestro señor* ***a tus***   ***siervos*** *[…]* ***que***   *busquen*

     tell-IMP.3SG NOW   POSS.1PL Lord   C POSS.PL   servant-PL   COMP search-SBJV.PRS.3PL

     un   *hombre que sepa*   *tocar*   *el*   *arpa, […]*

     DET   man   REL know-SBJV.PRS.3SG   play-INF   DET harp

     'Now tell our Lord to command your servants to search for a man who knows to play the harp.'

In conclusion, IO-CD might not have expanded as far as often assumed. In 3-participant constructions, IO- CD appears to be less preferred in combination with certain referential or syntactic features of the DO.

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