Georg Bossong

DOM and linguistic typology

A personal view

1 The discovery of Differential Object Marking

The discovery of what I later baptized as Differential Object Marking (DOM) was a crucial moment in my life. In 1977 I had completed my thesis on the *Problems of translation of scientific works from Arabic into Old Spanish in the age of Alfonso el Sabio* (Bossong 1979) and was looking for new challenges. I was deeply fascinated by the relationship between universal and particular structures in human language, and hence I was keen on linguistic typology, which had a rather marginal status in international linguistics at the time. I had the strong feeling that this kind of research was exactly where the future lay: empirically based research into language universals. How to describe the astounding diversity of languages and at the same time capture their underlying unity?

For me, the first instance of what later on was to be described as DOM was the typological parallelism between Hebrew and Spanish. This similarity was not apparent at first sight, and it was not explicitly discussed in descriptions at the time. Spanish was described according to the traditional patterns of Latin and Romance grammars; and Hebrew grammar had, in the West, a longstanding tradition of its own. So, in Spanish grammars a strange phenomenon was to be found, called the *prepositional accusative*, something unknown in the Latin tradition; and on the other hand, Hebrew grammars showed something equally strange, traditionally called *nota accusativi* (Hebrew grammars in the West were written in Latin until the 19th century). After Latin and Greek, I had learned Hebrew, a long time before Spanish, and so I had become at an early stage in my life what in the Renaissance was called a *homo trilinguis*. The similarity between the Hebrew *nota et* and the specific use of the Spanish preposition *a* struck me as particularly interesting, although the use of *et* was restricted to definite objects and the use of *a* to animate ones. Nevertheless, I very soon became aware that the common factor was that in both cases a differentiation was made inside a grammatical category, namely the object, according to certain semantic rules.

In 1978 I lived in Paris with my wife and our first-born son. For my research I relied essentially on the *Bibliothèque Nationale*, the old one, of course, in the Rue de Richelieu, with all its splendour and all its shortcomings. I began to delve

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into the grammars of numerous languages, beginning with Romance. The articles of Harri Meier on the *acusativo preposicional* were particularly revealing (Meier 1948). He had worked as a lecturer in Portugal in the early 1950s, just as I worked as a lecturer in the late 1970s in France. I soon discovered Bodo Müller's *morphemmarkiertes Satzobjekt* (Müller 1971) and many other studies on the preposition *a* in Romance and *pe* in Romanian. On the Semitic side, I discovered that Hebrew *et* was by no means an isolated phenomenon, but that it had etymological and grammatical parallels in Aramaic, in modern Arabic dialects, and in older and more remote Semitic languages such as Akkadian and Classical Ethiopian. From that moment on, my curiosity was definitively aroused, and I was soon overwhelmed by a never-ending stream of new discoveries. I had not simply found a theme, but rather the theme had found me! It was an exciting experience.

My excitement grew when I discovered that two of the languages I was studying at that moment showed similar phenomena, namely Persian and Guaraní, two languages geographically, typologically, and culturally as distant from one another as can be imagined. At that time, I was deepening my study of Persian in the research group of Gilbert Lazard at the *École Pratique des Hautes Études*, and was studying Guaraní in connection with Bernard Pottier's research group on American Indian languages. Soon I realized that traditional descriptions were hopelessly insufficient, insofar as they stuck to the surface of morphological marking, without reaching the deeper layers of universal structures. There was a deeply rooted commonality between all these languages, but nobody had become aware of it. Traditional descriptions remained totally superficial.

So, the first step was discovery. The next step had to be naming. Finding a name for a newly discovered reality is of crucial importance. With an appropriate name a vaguely imagined idea gets a clear-cut identity, a mental shape which permits one to go beyond initial empirical limitations. At some moment between 1978 and 1980 a decisive intuition struck me: the common factor is differentiality. In all languages I had considered thus far, there was a differentiation made within a given syntactic category, namely the object. Some objects were marked, whereas others were not. Very soon this fundamental point became crystal-clear to me. The important point was to make abstraction from all superficial differences and to work out the basic structure. The term to be applied had to be sufficiently abstract and general to cover all individual variations. Only when this level of abstraction had been reached did the basic underlying plans have a chance to reveal themselves from beneath the overwhelming variety of individual language structures.

It was in this way that the term *Differential Object Marking* came to my mind. This creation was not only abstract enough to cover all the various individual

realizations of a general principle, but had also the advantage of being international, to be easily pronounceable in most European languages, and to be presented in an easily manageable abbreviated form (DOM). I had created the term in English, and there was no problem with German (*Differentielle Objektmarkierung*). In the Romance languages the only difficulty is the well-known difference of the position of the adjective (*Marquage Différentiel de l'Objet*, *Marca Diferencial del Objeto*, both abbreviated as MDO, a bit like UNO vs. ONU). But this minimal lack of internationality was no obstacle at all. The term was there, and it made its way into scholarship. The initial empirical discoveries had helped to create the term, and once created, the term itself helped to foster new discoveries in an ever-increasing number of languages and language families, all around the world.

Differentiability refers to differentiations according to what at the time was called *animacy* (as in Spanish and Guaraní) and/or according to *definiteness* (as in Hebrew and Persian). In the higher semantic domains, there is frequently a certain overlap between animacy and definiteness, especially in personal pronouns and in proper names, which are necessarily both animate and definite. The term *animacy* has certain shortcomings: while it can easily be transferred into German 'Belebtheit' or Italian 'animatezza', it cannot be easily rendered in French or in Spanish. I proposed to call it *inherence* since it refers to semantic features inherent to the noun or noun phrase. Gilbert Lazard proposed the beautiful neologism *humanitude* ($\neq$ *humanité*), which works well in French, but not in other languages. As for definiteness, I prefer the more general term of *reference*. However, none of these terms had the success of the term DOM, and they did not impose themselves universally.

My findings on DOM were first presented in public at the 16th International Congress of Romance Philology, held in Palma de Mallorca in 1980. I attended this congress in the company of my former supervisors, Kurt Baldinger and Klaus Heger, as well as Gerold Hilty and Eugenio Coseriu. My article began to circulate in manuscript form, as a kind of *samizdat*, but it was never published in printed form, because, after several years of waiting, the publication of the congress acts was cancelled due to a lack of funds. Nevertheless, the idea made its way into the world.

In 1981 we moved to Munich. I had my office just opposite the *Bayerische Staatsbibliothek* (StaBi). Umberto Eco once said that "paradise must be something like a big library". Indeed, the StaBi was for me a paradise where I found plenty of information on the most remote and exotic languages. So, I went ahead and continued on my voyage of discovery.

One of my first adventures was to work through Grierson's *Linguistic Survey of India*, whose 11 large volumes contain detailed information on 364 languages

belonging to the Indo-Aryan, Dravidian, Sino-Tibetan, and Munda families (Grierson 1967–1968). The difficulties of the postposition *ko* in Hindi are well-known, indeed almost proverbial, but this is only the tip of an iceberg. When I penetrated the jungle of Indian languages, I soon realized that DOM was omnipresent on the subcontinent, in all language families. Grierson's survey is extremely useful insofar as he quotes the parable of the prodigal son in hundreds of languages – a text which contains many object constructions, animate and inanimate as well as definite and indefinite.

However, my research on Indian languages never took the form of a book. Instead, I began an intense study of the Iranian (Irano-Aryan) language family, this for several reasons: because of my long-standing love for the Persian language (and poetry), because of my friendship with Gilbert Lazard, and because of the rich internal variety of forms and functions in that language family. In 1985 my book on *Empirische Universalienforschung. Differentielle Objektmarkierung in den neuiranischen Sprachen* appeared (Bossong 1985). It did not have the international echo I had hoped, mainly, I think, because it was written in German, a language which was slowly dying out as a medium of international scientific communication. Nevertheless, it helped me to climb the academic ladder. I have several more books of this kind sleeping in my drawers, especially one on the Semitic language family, but as time went on, I focused on other topics. In Zurich the strong local traditions brought me back to my first love, namely Al-Andalus, the linguistic and cultural relations between Arabic/Hebrew and the Ibero-Romance languages. Several disciples, and also my successor in Zurich, Johannes Kabatek, have taken up the challenge and continue the research on DOM in Romance and beyond. The topic is now widespread in international research.

2 Short outline of selected topics

Why is DOM so fascinating? I think it is because of its “squishiness”. The boundary between the presence and absence of object marking is fluid. In most languages there are transitional zones where marking and non-marking are both possible. There follows a short collection of quotations describing these difficulties (from my 1985 book):

Spanish:

“Les notions d'animation et de particularisation étant essentiellement subjectives, il est parfois malaisé de décider de l'emploi ou de l'omission de la préposition 'A'.”

(Coste/Redondo 1976, 321)

Syro-Aramaic:

“In den meisten Fällen herrscht hinsichtlich der Wahl oder der Weglassung eines Objectzeichens beim Determinierten vollständiges Schwanken.” (Nöldeke 1898, 220)

Hindi:

“The correct use of these two alternative forms and constructions [ko vs. Ø] is perhaps the most difficult thing in the Hindi language. Only by extensive and continual reading of native books and by intercourse with the people can the foreigner become able to use them with idiomatic accuracy.” (Kellogg 1893, 397)

Finnish:

“Den Ausländer, der sich in den Bau der finnischen Sprache hineinzuarbeiten versucht, überkommt angesichts des Partitivs ein Gefühl der Hilflosigkeit, so wie einem Stoßtruppführer vor einem feindlichen Minenfeld zumute sein mag: bei jedem Schritt lauern Gefahren, und selbst der guten, verlässlichen Mutter Erde, die uns allen einen festen Standort gibt, darf er nicht mehr trauen.” (Raible 1976, 10)

Such categories are interesting for the linguist. Clear-cut boundaries, such as grammatical gender in European languages, are uninteresting, in that they may be difficult in second language learning, but they do not present a theoretical challenge. To say *el mesa* or *die Tisch* is simply wrong. But to say *he visto al perro* or *he visto el perro* may be equally correct according to the context and the meaning intended by the speaker, and so the use or non-use of the preposition becomes a challenging problem for linguistic research.

One of the fundamental discoveries concerning DOM is that it can be nominal and/or verbal. A grammatical relationship between nominal actant and verbal predicate can be expressed by grammemes added to one of the two terms, or to both. The interplay between verbal clitics and nominal affixes is particularly complex and therefore interesting for linguistic research. In Spanish, *lo he visto al perro* is in more or less free alternation with *he visto al perro*. In some languages, such as Hungarian (9) or the Bantu language Zulu (10), the alternation is exclusively verbal (compare the well-known “object conjugation” of Hungarian); in other languages, such as in Hungarian’s Ob-Ugric relatives Ostyak and Vogul, all four variants occur: the marking can be nominal alone, verbal alone, or nominal plus verbal, and of course marking can be lacking altogether. The result is a complex and subtle interplay of factors which allows for the expression of a great variety of semantic nuances.

An important chapter, although up to now a rather neglected one, is that dealing with incorporation vs. excorporation. The natural place for an object is close to the verb, with which it forms a semantic unit. Verb and object tend to undergo coalescence. According to DOM, marking may serve to interrupt this close relationship by rendering the object more independent and autonomous. This process can be called *excorporation*: instead of melting with the verb, the

object stands by itself. So, it can be topicalized, for instance, or can otherwise occupy a prominent position. Nahuatl is a classic example, already occurring in the work of Wilhelm von Humboldt, author of the term *Einverleibung* which later spread internationally in its Latinized form *incorporation*. Of particular interest are those cases where an incorporated object forms with the verb a basic unit, to which a marked, and thereby excorepated object is then added. Compare the example from Udi (7) where the Arabism *xabar* ‘message, information’ forms with the verb a phraseological unit meaning ‘to ask’, and then the unit of verb plus the incorporated object as a whole takes an independent object, to which the postposition *-ox* is added. (Note that in the Udi example we observe the simultaneous presence of the ergative marker *-en* for the subject.) Such constructions are extremely widespread in Iranian, Turkic, and Indo-Aryan languages.

By *configurational typology* I understand the distinction between the three basic types of marking the fundamental relationship of subject and object: the configuration can be accusative, ergative, or “active” (or, as Gilbert Lazard has felicitously termed it, “dual”). The combination of these three basic configurations with DOM yields very interesting results, which cannot be presented here in detail (cf. Bossong 1985, 116–121).

In terms of natural iconic markedness (Mayerthaler 1981), DOM is “iconic” insofar as natural combinations of features are left unmarked, whereas non-natural combinations are marked. It is “natural” for a prototypical object to be inanimate and/or indefinite, and the specific marking of animate/definite objects is natural and thus iconic. DOM is of particular interest for the theory of natural markedness.

Synchronic analysis has its logical counterpart in diachrony. Languages are always in movement; systems never stand still. In this sense, the distinction of synchrony and diachrony is useful, but artificial. With respect to DOM this has important implications. The pathways of diachronic change are universal, but the particular stretch of road on which a given language finds itself is individual. It is always the same street, but the point that a language has reached is variable.

In recent years, contact linguistic has generated much interest. Even on remote islands or in mountain valleys languages are continuously in contact with other languages. DOM is a phenomenon which spreads easily across borders of languages or language families. DOM can arise on the base of universal tendencies, or from internal factors, but it can also arise due to the influence of neighbouring languages. To give just one example: modern standard Guaraní has the postposition *pe* which works more or less like Spanish *a*. Thanks to the research on missionary grammars we know that this state of affairs is relatively recent. Older descriptions and texts clearly show that traditional (“tribal”) Guaraní did not show any trace of DOM. The emergence of this construction must be explained

as a contact induced change, namely contact with Spanish. Similar observations can be made with respect to Aymara, for instance (see (8), also compare Papia Kristang (12)).

3 Some examples

The short collection of examples which follows is intended to give a – necessarily superficial – impression of the enormous formal, genetic, and geographic variety of DOM. It occurs across all continents, and in many linguistic families. There is an astonishing diversity of structures, but the underlying structural principles are uniform. It is this combination of unity and diversity which makes the study of DOM so rewarding.

First, a few illustrative examples from Hindi (1) are given. As in most other Indo-Aryan languages, the postposition *ko* not only has the function ACC', but also DAT. In this respect its behaviour resembles the use of Spanish *a*. Such a constellation is frequent in the world's languages, although by no means universal. The boundary between marked and unmarked objects lies in the domain of animals. Also note that Hindi, like many other languages of the region, has an ergative configuration for the past tenses (what I call *preterital ergativity*). We observe here the simultaneous presence of overt ergative marking (*ne*) and the marking of the animate object (*ko*).

(1) Hindi (Indo-Aryan/Indo-European)

Maĩ laṛkē kō dēkhtā hũ
I boy ACC' seeing am
'I see the boy.'

laṛkī ghoṛ-ō kō dēkhā
girl horse-OBLPL ACC' saw
'The girls saw the horses.'

maĩ-nē cīṛi-yā dēkhĩ
I-ERG bird-OBL PL seen-FEM PL
'I have seen birds.'

us-nē brāhman kō dān diyā
he (OBL)-ERG Brahman DAT gift gave
'He gave the brahman a gift.'

The Iranian language Ormuri (2), spoken in the north-western frontier of Pakistan, shows a classical pattern. The preposition *ku* (etymologically related to Slavic *k*) is used differentially, in combination with simple or periphrastic verbs (*xalas kon* ‘make free’ = ‘liberate’).

(2) Ormuri (Iranian/Indo-European)

Az ku tū bẽ-nas-am, ku mūn kara dī xalās kōn
 I ACC’ you PRS-take-1 SG ACC’ me from him free make
 ‘I take you, but liberate me from him!’

Ku boz-am dek
 ACC’ goat-1 SG saw
 ‘I have seen the goat.’

yāsp bu nāl ka-m
 horse PRS iron make-1 SG
 ‘I am just shoeing a horse.’

The Munda language Sora (3) is semantically interesting. The noun *ad’ong* is used for both ACC’ and DAT. *He has seen the child* is expressed as *he has seen the child’s body*.

The same construction is used for the DAT function: *he has given money to the child* is rendered as *he has given money the child’s body*. From a typological perspective, this is a rare construction, and I have not found parallels elsewhere, but it is clearly in line with the general semantic rules of DOM based on inherency factors.

(3) Sora (Austroasiatic/Munda)

Anin pəsij-ən ad’ong gij-le
 He child-GEN “body” = ACC’ see-PRT
 ‘He has seen the child.’

Anin kənsim [-ən ad’ong] tɪb-le
 he chicken-GEN ACC’ carve-PRT
 ‘He has carved the chicken.’

Anin pəsij-ən ad’ong lebun tiy-le
 he child-GEN “body” = DAT money give-PRT
 ‘He gave money to the child.’

Great parts of Eurasia are occupied by languages which belong to a hypothetical macro-phylum, termed Altaic. The genetic relationship between the families of this phylum is a matter of dispute, but the structural similarity concerning DOM is striking. We consistently find the same pattern everywhere, namely nominally marked DOM on the base of referentiality: definite objects are marked, whereas indefinite objects remain unmarked, from the earliest documents until today. This pattern is universally attested in Turkic, Mongolic, and Tungusic languages, see the examples of Bashkir (4), Mongolian (5), and Mandchu (6) below.

(4) Bashkir (Altaic/Turkic)

čay-di ičtim vs. *čay ičtim*
 tea- ACC' I.drank tea I.drank
 'I have drunk the tea – I have drunk tea.'

(5) Mongolian (Altaic/Mongolic)

Bi nom-yg avlaa vs. *bi nom avlaa*
 I book- ACC' bought I book bought
 'I bought the book – I bought a book.'

(6) Manchu (Altaic/Tungusic)

Bi dengjan-be mukiye buhe vs. *bi bithe arambi*
 I lamp- ACC' I-extinguished I letter I-wrote
 'I switched off the lamp – I wrote a letter.'

This pattern is so pervasive that it has penetrated into Udi (7), an outlier of the Lezghian language family, situated in Turkic speaking Azerbaijan. Among the fifty-odd languages of the Caucasus, which was called the *mons linguarum* in Antiquity, DOM is absent. This is especially noteworthy in the Eastern language families, the Daghestanian area, which is well-known for being the realm of extremely rich case marking systems. Nevertheless, no trace of DOM is found elsewhere in this “mountain of languages”. The Lezghic branch of this group has some of the most extended case marking systems of the world, including Tabassaran with between 48 and 52 cases. Nevertheless, DOM is completely absent from this area, except in Udi, which is spoken in an otherwise Turkic region. It stands to reason that DOM in Udi can be assumed to be due to this adstratal influence. This example shows that DOM follows universal rules and tendencies, but that it is also sensitive to contact influences.

(7) Udi (Daghestanian/Lezghian)

pāčay-en armuy-ox xabarre aqsa vs. Arcen šum uken
 king-ERG son- ACC'-PL information he-asked let's-sit bread let's-eat
 'The king asked his sons. – Let's sit down and eat some bread!'

The development of DOM in the American Indian languages Aymara and Guaraní (8) can be shown to be due to contact with Spanish. Marking is purely nominal, the postposition for ACC' is identical to the marker for DAT, just like in Spanish. DOM has developed in times of Spanish influence; according to early missionary descriptions, it was absent in the original states of these languages. Below, there are a few examples from these two languages, which are probably genetically unrelated, but strongly influenced each other through adstratal contact. In the examples below (8), it becomes evident that the inherent feature of definiteness prevails over the inherent feature of animateness.

(8) Aymara/Guaraní (American Indian)

k'usilu-χa qamaqhi-ru nac'antaj-na
 monkey-THEM fox- ACC' bind-PRT
ka'I o-mosã aguara-pe
 monkey 3SG-bound fox- ACC'
 'The monkey bound the fox.'

juqasa-χa katxatā-na-wa mā lunthata
 son-THEM catch-PRT-ASSERT one thief
ñande ra'y o-ipyhy peteĩ mondaha
 we son 3SG-caught one thief
 'Our son caught a thief.'

The purely verbal marking of DOM occurs in many parts of the world, although on the whole it is less frequent than purely nominal marking. Hungarian (9) is well-known for its so-called object conjugation. Here, DOM takes the following form: the nominal object is always marked, without any differentiability (here glossed as ACC = 'non-differential accusative'); in contrast, the verbal conjugation has two forms, depending on the referential status of the object. If the object is definite, the verb obligatorily refers to it by a combined subject + object conjugation; if it is indefinite, there is no verbal agreement with the object, only with the subject.

(9) Hungarian (Finno-Ugric/Ugric)

az-t az újságo-t kér-i vs. *újságo-t kér*
 ACC-ART newspaper-ACC ask-for-SBJ+OBJ newspaper-ACC asks-for-SBJ
 ‘He asks for the newspaper. – He asks for a newspaper.’

The structure of Bantu languages is comparable in certain respects to the structures found in Ugric. The numerous nominal classifiers so typical of Bantu are integrated in the verbal predicate whenever the object is definite, yet they are not when the object is indefinite, a classic case of verbal DOM. The object noun itself remains unchanged, and differentiability appears only in the verb. Here, an example from Zulu (10) is given for illustration.

(10) Zulu (Niger-Kongo/Bantu)

ngiya-m-bona umuntu vs. *ngiya-bona umuntu*
 1SG-CLASS OBJ-see man 1SG-see man
 ‘I see the man. – I see a man.’

Ritharngu (11) is spoken in Arnhem Land in Northern Australia. It belongs to Pama-Nyungan, the most widespread genetic phylum of Australia. In this language, several structural particularities appear in combination. As in most Australian languages, one form or another of ergativity prevails in the noun. In Ritharngu, we observe the simultaneous presence of ergative and accusative markers. The presence or absence of the accusative marker in the noun follows the rules of DOM. Moreover, there is congruence between nominal and verbal object marking; in consequence, it can be said that both the noun and the verb are organized according to DOM. The semantic differentiation is purely inherent, the boundary being situated between animate and inanimate beings (*kangaroo* vs. *spear*). Such a combination of nominal and verbal DOM is not uncommon in Australian languages.

(11) Ritharngu (Pama-Nyungan)

nāwala-ñā-ŋay garčambal-na guya-du vs. *nāwala-ŋay wartambal*
 see-OBJ-PERF kangaroo-ACC' ish-ERG see-PERF spear
ding'-du
 woman-ERG
 ‘The fish has seen the kangaroo. – The woman has seen the spear.’

The final Section analyzes two special phenomena related to DOM in Ibero-Romance varieties.

The first is Papia Kristang (12), the Portuguese based creole of Melaka, also spoken by a few people in Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, and other places. In this variety, we find a special formal realization of DOM, namely the Portuguese preposition *com*, which appears phonetically as *ku/kung/kong*. As usual, this preposition is obligatory with personal pronouns and proper names; it is optional with nouns denoting human beings, unusual with higher animals (dogs and the like) and impossible with lower animals, such as insects, and with abstract nouns. *Kung* also stands for the dative, for the instrumental and the comitative function. Semantically and functionally, it is a prototypical DOM preposition, which corresponds in almost every detail to Ibero-Romance *a*. But its form comes from a different Portuguese word. Ultimately it stems from Hokkien *kăp* which has roughly the same range of meanings. Hokkien, in Mandarin Fújiàn, is a Sinitic language (popularly classified as a Chinese dialect) spoken in south-eastern China and widely used as a lingua franca among overseas Chinese in the region. Note that the Hokkien word *kăp* has no relationship whatsoever to any standard Chinese preposition or particle. If there is anything like DOM in Mandarin Chinese, it takes the form of a particle *bǎ*, whose original meaning is ‘to take, to seize’. This particle differs considerably from Hokkien *kăp*, not only in etymology, but also in function.

It seems that this Hokkien particle was copied semantically in a pidginized variety of Malay, the so-called Bazaar Malay used in the market places of Malaysia. There the preposition *sama*, meaning ‘with’, takes the functions of a prototypical DOM particle: marked accusative, dative, and comitative. From Bazaar Malay it spread to Papia Kristang, where it was functionally copied. This example shows that DOM may even arise in a creole language, despite the radical elimination of almost all inflectional morphology. Functionally, such newly formed DOM markers follow the universal patterns, even if morphologically they show a different pattern.

(12) Papia Kristang (Portuguese Creole of Melaka)

Eli konesé kung Mary
 He knows ACC' Mary
 ‘He knows Mary.’

Eli ja matá Ø/kung eli sa kachoru kontu ja mudré kung
 He PRF kill- ACC' he GN dog because PRF bite ACC'
eli sa krensa
 he GN child
 ‘He killed his dog because it has bitten his child.’

Eli ja matá bichu
 He PRF kill insect
 'He killed the insect.'

Eli ja kotrá aké kandri ku faka
 He PRF cut that meat with knife
 'He cut that meat with a knife.'

Way of influence: Papia Kristang *ku* ← Bazar Malay *sama* ← Hokkien *kăp*

(13) Hokkien (with the Mandarin and standard Malay versions in brackets)

Guà kăp î khuă
 I with (=ACC') he see
 'I see him.'

[compare Mandarin:

Wǒ kànjiàn tā
 I see he
 'I see him.']

(14) Bazaar Malay

gua tengok sama lu (saya tengok kamu)
 I see with (=ACC') you
 'I see you.'

[compare Standard Malay:

saya tengok kamu
 I see you
 'I see you.']

(15) Papia Kristang

yo olá ku eli/ yo olá ku bos
 I see with (=ACC') he/ I see with (=ACC') you

In conclusion, some short observations on the languages of Jewish Bible translations are given. In several Jewish communities, there exist specific language forms for Bible translations. These translation forms copy the original Hebrew

with extreme literalism. They do not stand for themselves, but have a serving function, which is to help the reader to better understand the original Hebrew. They were formed in Antiquity after the model of the Aramaic Targumim: since Hebrew and Aramaic are relatively closely related Semitic languages, it was easy to copy the Hebrew original in Aramaic, without forcing or straining the language structure of the target language. The Greek translation of the Septuaginta is literal, but it follows the rules of standard Greek. The translation of Aquila, transmitted only in fragments, is quite different. If we compare the beginning of Genesis in these two Greek translations, we find that Aquila's version contains a strange construction for rendering the Hebrew DOM preposition *et*.

*ἐν κεφαλαίῳ ἔκτισεν ὁ θεὸς σὺν τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ σὺν τὴν γῆν ...
καὶ εἶδεν ὁ θεὸς σὺν τὸ φῶς ὅτι καλόν*

Here the preposition *σὺν* is used in a way which contradicts two elementary rules of Greek: first, *σὺν* is never used for the object of a transitive verb; and second, it is never construed with the accusative, but always with the dative. Apparently, the translator wanted to render the Hebrew particle *et*, which indeed also means 'with', besides its function as ACC'. Nevertheless, it is a mistake to take this as a grammatical synonym, since in Hebrew *et* has two functions, whose difference becomes clear when personal suffixes are added: 'me' is *oti*, 'with me' is *itti*. The translator must have been aware of this, and nevertheless he makes this strange and shockingly wrong use of the Greek preposition *σὺν*. However, the later translation into *dhimotikí* is grammatically correct.

Ladino is another case in point. This particular form of Jewish Spanish is exclusively used in Bible translation and in liturgy. Ladino is found often in open contradiction of the rules of standard Spanish. Let us turn again to the beginning of Genesis:

*en prensipyō křiyó el dyo alos syeloš i ala tyera ...
i vido el dyo ala luz ke buena*

Here, many features copy directly the Hebrew original: the lack of the article in *en prensipyō*; the plural of *syeloš*, which imitates the plurale tantum *šamayim*; the lack of the copula verb *to be* in *ke buena*. However, the most striking feature is related to DOM. In Hebrew, the preposition *et* is used only with definite objects, and it follows a referential semantic pattern. In Spanish, the preposition *a* is used with animate objects, and it follows an inherent pattern. Both prepositions are differential, although with divergent semantics. What is noteworthy is that the Ladino translation follows the semantic pattern of Hebrew, not that of Spanish.

The differentiability is kept in the translation, but otherwise the grammar of Spanish is violated, because the inherent semantics of Spanish is replaced by the referential semantics of Hebrew. Thus, the translation uses *a* where according to the rules of Spanish there should be no preposition at all. It is remarkable that the translator seems to have become aware of the fundamental similarity of Hebrew and Spanish, which despite their different semantic patterns, both have differential marking of the object.

(16) Bible translations (*Genesis 1, 1/4*)

bě-re'šit bara' 'ēlohim' et ha-šamayim wě-'et ha-'areš ...
 in-beginning created God ACC' ART-heaven and- ACC' ART -earth
wa-yar' 'ēlohim' et ha-'or ki ṭob
 and-saw God ACC' ART -light that good
 [Hebrew original]

bě-qadmin bēra YY yāt šēma-yā wē-yāt 'ar'-ā ...
 in-beginning created God ACC' heaven- ART and- ACC' earth- ART
wa-ḥazā YY yāt nēhor-ā' are ṭāb
 and-saw God ACC' ART that good
 [Aramaic translation (Targum Onqelos)]

Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἐποίησεν ὁ θεὸς τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ τὴν γῆν...
καὶ εἶδεν ὁ θεὸς τὸ φῶς ὅτι καλόν
 [Koiné Greek translation (Septuaginta)]

ἐν κεφαλαίῳ ἔκτισεν ὁ θεὸς σὺν τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ σὺν τὴν γῆν ...
καὶ εἶδεν ὁ θεὸς σὺν τὸ φῶς ὅτι καλόν
 [Judeo-Greek, Aquila, in Origenes' Hexapla]

εις ἀρχὴ ἐπλασεν ο θεός τον ουρανó και την ιγῆ ...
και εἶδιαν ο θεός το φώς οτι καλό
 [Dhimotiki, Polyglot Bible Constantinople 1547]

en prensipyo krió el dyo alos syeloš i ala tyera ...
i vido el dyo ala luz ke buena
 [Ladino, Polyglot Bible Constantinople 1547]

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