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This is a contribution from *The Dialect Laboratory. Dialects as a testing ground for theories of language change.*

Edited by Gunther De Vogelaer and Guido Seiler.

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Dialect areas and linguistic change

Pronominal paradigms in Ibero-Romance dialects from a cross-linguistic and social typology perspective*

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This paper investigates object clitic paradigms in a number of Ibero-Romance dialects. It claims that dialect areas can be extremely helpful in understanding linguistic change if carefully studied through an adequate structural analysis in conjunction with historical information. The paper, therefore, discusses the extent to which the relationship between social structure and linguistic change is relevant and suggests that the probability that innovations will emerge and diffuse is both structurally and socially conditioned. In the data analysed, the appearance of new grammatical distinctions, which are rare from a typological perspective, seems to be more frequent in stable societies with strong ties and little mobility, regardless of whether bilingualism is present. On the other hand, the loss of previously existing distinctions seems to occur more easily in social situations where speakers of different languages or dialects colonize new territories, bringing their varieties into contact with each other to form a new variety.

1. Introduction

Recently, typologists have proposed a theoretical framework to address the issue of the emergence of linguistic innovations regardless of the social context in which innovations arise. Croft (2000, 2006) claims that speakers and listeners, by interacting with each other, are able to reanalyze the form-meaning mapping in a grammatical construction and produce a linguistic innovation. Grammatical innovation thus requires a form-function reanalysis, which leads to an altered

* I am indebted to Beatriz Fernández for her insightful comments and help with the Basque data, and am very grateful for the comments and suggestions made by two anonymous reviewers.

replication. The underlying mechanism involved in the emergence and actualization of an innovation can occur in an interference context (in which the speakers have access to different, coexisting languages, i.e. two codes for the same meaning) or in an intraference context (in which the speakers have access to different variants for similar meanings). In this view, both the so-called external and internal mechanisms involved in linguistic variation and change are basically the same and there is no reason to treat them separately (see also Mufwene 2001; Thomason 2003; Heine & Kuteva 2005).

These panchronic views, however, do not answer the crucial question of whether there are types of grammatical innovations that are more likely to arise in some kinds of social circumstances rather than others. Since the same mechanisms underlie language contact, dialect contact, new dialect formation, and even stable speech-community interaction, there is an assumption that any type of grammatical innovation is equally likely to occur and be diffused in any kind of social circumstance. Does the same, though, also hold true for its probabilities? To date, no theory exists that would account for the interplay of both mechanisms operating in linguistic change, innovation and propagation. Linguistic typology gives us precious tools to analyse the emergence of innovations and the evolutionary pathways that they pursue inter and intra-linguistically, synchronically and diachronically. However, from this perspective, the emergence of innovations and their type would seem to be completely independent of the kind of social context. On the other hand, sociolinguistics have convincingly explained the way in which innovations are propagated through social structure, social networks and social space (see contributions in Chambers, Trudgill & Schilling-Estes 2001; Labov 2001). However, it has also been suggested that the diffusion of certain features might be conditioned mainly by general cognitive mechanisms (Haspelmath 1999; Chambers 1995, 2004). In this view, social forces would not play a relevant role in propagation.

In this paper, I will defend the need to connect language and society, to embed linguistic generalizations in historical tendencies and social coordinates, however, without espousing (rather, fully rejecting) a deterministic or teleological point of view. If social interaction underlies any form-function reanalysis, it is reasonable to think that similar types of social circumstances would lead to similar innovation types. In fact, some linguists have made scattered observations on this matter.

For example, Labov (2007) has suggested that structural complexity in a perfect replication is more likely to be transmitted (propagation by contact between adults and children within the same speech-community) than diffused (propagation by contact between adults living in different speech-communities, i.e. dialect contact). Simply put, dialect contact usually implies altered replication, since the structural constraints are not wholly acquired in contact between adults. This fact

accounts for the frequent emergence of interdialect forms (Trudgill 1986), that is, new intermediate forms that do not exactly correspond to the original dialects that were in contact. Another situation raises new dialect formation or koineization, which is usually linked to the reduction of variants and simplification, meaning “an increase of regularity in morphology”, “a decrease of markedness”, and/or “the loss of categories such as gender, the loss of morphologically marked cases, simplified morphophonemics, and a decrease in the number of phonemes” (Kerswill 2001:671; Tuten 2003; Cremona 2002; Trudgill 2004b; Auer et al. 2005). Accordingly, Clements (2009:26) maintains that “the more universally unmarked a feature is, the more easily processable it is and thus the more likely it is to be found in an immigrant variety, a pidgin or a creole”. Mufwene (2001:58) also draws links between creoles and newly emerging dialects, but argues that the selection of features is determined by their markedness “relative to their other competitors in the contact setting rather than to whatever options happen to be available worldwide”. Furthermore, in Thomason’s view (2003:695), there are “no absolute linguistic constraints on the kinds and degrees of linguistic interference that can occur”, however, “different probabilities can be established for different kinds of changes, probabilities based both on social factors (e.g. intensity of contact) and on linguistic factors (e.g. markedness)”.

Instead, Heine & Kuteva conclude that “grammatical replication is fairly independent of the particular sociolinguistic factors that may exist in a given situation of language contact” (2005:260). However, they find that “grammatical replication is most likely to occur if there is a degree of intensive and extensive bilingualism” (2005:13), and accept that not every contact situation tends to produce the same typology of change. In Heine & Kuteva’s survey, they observe that “attrition and contact-induced grammaticalization need to be kept apart” (2005:255); while contact-induced grammaticalization “leads to an enrichment of the language concerned, in that new use patterns and grammatical categories are created on the model of another language, new categories are far less likely to arise in the case of attrition; rather existing categories are simplified, merge with other categories, or are simply abandoned” (2005:256). For this reason they claim that “speakers of dying languages tend to overgeneralize unmarked features at the expense of the marked ones” (2005:255). To a certain extent, then, new dialects, pidgins, creoles and language attrition produce similar types of innovations as compared to those produced in other sociolinguistic situations.

Trudgill (2001, 2004a), for his part, has attempted to explore the links between linguistic typology and social typology. In his view, there are three different types of societies or social structures associated with linguistic structures: (1) high-contact language communities with long-term stable contact involving child bilingualism, which may lead to increased complexity, such as greater and more

complex phonological inventories; (2) high-contact language communities with intense and short-term contact involving imperfect second language acquisition by adults, which may lead to increased simplicity, such as smaller phonological inventories, loss of morphological features and greater morphological regularity; and, (3) relatively isolated language communities with low contact and dense, strong social networks, which may lead to structural complexity, a high level of grammaticalization processes and changes that, from a cross-linguistic perspective, are relatively uncommon.

As will be proposed, dialect areas can be extremely helpful in understanding linguistic change and discussing the extent to which the relationship between social structure and linguistic change proves to be relevant. On the one hand, as Anderwald & Kortmann (2002) point out, dialects can sometimes provide more fine-grained analyses of typological generalizations than can cross-linguistic observations. On the other hand, sometimes the formation of dialect areas can be dated and the social context of their emergence reconstructed, which it is hardly ever possible to achieve when examining language differentiation.

The Iberian Peninsula is, in this respect, an extremely interesting territory to test hypotheses regarding diffusion models, the genesis of areal configurations and the relationship between innovation type and social pattern type. Unlike most European areas, which have been continuously populated since Antiquity, the Iberian Peninsula was resettled largely in relatively recent times. We can therefore determine the approximate date of the formation of some of the linguistic areas in the region, thanks to a relatively large amount of available historical data. The peninsula was invaded in 711 from North Africa and most of the territory was controlled by Muslim conquerors for the next several centuries. Only the north, protected by the Cantabrian Mountains and the Pyrenees, remained Christian and independent. In Al-Andalus, which was the Arabic name for Muslim controlled territories, Latin (or the derived Romance language, Mozarabic) was eventually lost and Arabic became the general language. Current Ibero-Romance languages, therefore, developed from Latin in the north, and only later were extended to the centre and south of the Peninsula. The northern varieties thus form a dialect continuum from Galicia in the west to Catalonia in the east, which is consistent with the idea of uninterrupted settlement since Antiquity (see Chambers & Trudgill 1998). Moreover, some areas in the north underwent varying degrees of latinization, as illustrated by the fact that Basque, a non Indo-European language, has been preserved. In the Basque area, first Latin, then Romance, have apparently been in contact with Basque for millennia.

From the 10th century onwards, the Christians started recovering lands from the Muslims and individuals from the north played a leading role in the resettlement of these territories. Romance languages in the Iberian Peninsula thus show

a north-south geographical pattern, which mirrors the medieval process of the expansion of the northern population to the south. In contrast with the lack of coincidence of linguistic boundaries in the north, bundles of isoglosses clearly divide Portuguese, Spanish and Catalan in the centre and south. This geographical configuration, which leads to a certain amount of homogeneity, is usually related to koineization processes subsequent to colonization (Penny 1987, 2000; Tuten 2003).

Given that we can date these linguistic areas as either being formed before or after the medieval expansion, and since we can reconstruct the social conditions under which they arose – sedentary populations in the north with strong social networks, migration and colonization in the centre and south, long-term language contact with Basque – we can analyse their linguistic features and draw conclusions with regard to the following: (1) the types of linguistic innovations that arose in each area type, and whether they fulfill the usual predictions about sedentary or colonization areas (Trudgill 2001, 2004a–b); (2) the possibility for either the diffusion or the transmission of innovations according to their structural features (Labov 2007); or, in other words, we can try to discern whether the diffusion is just socially or also structurally driven (Harnisch 1999; Chambers 1995, 2004; De Vogelaer 2006).

In this paper I will tackle some of these issues by analyzing the emergence and development of pronominal paradigms in some Ibero-Romance varieties. However, I will not take here the terms “simplicity” and “complexity” used by Trudgill for granted, since their meanings can be controversial. Instead, I will deal with the concepts of emergence and development of new grammatical categories and/or their reduction and loss.

The paper is organised as follows: in Section 2, the Standard Spanish pronominal paradigm and the dialect uses traditionally known as *leísmo*, *laísmo* and *loísmo* are described. Section 3 presents the dialectological data sources on which this paper is based. Sections 4 and 5 provide an overview of the pronominal paradigms of the north and centre of Spain, respectively, including a discussion of their features along with the historical and social background in which they originated. In Section 6, I discuss the data from a cross-linguistic perspective and draw some conclusions regarding the probability of innovations to occur, depending on the social context, and to diffuse, depending on their structural features.

2. The Standard Spanish paradigm and the dialect phenomena known as *leísmo*, *laísmo* and *loísmo*

In Standard Spanish the third person unstressed pronoun paradigm coincides with that of other Romance languages, namely, the one inherited from Latin,

which only distinguishes between case, gender and number. The neuter reference is preserved only for neuter pronouns or non-lexical (e.g. clausal) antecedents, since the Latin neuter gender was lost as a nominal category in Romance and only two lexical genders remained, masculine and feminine (see Table 1).

Table 1. Standard Spanish paradigm

	SINGULAR		PLURAL		NEUTER
	MASCULINE	FEMININE	MASCULINE	FEMININE	
ACCUSATIVE	lo	la	los	las	lo
DATIVE		le		les	le

Although this paradigm is widespread both in Latin America and in most areas in the Iberian Peninsula, Spanish grammarians have prescribed against the dialect uses that they call *leísmo*, *laísmo* and *loísmo*, and which are still mostly banned from Standard Spanish teaching.¹ *Leísmo* is the use of the dative pronoun *le* instead of the accusative pronoun *lo*: an extension of the dative at the expense of the accusative form, as example (1) illustrates. *Laísmo* is the use of the feminine accusative pronouns *la(s)* instead of the dative pronouns *le(s)*, as in example (2), and *loísmo* is the use of the plural masculine *los* or the neuter accusative pronoun *lo* instead of the dative pronoun *le* (3). Therefore, both *laísmo* and *loísmo* extend the accusative morphology at the expense of the dative one.²

- (1) a. *El niño_i/ el libro_i ¿lo_i*
 the boy.M/ the book.M 3.M.ACC.SG
ves tú? (Standard Spanish)
 do you see?
- b. *El niño_i/ el libro_i ¿le_i ves tú?* (*Leísmo* varieties)
 the boy.M/ the book.M 3.DAT.SG do you see?
 ‘The boy/ the book, do you see him/ it?’
- (2) a. *Le_i di el libro a María_i* (Standard Spanish)
 3.DAT.SG I gave the book to María

1. One exception, *leísmo* with masculine human singular objects, is accepted in the Madrid-based norm, as noted below.

2. In the glosses, I will describe the 3rd person pronouns as dative or accusative according to the more wide-spread morphological values of the Spanish speaking world, regardless of the syntactic usage they have in Ibero-Romance dialect paradigms. That means that a morphological accusative pronoun can refer to an indirect object NP or a dative pronoun can be used to refer to a direct object NP.

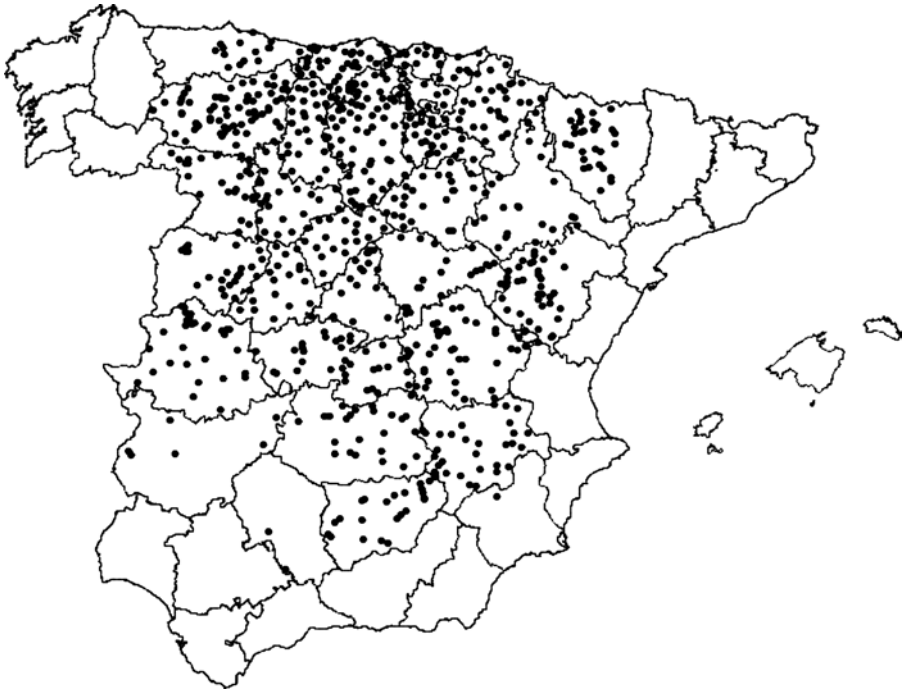
- b. *La_i di el libro a María_i* (Laísmo varieties)
 3.F.ACC.SG I gave the book to María
- (3) a. *Les_i he comprado un juguete a*
 3.DAT.PL I have bought a toy for
los niños_i (Standard Spanish)
 the kids
- b. *Los_i he comprado un juguete a*
 3.M.ACC.PL I have bought a toy for
los niños_i (Loísmo varieties)
 the kids

These uses were perceived as partial case syncretisms in the standard paradigm, as, according to the observations of grammarians, nonstandard uses were unable to fully replace the standard usage.

3. Ibero-Romance dialect grammar in the *Audible Corpus of Spoken Rural Spanish*

This traditional approach to *leísmo*, *laísmo* and *loísmo* has changed thanks to the oral interviews collected for the *Audible Corpus of Spoken Rural Spanish* (*Corpus Oral y Sonoro del Español Rural*; or COSER, its Spanish abbreviation). COSER is a dialect corpus of oral interviews recorded with elderly, rural speakers (72.5 years is the average age), local natives who have lower educational levels. From 1990 to 2009, COSER has recorded 1,408 informants, of which 44% are men and 56% are women. About 950 hours of interviews (75 minutes on average) have been compiled in 754 rural localities from the north, centre and part of the south of Spain, as can be seen in Map 1.

COSER recordings have made it possible to research a number of dialect grammar phenomena (morphological and syntactic). Among them, several 3rd person unstressed dialect pronoun paradigms have been identified and geographically located in the north and centre of Spain (Fernández-Ordóñez 1994, 1999, 2001; Tuten 2003). These regional paradigms, which reveal *leísmo*, *laísmo* and *loísmo* dialect use to varying degrees, have been subjected to a sociolinguistic pattern that has led some uses to all but disappear or become extremely reduced in upper and middle class speech (Klein-Andreu 2000). The underlying reason for this pattern is the long-term prescription by Spanish grammarians against *leísmo*, *laísmo* and *loísmo*. The discovery of these dialect pronominal paradigms revealed that the traditional description of *leísmo*, *laísmo* and *loísmo* was only the tip of the iceberg, which, having been restricted to dialect use, had remained mostly

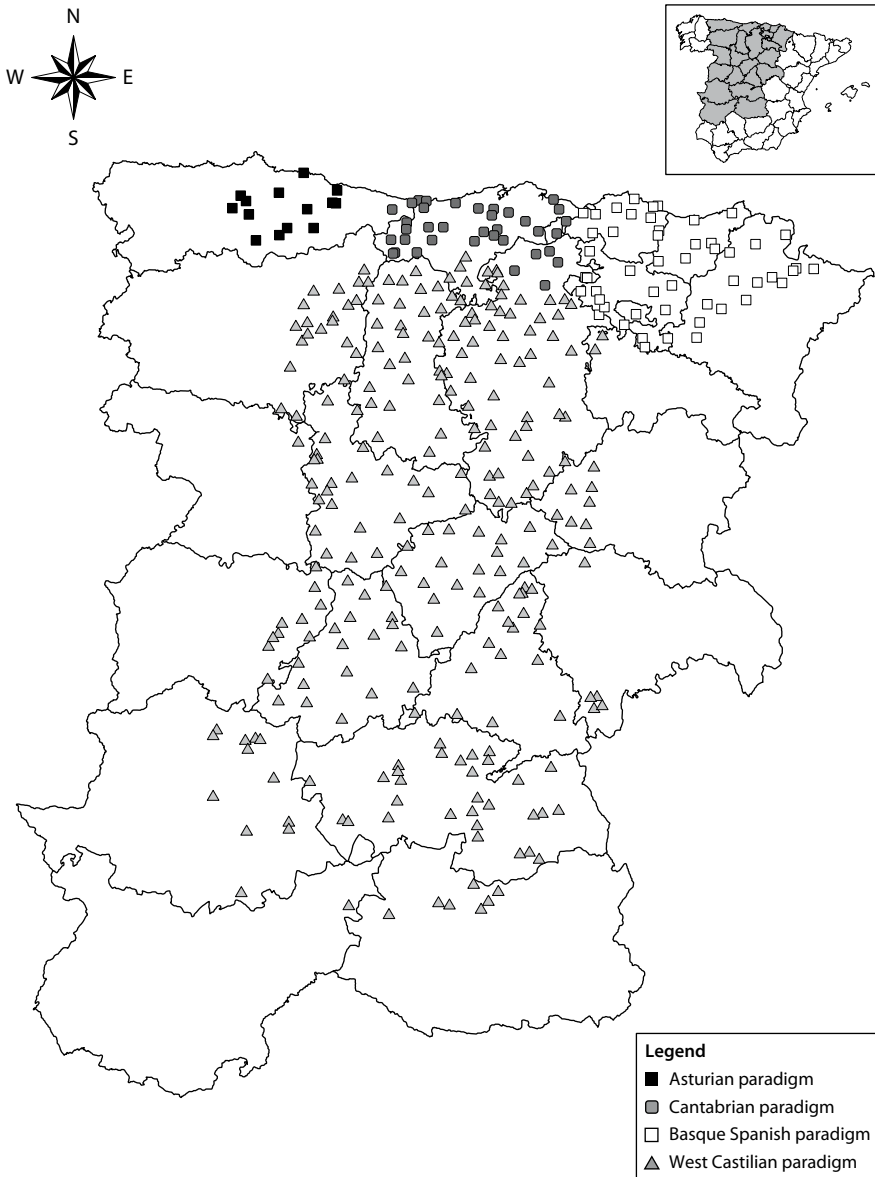


Map 1. Geographic distribution of *COSER* survey points (2009)

unknown to grammarians. As a result, the historical account of the emergence of *leísmo*, *laísmo* and *loísmo* has substantially changed. Map 2 illustrates the areas in which the dialect paradigms described in Sections 4 and 5 are found.

4. The paradigms in the North

In the north of the Iberian Peninsula, Latin developed into a Romance dialect continuum running from the western coast of Galicia to the eastern coast of Catalonia. Some of the varieties, which emerged in the north, have become standard languages, such as, Galician, Spanish and Catalan. Others have remained as spoken varieties without undergoing a process of standardization. All of these varieties, however, show different, gradual developments from Latin. For example, Castilian emerged in eastern Cantabria, in northern Burgos, and in the neighbouring areas of the Basque Country (provinces of Viscaya and Alava). To the West, Cantabria borders on Asturias, where Asturian varieties are spoken. To the East, it borders on the Basque Country, where Basque and a Romance dialect, Basque Spanish, coexist.



Map 2. Asturian, Cantabrian, Basque Spanish and Western Castilian paradigms

4.1 The Eastern Asturian paradigm

The Asturian linguistic area is the prototype for the dialectal fragmentation of Latin in a mainly sedentary and isolated population with strong social ties.

Dialectologists divide eastern and western Asturias into several areas that only approximately coincide with each other. Moreover, the population is scattered throughout numerous valleys, which weakens its inter-communication. Each valley's rural variety, therefore, usually exhibits significant variants compared to neighbouring zones.

The Eastern Asturian pronoun paradigm presents a singular innovation, which probably developed out of the preservation of neuter gender distinctions in the demonstrative and personal pronoun paradigm (Fernández-Ordóñez 2006–07, 2009). By means of semantic inference, in these dialects neuter pronoun agreement occurs both with non-lexical anaphora (i.e. neuter antecedents such as clauses) and with lexical antecedents when the masculine or feminine noun has a mass interpretation. This agreement is not limited to third person personal and demonstrative pronouns (both in subject and object positions) but also extends to adjectives: post-nominal attributive adjectives, predicative adjectives and depictive adjectives. As a consequence, the 3rd person unstressed pronoun paradigm, apart from number, gender, and case distinctions, distinguishes between mass and count interpretations of pronominal antecedents (see example (4)). As is shown in Table 2, in the Eastern Asturian paradigm there is no syncretism between dative and accusative pronouns (i.e. no *léismo*, *laísmo* or *loísmo*):

Table 2. Eastern Asturian paradigm

	COUNT				MASS	NEUTER
	SINGULAR		PLURAL		MASC./FEM.	
	MASC.	FEM.	MASC.	FEM.		
ACCUSATIVE	lu	la	los	las	lo	lo
DATIVE		y		yos	y	y

(4) Eastern Asturian

- a. *El vino_i vendemos-lo_i / *lu_i*
 The.M wine.M we sell-it.N.ACC/ *it.M.ACC
 'The wine, we sell it' [masculine, mass]
- b. *La lana_i vendemos-lo_i / *la_i*
 The.F wool.F we sell-it.N.ACC/ *it.F.ACC
 'The wool, we sell it' [feminine, mass]
- c. *El coche_i vendemos-lu_i / *lo_i*
 The.M car.M we sell-it.M.ACC/ *it.N.ACC
 'The car, we sell it' [masculine, count]

- d. *La moto_i vendemos-la_i/ *lo_i*
 The.F motorbike.F we sell-it.F.ACC/ * it.N.ACC
 ‘The motorbike, we sell it’ [feminine, count]

The development of new gender distinctions based on the count/mass interpretation of nouns, while cross-linguistically rare, is nevertheless documented in some western Indo-European languages, namely English (Siemund 2008), Dutch (Audring 2006), Low German (Rohdenburg 2004), Scandinavian (Braunmüller 2000) and South-Central Italian varieties (Haase 2000). Although Ibero-Romance and South-Central Italian developments are completely independent, both originated from the preservation of distinct demonstrative and personal pronouns for masculine, feminine and neuter. In both cases, neuter morphology was extended, but it followed very different syntactic paths (Fernández-Ordóñez 2009).

4.2 The Basque Spanish paradigm

In the eastern part of the area under consideration, in the Basque Country and northern Navarre, we find the Basque Spanish pronoun paradigm, which expresses distinctions of number, case and animacy, but ignores gender for human referents, as can be observed in Table 3:

Table 3. Basque Spanish Paradigm

	HUMAN		NON-HUMAN				NEUTER
	MASCULINE/ FEMININE		MASCULINE		FEMININE		
	SINGULAR	PLURAL	SINGULAR	PLURAL	SINGULAR	PLURAL	
	ACCUSATIVE	le ↑	les ↑	Ø/lo	Ø/los	Ø/la	
DATIVE	le	les	le	les	le	les	le

In this paradigm we find *leísmo*, the extension of the dative pronoun *le(s)*, at the expense of the accusative pronouns *lo(s)* and *la(s)*, as indicated by the arrows. Although there is syncretism in this paradigm, it is confined to the pronouns referring to human antecedents (regardless of their sex). Inanimate antecedents remain referred to by distinct pronouns in dative and accusative contexts. It is worth mentioning that null pronouns prevail in incipient bilinguals. As bilingualism level increases, full gendered accusative pronouns are learned and used for non-human objects (although rarely for humans). Some syntactic contexts, however, always resist full pronouns: ditransitive contexts and neuter pronouns (that refer to non-lexical entities or clauses) (Landa 1995). Null pronouns are thus

systematically used for definite accusative antecedents located in the lowest part of the Animacy Hierarchy, whereas dative pronouns are used for those located in the highest part [+human], as (5) illustrates.

- (5) Basque Spanish (examples from Landa 1995)
- a. ¿*Qué le_i pasó al libro_i?*
What 3.DAT.SG happened to the book
'What happened to the book?'
 - b. *Juan Ø_i llevó a su sitio*
Juan 3.ACC.SG took to its place
'Juan took [it] to its place'
 - c. *No le_i/*la_i conozco a la novia de Txetxu_i*
Not 3.DAT.SG/*3.F.ACC.SG I know to the girlfriend of Txetxu
'I don't know Txetxu's girlfriend'

There is some evidence that this paradigm emerged in an interference context. In the Basque Country and Navarre, Latin and Romance have been in contact with Basque for centuries. There is a controversy among scholars over whether Basque Spanish is the outcome of a particular development from Latin in a bilingual society or the result of a medieval implantation of Romance in a Basque monolingual society. Regardless, Basque Spanish dates back to at least the High Middle Ages. Furthermore, many features of Basque Spanish can be related to Basque influence (Urrutia 1995) and vice versa, also some Basque features can be explained by Romance contact (Haase 1992). While Basque Spanish probably arose in bilingual speakers as a second language, it is currently a variety that is also used by Romance monolinguals. The Basque Spanish paradigm can only be found in present-day Basque-speaking areas and in neighbouring areas where we know that Basque was still spoken in the eighteenth century (such as Middle Navarre and Alava).

Unlike Basque Spanish, Ibero-Romance allows null pronouns for indefinite and non-specific antecedents but does not accept them for definite antecedents. Basque is an ergative language in which the verb both exhibits morphological agreement with the arguments and has no clitics. However, the absolutive case (ABS), which marks the direct objects of transitive verbs and the subjects of unaccusative clauses, does not have verbal agreement morphemes with 3rd person arguments (Trask 1977, 1981:295–98, 1997:218–220; Laka 1988:355–60).³ This

3. "The prefixes long regarded as 'third-person markers' are in fact fossilized markers of tense and mood" (Trask 1997:223).

means that, when there is a 3rd person definite direct object, the Basque verb shows a zero morpheme (see example (6)):

- (6) Basque
- a. *Erosi zen-Ø-u-en* *opari-a-Ø?*
Buy 2ERG.SG-3ABS.SG-AUX-PAST gift-DET-ABS
'Did you buy the gift?'
- b. *Erosi d-Ø-u-zu* *opari-a-Ø?*
Buy PRESENT-3ABS.SG-AUX-2ERG.SG gift-DET-ABS
'Do you buy the gift?'
- c. *Bai, erosi n-Ø-u-en/*
Yes, buy 1ERG.SG-3ABS.SG-AUX-PAST/
d-Ø-u-t
PRESENT-3ABS.SG-AUX-1ERG.SG
'Yes, I bought/ buy it'

The Basque Spanish paradigm can therefore be explained as an indirect replication of the Basque verb agreement system in a structural interference context that led speakers to overgeneralize Romance null indefinite pronouns into definite antecedents. This matching minor pattern could lose restrictions and become a major pattern, being used in more and innovative contexts, as Heine & Kuteva (2005) claim for frequent contact-induced grammar changes. Let's now compare the data shown in example (6) with those in (7):

- (7) Standard Spanish & Basque Spanish
- a. *¿Compraste/compras el regalo_i?*
'Did you buy/do you buy the gift?'
- b. *Sí, lo_i compré/ compro* (Standard Spanish)
Yes, 3.M.ACC.SG I bought/ I buy
- c. *Sí, Ø_i compré/ compro* (Basque Spanish)
Yes, 3.M.ACC.SG I bought/ I buy
- d. *¿Compraste arroz_i?* (Standard Spanish and Basque Spanish)
'Did you buy rice?'
Sí, Ø_i compré
'Yes, I bought some'

The origin of the extension of dative morphology to accusative contexts appears to be more complex than the development of null pronouns, for it has two possible explanations. On the one hand, it could be explained as a subsequent development of Differential Object Marking (DOM) (Bossong 1991, 1998). In all central Ibero-Romance dialects (including Spanish), animate, definite and specific objects require marking by the same preposition *a* that is needed to introduce indirect

objects: *a* + NP (Indirect Objects and DOM). DOM thus appears on the noun by means of a dative preposition (see example (8b)):

- (8) Standard Spanish
- a. *Le_i di el libro a María_i*
 DAT.SG I gave the book to María
 'I gave the book to Mary'
 - b. *Veo a María*
 I see to María
 'I see María'
 - c. *Te_i veo a ti_i*
 2.ACC.SG I see to you
 'I see you'

As examples (8a–c) illustrate, prepositional marking and doubling by a clitic is fairly categorical both with respect to indirect objects and to the DOM of the 1st and 2nd person in Spanish. Consequently, *leísmo* in Basque Spanish could be a way to signal such dative-like 3rd person objects morphologically. To the extent that Romance clitics may be paired with verbal agreement morphemes, *leísmo* could be understood as a morphological DOM on the verb. If this were the case, the extension of dative morphology could have emerged without an interference context, since DOM is a well-documented process in the history of many languages and Basque only has scattered DOM traces (Fernández & Rezac 2009). Moreover, in Basque Spanish, dative morphology usually doubles the *a* + NP direct objects, as in example (5c), which is highly restricted in most Spanish varieties for 3rd person direct objects. While most Spanish varieties exhibit only preposition marking, in Basque Spanish DOM is fulfilled by both prepositional marking (on the noun) and morphological marking (on the verb).

On the other hand, however, the fact that in some Basque dialects a number of verbs alternate the dative with the absolutive agreement for direct objects supports the hypothesis that Basque Spanish *leísmo* could have received some influence from Basque. For instance, in some Basque dialects there are verbs whose objects are marked with the dative instead of the canonical absolutive (Fernández 2008; Fernández & Rezac 2010). Notably, in the Lekeitio dialect (Hualde et al. 1994), this absolutive/dative alternating agreement correlates with the Animacy Hierarchy. While dative marking is possible on 1st and 2nd personal pronouns (see examples (9) and (10)), proper names (11) and humans (12), it is not possible with animate or inanimate objects (13) (examples from Fernández 2008):

- (9) Basque dialect of Lekeitio
- a. *Peru-k ni ikusi n-au-Ø*
 Peter-ERG 1.ABS.SG see.ASP 1ABS.SG-AUX-3ERG.SG

- b. *Peru-k ni-ri d-os-ta-Ø*
Peter-ERG 1SG-DAT PRESENT-AUX.DEF-1DAT.SG-3ERG.SG
'Peter has seen me'
- (10) a. *(Ni-k) su ikusi s-ait-u-t-en*
(1SG-ERG) 2.ABS.SG see.ASP 2ABS-ABS.PL-AUX-1ERG.SG-PAST
- b. *(Ni-k) su-ri ikusi n-eu-t-zu-n*
(1.SG-ERG) 2.SG-DAT see.ASP 1ERG.SG-AUX-DEF-2SG.DAT-PAST
'I saw you'
- (11) a. *Peru-k Jon-Ø zo d-Ø-au-Ø*
Peter-ERG Jon-ABS hit.ASP PRESENT-3ABS.SG-AUX-3ERG.SG
- b. *Peru-k Jon-eri zo d-o-t-za-Ø*
Peter-ERG Jon-DAT hit.ASP PRESENT-AUX-DEF-3DAT.SG-3ERG.SG
'Peter hit John'
- (12) a. *(Ni-k) neski-a-Ø ikusi d-Ø-o-t*
(1.SG-ERG) girl-det-ABS see.ASP PRESENT-3ABS.SG-AUX-1ERG.SG
- b. *(Ni-k) neskia-ri ikusi d-o-t-za-t*
(1.SG-ERG) girl-DAT see.ASP PRESENT-AUX-DEF-3DAT.SG-1ERG.SG
'I saw the girl'
- (13) a. *(Ni-k) txakurr-a-Ø/ telebista-a-Ø*
(1.SG-ERG) dog/ TV-DET-ABS
ikusi d-Ø-o-t
see.ASP PRESENT-3ABS.SG-AUX-1ERG.SG
- b. **(Ni-k) txakurra-ri/ telebista-ri*
**(1.SG-ERG) dog/ TV-DAT*
ikusi d-o-t-za-t
see.ASP PRESENT-AUX-DEF-3DAT.SG-1ERG.SG
'I saw the dog/I watch the TV'

Although the Lekeitio dialect DOM corresponds to the same linguistic conditions as in central Ibero-Romance, it marks it both on the verb and on the noun, as does Basque Spanish.⁴ Despite the similarities, it is difficult to ascertain in which direction

4. Not all Basque verbs affected by the dative/absolute alternation (Trask 1981, Hualde 2003:412–14 and much more extensively in Fernández 2008, Fernández & Rezac 2009) can also be accounted for by DOM. Fernández (2008) provides the following list: 'Plain alternation: alternation observed in the same dialect and very often in the same idiolect (*Bultzatu* 'push', *erregutu* 'pray', *iguriki* 'wait', *itxaron* 'wait', *jarraitu* 'follow', *kontseilatu* 'give advice', *manatu* 'order', *obeditu* 'obey', *oratu* 'hold' and *utzi* 'let, leave'). Semantic alternation: alternation attested only in some meanings of the verb. (*Begiratu* 'look at', *deitu* 'call', *errepairatu* 'be

(if any) the influence went between Basque and Basque Spanish. In Romance, the full-fledged extension of dative morphology at the expense of the accusatives for all kinds of human direct objects and semantic types of verbs is completely atypical, in spite of the fact that prepositional DOM is widespread (for further discussion on this topic see Fernández-Ordóñez (2001); according to Bossong (1991), it also seems to be rare in a wider context). Interestingly, there are similarities to be found between Basque Spanish and certain American Spanish varieties, although always in a linguistic contact scenario. For example, both Andean Spanish in contact with Quechua in Ecuador and Paraguayan Spanish in contact with Guaraní have null pronouns and *leísmo* with similar – though not identical – restrictions compared to those of the Basque Spanish *leísmo* (Lipski 1994; Palacios 2008; to appear). Basque, Quechua and Guaraní are not genetically related languages. However, all of them lack the category of gender and object clitics and, therefore, can variably express object-verb agreement with null morphemes. Although some South American Southern Cone varieties (such as Argentinean Spanish) also have developed a double DOM (i.e. the clitic doubling of prepositional direct objects), this is always done by means of an accusative clitic (see examples (14a–b)):

- (14) a. *Le_i veo*
 DAT.SG I see
a María_i (Basque, Paraguayan and Ecuadorian Spanish)
 to María
- b. *La_i veo a María_i* (Argentinean Spanish)
 F.ACC.SG I see to María
 'I see María'

So we could consider the hypothesis that somehow the central Ibero-Romance prepositional DOM and null pronoun regular patterns (which can also be considered a part of DOM), in contact with non Indo-European languages with these characteristics (i.e. lack of gender and object clitics, null agreement morphemes),

aware of', *esetsi* 'attack', *jazarri* 'persecute' and *laga* 'let, leave'). Dialectal alternation: roughly speaking, absolutive attested in Navarrese-Lapuradian and Zuberoan, and dative in Navarrese and in Western and Central Basque (*Abisatu* 'notify', *deitu* 'call', *sentzun* 'hear', *eskertu* 'thank', *lagundu* 'accompany, help' and *segitu* 'follow').” This list is consistent with the semantic type of verbs that tend to accept dative objects in a cross-linguistic perspective (Blume 1998; Jónsson 2009): those verbs whose objects are semantically similar to dative objects, i.e. objects that do not have any proto-patient properties such as being created, affected or manipulated by the subject and, hence, usually human objects. In addition, dative marking is preferred in Basque dialects in Spain and absolutive marking in Basque dialects in France, which explains the existence of *leísmo* in Basque Spanish and its absence in Gascon.

tend to activate the extension of dative morphology (mainly to human objects) and of null pronouns (basically to inanimate definite objects). That Spanish structural features constrain the altered replication can be indirectly proved by the fact that Romance dialects in contact with Basque in France (Gascon) have developed neither null definite pronouns nor dative extensions. In Gascon varieties prepositional DOM exists, but any reference to indefinite and non-specific objects is made with a partitive clitic *ne* instead of with a zero marking (Landa 1995).

Dative object morphology is far more widespread in Basque Spanish than in Basque, apparently without constraints related to semantic types of verbs. Moreover, in Basque Spanish these dative-like objects usually require doubling (as though they were indirect objects), which is consistent with the Basque double marking of dative agreement in the argument and in the verb. As previously stated, double DOM is instead severely restricted in most Ibero-Romance varieties. Similarly, Basque Spanish null pronouns occur in many more contexts than do Spanish indefinite null pronouns. Furthermore, they closely match the pattern of 3rd person zero absolutive marking in Basque. All three characteristics show the loss of restrictions in the previously existing patterns in Ibero-Romance and Basque and illustrate the creation of new grammatical distinctions, specifically a new pattern of DOM with double (prepositional and morphological) marking in Basque Spanish.

4.3 The Cantabrian paradigm

In the middle northern area between the Asturian paradigm and the Basque Spanish paradigm, we find an intermediate solution: the Cantabrian paradigm, which is illustrated in Table 4:

Table 4. Cantabrian paradigm

	COUNT				MASS	NEUTER
	SINGULAR		PLURAL		MASCULINE/ FEMININE	
	MASCULINE	FEMININE	MASCULINE	FEMININE		
ACCUSATIVE	le	la	los	las	lo	lo
DATIVE	le	le	les	les	le	le

The categorical distinctions and shape of the Cantabrian paradigm are identical to those of the Asturian paradigm, except in the case of the pronoun referring to singular masculine count antecedents (*le*). Instead of a distinct accusative pronoun, we find that the dative pronoun *le* has been extended to the accusative cell

of the paradigm. Again, as with the Basque Spanish paradigm, we have syncretism between accusative and dative pronouns, but in this particular case, it is restricted to the masculine singular.

The Cantabrian paradigm seems to have emerged through reanalysis of the form-function mapping of *le* by means of the combination of two mechanisms in a dialect contact scenario: borrowing and syntactic reanalysis. Through this process the Cantabrian paradigm borrowed a dative pronoun and reanalysed it for use as an accusative pronoun, as occurs in the Basque Spanish paradigm. However, *le* was not adopted in exactly the same way as it was used in the Basque Spanish paradigm (in which *le* can only refer to human antecedents, but of either sex). Instead, in the Cantabrian paradigm, it can refer to masculine, countable and singular antecedents, as in the morphological categories operating within the Asturian paradigm.

This process of borrowing *le* is illustrated by the paradigm found in the transition zone between eastern Cantabria and the western Basque province of Vizcaya. This area attests to the use of *le* with masculine animate antecedents. In the Cantabrian paradigm, *le* was further extended to all masculine count antecedents, both animate and inanimate. These three steps are illustrated in Table 5:

Table 5. Profile of the form-function reanalysis of *le*

Cantabrian paradigm	Transition zone	Basque Spanish paradigm
<i>Le</i> refers to (in)animate masculine countable accusative antecedents, not feminine, only singular	<i>Le</i> refers to animate masculine accusative antecedents, not feminine, singular and sometimes plural	<i>Le</i> refers to human accusative antecedents, masculine and feminine, singular and plural

The form-function reanalysis of *le* could be also reinforced by the syntactic reanalysis of Basque Spanish ditransitive clauses by Cantabrian hearers. Syntactic reanalysis is a change in the underlying structure of a syntactic pattern that does not involve any immediate modification to its surface manifestation (Harris & Campbell 1995; Haspelmath 1998). Basque Spanish regularly requires null definite pronouns in ditransitive clauses, so the overt pronoun always has a dative reference (see examples (15a–b)):

- (15) a. *El libro_i te Ø_i devolví*
 The book_M 2.DAT 3.M.ACC I gave back
ayer (a ti) (Basque Spanish speaker)
 yesterday (to you)
 ‘The book, I gave it back to you yesterday’

- b. *El libro_i le Ø_i devolví*
 The book.M 3.DAT 3.M.ACC I gave back
ayer (a Juan) (Basque Spanish speaker)
 yesterday (to John)
 ‘The book, I gave it back to him (to John) yesterday’
- c. *El libro_i le_i devolví ayer* (Cantabrian hearer)
 The book.M 3.DAT I gave back yesterday
 ‘The book, I gave it back yesterday’

For Cantabrian hearers (or those of any Ibero-Romance variety) the dative pronoun *le* tends to be understood as co-referential with the direct object, since this variety does not allow null definite pronouns (see (15c)).⁵ Consequently, once *le* was reanalysed, it was progressively and analogically extended (or actualized) to all sorts of monotransitive clauses (16a) and novel ditransitive ones (16b) as an accusative pronoun:

- (16) a. *El coche_i le_i vendimos ayer* (Cantabrian speaker)
 The car.M 3.DAT we sold yesterday
 ‘The car, we sold it yesterday’
- b. *El libro_i se_j le_i devolví ayer (a Juan_j)*
 The book.M 3.DAT 3.DAT I gave back yesterday (to John)
 ‘The book, I gave it back to him yesterday (to John)’

Out of the evidence provided by the geographical distribution of these northern pronoun paradigms, we can conclude that dialect contact was the cause of the borrowing of *le* as an accusative pronoun in the Cantabrian paradigm. However, the adoption of *le* was determined by the morphological categories previously distinguished in the Cantabrian paradigm. Reanalysis did not create a new grammatical category in Cantabrian. The process reproduces a well-known pattern in changes induced by borrowing (Harris & Campbell 1995) and the intermediate solution created resembles the usual outputs of neighbouring dialects in contact (Trudgill 1986).⁶

5. As can be seen in this example, syntactic reanalysis does not always occur during the process of language acquisition. Rather, it can occur perfectly well through dialect contact between adults (as intuitively supposed by Haspelmath 1998).

6. According to Tuten (2003), the syncretism in the Cantabrian paradigm could have emerged through the apocope of the masculine accusative pronoun *lu* > *l* and the apocope of the dative pronoun *le* > *l*. I remain skeptical of this hypothesis because the apocope of the dative *le* is well attested in Old Spanish, whereas it is still uncertain as to whether there was an apocope of *lu*.

Unlike Basque Spanish, prepositional DOM and the morphological assignment of pronouns do not match in the Cantabrian area, as in most Spanish varieties. It has been suggested that the Cantabrian type of *leísmo* represents a further step in DOM, following the Animacy Hierarchy, since masculine count objects are referred to by dative morphology (Flores & Melis 2007). However, if it were part of a DOM extension process, we would expect a complete matching between prepositional and morphological DOM, which does not happen (see examples (17a–b)):

- (17) a. *Le_i llevo al colegio*
 3.DAT I bring to the school
 (*al niño_i/ *el niño_i*) (Cantabrian speaker)
 (to the boy.M/ *the boy.M)
 ‘I bring him to the school (the boy)’
- b. *Le_i llevo al colegio (el paquete_i/ *al paquete_i)*
 3.DAT I bring to the school (the parcel.M/ *to the parcel.M)
 ‘I bring it to the school (the parcel)’

Whereas both markings coincide with masculine animate objects (see (17a)), masculine inanimate objects fail to predict (17b), for which we would expect to have [+prepositional, +morphological] or [+prepositional, –morphological], but not [–prepositional, +morphological]. This anomaly finds a much easier explanation in the borrowing and interpretation of *le* in a dialect contact scenario.

During the Middle Ages, Cantabria belonged to the Kingdom of Asturias and Leon, whose political centre was located in the west, first in Oviedo, and later in Leon. As a part of the northern dialect continuum, the Cantabrian variety shares a large number of features with the Asturian one, such as mass/count distinctions. However, eastern Cantabria and the part of Burgos that borders on Cantabria – the areas belonging to the kingdom that lay furthest from Leon – also had close contact with neighbouring areas in the Basque Country. According to Menéndez Pidal’s historical reconstruction (1986), based on an exhaustive and thorough study of monastic documents dating from the 10th century onwards, the Castilian variety emerged in this border territory. Medieval documents, which evidence Basque personal and place names, suggest that there was an important Basque population in the area. The historical records, therefore, validate the argument that suggests that the Cantabrian pronoun paradigm emerged as an intermediate dialect contact solution. Furthermore, the Cantabrian medieval type of society – with strong social ties and reduced mobility due to geographical circumstances – is not different from the type we find in Asturias and the Basque Country.

5. The Centre paradigms

During the medieval war of reconquest against the Muslims, the Cantabrian paradigm extended to the south, between the 10th and the 13th centuries, as a result of the colonization of areas that were progressively being conquered. By the 13th century, private documents and literary texts suggest the existence, in Western Castile, of a pronoun system similar to that of modern-day Cantabrian (Matute 2004). Moreover, the isogloss demarcating the Western Castilian area largely coincides with the historical expansion, until the 12th century, of the county of Castile, later becoming the Kingdom of Castile (although it also partially coincides with the lands belonging to the Archbishop of Toledo in the 13th century) (Fernández-Ordóñez 2001). The extension of the northern varieties to the south also led to further linguistic changes and a new paradigm, namely, the Western Castilian paradigm, emerged in these territories. Western Castilian distinguishes between number, gender and mass/count interpretations of antecedents. It does not, however, entail case distinctions. According to the available data (Eberenz 2000), this paradigm probably arose as a later development of the Cantabrian paradigm throughout the 14th–16th centuries.

Table 6. Western Castilian paradigm

	COUNT				MASS	NEUTER				
	SINGULAR		PLURAL							
	MASCULINE	FEMININE	MASCULINE	FEMININE			MASCULINE/ FEMININE			
ACCUSATIVE	le	la	↓ los/les ↑	las	↓	lo	↓	lo	↓	
DATIVE	le	la	↓	↓ los/les ↑	las	↓	lo	↓	lo	↓

As can be seen in Table 6, in this area we find *leísmo* for masculine countable antecedents, just as in the Cantabrian paradigm. However, here, the syncretism within the paradigm has been extended to all other categories. In the feminine, singular and plural we have *laísmo*, which constitutes the extended accusative pronouns *la(s)* at the expense of the dative forms (see example (18a)). With regard to mass and neuter antecedents, we have *loísmo*, the extension of the accusative pronoun *lo* at the expense of dative *le* (18b). Thirdly, for the masculine plural antecedents, we find either a full-fledged *loísmo* in the south (with *los* as the only masculine plural pronoun) (18c) or an absolute *leísmo* in the north (with *les* as the only masculine plural pronoun) (18d). As a result of

this process, the Cantabrian paradigm became the Western Castilian paradigm, which involved a complete loss of case distinctions (see example (18)):

- (18) Western Castilian
- a. *A María_i la_i di el libro*
To Mary F.ACC I gave the book
'I gave the book to Mary'
 - b. *Al vino_i lo_i echan azúcar*
To the wine.M N.ACC they put sugar
'They put sugar in the wine'
 - c. *A los niños_i los_i di macarrones* (southern speaker)
To the children.M M.ACC.PL I gave macaroni
'I gave macaroni to the children'
 - d. *Los libros_i les_i traigo aquí.* (northern speaker)
The books.M DAT.PL I bring here
'I bring the books here'

How could such a paradigm arise out of the Cantabrian system? The case syncretism that originated through the borrowing of *le* in the Cantabrian paradigm affected the paradigm's cell located higher up in the Animacy Hierarchy (specifically, the pronoun for masculine, singular, countable direct objects). In fact, if we consider the grammatical categories that are distinguished in each of the following contrasts, *le* always receives the unmarked values:

Number:	Singular > Plural
Individuation:	Count > Mass
Gender:	Masculine > Feminine (in Romance and most Indo-European languages)

As the Animacy Hierarchy predicts, based on cross-linguistic evidence, languages tend to establish more grammatical distinctions (of number, gender or case) in the higher parts of the Hierarchy than in the lower ones (Corbett 1991, 2000; Dahl 2000a,b). As Baerman, Brown & Corbett (2005) demonstrate, there is much cross-linguistic evidence that supports the view that gender and case syncretism is more common in non-singular numbers. From this point of view, the borrowing of the singular *le* created a morphological abnormality within the pronominal paradigm that might trigger a wider syncretism process. This led to the Western Castilian system. Moreover, koineization probably played a relevant role in this process (see the discussion below).

In the case of the Romance pronoun paradigms, the loss of feature distinctions seems to follow a pattern governed by the markedness of the categories involved (Fernández-Ordóñez 2001). For example, dialect varieties of Romance languages tend to extend the dative singular pronoun to refer to plural antecedents.

Syncretism affects the plural form instead of the singular. A number of Romance languages have lost a distinct neuter pronoun and use a masculine pronoun for neuter reference (with non-lexical antecedents). Syncretism affects the neuter form and favours the masculine. Romance languages use masculine plural agreement to refer to conjoined masculine and feminine antecedents: again syntactic syncretism (or neutralization) favours gender being placed higher in the Animacy Hierarchy (particularly in Indo-European languages), i.e. favouring masculine over the feminine.

Most instances of case syncretism are core marked cases (such as the accusative), which become identical to either unmarked core cases (such as nominative) or peripheral cases (such as dative) (Baerman, Brown & Corbett 2005). Likewise, this process is originally linked to the Animacy Hierarchy and the differential marking of objects according to their semantic characteristics. Arguments with patient semantic features (such as neuter arguments in IE languages) tend to be syncretic in the nominative/accusative. Arguments with agent-like semantic features (such as human referents) tend to be syncretic in the accusative/dative-genitive. The Western Castilian paradigm coincides with this pattern, although not with the expected directionality. Syncretism was completed by means of the extension of accusative pronouns at the expense of dative pronouns, i.e. extending the core accusative morphology at the expense of the peripheral dative case, instead of the opposite (which, incidentally, occurs in Basque Spanish).

From a cross-linguistic perspective, however, there is no doubt that the accusative ranks higher as a core case in the inflectional case hierarchy than the dative, which is one of the peripheral cases. In a nominative/accusative language, the existence of dative inflection implies accusative marking, and not the contrary (Blake 1994; Blume 1998). This ranking allows us to predict a tendency to preserve accusative forms in a situation of case loss, such as the one analysed here. In case, gender or number attrition, the unmarked values are always preserved. For example, in Brazilian Portuguese, object clitic pronouns have been lost and, instead, subject pronouns are (sometimes) used (Clements 2009).

Only the extension of the dative *les* in the masculine plural (in the northern variety of Western Castilian) contradicts this pattern of expansion of the accusative. Nonetheless, it can be accounted for by the fact that the formal analogy expected between a pronoun and its plural counterpart was not fulfilled by *le* and its plural *los*. Since the pronoun that refers to mass antecedents, *lo*, does not require a plural counterpart, both the previous *les* and *los* could be reallocated and generalized for the plural masculine. Transition areas in Western Castile, for example, still show alternation between *les* and *los* as masculine plural solutions.

This process of syncretism preserved number, gender and mass/count distinctions instead of case distinctions. In several transition areas within the Western

Castilian area, syncretism has gone a step further and mass/count distinctions tend to be eliminated by overgeneralizing *la* and *le* for all kinds of feminine and masculine objects (direct and indirect, mass and count). Once again, this process seems to be regulated by the markedness values of each gender, since syncretism is more frequent with the feminine than with the masculine.

Although such a process of syncretism could be motivated by structural reasons alone, elements of the social environment from which it arose must also be taken into consideration. This process only came to pass, notably, in the southern territories that were repopulated during Middle Ages (Western Castile). It did not occur in the northern area, which had been continuously populated from Roman times (Cantabria). Linguistic koineization, typical of colonization processes, is therefore likely to have contributed to the development of the generalized syncretism process that transpired throughout the Middle Ages (Tuten 2003). Until the 10th century, a mixture of Basque, Asturian and Cantabrian settlers established themselves on lands to the north of the Duero river, forming small, similar villages in a relatively free environment. Later, between the 11th and 13th centuries, the lands located to the south of the Duero were conquered and resettled by people coming from the lands lying north of the river. This second wave of settlement was undertaken in a different social context. Instead of being driven by similarly small, collective and self-governed villages, as in the case of the northern colonies, the settlement process that took place to the south of the Duero was driven by the heterogeneously structured population of cities, which governed a number of the smaller, surrounding villages. This settlement process is therefore likely to have stimulated new-dialect formation, due to a high level of contact among people who spoke different dialects.

This reconstruction is consistent with the observation that koineization tends to overgeneralize unmarked forms and to lose morphological distinctions and, more specifically, case distinctions. Similar outcomes also occur in cases of language attrition. For example, in the various immigrant languages studied by Clyne in Australia (2003) the loss of cases is not unusual. Moreover, dative case loss favouring accusative forms in German immigrants in the U.S., Brazil or Russia has been explained in different ways: as an internal development, as a language attrition process, and as the result of a new-dialect formation (Rosenberg 2005; Boas 2009). Even in insular Scandinavia, dative loss in favour of the accusative has advanced more in Faroese than in Icelandic, which may be abetted, among other reasons, by bilingualism with Danish (Jónsson 2009). Heine & Kuteva (2005:254) provide an extensive list of instances of language obsolescence in which some cases were lost following an overall directionality. Among other tendencies of case loss, “accusative/direct object markers tend to replace dative/indirect markers” (2005:254). In contrast, as regards contact-induced grammaticalization, and

regular grammaticalization, case markers “for peripheral participants may develop into markers for complements” (Heine & Kuteva 2005: 255–6), such as the transformation of indirect object markers to direct object markers. Grammaticalization thus appears to trigger a different type of syncretism, notably, one that may entail the emergence of DOM (as described by Baerman, Brown & Corbett 2005). From this point of view, it is evident that the Western Castilian paradigm developed without entering the typical grammaticalization channel of DOM.

6. Discussion and conclusions

6.1 The paradigms from a linguistic and social typology perspective

As discussed above in the introduction, recent linguistic analyses tend to assume that the underlying mechanism driving a linguistic innovation – a form–function reanalysis – is essentially the same regardless of the social circumstances in which it arises. However, neither the probabilities of an innovation type nor its diffusion seem to be random in each instance. Although innovations seem to be “fortuitous, contingent, incidental” events (Bossong 1991: 143), and although it is impossible (and maybe unnecessary) to predict whether a specific change will take place, there seem to be correlations between linguistic tendencies and social environments.

The Ibero-Romance pronouns paradigms analysed here suggest that societies that are bound by strong social ties and which lack mobility or which demonstrate a reduced mobility, regardless of whether they show stable bilingualism, tend to develop new grammatical categories, such as mass/count distinctions or an atypical DOM pattern. Mass/count gender distinctions have parallel developments in other IE varieties, but are rare from a cross-linguistic point of view and completely unknown to any other Spanish variety, despite the wide range of social circumstances given in Spanish speech communities. They cannot be considered anything like “vernacular universals” in Chambers’ terms (1995, 2004). DOM is widespread in European languages and other world languages (see Bossong 1991, 1998), and seems able to develop either independently or through language contact (Heine & Kuteva 2005). Nevertheless, in Europe, it is generally marked on the noun, either with a preposition (Romance languages) or with case inflections (Slavic languages). The case of double marking on the noun and the verb (such as with a clitic) is only known in Romanian and in four Fino-Ugrian languages, out of some 35 languages spoken in Europe or belonging to the Indo-European family (Slavic, Romance, Iranian, Indo-Aryan, Turkish, Maltese and Albanian) (Bossong 1998). From this typological perspective, the tendency to double DOM on the noun and the verb as in Basque Spanish appears to be unusual. Interestingly,

Romanian, which also has experienced long-term language contact with surrounding Balkan languages, is the other Romance variety to present the same pattern. Moreover, Bossong also observes that “it is evident that the formal identity of ACC and the DAT [prepositional] markers may influence the form of pronouns by analogy, but such an influence is far from being frequent” (1991: 155). In fact, within the Indo-European family, the only other cases to demonstrate such a parallel dative pronoun marking are Basque Spanish, the varieties that have adopted *le* from Basque Spanish and are spoken in Cantabria and Western Castile, and the Spanish varieties spoken in Paraguay and Ecuador.⁷

Consequently, the pronoun paradigms developed in the north attest to unusual grammatical developments from a cross-linguistic perspective. Furthermore, all are related to similar types of societies as regards language transmission and reduced mobility, regardless of the type of interaction context – either an intraference context (Asturias, Cantabria) or an interference context (Basque Spanish area) (both situations are compatible with types 3 and 1 respectively in Trudgill’s (2001) proposal). There might also be, however, some differences. While the intraference context developed new grammatical distinctions (mass/count morphology) without losing the previous ones (number, case, gender), the interference context developed a new grammatical distinction (a morphological DOM pattern), but tended to lose one of the previous distinctions (gender).

The fact that rare – and to certain extent similar – DOM patterns also occur in other language contact circumstances involving similar social situations – such as the Spanish varieties in contact with Quechua and Guarani – can be assessed in several ways. On the one hand, the structural interplay of Spanish DOM and null pronoun patterns with the common characteristics of the languages involved (for instance, the absence of gender and clitics and the lack of agreement morphemes on the verb to various degrees) could have favoured this development, even though these languages belong to different genetic families.⁸ For instance, language contact with Basque does not produce the same effects on Gascon, despite well-documented Basque influence in other respects. On the other hand, these changes also involved similar social circumstances: stable, long-term bilingualism,

7. I agree with Mufwene (2001) and Wiemer (2004) when they say that, with regard to linguistic marking, both markedness and the probability that changes will occur should not be established in general terms (that is, with reference to all the languages in the world), but should rather be determined in relation to the linguistic family or area being considered.

8. A parallel drift in all these Spanish varieties cannot be discarded either: see the evolution of German in language islands (Rosenberg 2005) or English varieties in New Zealand and Falkland Island (Britain & Sudbury 2002).

where Romance/Spanish was always the second language. In such conditions an interlanguage can emerge and later even be used by monolinguals. It appears that the similarity between structural and social situations make some linguistic innovations more likely to occur and be transmitted. Multiple causation, however, does not allow us to determine the ultimate triggering factor. Regardless, in all three cases of contact (with Basque, Quechua and Guarani), gender morphology was lost in clitics and a tendency to create a new morphological DOM arose. In a certain way, therefore, we can posit that there was a grammatical rearrangement or replacement of one category (gender) by another category (case).

The Western Castilian paradigm seems to have developed in a rather different type of social environment. Progressively, a mixed population had emigrated from the north to settle Western Castile. A new dialect formation through contact among people speaking different dialects is likely to have taken place (which is partially compatible with Trudgill's type 2 social situation). Western Castilian paradigm features agree with the type of innovations that new dialects usually present, such as the loss of grammatical distinctions. In this context, grammatical distinctions neither emerged nor were they rearranged or replaced, but were simply lost.

The fact that the Western Castilian paradigm did not extend further, even though the southern territories (and specifically Andalusia) were conquered and settled throughout the 14th and 15th centuries, mainly by Castile, calls for an explanation. Again we can argue for two possible and not incompatible causes. On the one hand, this could be due to the "Founder Principle": the structural features of creoles or new dialects "are predetermined to a large extent by characteristics of the vernaculars spoken by the populations that founded the colonies in which they developed" (Mufwene 2001:28–9). So the founding population of an area has an advantage in making their features survive, as opposed to later newcomers. The Founder Principle explains the presence of mass/count distinctions in Western Castile by the historical fact that the founding population in Western Castile came predominantly from Cantabria and northern Castile. The south, however, was conquered only following Castile's unification with the Kingdom of Leon (in the year 1230). We can hypothesise that southern settlements, therefore, probably received settlers from both kingdoms. The absence of mass/count distinctions in the south might then be accounted for by the fact that Western Castilian colonists in the south would not have been as numerous as the settler populations coming from elsewhere in both kingdoms.

On the other hand, it can also be argued that the northern and central paradigms did not diffuse to other areas because their structural features did not facilitate their expansion. Such paradigms are only found either in places where they originally emerged from Latin or in places where they originally developed

through koineization, subsequent to repopulation during the Middle Ages. All of these are instances of transmission (in Labov's 2007 terms). From a cross-linguistic or Romance perspective they cannot be integrated to the category of 'primitive or natural' features (in Chambers 1995, 2004 terms) that independently emerge and diffuse in several varieties. The rest of the Ibero-Romance speaking areas have the same pronoun paradigm as most other Romance languages, namely, the paradigm inherited from Latin, which only distinguishes case, gender and number.

The difficulties these paradigms have in being diffused geographically are corroborated by their partial adoption in Peninsular Standard Spanish. In the Iberian Peninsula the standard language is to a great extent defined by the speech community of Madrid. Although Madrid's vernacular maintains most of the characteristic features of the Western Castilian paradigm, only the use of *le* for human masculine objects has made its way into the Peninsular Standard Spanish paradigm. This *leísmo* type is constantly being diffused by upper class speakers and the media as a prestige feature and is now spreading throughout Spain (Klein-Andreu 2000). Table 7 shows the resultant paradigm.

Table 7. Peninsular Standard Spanish paradigm

	SINGULAR		PLURAL		NEUTER
	MASCULINE	FEMININE	MASCULINE	FEMININE	
	HUMAN	NON-HUMAN			
ACCUSATIVE	le	lo	los	las	lo
DATIVE	le	le		les	le

Interestingly, this extension of *le* promotes an intermediate solution that does not exactly match the grammatical distinctions that are relevant to the Western Castilian paradigm. Instead, it only partially adopts the semantic values of *le* in Western Castilian and the Standard Spanish or Romance paradigms. As a dative pronoun, *le* is predominantly [+human] in all Romance languages. On the other hand, the referential properties of *le* are [+masculine, +count] in Western Castile. Out of the intersection of both sets of values, *le* was structurally rearranged as [+human, +masculine] in Peninsular Standard Spanish. As a result, the social diffusion of this feature appears to imply imperfect structural replication, as Labov (2007) suggests.

In conclusion, the analysis of pronominal paradigms from the centre-north of the Iberian Peninsula together with the types of societies in which they developed shows that the appearance of new grammatical distinctions, which are rare from a

typological perspective, seem more frequent in stable societies with strong ties and little mobility, whether or not bilingualism is present. On the other hand, the loss of previously existing distinctions seems to occur more easily in social situations where speakers of different languages or dialects colonize new territories, bringing their varieties into contact with each other to form a new variety. Therefore, the types of innovations to appear seem to correspond to the social contexts in which they emerge. Conversely, as we have seen, the likelihood that distinctions will appear and/or the process of their attrition do not seem to be the only elements regulated by structural factors: the probability of their diffusion also seems to be structurally conditioned.

6.2 Difussionist models and historical reconstruction

Another interesting issue raised by the Ibero-Romance dialect pronominal paradigms studied in this paper is the relative reliability of difussionist models to reconstruct historical processes. Regarding the two distinct mechanisms operating in linguistic change, innovation and propagation (or diffusion), it is a well-known fact that dialect areas can preserve different stages of the propagation of a particular innovation (Wolfram & Schilling-Estes 2003). Current stable linguistic areas usually exhibit the retention of a linguistic feature that was diffused in the past. However, the innovation might only have been adopted by some groups of speakers or in some linguistic contexts, which can then be taken as proof of the initial or intermediate stages of the feature's development; or it might be completely extended to most speakers in the area and/or have reached a full-fledged use in many contexts, in which case it may then be assumed to demonstrate an advanced or final stage of propagation. Dialect areas can thus provide us with information about the mechanisms that propel the diffusion of innovations, both in relation to linguistic structures and social structures. In this sense, the diffusionist model – be it the wave model or the gravity model (see Bailey et al. 1993) – usually accepts a higher frequency of and a wider range of contexts for an innovation in a particular area as evidence of an advanced stage and, hence, the long-term existence of the linguistic feature. Conversely, a lower frequency and a narrower range are seen as evidence of the initial or incipient stage of the feature and, therefore, its recent existence. It is generally assumed that the differences in frequency found in neighbouring – or somewhat connected – areas make it possible to reconstruct the stages of diffusion of an innovation.

If these assumptions are correct, why the relative age of linguistic areas cannot be straightforwardly reconstructed? This is usually because we cannot guarantee that other factors have not interfered in their development. For example, that fact that the structural features of an innovation may be one and the same

for all the areas considered, or that language contact, migrations or parallel and independent developments may not have taken place. Since the structural constraints of a feature can change and/or its frequency can unexpectedly increase or decrease, the historical interpretations that the diffusionist model proposes can be distorted.

Although these limitations are widely accepted (Chambers & Trudgill 1998), our survey on Ibero-Romance dialect pronoun paradigms shows that they are more common than usually suggested. A pure diffusionist model measuring the global frequency of case syncretisms in all the Ibero-Romance dialects considered would lead us to erroneously judge Western Castile as the oldest area to show the innovation, since the structural diffusion process (a wider range of contexts) has advanced more than have Cantabrian and Basque Spanish. Even if we distinguish between dative syncretism and accusative syncretism, the diffusionist model would not have achieved the correct reconstruction, except for the fact that the accusative syncretism developed later. Again, while in Cantabria dative morphology was extended to count masculine objects, in the Basque Spanish area it was only extended to human objects. Following the postulates of the Animacy Hierarchy, the broader scope (and higher frequency) of the innovation could have led us to believe that Cantabria represents the original locus of innovation. However, this conclusion is debatable. A diffusionist model thus needs to integrate the structure and connections of the phenomena measured in order to avoid inaccurate reconstructions, by comparing forms as well as grammatical structures. Since language contact and new dialect formation can alter the frequency and structural features of the variable analysed, historical information also seems to be necessary to track its trajectory over time (an example of the method to be followed is Loporcaro (2000)). Finally, dialect areas are not easily interpreted in historical terms, by means of the diffusionist model. Instead, interpretation usually needs to take into account other information, namely structural analysis and information pertaining to the sociohistorical background.

6.3 Final conclusions

The conclusions to be drawn from this study are twofold. Firstly, a full account of linguistic variation and change needs to integrate all the factors involved not only by distinguishing what is possible or not, but also by ascertaining what is most likely to occur, both in terms of the linguistic structure and the social environment. Secondly, dialect data have proven extremely valuable in reconstructing historical processes, but only if combined with historical information. Conversely, historical reconstruction needs to carefully separate and adequately analyse data

coming from different dialects in order to be accurate. In order to effectively reconstruct historical processes, in many cases it will not be sufficient to use only the diffusionist model.

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