

## “Why differential case marking in Corsican?”

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The aim of this talk is the description and discussion of the main functions of Differential Object Marking (*DOM*) in Corsican. It will be argued that *DOM* in Corsican is a marking strategy for highly individuated referents (cf. in a similar vein Næss 2004), similarly to nominal determiners and some types of quantifiers, like is *DOM* in Rumanian.

Most Romance languages and varieties show the phenomenon of *DOM* (cf. Bossong 1985). Besides the well-known facts of Spanish, Portuguese and Rumanian, also many non-standard varieties of Romance languages like the dialects of southern Italy show the phenomenon of *DOM* with direct (and partly also indirect) objects (cf. Rohlf's 1971, Roegiest 1979, Floricic 2003, von Heusinger & Kaiser 2003, 2007, Stark (submitted), triggered mainly by (semantic) factors such as animacy, specificity or individuation. Now, *DOM* is attested also in Corsican (cf. Bottiglioni 1933-42, Rolfs 1971, Marcellesi 1986), but a detailed analysis about its underlying regularities, triggering factors and functions is still outstanding.

We want to present in a first step a detailed analysis on the basis of a written prose corpus (~ 25.000 words), focussed on the factors animacy and referentiality. Full lexical noun phrases (sg./pl.) ± (in)definite article, ± def. determiners, ± quantifiers (*tutti*, *tantu*, *nisun*), personal pronouns, proper names, (modified) bare nouns, universal quantifiers and other indefinite pronouns, relative and interrogative pronouns will be systematically considered in direct object position, with all syntactic categories being differentiated according to their human, animate and inanimate referents.

This analysis will show that *DOM* in Corsican appears mainly with proper names, namely of human or animate referents. *DOM* appears furthermore with pronouns with human referents, but not without exceptions (e.g. demonstratives with a following relative clause mainly appear without *DOM*). There is variation also within the class of interrogatives. Bare nouns show no *DOM*.

The most intriguing fact lies in a systematic incompatibility between the *DOM*-marker *à* and determiners or quantifiers: lexical noun phrases, with an (in)def. article, a possessive, demonstrative or quantifier never get *DOM*-marked, independently of the semantic nature of the referent:

- |     |                       |             |               |     |                       |             |              |
|-----|-----------------------|-------------|---------------|-----|-----------------------|-------------|--------------|
| (1) | <i>Vigu</i>           | <i>*(à)</i> | <i>Pedru.</i> | (2) | <i>Vigu</i>           | <i>*(à)</i> | <i>l'omu</i> |
|     | See <sub>1Ps Sg</sub> | DOM         | Pedru         |     | See <sub>1Ps Sg</sub> |             | the man      |
|     | 'I see Pedru'         |             |               |     | 'I see the man'       |             |              |

Thus, on the syntactic level, we claim in a second step that the *DOM*-marker is incompatible with overtly realized elements in D°- or Num°-position, which seems to point at a functional equivalency to them. On the semantic-functional level, it seems thus as if *DOM* in Corsican were a marker of *individuation*: there is systematic *DOM* with stressed personal pronouns, most interrogatives, relatives and quantifiers whenever referring to human referents.

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