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The development of DOM in the diachrony of Catalan

(Dis)similarities with respect to Spanish

Abstract: The existence of Differential Object Marking (DOM) is well-established in a number of Romance languages and varieties, such as Spanish and Romanian, where its use extends to several types of direct objects. For other languages in the Romance family, like Catalan, DOM is often considered to be absent, except for personal pronouns and a few other cases – at least from the perspective of normative grammar. However, in most varieties of Catalan, DOM applies to human direct objects generally, including proper names, definites and some indefinites, and even occasionally extends to bare plurals or inanimates. Although an exhaustive dialectal survey on the exact prevalence of DOM has yet to be carried out, it is clear that it is widespread and features in many dialects. While one might initially assume that this is the result of the influence of Spanish, such instances (at least partially) might in fact have arisen from the internal evolution of Catalan. Crucially, instances of DOM were remarkably abundant in Old Catalan, although this has sometimes gone quite unnoticed. That is, instances of DOM with proper names and human NPs are found in earlier Catalan texts (in the 13th to 15th centuries), and increase quite significantly from the 16th century on, reaching very high percentages of occurrences in some texts. The aim of this paper is to offer an account of the emergence and development of DOM in Catalan over time, showing the commonalities with neighbouring Spanish, as well as the important differences that distinguish these two languages. This is a large corpus study, based on the *Corpus Informatitzat del Català Antic*, and comprising the period from the first written texts to the 16th century, with some notes on the 17th century too.

Keywords: Differential Object Marking (DOM), Catalan, Spanish, language contact, diachronic linguistics, corpus study

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1 Introduction

Differential Object Marking (DOM) is a well-established phenomenon in many languages across the world, such as Hebrew, Hindi and Turkish, and also in several Romance languages and varieties, such as Spanish, Sardinian and Romanian. It consists of the introduction of direct objects by using a specific, differential marker. This marker has often been identified with a preposition (hence the alternative name “prepositional accusative”), and in the case of Romance languages, among many others, the marking often coincides with that for indirect objects, that is to say, dative marking. DOM as a phenomenon continues to arouse interest in linguistics, both in more traditional descriptive accounts and in more theoretical ones (cf. e.g. Rohlfs 1971; 1973; Bossong 1991; 1998; Pensado 1995; Torrego 1998; Aissen 2003; Laca 2006; Leonetti 2008; Iemmolo 2010; López 2012).

The emergence of DOM has been attributed to many causes and functions. It is nevertheless interesting to highlight a specific function here; namely, its status as a mechanism that distinguishes highly particularized participants, when these are objects, which could otherwise be identified with the subject function. In other words, DOM marks objects that have properties typical of subjects. Thus, the appearance of the marking in a direct object is conditioned by the semantic properties of the affected element. In fact, animacy and definiteness of a direct object are properties which regulate the emergence and expansion of DOM (cf. Silverstein 1976; Dixon 1979). The two hierarchies proposed in the literature are set out below. Categories ranked higher are more likely to show DOM than those ranked lower.

(1) Animacy scale:

HUMAN > ANIMATE > INANIMATE

(2) Definiteness/Specificity scale:

PRONOUNS > PROPER NAMES > DEFINITE NPs > SPECIFIC INDEFINITE NPs >
NON-SPECIFIC INDEFINITE NPs (> BARE NPs)

In the Catalan prescriptive tradition, the presence of DOM is restricted to the elements located at the top of the hierarchies in (1)–(2); these are mainly personal pronouns, plus a few other cases, which we will describe in detail in Section 2.

However, as already noted by Sancho Cremades (2002, 1737) concerning this aspect of the grammar, there is “a clear divergence between the spoken Catalan and the written Catalan which follows the normative grammar. In the language spoken throughout the linguistic domain there is a wide usage of the preposi-

tion *a* (and the forms *an*, *ana*, *amb*) in front of definite animate direct objects, as occurs in Spanish: *No he vist {a la Maria/als nois}* ‘I have not seen Maria/the boys’” [our translation]. In fact, DOM is very frequent today in most Catalan varieties (not only in colloquial registers), both in the spoken and written language – even in the press and institutional communications, this being visible in the digital era when many texts are often made public before a proof-reader has had the chance to revise them. Before exploring this further, let us see how the description and prescription of the Catalan language has evolved over the last century with respect to this aspect of the grammar.

The paper is structured as follows. In Section 2 we describe how prescriptive grammar has dealt with DOM, from Fabra (1918) until the appearance of the new Catalan normative grammar in 2016. Section 3 focusses on the controversial discussion regarding the nature of DOM, which may be seen either as the result of the influence of Spanish, or (at least in part) as the product of the internal evolution of Catalan. Evidence for the latter claim is provided in Section 4, where detailed diachronic data are presented, and a comparison with the evolution of DOM in Spanish is made. Section 5 briefly summarizes the main conclusions of the paper.

2 DOM in normative Catalan

In 2016 the Catalan Academy (Institut d’Estudis Catalans) published the new Catalan prescriptive grammar (GIEC 2016). Until then, Standard Catalan was regulated by Fabra’s (1918) *Gramàtica catalana* – Pompeu Fabra was the leading figure in the standardization of Catalan and the establishing of a prescriptive grammar. From Fabra’s work to the GIEC, the range of contexts where DOM is allowed has been progressively widened. In what follows, we provide a description of the relevant contexts of DOM usage in order to show how prescriptivism has evolved here.

2.1 Pronominal direct objects

In Standard Catalan, DOM is obligatory with strong personal pronouns, which must also be clitic doubled¹ (Fabra 1918, §112.I; GIEC 2016, §19.3.2.1, 19):

¹ In Catalan, clitic doubling of 1st and 2nd person pronouns is obligatory, whereas for 3rd person pronouns the situation is slightly different. In some dialects, such as Valencian, doubling of 3rd

- (3) a. *T' he vist *(a) tu.*
 CL.2SG.ACC have.1SG seen DOM you
 'I have seen you.'
- b. *El Joan l' estima *(a) ella.*
 the Joan 3SG.F.ACC love.PRS.3SG DOM she
 'Joan loves her.'

In addition, Fabra (1918, §112.III) also considered DOM to be allowed in front of certain "pronouns"; the examples he gave include the universal *tothom* 'everybody' (4) and [+human] *tots* 'all', as well as the relative [+human] *qual* (5):

- (4) *He salutad (a) tothom.*
 have.1SG greeted DOM everybody
 'I have greeted everybody.'
- (5) *La doctora Pons, (a) la qual tan admires,*
 the doctor.F Pons, DOM the which so.much admire.PRS.2SG
és aquí.
 be.PRS.3SG here
 'Doctor Pons, whom you admire so much, is here.'

Several other grammarians have enlarged the list of "pronouns" with which DOM was to be allowed in Standard Catalan, reaching a general consensus. In particular, the relative and interrogative *qui* 'who' (6) was added by Ruaix (1985, 174), *ningú* (7) was added by Wheeler et al. (1999, §14.1.1.1), *algú* was suggested by Solà (1994, 177) and *altri* was pointed out by Mestres et al (1995). Note that the cases of *qui* and *ningú* had already been observed by Fabra, not in his prescriptive grammar (1918), but in the one published in 1912 (Fabra 1912, §122), where he established that Catalan admitted the use of DOM for these cases.

- (6) a. *Trobaran (a) qui ho ha fet.*
 find.FUT.3PL DOM who it have.3SG did
 'They will find who did it.'

person pronouns is obligatory, whereas in other dialects it is not, under certain pragmatic conditions, as illustrated in the example below (Todolí 2002, §6.5.5.3a):

- (i) *També (l') avisaran a ell.*
 also CL.ACC.M.3SG notify.FUT.3PL DOM he
 'They will notify him too.'

- b. (A) *qui has vist?*
 DOM who have.2SG seen
 ‘Who have you seen?’

- (7) *No han detingut (a) ningú.*
 No have.3PL arrested DOM nobody
 ‘They have not arrested anybody.’

The range of pronominal direct objects allowing the use of DOM was enlarged by the new Catalan prescriptive grammar (GIEC 2016, §19.3.2.1, 19.3.2.2). For example, reference was made to direct objects corresponding to [+human] pronominal quantifiers *cada u* ‘every one’, *cadascú* ‘everyone’, *qualsevol* ‘any one’ (8), as well as the interrogatives *quin/-a/-s/-es* ‘which ones’ (9) and *quants* ‘how many’ (10):

- (8) *Aquí premien (a) qualsevol.*
 here reward.PRS.3PL DOM anyone
 ‘Here they reward anyone.’

- (9) (A) *quina dona has vist?*
 DOM which.F woman have.2SG seen
 ‘Which woman have you seen?’

- (10) (A) *quants alumnes premiaran?*
 DOM how.many.PL students reward.FUT.3PL
 ‘How many students will they reward?’

Finally, note that when a pronominal direct object is coordinated with a non-pronominal one, as in (11), there is also the need for DOM (as a parallelism effect), as pointed out by Solà (1994, 166–167), this once more becoming the consensus view.

- (11) *T’ he vist a tu i al metge.*
 CL.ACC.2SG have.1SG seen DOM you and DOM.the doctor
 ‘I’ve seen you and the doctor.’

2.2 Potentially ambiguous direct objects and other stylistically marked contexts

In structures where both the subject and the object appear in post-verbal position, DOM emerges as a useful mechanism to distinguish the two syntactic functions at play. This is the case for reciprocals (12) and comparative structures with the verb elided (13), two contexts for which Fabra (1918, §112.II) noted the need for DOM.

- (12) *S'abraçaven l' un *(a) l' altre.*
 REFL-hug.IPFV.3PL the one DOM the other
 'They were hugging each other.'

- (13) *El perseguia com el gat *(a) la rata.*
 CL.ACC.3SG.M chase.IPFV.3SG like the cat DOM the rat
 'He chased him like the cat ~~chases~~ the rat.'

This distinguishing function of DOM also becomes clear in several other contexts of potential ambiguity, which were already alluded to by Fabra (1912, §122), who claimed that the use of DOM seemed "perfectly admissible" in order to avoid any confusion. To exemplify the contexts of potential ambiguity, he in fact used a sentence with the interrogative *qui* 'who', which also happens to be a pronominal direct object (recall §2.1):

- (14) a. *Qui ha vist en Miquel?*
 who has seen the Miquel?
 Ambiguous: 'Who has Miquel seen?'/ 'Who has seen Miquel?'
 b. *A qui ha vist en Miquel?*
 DOM who has seen the Miquel?
 Non-ambiguous: 'Who has Miquel seen?'

In examples like these, DOM resolves the potential ambiguity between the object and subject interpretation.² Over the years some grammarians, especially Solà

² Fabra observed many other contexts of this type. Interestingly, as Xavier Rofes (p.c.) points out, in the earliest versions of his *Gramàtica catalana*, starting with the 1918 edition, Fabra devoted a whole page (which would disappear from the editions published in the 1930s) to offer a variety of resources, such as the use of the comma, changes of word order, and recourse to the passive, to solve a number of contexts of potential ambiguity (*La fonètica precedeix la morfologia* 'Phonetics precedes morphology'/'Morphology precedes phonetics', *Qui ha vist en Joan?* 'Who has seen Joan?'/ 'Who has Joan seen?', *Demà tornarà l'estranger que visità en Joan* 'Tomorrow

(1994), have pointed out several other contexts where the absence of DOM would lead to a subject/object ambiguity, leading to the consensus that in such contexts DOM is recommended:

- (15) a. *El Barça serà campió si venç al*
 the Barça be.FUT.3SG champion if beat.PRS.3SG DOM.the
Madrid.
 Madrid
 ‘Barça will be the champion if they beat Madrid.’ (Without DOM, another interpretation would be possible: ‘Barça will be the champion if Madrid beats some other team.’)
- b. *Com penseu que afectarà el món d’ Internet*
 how think.PRS.2PL that affect.FUT.3SG the world of Internet
a l’ economia mundial?
 DOM the economy world
 ‘How do you think that the world of the Internet will affect the world economy?’ (Without DOM, another interpretation would be possible: ‘How do you think that the world economy will affect the world of the Internet?’)
- c. *L’ estimo com/més que a la meva mare.*
 CL.ACC.3SG love.PRS.1SG like/more than DOM the my mother.
 ‘I love him/her like/more than (I love) my mother.’
 (Without DOM, another interpretation would be possible: ‘I love him/her like/more than my mother loves him/her.’)

The GIEC (2016, §19.3.2.4b, c) also offers a fine-grained description of the contexts of potential ambiguity where DOM should be used, with examples such as (16), and cases of reordering for stylistic reasons where, again, DOM is useful (17). The GIEC (2016, §19.3.2.4d) also establishes that the preposition is usually employed to mark the animate direct object that appears postponed to an argumental prepositional complement (especially if the latter has a complex structure), as in examples (18):

the foreigner whom Joan visited will be back’/‘Tomorrow the foreigner who visited Joan will be back’) with resources other than DOM. We can deduce from this that, if providing alternatives to DOM was seen as necessary, then DOM was indeed used by speakers.

- (16) a. *Diuen que rellevarà a l' alcalde una*
 say.PRS.3PL that substitute.FUT.3SG DOM the mayor a
regidora.
 councillor
 'They say that a councillor will substitute the mayor.' (Without DOM, another interpretation would be possible: 'They say that the mayor will substitute a councillor.')
- b. *És preocupant veure com ha enfonsat a l'*
 is alarming see.INF how has sunk DOM the
acusat la teva declaració.
 accused your testimony
 'It is alarming to see how your testimony has sunk the accused.'
 (Without DOM, another interpretation would be possible: 'It is alarming to see how the accused has sunk your testimony.')
- c. *Aquest és l' objectiu que defineix a la*
 this is the goal that defines DOM the
biolingüística.
 biolinguistics
 'This is the goal that defines biolinguistics.' (Without DOM, another interpretation would be possible: 'This is the goal that biolinguistics defines.')
- (17) *A l' apatia habitual vencé l' esperança del triomf.*
 DOM the apathy usual beat.PST.3SG the hope of.the victory
 'The usual apathy was beaten by the hope of victory.'
- (18) a. *No va poder convèncer d' estudiar literatura*
 no can.PST.3SG convince.INF of study.INF literature
medieval a les filles.
 medieval DOM the daughters
 'He could not convince his daughters of studying medieval literature.'
- b. *Ha convidat a passar un cap de setmana*
 has invited to spend.INF a end of week
en un hotel de muntanya a la teva
germana.
 in a hotel of mountain DOM the your sister
 'He has invited your sister to spend a weekend in a mountain hotel.'

2.3 Dislocated direct objects

One last context that was added by Solà (1994, 167) to the list requiring, or at least allowing, DOM was left-/right-dislocation (19) (cf. also Escandell Vidal 2007a; 2007b; 2009), again reaching consensus among grammarians (Sancho Cremades 2002, 1738, fn. 68).³ The use of DOM in such contexts is also described in the GIEC (2016, §19.3.2.4a).

- (19) a. (A) *la meva mare, la visitaré demà.*
 DOM the my mother CL.ACC.3SG.F visit.FUT.1SG tomorrow
 ‘My mother, I will visit her tomorrow.’
 b. *La visitaré demà, (a) la meva mare.*
 CL.ACC.3SG.F visit.FUT.1SG tomorrow DOM the my mother
 ‘My mother, I will visit her tomorrow.’

2.4 Summary

The Catalan prescriptive tradition, then, has gradually widened the range of contexts in which DOM is allowed or recommended. Table 1 summarizes the contexts for this:

However, as shown in Table 1, the normative grammar proscribes the use of DOM in most of its possible contexts, such as nominal phrases with human referents (*He vist a la teva cosina* ‘I have seen DOM your cousin’) or proper names (*He vist a la Maria* ‘I have seen DOM Maria’), which are not dislocated nor subject to any ambiguity between a subject and an object interpretation. In this regard,

3 In Balearic Catalan, inanimate dislocated NPs can also show DOM:

- (i) a. *Colliu-les, a les peres, que ja són madures.*
 pick.imp-CL.ACC.3PL.F DOM the pears, that already be.PRS.3PL ripe
 ‘Pick the pears, as they are ripe.’ (Moll 1975, §239)
 b. *Ja ho sé, [ən] això.*
 already it know.prs.1sg dom this
 ‘This I know.’ (Rosselló 2002, 1932, fn. 77)

These instances, which will not be addressed in this paper, are analyzed in detail by Escandell Vidal (2007a; 2007b; 2009), who offers an account where topicality is a key factor. Also, note that in example (ib) the preposition *a* appears in its phonetic transcription, reflecting one of the allomorphic variants that a shows across Catalan dialects, including also [ə]n[ə], [ə]m, [ə]m[ə], [ə]mb, [ə]mb[ə]. Cf. Albareda (2009) for a complete description of such variants.

Table 1: DOM in Standard Catalan (GIEC 2016).

	DOM in Standard Catalan
strong pronouns	compulsory
reciprocal structures	compulsory
comparative structures (elided verb)	compulsory
other pronouns	allowed
relatives, interrogatives	allowed
proper names	not allowed (except if dislocated or potential ambiguity)
human NPs	not allowed (except if dislocated or potential ambiguity)
animate NPs	not allowed (except if dislocated or potential ambiguity)
inanimate NPs	not allowed (except if potential ambiguity)

prescription thus departs from what occurs in formal and informal registers of spoken Catalan, and even to a large extent in written Catalan before a proof-reader has intervened. We will explore this in the next Section.

3 DOM in Catalan: evolution or interference? From Old Catalan to the 21st century

Despite the considerable gap that exists between prescriptivism and language use, it is useful to recall that Fabra was aware of the “real” scope of DOM in Catalan, as indirectly shown by some passages of his work.⁴ Nowadays, like then,

⁴ Evidence is found, for example, in the following passage extracted from his prescriptive grammar (Fabra 1918), where he claimed:

It is very useful to know how to distinguish an indirect object from a direct one, [...]. Thus, in *Hem escrit a la Maria* ‘We have written to Maria’, if we replace the complement *a la Maria* with a pronoun, this will be *li* ‘to her’ (*Li hem escrit* ‘We have written to her’); therefore the mentioned complement is an indirect object (and *Hem escrit a la Maria* ‘We have written to Maria’ is correct). On the other hand, in *Hem vist a la Maria* ‘We have seen DOM Maria’, if we replace the complement *a la Maria* ‘DOM Maria’ with a pronoun, this will be *l’* ‘her’ (*L’hem vista* ‘We have seen her’); therefore the mentioned complement is a direct object (and it is thus appropriate to omit the preposition: *Hem vist la Maria*). (Fabra 1918, §113) [our translation]

the perception that any attentive speaker will have of the extent of DOM use is that the phenomenon keeps on spreading. We will now offer some examples of the phenomenon that we have collected recently. A clarification is in order: whereas there is an urgent need for a large-scale survey of the use of DOM across Catalan dialects and registers,⁵ it is also true that any preliminary observation of

Fabra explained how to distinguish a direct object from an indirect one precisely because for many speakers both syntactic functions could formally coincide, that is to say, could be headed by the preposition *a*. In other words, many speakers felt – and still feel – that a sequence such as *Hem vist a la Maria* ‘We have seen DOM Maria’ is completely natural. This is why Fabra wanted to introduce the resource of pronominal substitution in order to detect the uses of the preposition which were not accepted in the prescriptive grammar. In other works, Fabra was very clear about the quite well-extended use of DOM that existed in Catalan. His grammar published in 1912 is a good example:

[...] in Catalan one says indistinctly *Hem vist la casa de ta germana* ‘We have seen your sister’s house’ and *Hem vist ta germana* ‘We have seen your sister’: the direct object is introduced in both cases without the preposition *a* [...] there has recently been a preference for the construction with *a*, up to the point that many writers consider the use of this preposition to be as well-extended as it is in Spanish. [...] thus, one often hears *Coneixes a la meva filla?* ‘Do you know DOM my daughter?’, but one also hears with the same frequency *Coneixes la meva filla?* ‘Do you know my daughter?’ (Fabra 1912, §122) [our translation]

From this passage, and in particular from expressions such as ‘one says indistinctly’ or ‘with the same frequency’, it is clear that the scope DOM had at that time was worthy of consideration.

In fact, Fabra was well aware that Catalan DOM was not to be seen as merely an influence from Spanish, but rather as a phenomenon that, although far more extended in Spanish, is present in very different (Romance) languages. While he did not express that view in his prescriptive grammar, as we saw in Section 2, he did make it clear at the First International Conference of the Catalan Language (Primer Congrés Internacional de la Llengua Catalana), in 1906, when he offered an amendment to the presentation given by another grammarian, Costa i Llobera, and claimed:

The preposition *a* has to be used in front of strong personal pronouns [...] and in some other cases. Its use in the accusative cannot be considered a ‘castilianism’, but rather Castilian [= Spanish] has seen a greater extension of its use than the other languages, since there are also uses of the *a* in Italian dialects such as Sicilian, Calabrese and Roman; the phenomenon is also found in the Engadine and in the Romanian language spoken in the mouth of the Danube (Fabra 2010, 877) [our translation]

5 For the particular case of Valencian Catalan, Sancho Cremades (1995, 199) claims that DOM in this variety shows up with the same pattern of distribution that it has in Spanish, and he gives the examples with proper names and definite NPs:

- (i) No veig {a Cast/als xiquets} des de fa sis anys.
 not see.PRS.1SG {DOM Cast/DOM-the children} from ago six years
 ‘I haven’t seen Cast/the children for six years.’

the daily use of the Catalan language reveals that the scope of the phenomenon goes well beyond the prescriptivist norm, as shown in Table 2 below. Thus, in what follows, examples are provided from the media as well as other formal or institutional contexts, both spoken and written.

Our data show that across most varieties DOM is spreading (as a possibility) to human/animate direct objects, whether they are proper names (20) or definite NPs (21), a fact already pointed out by Sancho Cremades (2002, 1737), Aissen (2003, 451) and also Hualde (1992, 86–87; 237–241), who describes Catalan as a language with DOM extending to all human definites and claims that “[f]or most speakers, in spoken language all human direct objects are marked by the preposition *a*”. Interestingly, Naess (2004, 1188) takes Hualde’s data and classifies Catalan as a language with DOM depending on animacy/humanness.

- (20) *Hem vist a Puigdemont ferm i animat.*
 have.1PL seen DOM Puigdemont firm and cheerful
 ‘We have seen Puigdemont firm and cheerful.’
 (*Diari de Tarragona*, 07/04/2018)

- (21) a. *Han detingut al president.*
 have.3PL arrested DOM.the president
 ‘They have arrested the president.’
 (*ElNacional.cat*, 25/03/2018)

- b. *Estem parlant de protegir a les dones.*
 be.PRS.1PL talking of protect.INF DOM the women
 ‘We are talking about protecting women.’
 (Central Catalan speaker, spoken in a formal context, Barcelona,
 15/04/2019)

Importantly, it is also possible to find DOM with elements located lower down the animacy and definiteness scales provided in (1)–(2), such as with indefinites, not only specific ones (22), but also non-specific ones (23), and even with bare plurals (24), this contra Hualde (1992, 241), who claims that indefinites never take DOM.

- (22) a. *Després he vist a un grup d’estudiants que*
 then have.1SG seen DOM a group of students that
estaven cridant.
 be.IPFV.3PL yelling
 ‘Then I’ve seen a group of students who were yelling.’
 (*Diari de Girona* [Central Catalan], 24/03/2017)

- b. *Han trobat a una persona amb una ferida a la cara.*
have.3PL found DOM a person with a wound in the face
‘They found someone with a wound in their face.’
(Diari Més, Tarragona-Reus-Costa Daurada [Central Catalan], 03/05/2018)
- (23) a. *Dies abans cinc homes s’ havien preparat per agredir a alguna dona en grup.*
days before five men REFL had.3PL prepared for attack.INF DOM some woman in group
‘Some days before five men had prepared to attack some woman in a group.’
(Elcrític.cat [Central Catalan], 27/04/2018)
- b. *Tu mataries a un home per la vida d’ un altre?*
you kill.COND.2SG DOM a man for the life of an other
‘Would you kill a man for another man’s life?’
(“El meu lament”, song by Ferran Palau [Central Catalan speaker], album Santa ferida, 2015)
- c. *Coneixeu a algun llicenciat en Filologia Catalana?*
know.PRS.2PL DOM some graduate in Filology Catalan?
‘Do you know a graduate in Catalan philology?’
(Job offer via WhatsApp, within a group of Catalan philologists from different dialects)
- (24) a. *Els últims mesos hem vist que l’ Estat acusava a professors de delictes d’ odi.*
the last months have.1PL seen that the State accuse.IPFV.3SG DOM teachers of crimes of hate
‘These past few months we have seen that the [Spanish] State accused teachers of hate crimes.’
(Central Catalan speaker, spoken in a formal context, Barcelona, 16/05/2018)

- b. *Vam iniciar uns cursos per formar a mestres en*
 start.PST.1PL some courses to form DOM teachers in
gramàtica i llengua de signes.
 grammar and language of signs
 ‘We started some courses to train teachers in grammar and sign
 languages.’

(Central Catalan speaker, spoken in a formal context, Barcelona,
 7/11/2018)

Some speakers also find natural examples of DOM with direct objects whose referent corresponds to social institutions, such as political parties, or abstract names that can be interpreted as referring metonymically to humans (25), including names of places which probably allow for a collective reading (26). Moreover, one can even find examples with clearly inanimate direct objects, both definite and indefinite (and even bare) (27).

- (25) a. *Ciutadans serveix per parar a Podem.*⁷
 Ciutadans serve.PRS.3SG to stop DOM Podem
 ‘Ciutadans serve to stop Podem.’

(Central Catalan speaker, RAC1 radio station, spoken in a formal
 context, 18/05/2018)

- b. *Un partit que uneix a diferents sensibilitats.*
 a party that unite.PRS.3SG DOM different sensitivities
 ‘A party which unites different sensitivities.’

(Central Catalan speaker, RAC1 radio station, spoken in a formal
 context, 26/10/2018)

- (26) *Aquestes primàries, aquest gruix és el*
 these primaries, this substantial.amount be.PRS.3SG the
que pot fer a Barcelona gran.
 what can.3SG make DOM Barcelona great
 ‘These primary elections, this substantial amount [of people voting] is what
 can make Barcelona great.’

(Central Catalan speaker, RAC1 radio station, spoken in a formal context,
 08/05/2018)

⁶ Ciutadans and Podem are political parties.

- (27) a. *Els determinants acompanyen als noms.*
 the determiners accompany.PRS.3PL DOM.the nouns
 ‘Determiners accompany nouns.’
- b. *El morfema flexiu de grau -íssim només és gramatical si flexiona a un adjectiu.*
 the morpheme inflectional of degree -íssim only is grammatical if inflect.PRS.3PL DOM an adjective
 ‘The inflectional degree morpheme -íssim is only grammatical if it inflects an adjective.’
- c. *Un morfema flexiu de grau pot modificar a un adjectiu, i l’ exclamatiu quin pot modificar a adjectius amb funció de nom.*
 a morpheme inflectional of degree can.3SG modify.INF DOM an adjective, and the exclamative quin can modify.INF DOM adjectives with function of noun
 ‘An inflectional degree morpheme can modify an adjective and the exclamative *quin* can modify adjectives which function as nouns.’
- (Academic texts written by Central Catalan speakers who were fourth year Applied Languages students, Universitat Pompeu Fabra 2018)

In short, we observe that DOM in Catalan is spreading, at least for some speakers, from the elements located at the top of the animacy and definiteness hierarchies to the elements located lower down, and in some cases the phenomenon is even attested at the bottom of the hierarchies. Thus, even if there is still no exhaustive dialectal study of this particular syntactic phenomenon, one can observe, as Sancho Cremades (2002, 1737) pointed out, that there is a “a clear divergence” between what (a notable number of, if not most) speakers do and what the prescriptive grammar establishes. It is easy to attribute such a disparity to the view that DOM is the result of interference from Spanish, and therefore a phenomenon that one should avoid to ensure a more genuine Catalan, especially given the sociolinguistic context of Catalan being historically a minoritized language threatened by Spanish.

However, an accurate analysis of the diachrony of Catalan demonstrates that DOM, a grammatical device banned in most contexts by prescriptive grammars (recall Section 2), may in fact constitute a genuine feature of the language. Indeed, a notable use of DOM is attested in old times, before the sociolinguistic pressure from Spanish began in the 16th century, due to the dynastic union with Castile, the subsequent move of the court and the rise of Spanish political power. As Salvador/Pérez Saldanya (1993) stated, one should take into account that:

‘If Catalan, before experiencing sociolinguistic pressure from Spanish, had evolved towards certain grammatical solutions which were born during the time of its configuration as a language, then considering the result [of DOM, our note] as a castilianism turns out to be problematic [...] some recent studies [...] suggest caution with regard to the position of normative grammar.’ (Salvador/Pérez Saldanya 1993, 60) [our translation]

In sum, while Catalan normative grammar prescribes DOM to be relatively restricted in formal usages, in “colloquial” varieties of the language, DOM is used more widely. We use quotation marks for the term “colloquial” because this wider usage of DOM is not truly restricted to colloquial linguistic contexts (e.g. conversations with friends and family) but it is also very frequently found in all kinds of formal discourses (e.g. political, journalistic) or more broadly in the press (radio, TV, and newspapers, especially those published online, for which a proof-reader has normally not revised the texts). Thus, any observation of contemporary Catalan reveals that there is a much wider set of contexts where DOM is or can actually be used by most speakers, which clearly contrasts with what is prescribed for Standard Catalan. This is shown in Table 2.

Table 2: DOM in Standard Catalan (GIEC 2016) vs. “Colloquial” Catalan.

	DOM in Standard Catalan	DOM in “Colloquial” Catalan
STRONG PRONOUNS	compulsory	compulsory
RECIPROCAL STRUCTURES	compulsory	compulsory
COMPARATIVE STRUCTURES (elided verb)	compulsory	compulsory
OTHER PRONOUNS	allowed	attested
RELATIVES, INTERROGATIVES	allowed	attested
PROPER NAMES	not allowed (except if dislocated or potential ambiguity)	attested
HUMAN NPS	not allowed (except if dislocated or potential ambiguity)	attested
ANIMATE NPS	not allowed (except if dislocated or potential ambiguity)	attested
INANIMATE NPS	not allowed (except if potential ambiguity)	very infrequent, but possible

4 The diachrony of DOM in Catalan and Spanish: (dis)similarities

Bearing in mind the extension of DOM in the Romance area, it seems logical not to disregard the consideration that the current scope of this phenomenon in Catalan could (at least partially) result from the internal evolution of the language. Several studies, most of which focus on the 15th century, have shown that DOM was relatively abundant in Old Catalan, not only with personal pronouns (Meier 1947; 1948; Perera 1986; Adell 1994; Cabanes 1994; 1995). In the context of the project for a *Gramàtica del català antic*, Pineda (in press a; in press b) offers an exhaustive study of the emergence and spreading of DOM in the diachrony of Catalan, from the earliest texts (11th–13th centuries) to the end of the Old Catalan period, in the 16th century. The study is based on a corpus comprising 900,000 words, which is representative of diachronic, diatopic, diaphasic and diastratic variation of the language.⁷ The conclusions of Pineda (in press a; in press b) indicate that DOM appeared with proper names (both person and deity names) and human definite NPs, in addition to personal pronouns. We summarize the results in Table 3, which also includes preliminary data from the 17th century, the initial period of Modern Catalan (cf. Pineda 2018; 2019):

Table 3: Overview of the evolution of DOM in Old Catalan (11th–16th centuries), and at the beginning of Modern Catalan (17th century).

Century	PERSONAL PRONOUNS	PERSONAL NAMES	DEITY NAMES	HUMAN DEFINITES	HUMAN INDEFINITES
11 th	0% (0/1)	(no occurrences)	(no occurrences)	0% (0/6)	(no occurrences)
13 th	17.9% (19/106)	16.2% (23/142)	0% (0/135)	2.4% (10/417)	1% (1/96)
14 th	34.5% (19/55)	1.9% (5/262)	0% (0/29)	2.8% (16/567)	2.7% (4/147)
15 th	61.1% (36/58)	12.8% (23/180)	21.8% (12/55)	9.7% (60/617)	7.3% (14/192)
16 th	97.3% (36/37)	64.4% (100/153)	92.6% (25/27)	26.8% (125/466)	11.8% (18/153)
17 th	100% (2/2)	90.6% (77/85)	93.5% (43/46)	69.9% (76/92)	22.4% (28/80)

⁷ Data extracted from the *Corpus Informatitzat del Català Antic* (CICA), www.cica.cat.

One can immediately see that DOM was already present in the language before interference from Spanish began in the early 16th century. From then on, the frequency of DOM with different types of direct objects increases rapidly, reaching very high percentages in the 17th century, when political and linguistic subordination was immense. Before drawing any conclusions from these observations, let us show in detail how DOM evolves within each class of direct objects, and see the similarities and differences that Catalan presents with respect to Spanish. We ought to say that, due to space restrictions, the data are presented here in a streamlined way, but those readers seeking for a much more exhaustive and detailed account are referred to Pineda (in press a; in press b).

In order to organize the presentation of the data in this Section, we will combine the two scales in (1)–(2). Starting with personal pronouns, located at the higher positions of the animacy and definiteness scales, our data show that DOM is not systematic until the 16th century. Thus, examples with and without DOM, as in (29) and (28) respectively, even within the same text, coexist for a long time. On the other hand, as shown in Table 3, DOM becomes absolutely systematic in the 16th century. At that time, there is only one instance without the marking attested in our corpus (30):

- (28) a. *pare, no vules mi pregar d' aquesta cosa*
 father no want.IMP.2SG me pray.INF of this thing
 'Father, don't you want to pray me to do that.' (13th c., *Vides*, 37)
- b. *que tu ams tu matex*
 that you love.SBJV.PRS.2SG you self
 'That you love yourself.' (13th c., Llull, *Doctrina* I, 95)
- c. *fêu tornar mi*
 do.PST.3SG return me
 'He made me return.' (14th c., *Clams* II, 221)
- (29) a. *lo fil de na Godoi qui venc contra ela e a la porta sua ab espasa treita e*
requerí a ela
 requested DOM her
 'Godoi's son, with his sword out, came to her, at her door, and requested her.' (13th c., *Clams* I, 72)

- b. *aquel dit Matheu a él pagar no*
 that mentioned Matheu DOM him pay.inf no
volia ni pagat no l' avia
 want.IPFV.3SG nor paid no CL.ACC.M.3SG had
 'That guy, Matheu, didn't want to pay him and didn't pay him.'
 (13th c., *Clams* I, 83)
- c. *enassí con tu ab dejunis as trebalat a tu,*
 just like you with fastings has worked DOM you
axí és mester qu' él se trebal
 in.this.way is necessary that he REFL work.SBJV.PRS.3SG
 'Just like you have worked yourself with fastings, he needs to work himself.'
 (13th c., *Vides*, 29)

- (30) *ý encara pensava no trobaria nosaltres*
 and still think.IPFV.3SG no find.COND.3SG us
 'And she even thought that she would not find us.'
 (16th c., Liori i Requesens, *Epistolaris*, letter 13, written in
 Molins de Rei, Catalonia)

This situation clearly differs from Spanish where, according to several studies, personal pronouns take DOM systematically, without exceptions, from the earliest texts in the 12th century (Pensado 1995, 19; Company 2002, 207–208; von Heusinger/Kaiser 2005, 35–36; 41; Laca 2006, 426; 469).

Regarding personal pronouns, it is worth clarifying that reflexive pronouns (*si*, *si mateix* 'oneself') behave differently with respect to the spread of DOM, disallowing DOM until the 14th century (31). As Table 4 shows, they only started to be marked in the 15th century (32), and have subsequently continued as such:

Table 4: Evolution of DOM with reflexives
 in Old Catalan.

Century	REFLEXIVE PERSONAL PRONOUNS
11 th	0% (0/1)
13 th	0% (0/18)
14 th	0% (0/35)
15 th	54.5% (6/11)
16 th	(no occurrences)

- (31) a. *que ·l pagès, meynspresan sí, amàs més*
 that the peasant underestimating himself love.SBJV.PST more
 ‘That the peasant, underestimating himself, would love more.’
 (14th c., *Diàlegs*, f. 8r)
- b. *volén més si ociure que venir viu en*
 wanting more himself kill.INF than come.INF alive in
mans de sos enemichs
 hands of his enemies
 ‘Preferring to kill himself than come alive in his enemies’ hands.’
 (14th c., *Agramont, Regiment*, 63a)
- (32) *aquests hòmens de leys fan richs a*
 these men of laws make.PRS.3PL rich.PL DOM
sí mateyx e destroexen tota Anglaterra
 themselves and destroy.PRS.3PL all.F.SG England
 ‘These men of the law are enriching themselves and destroying all England.’
 (15th c., Martorell, *Tirant*, 197)
- Turning to human proper names, i.e. personal names, Table 3 shows that these could take DOM as early as in the 13th century, as shown in examples (33):
- (33) a. *Maria Domingo près a na Joanna, [...] ab*
 Maria Domingo take.PST.3SG DOM the Joanna with
Abdues les mans als cabels
 both the hands in.the hair
Lit. ‘Maria Domingo_j grasped Joanna_i by her hair_i [...] with her own hands_j.’
 ‘Maria Domingo_j grasped Joanna’s [...] hair with her own hands_j.’
 (13th c., *Clams* I, 46)
- b. *Aquel encalsava ab lo coltel treit al dit Apariçi*
 that chase.IPFV.3SG with the knife out DOM.the mentioned Apariçi
 ‘That one was chasing the mentioned Apariçi while holding a knife.’
 (13th c., *Clams* I, 50)
- c. *[ells] tenien en terra a Michel Mercer*
 they have.IPFV.3PL in ground DOM Michel Mercer
 ‘They kept/had Michel Mercer on the ground.’
 (13th c., *Clams* I, 76)

Interestingly, geolectal differences can be observed at this time, with Valencian texts offering the highest number of occurrences of DOM with proper names, as seen in Table 5.

Table 5: Evolution of DOM with human proper names in Old Catalan.

Century	PERSONAL NAMES WITH DOM (ALL DIALECTS)	PERSONAL NAMES WITH DOM (VALENCIAN CATALAN)
11 th	(no occurrences)	(no occurrences)
13 th	16.2% (23/142)	19.3% (17/88)
14 th	1.9% (5/262)	4.1% (4/98)
15 th	12.8% (23/180)	9.5% (2/21)
16 th	65.4% (100/153)	89.2% (58/65)

In the 13th century, 17 of the 23 total occurrences of DOM with human proper names correspond to Valencian texts. At the same time, these 17 occurrences represent a slightly higher percentage of DOM within Valencian texts (19.3%, vs. 16.3% for all Catalan). Similarly, in the 14th century, 5 out of 6 occurrences of DOM with human proper names are found in the Valencian area, where the percentage of DOM is more than twice than in Catalan as a whole (5.1% vs. 2.3%).⁸ This dialectal pattern seems not to hold in the 15th century, as Valencian texts seem to show less DOM than the Catalan mean. However, we argue that this is due to the particular passage of the Valencian texts under consideration: for example, only two occurrences of human proper names in direct object function were found in *Tirant*, one of the two Valencian texts from the 15th century in our corpus. This extremely low number of human proper names in direct object function certainly affected the

⁸ On the other hand, if one compares the numbers of the 13th and the 14th centuries, it one may find surprising the relatively elevated proportion of DOM in the 13th c. with respect to the 14th c. In this regard, in addition to the possible influence of the textual typologies of the works of one century and the other, we must highlight two aspects: first, 5 of the occurrences of the 13th c. belong to the *Llibre dels Fets* by Jaume I, a work which has been counted belonging to the 13th c. for its date of composition, but which has been analyzed using a copy of the 14th century; and second, 16 of the examples of the 13th century correspond to a work (*Clams I*) which, in addition to its Valencian adscription, contains a major proportion of proper names in DO function, with a total of 77.

overall figures for that century. This is corroborated by Perera's (1986) observation on *Tirant*:

'When the direct object is a personal proper name, in *Tirant* there is an absolute predominance of the construction with preposition [= DOM]; cases where this type of direct object does not bear preposition are very scarce.' (Perera 1986, 65) [our translation]

Moreover, 9 of the 23 occurrences of DOM in the 15th century are from *Curial* (34), a work whose dialectal adscription has been subject to a long-lasting debate, and in our study, following the CICA's criterion, it has been considered as belonging to general Catalan (i.e., as not belonging to any dialect in particular). However, its Valencian adscription is the one that seemed to be supported by more evidence, as recently argued by Soler (2017). Finding a meaningful number of DOM in the text thus supports Soler's claim.

- (34) a. *Mas l' emperador tenia prop sí a Curial*
 but the emperor have.IPFV.3SG near himself DOM Curial
 'And the emperor had Curial nearby.'
 (15th c., *Curial*, 62)
- b. *e víu que volia ociure a Othó*
 and see.PST.3SG that want.IPFV.3SG kill.INF DOM Othó
 'And he saw that he wanted to kill Othó.'
 (15th c., *Curial*, 67)
- c. *lo rey de Navarra, loctinent general del senyor*
 the king of Navarre, lieutenant general of.the lord
rey féu penjar a n Guillem Arús, pagès
 King make.PST.3SG hang DOM the Guillem Arús, peasant
del terme de Terraça
 of.the area of Terrassa
 'The king of Navarre, general lieutenant of the lord king, had Guillem Arús hung, a peasant of the area of Terrassa.'
 (15th c., Safont, *Dietari*, 95)
- d. *condescendria en favorir al dit*
 condescend.COND.3SG in favor.INF DOM.the mentioned
micer Pere Ram
 mister Pere Ram
 'He would condescend to favour the above-mentioned gentleman Pere Ram.'
 (15th c., *Epistolari* IIa, letter 25, written in València)

- e. *per què no m' has dat a Rachel?*
 why not CL.DAT.1SG have.PRS.2SG given DOM Rachel
 'And why haven't you given Rachel to me?'

(15th c., Sant Vicent, *Sermons* IV, 12)

To explain the substantially different patterns attested in the Valencian texts, several factors need to be considered. First, this was a late area within the Catalan linguistic domain: the language was taken there once the land was conquered in 1229–1245. In addition, a great portion of repopulators came from Aragon, and therefore the potential influence of Aragonese could have played a role – although at this point we cannot provide any further details on DOM in that variety. In addition, being a lateral area within the Catalan linguistic domain, the Valencian territories were probably more subject to the influence of Spanish, whose penetration into the Catalan-speaking area would soon become more pronounced. Recall from Table 3 that from the 16th century onwards, once the influence of Spanish reaches high levels, DOM becomes much more frequent in general (35), and the dialectal constraints (Valencian vs. other varieties) seem to be blurred:

- (35) a. *Are deslíga[n] a Susanna y líga[n] los vells*
 now untie.PRS.3PL DOM Susanna and tie.PRS.3PL the old.PL
 'Now they are untying Susanna and tying up the old fellows.'

(16th c., *Consueta de Susanna*, 431)

- b. *fonch int[errogat] si coneix a Joan*
 be.PST.3SG asked whether know.PRS.3SG DOM Joan
Palou, fill de Ant[oni]
 Palou son of Antoni

'He was asked whether he knew Joan Palou, Antoni's son.'

(16th c., *Illes* XVI–28, 458)

- c. *No fou poca consolació de trobar a Lloÿset,*
 not be.PST.3SG little consolation of find.INF DOM Lloÿset
com aribàrem, tan bonico y sanet
 as arrive.PST.1PL so pretty and healthy
 'It was not of little consolation to find Lloÿset so pretty and healthy,
 when we arrived.'

(16th c., Liori i Requesens, *Epistolaris*, letter 13, written in Molins de Rei, Catalonia)

- d. *Déu ha derrocat y destruït a Job*
 God have.PRS.3SG demolished and destroyed DOM Job
 ‘God has demolished and destroyed Job.’
 (16th c., Conques, *Job*, 81)
- e. *esquarteraren a Johan Martí, de Campanar*
 quarter.PST.3PL DOM Johan Martí from Campanar
 ‘They quartered Johan Martí, from Campanar.’
 (16th c., *Antiquitats I*, 82)

If we compare the evolution of DOM with personal names in Catalan with the evolution in Spanish, substantial differences emerge, since in Spanish DOM with human proper names was nearly systematic from the very beginning (Laca 2006, 443, among others).

Let us focus now on deity names (*Déu* ‘God’, *Satanàs* ‘Satan’, *Sant Joan* ‘Saint John’, etc.). Table 3 shows that, as with personal proper names, DOM was usual in Old Catalan, particularly from the 15th century onwards, especially among Valencian authors (36), and was subsequently generalized to all dialects (37).⁹

- (36) a. *tots veurem clarament a Déu*
 all.PL see.FUT.1PL clearly DOM God
 ‘We will all see God clearly.’
 (15th c., Sant Vicent, *Sermons IV*, 9)
- b. *nostre Senyor Déus ha mès capità a sent*
 Our Lord God have.PRS.3SG put captain DOM saint
Miquel sobre tots los àngels.
 Miquel above all.PL the angels
 ‘Our Lord God has put Saint Miquel as captain over all the angels.’
 (15th c., Sant Vicent, *Sermons IV*, 71)
- c. *él amà a Déu sobiranament*
 he love.PST.3SG DOM God very much
 ‘He loved God very much.’
 (15th c., Sant Vicent, *Sermons IV*, 82)

⁹ In turn, deity nouns (those containing determiners or possessives, such as *Nostre Senyor* ‘Our Lord’, *el Senyor* ‘the Lord’, *la Verge* ‘the Virgin’, etc.) pattern with human definite NPs. For the distinction between deity nouns and deity names, and the validity of this in different languages, cf. Caro Reina (2020) and references therein.

- (37) a. *Deffensen a Déu provant que, com a just, no*
 defend.PRS.3PL DOM God proving that, as fair, no
castiga a nengú sens culpa
 punish.PRS.3SG DOM nobody without fault
 ‘They defend God, proving that since he is fair, he doesn’t punish anybody who is not guilty.’

(16th c., Conques, *Job*, 37)

- b. *offenien greument a Déu*
 offend.IPFV.3PL gravely DOM God
 ‘They used to offend God gravely.’

(16th c., *Antiquitats I*, 57)

Turning now to human definite NPs, Table 3 shows that, although the absence of marking is general in the earlier period of Old Catalan, DOM has a modest but not insignificant presence, especially from the 15th century onwards and mainly in texts from the Valencian area (39).¹⁰ In the 14th century, only very scarce occurrences of DOM with human definite NPs are attested (38).

- (38) a. *Volem anar a la vila e estaylarem al*
 want.PRS.1PL go.INF to the town and isolate.FUT.1PL DOM.the
rey, que no y pusca entrar ost.
 king that not there can.SBJV.PRS.3SG enter.INF army
 ‘We want to go to the town and isolate the king so that no army can enter there.’

(14th c., Jaume I, *Fets*, f. 39v)

- b. *e regonech al dit mercader*
 and recognize.PST.3SG DOM.the mentioned trader
 ‘And he recognized the mentioned trader.’

(14th c., *Epistolari Ic*, letter 90, written in València)

¹⁰ As an anonymous reviewer notes, throughout the 15th century the Valencia area was more influential than Catalonia in economic and political terms, and gave rise to many of the greater literary achievements (e.g. the chivalric novel *Tirant lo Blanc*) and authors (e.g. the poets Ausiàs March and Jordi de Sant Jordi) in the period. This might well have influenced literary production in the other areas of the Catalan-speaking countries, although it is difficult to make a similar claim when it comes to personal letters or other text types. While we agree that an analysis of the textual transmission at that time would be very interesting, it is outside the scope of the current paper.

- (39) a. *lo rey près per la mà a l' ermità*
 the king take.PST.3SG by his hand DOM the hermit
 'The king took the hermit by his hand.'
 (15th c., Martorell, *Tirant*, 102)
- b. *yo penjaré als jurats*
 I hang.FUT.1SG DOM.the jurors
 'I will hang the jurors.'
 (15th c., *Epistolari* IIa, letter 10, written in València)

Finally, as observed with the previous categories, there is a sharp change in the 16th century, when the presence of DOM with human definite NPs increases significantly (40), still with greater frequency in the Valencian texts (41):

- (40) a. *lo prevera interrogarà primerament a l' home*
 the priest interrogate.FUT.3SG firstly DOM the man
 'The priest will first interrogate the man.'
 (16th c., *Illes* XVI–23, 444)
- b. *Per què donchs sosté als affligits?*
 why then sustain.PRS.3SG DOM.the heartbroken.PL
 'Why then does he support the heartbroken?'
 (16th c., Conques, *Job*, 42)
- c. *animant als cavallés romans*
 cheer.up.GER DOM.the knights Roman
 'Cheering up the Roman knights.'
 (16th c., *Grandeses*, 151)
- (41) a. *Jo crech que a[u]rà vists a mos*
 I think.PRS.1SG that have.FUT.3SG¹¹ seen.M.PL DOM my
fills, puy sòn estats en Barcelona
 children since be.3PL been.M.PL in Barcelona
 'I think that you will have seen my children, since they have been to Barcelona.'
 (16th c., Liori i Requesens, *Epistolaris*, letter 12, written in València)
- b. *Ý per ospedar a estos senyós*
 and for host.INF DOM these men
 'And because I was hosting these men.'
 (16th c., Liori i Requesens, *Epistolaris*, letter 11, written in Molins de Rei, Catalonia)

- c. *lo duch de Segorb sentencià en Segorb*
 the duke of Segorb sentence.PST.3SG in Segorb
a hun moro, que era alamí de Algar,
 DOM a Moor who be.IPFV.3SG officer of Algar
que-s deya Caravan, qui era lo principal
 who-REFL say.IPFV.3SG Caravan who be.IPFV.3SG the principal
de la muntanya de Spatan ab dos fills seus;
 of the mountain of Spatan with two sons his
y hun alter moro capità.
 and a other Moor captain
 ‘The duke of Segorb sentenced in Segorb a Moor, who was officer of
 Algar, who was named Caravan, who was the principal of the mountain
 of Spatan, with two of his sons; and another Moor captain.’

(16th c., *Antiquitats* I, 11)

In this respect, then, Old Catalan behaves like Old Spanish, where indefinites used to lack DOM (Laca 2006, 443, 458–460).

As for bare (singular and plural) NPs, at the bottom of the definiteness/specificity scale (2), DOM is not an option in Old Catalan. There are only three examples in our corpus, from the 16th century and from Valencian texts. In all three cases, other factors (such as word order alterations) co-occur and may explain the use of DOM. For example, in (43) we see the presence of a complement breaking the adjacency between the verb and the direct object. On the other hand, in Spanish, DOM with this type of objects appears “sporadically since the 15th century” [our translation] (Laca 2006, 445).

- (43) *en Barcelona no admètan per la vida a home*
 in Barcelona not admit.PRS.3PL for the life DOM man
perquè sia molt rich si altres calitats convenients ad aquell estament li falten
 ‘In Barcelona they don’t admit at all man only because he is very rich, if he
 lacks any other of the required qualities.’

(16th c., Despuig, *Col·loquis*, 125)

If we now focus on the animacy scale (1), we conclude that, with the exception of objects with human referents, Old Catalan disallows DOM. Accordingly, whereas in the diachrony of Spanish DOM with animate direct objects was possible from the 14th century (Laca 2006, 444–445), this is not the case in Catalan. Only very few examples are found, all of which are from the 16th century when, as previously mentioned, there was a significant Spanish influence on Catalan. Additionally, note that in example (44), other factors, including the absence of a verb and

the parallelism with an obligatorily marked personal pronoun, are also relevant factors:

- (44) *ý à· ns dotat a nosaltres de més capacitat*
 and has CL.ACC.1PL endowed DOM us of more capacity
ý saber que a les bèsties del camp
 and wisdom than DOM the beasts of.the countryside
 '[God] has endowed us with more capacity and wisdom than he has
 endowed the beasts of the countryside.'
- (16th c., Conques, *Job*, 86)

Another difference between DOM in Catalan and Spanish relates to inanimate proper names, that is, place names. In Spanish 'from the earliest texts DOM appears optionally with proper names referring to inanimates, in particular place names' (Laca 2006, 450) [our translation], reaching 38% of occurrences in the *Cid* and 100% (from a small total amount) in the *Quijote* and *Lucanor* (cf. also Caro Reina 2020, 245–247). In Old Catalan, however, DOM with place names is not possible, barring a few examples, all of which come from the 16th century, in the Valencian area:

- (45) a. *conquistà Almeria, a Tortosa ý la*
 conquer.PST.3SG Almeria, DOM Tortosa and the
antiga ý populosa Lleyda
 ancient and populated Lleida
 'He conquered Almeria, Tortosa and the ancient and populated Lleida.'
- (16th c., Despuig, *Col·loquis*, 96)
- b. *lo ardit que tingueren los grechs per a*
 the trick that have.PST.3PL the Greek.PL to
pèndrer a Troya
 take.INF DOM Troy
 'The trick that the Greek had to take Troy.'
- (16th c., Despuig, *Col·loquis*, 119)
- c. *E après de haver saquejat a Gandia*
 and after of have.INF sacked DOM Gandia
ý Oliva, los de Oriola tornaren-se·n ab molta roba que havien pres.
 and Oliva
 'And after having sacked Gandia and Oliva, the people from Oriola went
 back with a lot of clothes they had taken.'
- (16th c., *Antiquitats I*, 69)

indefinites and inanimates, are entirely free of DOM. Thus, although DOM is far less extended than in Spanish in quantitative terms, it is not the case to the same extent in qualitative terms.

This study sheds light on the question of whether DOM in Catalan has undergone a process of narrowing – as argued by Dalrymple/Nikolaeva (2011, 212–213), based on the allegedly reduced use of DOM according to prescriptive grammar – or, alternatively, if the contemporary non-prescriptive uses in Section 3 (examples 20–27) represent the continuation of medieval patterns. We have shown that DOM was a syntactic resource present in the language in the 13th–15th centuries, long before the influence of Spanish was relevant. It is therefore difficult to attribute the spread of this phenomenon exclusively to an external influence – recall Salvador's and Pérez Saldanya's words at the end of Section 3. From the late 15th to the early 16th century, the sociolinguistic pressure from Spanish unquestionably played a significant role. It is during that time that the percentage of DOM increases exponentially across all types of objects, both with personal pronouns and for proper names and human NPs. We conclude that DOM is (at least partially) a phenomenon native to Catalan, and that the influence of Spanish, from the late 15th and the early 16th century onwards, was probably more quantitative than qualitative. It is impossible to determine how DOM would have evolved in Catalan in the absence of any influence from Spanish, but in any case one should take into account that: (i) DOM is a phenomenon that exists in many very different languages of the world, including the Romance family; (ii) DOM already existed in Catalan before the Spanish influence began; and (iii) in the languages of the world the cases of retraction of a syntactic phenomenon like this one are particularly scarce, whereas the general pattern is the progressive enlargement of the set of contexts with DOM following the hierarchies in (1)–(2) (cf. Bossong 1991, 152–153; Aissen 2003, 472, fn. 33 and also Dalrymple/Nikolaeva 2011, 211–215).

5 Concluding remarks

We have provided a comprehensive picture of Differential Object Marking (DOM) in Catalan, analyzing its diachronic evolution as well as its scope in present-day language, and we have been able to draw significant conclusions from our discussion.

Following the criteria established by Thomason (2001, 93–94) to determine whether a linguistic change can be considered the result of exogenous factors or of endogenous development, the presence of DOM in Old Catalan texts which precede the impact of Spanish leads us to the conclusion that DOM is (at least partially) a

phenomenon native to Catalan (the increase of DOM with different objects in the 16th and the 17th century owing to the influence of Spanish notwithstanding).

At the same time, however, and in accordance with the fact that the phenomenon was already present in the language before the period of external influence of Spanish, what occurred in Catalan could be a case of what Heine/Kuteva (2003, 539; 2010, 86) term “replica grammaticalization” – we thank Itxaso Rodríguez-Ordóñez (p.c.) for having suggested this possibility to us. This type of grammaticalization is triggered by language contact, where a language adopts not a category or a grammatical concept that it did not have until then, but a grammaticalization process existing in another language: in the case under study, Catalan (where DOM already existed but with many constraints) would have adopted the grammaticalization process of DOM existing in Spanish and would thus have made of DOM a grammatical resource with a much wider scope. This means that because of the contact with Spanish, Catalan could have given to DOM a new grammatical sense, as a marker for a wider range of DOs.

Although there are no studies of DOM in Catalan after the 17th century, and a systematic Catalan dialect survey remains to be carried out, our observations on spontaneous speech and language usage in the media over the past few years indicate that Catalan DOM has continued to spread towards less-prototypical categories: current uses of DOM with indefinites (both specific and non-specific), bare plurals or even some inanimate NPs can be found, as exemplified in Section 3.¹⁴ Thus, we argue that the diachronic and contemporary data provided in this study call into question Dalrymple/Nikolaeva’s (2011, 212–213) suggestion that the evolution of DOM in Catalan is an instance of the “narrowing” of DOM.¹⁵ We hope that this paper has shed some light on the nature of DOM in Catalan, one of the most controversial – and interesting – phenomena in the (descriptive and prescriptive) grammar of this language.

14 A similar evolution is attested in Neapolitan: in present-day use, and from the 19th century, DOM extends to animate and individuated direct objects, whereas in Old Neapolitan the phenomenon was far more restricted, subject to several lexical, syntactic, semantic and pragmatic factors (Ledgeway 2009, 831; cf. also Sornicola 1997).

15 When reviewing the existing literature on DOM in Old Catalan, also Escandell Vidal (2009, 842), citing Bossong (1983/1984, 11), suggested: “The diachronic data suggest that DOM is not necessarily a transfer from Spanish and that the normative ban against it has given rise to a system in which ‘the formerly far more widespread use of the preposition *a* with the direct object has been reduced to the absolute minimum (the free pronoun)’ [...]”. If this view is correct, what the standardization did was to promote an artificial regression of DOM”.

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