



## Floating agreement in American Spanish Leísta dialects

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# Romance Linguistics in the Pacific: Variation in Time and Space

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This special issue includes selected peer reviewed proceedings of the workshop *Romance Linguistics in the Pacific: variation in time and space*, part of the Australian Linguistic Society Conference held in December 2011 at the Australian National University in Canberra. We would like to take this opportunity to thank the participants and the audience for their comments and suggestions. We are also grateful to the editor of *AJL*, Keith Allan, for giving us this opportunity.

The workshop brought together specialists from both sides of the Pacific working on a variety of topics within Romance Linguistics, ranging from phonological analysis to syntax and discourse. The rationale behind this workshop was to celebrate the establishment of a research group in the field at the School of Language Studies at the ANU, in particular Hispanic Linguistics. This special edition marks the launch of the *Romance Linguistics in the Antipodes* (RomLA) virtual research centre, which aims to provide a platform for researchers in Australia and New Zealand, and to facilitate collaborations and networking with colleagues outside of Oceania.

The papers are organised in alphabetical order, which coincidentally allows us to organise the papers according to theoretical frameworks and/or topics.

In the first paper, Delicado Cantero addresses clausal substantivization in Spanish. After introducing a formal syntactic account of finite clauses and clausal nominalization in Spanish, a language where a DP may optionally top a CP in certain contexts, the author concentrates on two main issues. The first is the unexpected constraint barring the combination of prepositions and clauses introduced by determiners. While DPs make typical prepositional complements, <D + CP> in Spanish results in ungrammaticality if selected by a preposition. Building on the weak nature of the Spanish complementizer *que* and on interpolation tests, the author argues for the application of strict adjacency between P and C, thus blocking a potential DP projection. The author goes on to argue against the need of the determiner layer – a DP – in creating a nominal (finite) clause, and supports a differentiation between the nominality of the (finite) clause and the projection of an additional DP, labelled clausal substantivization.

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4 This first paper adopts a Chomskyan perspective, which is also the basis for the second  
5 paper, by Di Sciullo and Somesfalean. They adopt a biolinguistic perspective in examining  
6 the linearization of definite determiners in the history of Romanian based on the ‘Directional  
7 Asymmetry Principle’. They envision change as an evolutionary process in line with recent  
8 findings in biology, in particular the principle of symmetry breaking. Like bipartite organisms  
9 moving from an initial stage of symmetry towards an asymmetrical stage through a  
10 fluctuating stage, after a period of variable order, Romanian definite determiners have moved  
11 from a variable stage (due to differences in feature valuation) to a stable but asymmetrical  
12 stage: syntactically constrained to one position. Directional asymmetry is seen as a process of  
13 simplification.  
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21 Romanian is also the topic of the third paper, by Virginia Hill, which examines the  
22 historical evolution of differential object marking (DOM) by *pe* with a discourse based  
23 approach. Based on data from Early Modern Romanian and from other Balkan Romance  
24 languages, Hill argues for *pe* as a discourse marker and against the generally assumed  
25 analysis as a Case assigning preposition. This distinction is important as it allows to  
26 dissociate clitic doubling from DOM and establish both as independent operations. The fine-  
27 grained analysis of *pe*-DOM as a contrastive topic, switching to a familiar topic in  
28 conjunction with clitic doubling, is not only useful for a deeper understanding of Romanian  
29 grammar and dialectal variation, but also to identify the types of derivational triggers  
30 involved.  
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39 The fourth paper, by Elisabeth Mayer, focuses on ‘floating features’ in clitic clusters with  
40 two third-person participants in American Spanish *Leísta* dialects (ASLD). The author links  
41 the floating features to a split object marking system, indicative of a language change in  
42 progress and proposes an analysis within the framework of Lexical-Functional Grammar.  
43 Clitic cluster agreement is triggered by a loss of case restrictions on the third-person clitic  
44 paradigm, which in turn is a continuation of the historical erosion of case in Spanish. While  
45 Standard Spanish varieties draw a clear distinction between direct and indirect objects,  
46 ASLDs follow a generally typologically observed tendency to mark the primary object  
47 instead.  
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55 We close the special issue with an invited paper by Catherine Travis and Rena Torres  
56 Cacoullos. While not presented at the ALS 2011, this paper offers a sociolinguistic and  
57 corpus-based study of language variation and retention in minority groups. The study  
58 revolves around the compilation of the New Mexican Spanish-English Bilingual corpus  
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4 (NMSEB). New Mexican Spanish is particularly interesting in being a rather isolated dialect  
5 of Spanish which represents the oldest European language spoken in what is today the USA.  
6 Due to the pressure of English, the influence from standard Mexican Spanish and Spanish in  
7 the schools, traditional New Mexican Spanish is an endangered dialect. The authors provide a  
8 sociolinguistic profile of the community and explain in detail their methodology for data  
9 compilation and transcription. Travis and Torres Cacoullos advocate for oral corpora built  
10 upon spontaneous interactions collected in community-based fieldwork. The speech  
11 community lies at the centre of their approach. With the addition of this paper to our volume  
12 we welcome Catherine Travis as the new chair of Modern European Languages at the ANU  
13 and as a new researcher in Romance Linguistics in Australia, in particular Hispanic  
14 Linguistics.  
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23 Last but not least, we finish this foreword with sincere thanks our peer reviewers, working  
24 in Australia, the USA and Europe, whose expertise and assistance have made this volume  
25 possible.  
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## Floating agreement in American Spanish *Leísta* dialects

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*In this paper I link 'floating features' in clitic clusters with two third-person participants to a split object marking system, indicative of a language change in progress. Both clitics are undergoing concurrent reanalysis processes affecting them differentially, i.e., they are located at different stages in the process. Whereas standard varieties draw a clear distinction between direct and indirect object, American Spanish *Leísta* dialects move to a distinction between primary and secondary object. Clitic cluster agreement in those dialects is triggered by a loss of case restrictions on the third-person clitics resulting in a tendency to mark the primary object.*

*Keywords: dialect syntax, clitic clusters, case erosion, primary object marking*

### 1. Introduction<sup>1</sup>

This paper proposes an analysis of object marking by clitic clusters with 'floating features' focussing on feature variation- and surface constraints in third person clitic clusters in

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<sup>1</sup> I would like to thank the audience of the ALS 2011, as well as two anonymous reviewers for their comments and suggestions. I owe gratitude to Avery Andrews for many helpful suggestions. The usual disclaimers apply.

American Spanish *Leísta* dialects (henceforth ASLD) within the framework of Lexical-Functional Grammar (LFG). In these dialects, either number (1b) or gender, or both, if both are present as in (2b), optionally float from the first clitic SE onto the second clitic resulting in double-marking of the features of the indirect (dative) object, and no marking of those of the direct (accusative) object. The difference between ASLD (1b) and (2b) and the Standard Spanish version in (1a) and (2a) is that in the latter co-occurring clitics show feature agreement with their referential noun phrases.

- (1) a. *Standard Spanish* [+AGR, +REF]  
 El libro<sub>j</sub>, a ellos<sub>i</sub>, ¿quién **se<sub>i</sub>** lo<sub>j</sub> prestó?<sup>2</sup>  
 DET.MSG book IOM PRO.3MPL who SE ACC.3MSG lent.3SG  
 ‘The book, who lent it to them?’
- b. *American Leísta Spanish* [-AGR, -REF]  
 El libro<sub>j</sub>, a ellos<sub>i</sub>, ¿quién **se<sub>j</sub>** los<sub>i</sub> prestó?  
 DET.MSG book IOM PRO.3MPL who SE ACC.3MSG lent.3SG  
 ‘The book, who it to them?’ Bonet (1995: 634)
- (2) a. *Standard Spanish* [+AGR, +REF]  
 Si ellas<sub>i</sub> me quieren comprar el caballo<sub>j</sub> yo  
 if PRO.3FPL DAT.3SG want.3PL buy DET.MSG horse PRO.1SG  
**se<sub>i</sub>** lo<sub>j</sub> venderé  
 SE ACC.3MSG sell.1SG

<sup>2</sup> The following conventions and abbreviations are used in all examples: third person clitics in bold, the syncretic case marker *a* in italic. 1,2,3: first, second, third person; SG: singular; PL: plural; IOM: indirect object case marking=dative case (DAT); DOM: differential object marking = accusative case (ACC); DAT: dative clitic=indirect object marker; ACC: accusative clitic=direct object marker; DET: determiner; M: masculine gender; F: feminine gender; IMP: imperative; INF: infinitive; PRED: predicate feature/lexical form; PRO: pronoun; GEND: gender; PAST: past tense; AGR: agreement; REF: referential; IMPERS: impersonal; REFL: reflexive; PREP: preposition; ETHDAT: ethical dative; OM: object marker. All data if not acknowledged are mine.

‘If they want to buy the horse from me, I will sell it to them’

- b. American *Leísta* Spanish [-AGR, -REF]  
 Si ellas<sub>i</sub> me quieren comprar el caballo<sub>j</sub> yo  
 if PRO.3FPL DAT.1SG want.3PL buy DET.MSG horse PRO.1SG  
**se<sub>j</sub> las<sub>i</sub>** venderé  
 SE ACC.3FPL sell.1SG

‘If they want to buy the horse from me, I will sell it to them’

Company (2003, based on Lope Blanch 1953)

Cluster variation in terms of floating features is motivated by a complex mix of morphological, syntactic and pragmatic, synchronic as well as diachronic factors. The aim of this paper is to analyse and explain floating features in American Spanish *Leísta* dialects based on a hybrid/split object agreement system as shown in (2b). The main claim is that the ‘floating features’ phenomenon can be analysed as a result of loss of case restrictions on the third-person clitics, which is a continuation of the historical erosion of case in Spanish, combined with a generally typologically observed tendency to mark the ‘primary’ rather than the ‘secondary’ object in the sense of Dryer (1986).

Previous accounts treated the phenomenon as non-standardised dialectal variation (Heap 1998; Ordoñez 2002; Company 2001, 2003), proposed morphological analyses such as feature delinking from *spurious se* and relinking onto the direct object clitic (Bonet 1991, 1995; Harris 1994, 1995; Pescarini 2005), violable language-specific markedness constraints based on the interaction of phonology and morphology (Grimshaw 1982, 2001, 2004) and topic-worthiness of the macro-roles THEME and RECIPIENT in a frequency-based analysis (Haspelmath 2004).

Even though these formal morphological, syntactic and functional-pragmatic studies address animacy, case syncretism, pragmatic motivation and agreement issues, they do not integrate the analysis of ‘floating features’ with the properties and cross-dialectal variation in American *Leísta* Spanish dialects. Part of the problem are highly variant co-occurrence restrictions of floating features that are not very extensively documented for these varieties.

The paper is organised as follows. Section two presents my proposal to incorporate the ASLD clusters under discussion in form of a modified version of the Verb Phrase rules

originally developed by Grimshaw (1982) for French. The rest of section two is dedicated to introduce the background of the phenomenon in terms of case syncretism of the pronominal paradigm, case erosion of clitics and how this can be linked to primary object marking in ASLD demonstrating the difference between direct vs. indirect object (DO/IO) marking in Standard Spanish varieties and primary vs. secondary object (PO/SO) marking in ASLD. Section three treats alignment constraints and surface orders mainly for Standard Peninsular Spanish facts and proposes two alternate restrictions for spurious SE. ASLD strategies and innovations in terms of primary and secondary object marking is given in section four, followed by a short conclusion in section five.

## 2. Proposal for ‘floating’ agreement and theoretical background

I argue that the extended and annotated VP rule in (3), adapted from Grimshaw (1982) for French in Mayer (2010), adequately allows for ‘floating’ features when read in conjunction with the ordering restrictions in Perlmutter’s (1971) template ( $V_{-fin}$  SE II I III (AUX)  $V_{+fin}$ ). The adapted VP-rule in (3) allows for the difference between optional and relatively unrestricted object-marking with dative objects, as well as much more restricted object marking with accusatives. It also covers very limited clitic doubling (CLD) of accusative objects in Peninsular Standard Spanish, liberal CLD limited to specifics in some American Spanish dialects, and CLD in ASLD. The annotation ( $\uparrow$ OBJ)= $\downarrow$  is based on the assumption that reflexive constructions are actually transitive (as in Alencar & Kelling 2005), covering both ‘primary and ‘secondary’ object.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Reflexives are treated by the syntax as objects based on evidence that reflexive and non-reflexive clitics show identical linearization and grammatical functions. Thus the extended VP-rule can handle the difference in transitivity due to a distinction between syntactic reflexivity with an agentive subject and semantic reflexivity (ethical datives) with a non-agentive subject and with similarities to unaccusative syntax.



(3)	VP	→	V	NP	XP		
			↑=↓	(↑GF)=↓	(↑OBJ)=↓		
	V	→	(se)	(CL)	(CL)	(CL)	V
			(↑OBJ)=↓	(↑OBJ)=↓	(↑OBJ)=↓	(↑OBJ)=↓	↑=↓
			(↓PERS)=3	(↓PERS)=2	(↓PERS)=1	(↓PERS)=3	
	<i>Standard Spanish</i>		dative	te	me	lo(s)	
			reflex/reciproc	os	nos	la(s)	
			impersonal			le(s)	
	<i>American Spanish</i>		ethical dative	te	me	lo(s)	
				les	nos	la(s)	
						leísmo	

This allows us to specify *se* as PERS 3 and the series of *lo/la* as PERS 3 and REFL-.

Morphological Blocking (Andrews 1990) assures the selection of the *lo/la* series over *se* for the presence of a single nonreflexive third-person clitic.

However, there is a problem with overgeneration since the revised template allows most of the clitics to be assigned any core grammatical function, with controlling order solely by person and the ‘reflexive’ feature. The problem will be addressed in the following sections by introducing restrictions on ‘case’ / grammatical function of the clitics and the most relevant universal or near universal constraints from the literature.

### 2.1. Clitics and case erosion

Spanish has a mixed clitic system of enclitics and proclitics. Enclitics (including the subject clitic) can be treated as stem-level inflectional affixes, morphologically attached to the verb with internal structure and their own grammatical functions (Andrews 1990). Proclitics are special clitics (Zwicky 1977), prosodically weak single words syntactically adjoined to the verbal host.<sup>4</sup> Spanish clitics cannot be modified, conjoined, topicalized, nor appear in isolation. They play a double role in the functional morphology of phrases. They can function

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<sup>4</sup> European Portuguese has a similar clitic system, treated in Luís & Otoguro (2005) as ‘phrasal’ affixes.

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8 as PRED-less agreement markers in grammatical agreement, or as full theta-role or PRED-  
9 bearing objects in anaphoric agreement<sup>5</sup>; optionality of the alternate functions is regulated by  
10 Bresnan's rule of anaphoric control (Bresnan 2001a).  
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13 While grammatical relations in standard Spanish varieties are marked according to the  
14 properties of each feature-specific paradigm of the third-person clitics, in some American  
15 Spanish *leísta* dialects, the entire sequence of *lo/a/e(s)* attempts to manifest the properties of a  
16 single grammatical relation. This phenomenon, known as *leísmo*, *laísmo* and *loísmo* is a  
17 result of case erosion, it is highly variant and more tightly keyed to grammatical function than  
18 to morphological form.<sup>6</sup>  
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24 Tables 1a,b below show the important difference in clitichood and object agreement of the  
25 dative and accusative paradigms in Standard Spanish and ASLD. Whereas European Spanish  
26 uses a referential system based on [ $\pm$ animacy], American Spanish *leísmo* object marking  
27 strategies eliminate gender in favour of case distinction, hence the name ALSD. In the  
28 reanalysis process affecting the clitic systems differentially, the fully grammaticalised dative  
29 *le* emerges as almost sole featureless object marker showing a more advanced  
30 grammaticalization stage than the accusative *lo*, which retains some referential features as  
31 topic-anaphoric pronoun in the sense of Bresnan (2001b).  
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44 <sup>5</sup> I follow Bresnan & Mchombo (1987) in adopting the distinction into anaphoric agreement and grammatical  
45 agreement, with the latter being part of structural syntax, e.g. predicate-argument.  
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48 <sup>6</sup> Standard *leísmo* (restricted to European Spanish) extends the use of dative *le* to human and mainly male  
49 (accusative) direct object arguments; *laísmo* refers to the use of feminine accusative *la* to dative and accusative  
50 arguments, and *loísmo* refers to an extension of accusative *lo* to dative arguments (cf. Fernández-Ordoñez 1999  
51 for the full range of variation in European Spanish). ASLD extends the dative *le* to feminine humans and in  
52 some dialects under extensive *leísmo* to inanimates, triggering loss of *laísmo*. There is further the issue that  
53 *leísmo* does not facilitate clitic doubling as discussed by Ormázabal & Romero (2007) in terms of agreement, as  
54 doubling does not seem to have a significant effect on the form or behaviour of an object-marking clitic.  
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Tables 1a,b. Evolution and differences in clitic systems

1a. Standard Spanish clitic system

	ACCUSATIVE		DATIVE
	MASC	FEM	
ANIM	le/lo	la	le
-ANIM	lo	la	le

1b. American *Leísta* Spanish clitic system

	ACCUSATIVE	DATIVE
	ANIM	le/lo/la
-ANIM	lo/le	le

Finally, under extensive *leísmo*, as for example in Ecuador and Paraguay, this leads to a single object marking system based on *le* for [±animates] with *lo* restricted to propositional anaphors.

## 2.2. Primary and secondary object marking

Clitic case erosion marks the move from co-reference to grammatical agreement in object marking. Case marking in Standard Spanish varieties allows identification of different grammatical relations intrinsically linked to differentiate between the grammatical functions DO/IO. In ASLD grammatical functions are defined in terms of PO/SO in accordance with their prominence ranking on the thematic role hierarchy (Alsina 1996: 36) in (4a), and on the partial ordering of argument functions (Bresnan 2001a: 309) in (4b).

- (4) a. AGENT>BENEFICIARY>GOAL/EXPERIENCER>INSTRUMENT>PATIENT/THEME>LOCATIVE
- b. SUBJ>OBJ, OBL<sub>θ</sub> > OBJ<sub>θ</sub>

The floating phenomenon in (1) and (2) can be accounted for by assuming the classification of objects in Table 2 with the AGENT as the most topical mapping onto the external function SUBJ. For the internal object functions, Spanish complies with the PO/SO principle (Dryer 1986: 836) where the corresponding object relation in monotransitives are PO↔DO, and in ditransitives PO↔IO, SO↔DO, exactly as laid out in Table 2 with the corresponding thematic roles.

Table 2: Primary and secondary object classification

Transitive	AGENT	PATIENT/THEME +Primary +Direct	
Ditransitive	AGENT	RECIPIENT +Primary -Direct	THEME -Primary +Direct
Semi-transitive	AGENT	GOAL +Primary -Direct	

In object–verb agreement, Spanish shows dependent and head-marking for both core grammatical functions, the dative object and the accusative object (Nichols 1986; Bresnan 2001a). Dependent-marking uses a syncretic form *a*<sup>7</sup> to mark dative objects obligatorily (IOM) and accusative objects differentially (DOM). Head-marking in Standard Spanish obtains through a set of feature-specific clitic pronouns (number, case/gender [fem/masc]) which optionally cross-reference the object on the verb. Co-occurrence of head and dependent marking, so called clitic doubling (CLD), shows two elements specifying information about one argument. The following examples demonstrate Spanish object marking for ditransitives and monotonatives in terms of DO/IO and PO/SO marking, as well as PREDless clitics in grammatical agreement and PREDcarrying clitics in anaphoric agreement.

In ditransitive constructions such as in (5), the dative is the primary object [+primary, -direct], and the accusative the secondary object [-primary, +direct]. Dative objects (IO) show no crossreferencing (CLD) restrictions presumably because they are usually core arguments with intrinsically greater animacy and topicality. In grammatical agreement in (5a), the dative *le* is a PRED-less agreement marker, and in anaphoric agreement in (5b) a PRED-bearing object. Clitic clusters (5c-d) show the move from co-reference to grammatical agreement.

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<sup>7</sup> Also called the prepositional accusative, the form *a* functions as a locative preposition, dative case for indirect objects (IOM) and differential object marker (DOM) for direct objects.

Standard varieties (5c) draw a clear distinction between DO and IO with feature-specific clitics. ‘Floating’ features in ASLD (5d) represent the move to PO/SO in marking the object argument highest on the thematic hierarchy, as such most topical, as the primary object in the secondary object slot.

- (5)a. **Le<sub>i</sub>** doy el libro **a mi hermana<sub>i</sub>**  
 DAT.3SG give.1SG DET.MSG book IOM POSS sister.FSG  
 ‘I give the book to my sister’
- b. **Le<sub>i</sub>** doy el libro  
 DAT.3SG give.1SG DET.MSG book  
 ‘I give her the book’
- c. Se lo doy lo [pers 3][pers 3,gend,num]  
 SE ACC.3MSG give.1SG  
 ‘I give it to her’
- d. Se **la** doy la [+primary, -direct]  
 SE PRIM.3FSG give.1SG  
 ‘I give it to her’

Monotransitives mark the accusative as DO/primary object [+primary, +direct] in grammatical agreement in (6a-c). Clitic doubling of accusatives is restricted to pronominal objects (6a) in Peninsular Standard Spanish, and more liberal in American Spanish dialects. DOM obligatorily marks specific human direct objects as in (6b) and extends optional marking to highly topical animate (6c) and inanimate objects. Anaphoric agreement with feature-specifying clitics, referential with their antecedent objects for (6a-c), is shown in (6d).

- (6) a. **La<sub>i</sub>** /lo<sub>j</sub> vi a ella<sub>i</sub> /él<sub>j</sub>  
 ACC.3FSG / ACC.3MSG see.1SG.PAST DOM PRO.3FSG/ PRO.3MSG  
 ‘I saw her/him’
- b. Vi a Ana<sub>i</sub>/Pablo<sub>j</sub>  
 see.1SG.PAST DOM Ana/Pablo  
 ‘I see Ana/Pablo’
- c. Vi (a) la gata<sub>i</sub>/el gato<sub>j</sub> de mi hermano  
 see.1SG.PAST DOM DET.FSG cat / DET.MSG cat PREP POSS.1SG brother  
 ‘I see the she cat/he cat.’

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7 d. **La<sub>i</sub>** /**lo<sub>j</sub>** vi [pers3, gend, num] / [+primary, +direct]  
8 ACC.3FSG / ACC.3MSG see.1SG.PAST  
9 'I saw her/him'  
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13 Peninsular or European Spanish and American Spanish *leísta* strategies are different from  
14 each other. Whereas American Spanish *leísmo* is case-based and indicative of a language  
15 change in progress, Peninsular Spanish *leísmo* is animacy-based as shown in (7a) referring to  
16 a highly topical human masculine object argument.<sup>8</sup> Since there appear to be no agreement  
17 phenomena associated with the traditional cases, clitics express inside out functional  
18 uncertainty which constrain the grammatical functions they can express rather than the DAT  
19 vs. ACC case values. In the Peninsular Spanish *leísmo* strategy in (7a) the ([+primary]↓)  
20 specification blocks *leísmo* examples such as (16b) and (16c) while MAN=+ represents a  
21 semantic restriction. The loss of the constraint [+direct] that *lo* realizes in (7b), generalizes to  
22 realizing [+object].  
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31 (7) a. le(s): ([+primary] ↓), MAN = +  
32 **Le** /\***lo** vimos (a él)  
33 DAT.3SG / ACC.3MSG saw.1PL (D)OM PRO.3MSG  
34 'We saw him'  
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36 b. le(s): ([+primary, -direct] ↓)  
37 **Le** /**lo** vimos  
38 DAT.3SG / ACC.3MSG saw.1PL  
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43 'We saw him/him/it (as in the event)'  
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45 In sum, the differences in CLD seem to be more tightly keyed to grammatical functions/  
46 cases rather than morphological form. As such the distinction between primary object [-R]  
47 and secondary object [+R] is syntactic and represented at two different levels. The concept of  
48 object is represented on f(unctional)-structure, the level that represents grammatical  
49 functions. The concept of restrictedness is represented at the level of a(rgument)-structure.  
50 Therefore an object represented as a restricted object on f-structure maps onto a restricted  
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<sup>8</sup> The personal *leísmo* strategy is part of a highly complex multisystem and subject to geographical variation.

argument on a-structure; and an object represented as an unrestricted object on f-structure does not map onto a restricted argument on a-structure. The features (un)restricted [ $\pm R$ ] and (non)objective [ $\pm O$ ] regulate the mapping of thematic roles to argument functions. The distribution of primary and secondary object in Spanish is shown in table 3.

Table 3. Primary and secondary object in Spanish

MT	-R	+R	DT	-R	+R
-O	SUBJ	OBL <sub><math>\theta</math></sub>	-O	SUBJ	OBL <sub><math>\theta</math></sub>
+O	OBJ/DO		+O	OBJ/IO	OBJ <sub><math>\theta</math></sub> /DO

In Spanish then, the primary object is the thematically unrestricted object [-R], OBJ/DO in monotonatives and OBJ/IO in ditransitives. The secondary object is OBJ <sub>$\theta$</sub> , it is thematically restricted to arguments with particular thematic roles. From a crosslinguistic perspective SO is mostly patients and themes, they are more marked and more restricted in their distribution than primary objects<sup>9</sup> (Dryer 1986; Bresnan & Kanerva 1989; Alsina 1996, 2001; Butt & King 1996).

### 2.3 Case syncretism in the clitic paradigm

The immediate consequence of case erosion as described above is case syncretism as shown in Table 4 for the Spanish pronominal object paradigm. Case syncretic forms mark the two core object arguments, the dative and the accusative, correlating with person surface constraints in clitic clusters.

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<sup>9</sup> For example, Butt & King (1996) correlate weak (nonspecific) objects in Hindi/Urdu with the primary object and strong (specific) objects with the secondary object.

Table 4. Syncretism in the clitic paradigm

PERS	SG			PL	PL	
	DAT	DAT+ACC	ACC		DAT	DAT+ACC
1		me			nos	
2		te			os (ES)	
2 LAS	le		lo/la	les		los/las
3	le		lo/la	les		los/las
3			← SE →			

Person 1&2 syncretic forms are phonologically weak, underspecified for case and gender but marked for person; they do not overtly distinguish dative and accusative arguments.<sup>10</sup> The second person plural paradigm shows two lines with a difference in the plural paradigm only. As shown in example (18) in section 4.2 below, European Spanish (ES) retains the syncretic form *os*, and Latin American Spanish (LAS) replaces it with the plural third person forms displaying a singular concentration of person/number/gender features and a split into dative and accusative case.

The fully syncretic form *SE* is only specified for person, “without explicit reference (gender and number)” (Pescarini 2005: 253), covering as a portmanteau morpheme third person singular and plural, second person plural reflexive pronouns, spurious *SE* and impersonal *se*, which is the only true subject clitic and can be replaced by “one” (Zagona 2002: 17). The problem that syncretism causes here is the loss of consistency of expression (Spencer & Luis 2010: 5), as syncretism breaks the one to one correspondence between form and function/ meaning. However the form *per se* remains consistent in all environments.

The strong relationship between case syncretism and surface constraints is shown in the next section.

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<sup>10</sup> Spanish third-person clitics originated from the Latin demonstratives, and as such are the only clitics to preserve the gender, case and reflexivity features.



### 3. Alignment constraints and surface order

Due to the lack of GF specification in the template and the high degree of syncretism in the clitic paradigms, the possible clitic sequences are highly underdetermined without additional constraints being imposed. This section treats these mostly universal or near universal constraints focusing on the relatively well-known Peninsular Standard Spanish facts.

Previous mainly Minimalist proposals, such as the Object Agreement Constraints (OAC) or the Restricted Argument Parameter (RAP) triggered by the dative (Albizu 1997; Ormazabal & Romero 2007; Nevins 2007; Adger & Harbour 2007) argue that clitics fail to check features against a functional head, and that object agreement on the verbal complex needs to be restricted to one argument only. The present proposal of PO/SO marking is based on the classic *me lui*/I-II or Person-Case Constraint (PCC) (Bonet 1991, 1995) which in turn builds on clitic order surface constraints (Perlmutter 1971) and the spurious SE rule.

#### 3.1 *Me lui*/I-II or Person-Case constraint

The *me lui* /or person I-II constraint applied in (8a) “disallows the presence of a third person clitic which does not correspond to the direct object, with ditransitive verbs” (Bonet 1991: 42). This constraint is claimed to be universal, but there are language-specific strategies to avoid it.

- (8)a. \*Me le recomendaron  
 ACC.1SG DAT.3SG recommend.3PL.PAST  
 ‘They recommended me to him/her’
- b. Me recomendaron a él  
 ACC.1SG recommend.3PL.PAST PREP PRO.3MSG  
 ‘They recommended me to him/her’<sup>11</sup>

This then rules out ASLD combinations such as *me le, te le* where *le* is the indirect object. The order restriction DAT>ACC presents a solution to most ordering underdetermination.

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<sup>11</sup> The English translation in (8b) is a faithful reproduction from the article, however it should only be ‘They recommended me to him’, as the PRO él is only masculine.

For clusters with two third-person arguments this order restriction is imposed by the verb and not by the forms of the clitics. This would rule out third-person clusters of *se le* with *se* as the direct object.

### 3.1.1 Two third-person clusters and spurious SE

In two third-person clusters, the spurious SE rule in (9a) gives rise to the only opaque clitic in Spanish. Spurious SE is based on two basic interacting rules for the relative clitic order in Spanish and French, on the surface structure constraints (Perlmutter, 1971: 76) in (9b) and on the case constraints based on the thematic case hierarchy<sup>12</sup> in (9c) (Dinnsen 1972: 181).

- (9)a. \**le(s)*<sub>DAT</sub> *lo*<sub>ACC</sub> → SE *lo*  
 b. *se* II I III  
 c. REFLEXIVE > BENEFACTIVE > DATIVE > ACCUSATIVE

The template in (3) shows two positions for third person, one occupied by SE with its multifunctions.<sup>13</sup> Co-occurrence of two third person clitics then places the accusative into the third person slot and transforms the dative into spurious SE (10b). In standard third person clusters, the PCC bars the dative (and *leísmo*) from appearing in the second slot (10c).

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<sup>12</sup> These constraints have also been addressed in Haspelmath (2004) in a diachronic functionalist explanation of the reworded ‘Ditransitive Person-Role Constraint’ (DPRC) in terms of THEME (T) and RECIPIENT (R) as macro-roles aiming at cross-linguistic generalization. In this frequency-based account, the role scale R > T interacts with the person scale 1, 2 over 3, that is the THEME is most likely a third person whereas the RECIPIENT tends to be first and second person. These semantic roles in turn are related to different grades of topic-worthiness which integrates the DPRC into a greater crosslinguistic generalization, namely the Ditransitive Topicality Roles Constraint. This approach shows a strong emphasis on speaker preferences but acknowledges the existence of language specific constraints nevertheless.

<sup>13</sup> Important for this analysis is the potential assumption that the unsupported reflexive fails to parse dative and parses third person instead (Grimshaw 1982).

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- (10) a. \*Le lo /la doy  
 DAT.3SG ACC.3MSG / ACC.3FSG give.1SG  
 ‘I give it to him / her’
- b. Se lo(s) /las(s) doy  
 SE ACC.3MSG(PL)/ ACC.3FSG(PL) give.1SG  
 ‘I give it (them) to him / her’
- c. \*Se le doy  
 SE DAT.3SG give.1SG  
 ‘I give it to her’

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Parallel to *le* under Peninsular Spanish *leísmo* in (7a) and (7b), spurious SE has two alternate feature contents. SE restricted to a reflexive in (11a), and SE as the primary object when there is a third-person secondary object in (11b) as an inside out functional uncertainty condition.<sup>14</sup>

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- (11) a. REFL=c+  
 b. ((POBJ↑) SOBJ PERS) = III

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Violations of first position SE with person I and II do exist as shown in (12) but are considered as extremely vulgar and to be avoided<sup>15</sup> in traditional grammar. Unusual clitic cluster variations of first and second person have been reported for varieties of Aragonese, Occitan, certain varieties of Catalan, non-standard Murcian Spanish as in (12), Judeo Spanish, a specific region in the Dominican Republic, and for colloquial French (Heap 1998; Fernández Soriano 1999; Ordóñez 2002).

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- (12) a. Si no riego, me se seca todo  
 if not irrigate.1SG ETHDAT.3SG SE dry.3SG QUANT

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<sup>14</sup> POBJ and SOBJ here are described as ad-hoc notations for the two kinds of objects.

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<sup>15</sup> This comment implies that these two combinations, which clearly violate Bello’s (1984) rule, are in fact not categorically ruled out by surface constraints, but not generally accepted because of a normative/standardizing view.

‘If I don’t irrigate, everything dries up on me’

- b. La he atado para que no te se caiga  
 ACC.3MSG AUX.1SG tie.PARTIC PREP that not ETHDAT.2SG SE fall.SUBJUNC  
 ‘I tied it so that it wouldn’t fall’

Heap (1998: 321)

Both instances of SE in (12a) and (12b) can be easily analysed as primary object marking in second position of clitic clusters based on a grammaticalization process affecting the third-person clitic paradigm differentially and triggering a move from person to grammatical function marking.

### 3.2 Nonfinite positioning and clitic climbing

As a last point, clitic placement in preverbal or postverbal position depends on finiteness of the verb as illustrated in the extended version (13) of the reformulated spurious SE rule (Mayer 2010: 32). The clitic position is not available to putative NPs, only another clitic in form of a clitic cluster or an auxiliary can come between the verb and a clitic.

- (13) V SE II I III (AUX) V  
 -fin +fin

In finite clauses proclitics occupy the immediate preverbal position (14a), in non-finite clauses enclitics adjoin verb finally, as in the imperative (14b), the gerund (14c) and also with infinitives.

- (14) a. **Se lo da**  
 SE ACC.3MSG give.3SG  
 ‘(S)he gives it to her/him/them’
- b. **¡Déselo!**  
 give.IMP.SE.ACC.3MSG  
 ‘Give it to her/him/them.’
- c. **Dándoselo**  
 giving.GERUND.SE.ACC.3MSG  
 ‘Giving it to her/him/them’

Finally, clitic climbing constructions with light verbs as in (15a) and (15b) optionally allow both locations; cluster splitting (15c) does not normally obtain in any dialect or variety, but counterexamples do exist.<sup>16</sup>

- (15) a. Quiere dárselo  
 want.3SG give.INF.SE.ACC.3MSG  
 ‘(S)he wants to give it to her/him/them’
- b. **Se lo** quiere dar  
 SE ACC.3MSG want.3SG give.INF  
 ‘(S)he wants to give it to her/him/them’
- c. \***Se/Le** quiere darlo.

These examples provide ample evidence to view clitic clusters not only as morphological but also as phonological units (Harris 1995). In morphological accounts floating features are accounted for by feature relinking or feature transfer as a consequence of the application of spurious SE (Bonet 1995; Harris 1994, 1995; Pescarini 2005). However the motives for the linking processes remain unclear in these accounts.

#### 4. American Spanish *Leísta* dialect clusters

ASLD clusters as shown in this section, defy any explanation in terms of morphological features including syntactic proposals focusing on the dative and unique verbal agreement (Albizu 1997; Nevins 2007; Ormázabal & Romero 2007; Adger & Harbour 2007) as they are based on person. However, dialectal variation and non-standard clusters can be explained by the typological change from DO/IO to PO/SO marking, focusing on primary object marking in the second slot, which implies a move from person to GF marking. When reworded in those terms, the PCC constraint as well as the extended PCC (Ormázabal & Romero 2007: 319 ff) loosely apply.

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<sup>16</sup> See Andrews & Manning (1999, chapter 3, section 3.3) for an extensive discussion of clitic climbing with restructuring verbs and a proposal of a non-constructive splitting constraint rule. Also, thanks to an external reviewer for bringing counterexamples such as ‘*se quiere darlo*’ to my attention; further investigation is needed.

#### 4.1. Primary and secondary object and PCC effects in ASLD

The combination of person 1&3 in (16) follows the PCC rule by placing the accusative in the second slot. ASLD speakers accept *leísmo* in the second slot in the person 1&3 cluster in (16b) as well as in the person 2&3 cluster in (16c) although the grammatical relation in slot 2 is an accusative (*leísmo*) and not a dative. In ASLD *leísta* dialects the restrictions on the second entry weaken to the point that (16b) and (16c) are considered a dialect-variable (%).

- (16) a. Me      **lo**      /la      acercaron      1&3  
 DAT.1SG ACC.3MSG / ACC.3FSG take.closer.3 PL  
 ‘They brought him/her closer to me.’
- b. %Me      **le**      acercaron      %1&3  
 DAT.1SG DAT.3SG take.closer.3PL  
 ‘They recommended him to me’
- Fernández-Soriano (1999:1267)
- c. %Te      **le**      presentaron      %2&3  
 DAT.2SG DAT.3SG introduce.3PL.IMPERS  
 ‘They introduced him to you’

PCC constraints don’t appear in person 3&3 clusters with impersonal SE appearing in the first slot and the dative in the second (17a) and in (17c) involving a case syncretic person 2 and a reflexive person 1. The person 2&1 cluster with two syncretic (case underspecified) clitics in (17b) is different as it may give rise to referential ambiguity. The PCC constraints may apply weakly here in order to render both readings a bit forced, but not fully ungrammatical.

- (17) a. Se      **les**      presentaron      unos problemas      3&3  
 IMPERS DAT.3SG run.3PL.IMPERS some problems  
 ‘They ran into some (unexpected) problems’
- b. ?Te      me      presentaron      ?2&1  
 ACC/DAT.2SG DAT/ACC.1SG introduce.3PL.IMPERS  
 ‘They introduced you to me/me to you’

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7 c. Te me imaginaba diferente 2&1  
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9 ACC.2SG REFL.1SG imagine.1SG different  
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11 ‘I thought you looked different’  
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13 In ASLD and other dialects [+primary] and [+direct] are replaced by [+object] and the  
14 lexical entries for *le*, *lo/la* (18) generalize to [+object].  
15

- 16  
17 (18) *le*(s): ([+object]↓)  
18  
19 *lo/a*(s): ([+object]↓)  
20

21 The Peninsular non-floating feature version keeps [+direct].  
22

- 23 (19) *lo/a*(s): ([+direct]↓)  
24

25 The example from (16b) will be disambiguated both by the PCC and the constraint PO  
26 >SO in the linear ordering replacing the DAT > ACC.  
27  
28

## 29 30 31 4.2 Case syncretism and the PCC

32 Proposals such as Adger & Harbour (2007) focussing on a strong relationship between the  
33 PCC and case syncretism support the analysis presented here as they exemplify the move  
34 from coreferential agreement marking IO and DO in (20a) to primary object marking in  
35 (20b).  
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- 38 (20) a. European Spanish 2&3 → [IO + DO]  
39  
40 Os **lo** agradezco  
41 DAT.2pl ACC.3MSG thank.1SG  
42  
43 ‘I thank you (pl) for it’  
44  
45 b. Latin American Spanish 3&3 → [PO + SO]  
46  
47 **Se lo** agradezco  
48 SE ACC.3MSG thank.1SG  
49  
50 ‘I thank you (sg/pl) for it’  
51  
52

53 Losing the person feature from the second person plural, not only triggers an increase in  
54 syncretism but also in argument marking, both examples combine an [+ANIM] and an [-ANIM]  
55 object and referential identification obtains unambiguously in (20a) different from (20b)  
56 where the case syncretic weak clitic SE gives rise to potential referential and syntactic  
57 ambiguity. SE can either refer to *you* plural or *You* singular as anaphor for the honorific third  
58  
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person personal pronoun *usted*. SE as the type of addressee in (20b) can be specified in the f-structure representation in (21).

- (21) PRED 'PRO'  
 PERS {}  
 NUM PL

In ASLD in (22), the [+MASC, +PL] features float from spurious SE to the accusative clitic assuring referential identification of the primary object.

- (22) American Spanish *Leísta* dialects<sup>17</sup> 3&3 → [+primary, -direct]  
**Se los** voy a agradecer  
 SE ACC.3MPL will.1SG PREP thank.INF  
 'I will thank you (pl) for it'

The primary feature reflects the discourse status and topic-worthiness of the object, and the direct feature reflects the thematic role status of the object (cf Dryer 1986: 841).

#### 4.3 Increased syncretism as an effect of case erosion

In Castilla, historic uses of the dative clitic *le* referring to inanimate direct objects (23a) and in a cluster consisting of dative and *leísmo* (23b) date back as far as to XIII. Specifically the *leísmo* cluster in (23b) presents more evidence for the syntactic nature of the phenomenon and against a morphological treatment (Bonet, 1991 me-lui constraint).

- (23) a. el paraguas **le** perdí  
 DET.MSG umbrella DAT.3SG lost.1SG  
 'I lost the umbrella'  
 b. los libros me **les** dejé en casa  
 DET.MPL book DAT.1SG DAT.3PL left.1SG PREP home  
 'The book I forgot them at home'

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<sup>17</sup> Chilean Spanish, pc from C Holtheuer.



Further, the combination of two completely underspecified clitics, a first person ethical dative and a third person *leísmo* in (24a), and an impersonal and third person *leísmo* in (24b), demonstrates fully fledged primary object marking in ASLD.

- (24) a. ¿Conoces a Michelle y Alex?  
 ‘Do you know Michelle and Alex?’
- b. Sí, yo me les encuentro todos los días  
 yes PRO.1SG ETH.DAT.1SG DAT.3PL meet QUANT DET.MPL days  
 ‘Yes, I meet them every day’
- c. Se les encuentra todos los días  
 IMPERS DAT.3PL meet QUANT DET.MPL days  
 ‘Yes, one meets them every day’

Finally, as expected in a language change situation, ASLD dialects show the full range of competing grammars, the classic indirect object in (25a) and *loísmo* co-varying with *leísmo* in (25b). Co-variation of floating features in terms of agreement markers (*las*) referential with the PO and LAS *leísmo* in (25c) are a further consequence of case erosion and indicative of primary object marking.

- (25) a. **Le<sub>i</sub>** entregamos el regalo<sub>j</sub> a las<sub>i</sub> niñas<sub>i</sub>  
 DAT.3SG give.1PL DET.MSG gift IOM DET.FPL girls  
 ‘We give the gifts to the girls’
- b. **Se lo<sub>j</sub>** /**le** entregamos  
 SE ACC.3MSG/ DAT.3SG give.1PL  
 ‘We give it to them’
- c. **Se las** / **les** entregamos  
 SE ACC.3FPL / DAT.3PL give.1PL  
 ‘We give it to them’

The theory presented here predicts that in ASLD examples such as (25c) SE and the third person can jointly realize the primary object as *las/les* realize [+object]. Of crucial importance is that the DAT>ACC ordering restriction for 2 third-person arguments is triggered by the inherent feature content of the arguments, as imposed by the verb, and not by the forms of the clitics.

## 5. Conclusion

At first sight the phenomenon looks like a simple parsing problem, where, due to coexistence of various paradigms, *leísmo*, *laísmo*, *loísmo*, dialect speakers potentially fail to distinguish between dative and accusative clitics (as argued for by Harris & Halle (2005: 212)). This is true to a certain extent, however it is also symptomatic of several ongoing grammaticalization processes affecting the general case object marking system. These reanalysis processes are gradual, resulting in case erosion indicative of a typological change from ACC-DAT in monotransitives to PO/SO (primary object/secondary object) in ditransitives. I have shown that both *le* in Peninsular / European Spanish *leísmo* as in (7) and SE in (11) have each two alternate feature contents, this also applies to spurious SE. If *lo/la/le* lose their case specifications, and null secondary object anaphora become allowed, there is nothing to block floating features since both the SE and the third-person positions can realize the primary object GF with SE as primary and third-person as secondary.

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