Diego Romero Heredero

Telicity and Differential Object Marking in the History of Spanish

Abstract: This paper addresses the influence of telicity on DOM (Differential Object Marking) from a diachronic perspective. Previous literature has frequently pointed to telicity as one of the verbal factors that trigger DOM in Spanish. However, this assumption has not been tested empirically. The present study provides a corpus analysis examining the question of whether the assumed impact of telicity on DOM in Modern Spanish, which has been noted in synchronic studies, also occurs in previous stages of Spanish. The corpus-based study covers the 14th, 16th, and 20th centuries, and is the first empirical study that addresses the relationship between telicity and DOM with human direct objects. The results point in the opposite direction to what has been proposed by previous literature, suggesting that telicity had no significant impact on DOM in any of the periods studied. These findings lead both to discard telicity as a factor that influences DOM independently, and to raise the question of whether it is possible that the effect of telicity observed in previous studies could be the consequence of the interaction of telicity with other verbal factors such as affectedness or agentivity.

Keywords: aspectual class, corpus analysis, definiteness, Differential Object Marking, language change, lexical aspect, telicity, verbal factors.

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1 Introduction

Differential Object Marking (DOM) is a grammatical phenomenon conditioned by the interaction of various factors (see García García, 2018 for an overview). These factors are not only related to the noun phrase (NP) having the function of direct object, but also to other aspects of the context in which it appears. In the early 1950s, Fernández Ramírez had already pointed out with regard to Spanish that "the nature of the verb and the nature of the noun or pronoun that functions as a direct object influence this phenomenon" (1951: 151). In this regard, Laca (2006) distinguishes between local and global factors. Local factors are those concerned with the properties of the NP that occupies the object position, while global factors are those concerned with the context in which it appears (Laca, 2006: 430-431). More precisely, the animacy of the direct object, its degree of referentiality, and the specificity of the referent are considered local factors (Company Company, 2002; Laca, 2006; Leonetti, 2004). On the other hand, global factors are those related to the semantics of the verb, such as telicity, affectedness, and agentivity (García García, 2014; von Heusinger, 2008, 2011; Torrego, 1998; 1999); the presence of secondary predication referring to the object (Laca, 2006); the topicality of the object and clitic doubling (Laca, 2006; Melis, 1995; Ormazábal/Romero, 2013; Torrego, 1998).

The influence of local factors has been widely documented in Spanish, not only from a synchronic point of view, but also from a diachronic perspective (Company Company, 2002; von Heusinger, 2008; Laca, 2006). In contrast, global factors, and more specifically those related to the lexical properties of the verb, have not received as much attention. Nevertheless, while some studies deal with affectedness and agentivity, establishing the extent to which these factors influence DOM (García García, 2018; von Heusinger, 2008, 2011; Pottier, 1968), telicity continues unattended, with the exception of the work of Torrego (1998; 1999), which will be presented in Section 2.

The aim of this paper is to shed light on the factor of telicity drawing on diachronic data. It will be discussed as to whether telicity has been a trigger for DOM in earlier stages of Spanish, as assumed for Modern Spanish, and whether the diachronic evolution of DOM supports the claims about the effect of telicity at present. Thus, the impact of telicity on DOM with human direct objects is addressed for the first time from a diachronic perspective and with an empirical methodology.

The paper is structured as follows: Section 2 deals with the relationship between lexical aspect and case marking, which has been studied in many languages and, more specifically, addresses the effect of telicity on DOM which has been suggested for Spanish by previous studies; Section 3 presents the diachronic corpus study conducted for the fourteenth, sixteenth, and twentieth centuries; finally, Section 4 summarises

all the findings derived from the corpus study and the most important ideas raised in the discussion about the influence of telicity on DOM.

2 Telicity, case-marking, and DOM

Telicity is a property of the verbal phrase (VP) implying the existence of an end point or termination, after which the event designated by the predicate terminates or does not continue to take place (Dowty, 1979; Krifka, 1998; Tenny, 1994; Verkuyl, 1972). Hopper and Thomson (1980: 252) point to telicity as one of the factors linked to a high degree of transitivity in the clause, arguing that an action described by a telic VP is more effectively transferred to the object than one lacking an endpoint.

The relationship between case-marking and telicity or, more broadly, between case-marking and aspect, is a phenomenon that is well documented in many languages (Richardson, 2012: 965). This relationship has been suggested for Slavic languages (Russian (Borer, 2005, among others), Belarusian, Ukrainian, Czech, Slovak, Polish, Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian (Richardson, 2007)), Germanic languages (German (Leiss, 2000, among others), Icelandic (Svenonius, 2002)), and even more prominently, for Finno-Ugric languages (Finnish (Kiparsky, 1998, among others), Estonian (Tamm, 2007, among others), and Hungarian (Csirmaz, 2006)). Although, to a lesser extent, the case-aspect relationship has also been defended for other languages such as Scottish Gaelic (Ramchand, 1997), Hindi (Mohanan, 1984), or Spanish (Torrego, 1998; 1999), among others.

One of the most frequently cited languages that exhibits this case-aspect relationship is Finnish, which presents an accusative-versus-partitive opposition for the internal argument which seems to be linked to an aspectual contrast (Richardson, 2012: 965). The nature of that opposition has been described in terms of boundedness, telicity, and sometimes both. Kiparsky's examples in (1) exemplify this relationship. In Finnish the accusative has been characterised in terms of resultativity, as illustrated in (1) by the verb *to shoot*. This verb can assign different cases, giving rise to different aspectual interpretations. While in (1a) the verb has a partitive object and denotes an activity ('to shoot at'), in (1b) the verb is followed by an accusative object and describes an accomplishment ('to shoot dead') (Kiparsky, 1998: 266-267). This example shows that accusative case in Finnish is associated with a telic character of the event, while partitive case is related to an atelic reading.

(1) Case-marking in Finnish (Kiparsky, 1998: 266-267)
    a. *Ammu-i-n*   *karhu-a*
       shoot-PST-1SG bear-PART
       'I shot at the/a bear.'
    b. *Ammu-i-n*   *karhu-n*
       shoot- PST-1SG bear-ACC
       'I shot the/a bear.'

With regard to Spanish, Torrego (1998; 1999) are the only studies devoted to the interaction between DOM and lexical aspect. Torrego (1999) describes the relationship between DOM and telicity[1] according to the assumptions in (2).

(2) Interaction between telicity and DOM in Spanish (Torrego, 1999: 1787-1790)
    a. Telic verbs impose DOM on their direct object.
    b. DOM triggers a telic interpretation on atelic verbs.

The first assumption (2a) refers to the requirement of DOM by telic verbs. Following Torrego, telic verbs, which comprise achievements (e.g. *encontrar* 'to find') and accomplishments (e.g. *construir* 'to build'), describe delimited situations, and this delimitation confers them a specific character. The direct object of telic verbs moves to a certain syntactic position which implies the interpretation of the NP as the boundary of the event and, therefore, as specific. In that position the object receives a certain type of case that implies *a*-marking in Spanish. Therefore, telic verbs require DOM due to the specific character of the situations they describe and, for this reason, intrinsically telic verbs, such as *insultar* 'to insult', obligatorily require their direct object to be marked with DOM, as can be observed in (3), where the sentence without *a*-marking would be ungrammatical.

(3) DOM with telic verbs (Torrego, 1999: 1787)
    Marta insultó *(a) un compañero.
    'Marta insulted a colleague.'

The second assumption (2b) is aimed at the interpretation of atelic verbs. In contrast to telic verbs, these verbs do not require DOM. However, their interpretation changes if the direct object is differentially *a*-marked. Following Torrego, *a*-marking forces a reading of the object as specific and this implies a telic reading of the event. The example in (4a) shows that activity verbs, such as *besar* 'to kiss', do not require DOM. Nevertheless, the reading is telic when the direct object is *a*-marked, as can be

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[1] Torrego refers to the inherent telicity of certain aspectual classes of verbs, not to telicity as a property of the VP.

observed in (4b), where the verb admits a temporal prepositional phrase (PP) introduced by the preposition *en* 'in' (telicity test). This reading in not obtained in (4c), where the temporal PP is rejected.

(4) DOM with atelic verbs (Torrego, 1999: 1788-1789)
    a. *Besaron (a) un niño.*
    b. *Besaron a un niño en un segundo.*
    c. **Besaron un niño en un segundo.*
      'They kissed a boy (in a second).'

The two assumptions presented above represent the only systematic attempt so far to describe the impact of telicity on DOM in Spanish. However, they are based on a rather small number of examples and subsequent studies have suggested that speakers' intuitions do not always support them (Delbecque, 2002: 90; Fábregas, 2013: 25). Furthermore, it should be noted that these assumptions have not been empirically tested. Moreover, they only address the issue from a synchronic perspective.

The following section provides a diachronic corpus analysis investigating the impact of telicity on DOM from fourteenth to twentieth-century European Spanish.

3 Diachronic corpus analysis

In order to study the effect of telicity on DOM in the fourteenth, sixteenth, and twentieth centuries, I conducted a corpus analysis based on the *Corpus del Nuevo Diccionario Histórico del Español* (CNDHE). Section 3.1 presents the hypotheses according to the assumptions of the previous studies described in section 2. Section 3.2 is dedicated to the design of the study. Section 3.3 contains the results according to definiteness, telicity, and aspectual class of the verbs. Finally, Section 3.4 discusses the results.

3.1 Hypothesis

As mentioned in Section 1, some diachronic studies on factors such as referentiality or affectedness have shown that their impact on DOM was already present in previous stages of Spanish. However, telicity has been studied only from a synchronic perspective so far. This leads to the question of whether this factor also had any impact on previous stages of Spanish. To address this question, I have conducted a corpus study encompassing the fourteenth, sixteenth, and twentieth centuries with the hypothesis reported in (5).

(5) Hypothesis for DOM and telicity
    The occurrence of DOM is more frequent with human direct objects of telic predicates than with human direct objects of atelic predicates.

This hypothesis is based on the notion of telicity as a property of the VP, as introduced in Section 2. This remark is relevant since previous studies that have addressed the relationship between telicity and DOM have generally based their hypotheses on a more restricted concept of telicity that refers only to the semantics of the verb (inherent telicity). The problem with this approach arises when categorising certain verbs according to their inherent telicity in terms of Vendler (1957) (see Marín, 1999 for discussion). In (6) the verb *to run* can be considered either atelic (activity verb) or telic (accomplishment verb) depending on the argument structure it exhibits.

(6) *To run* with different argument structure
    a. *Mary runs.*   (one argument; activity)
    b. *Mary runs a mile.*   (two arguments; accomplishment)

Considering this problem, it seems safer to take the definition of telicity as a property of the VP, and to classify all the VPs according to their behaviour in the test that has traditionally been used to distinguish telic from atelic predicates. As can be seen in (7), those VPs that admit a PP headed by the preposition *in* with a delimiting function will be considered telic, while those that do not admit it will be classified as atelic.

(7) Telicity test
    a. **Maria runs in an hour.*
    b. *Mary runs a mile in an hour.*

3.2 Study design

The analysis is based on the *Corpus del Nuevo Diccionario Histórico del Español* (CNDHE). It comprises the entries corresponding to the *Corpus nuclear del NDHE* as well as a selection of texts from both the *Corpus Diacrónico del Español* (CORDE) and the *Corpus de Referencia del Español Actual* (CREA). The CNDHE allows for the search of single words (or a combination of words) according to word class, author, work, time span, text type, country, and text subject. Unfortunately, this corpus is only partially annotated and, although it allows searching by word type, it is not possible to search for specific syntactic patterns such as DOM.

The search is restricted to European Spanish of the fourteenth, sixteenth, and twentieth centuries. The sources for European Spanish are extensive enough for a diachronic study since they contain a total of 7,745,250 words for the fourteenth century, 49,797,748 words for the sixteenth century, and 113,509,174 words for the

twentieth century. The time span selection is motivated by Octavio de Toledo's (2007) observation that the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries are less represented than the rest of the periods in the CORDE and, consequently, in the CNDHE. Moreover, the same author argues that these centuries constitute a period of great linguistic variation contrary to what had been previously defended (see Kabatek, 2016 for discussion). Therefore, it has been decided to avoid them and to select three periods whose representation in the corpus is wider and which present more internal stability.

The study is based on 3,200 instances following a 2x2x3 factorial design that takes into account telicity, definiteness, and century as independent variables, and the presence/absence of DOM as dependent variable. The distribution of instances according to the independent variables has been structured as follows (see Table 1): as far as telicity is concerned, half of the instances contain a telic VP and the other half show an atelic VP. With regard to definiteness, 75% of the cases have a definite direct object NP and the remaining 25% contain an indefinite direct object NP. Finally, regarding the temporal distribution, the 14th century represents 20% of instances; the 16th century, 30%; and the 20th century, 50%. This configuration allows an easy comparison between the results obtained for telic and atelic VPs, being this the main goal of the study, since both categories are equally represented. As regards the distribution of cases according to definiteness and century, the configuration reflects the availability of instances found in the corpus for the different categories.

		14th century	16th century	20th century	TOTAL
[+ telic]	definite NP	240	360	600	1200
	indefinite NP	80	120	200	400
[- telic]	definite NP	240	360	600	1200
	indefinite NP	80	120	200	400
	TOTAL	640	960	1600	3200

Table 1: Distribution of instances extracted from the CNDHE according to century, telicity, and definiteness

All instances extracted from the corpus to complete the distribution described above contain a full definite or indefinite human direct object NP in postverbal position (SVO). Thus, collective nouns, animate non-human NPs, inanimate NPs, proper names, bare nouns, and left dislocations are excluded.

The collection of the 3,200 examples is based on the selection of ten inherently telic verbs and ten atelic verbs, following Vendler's classification. This selection has not implied the assignment of the instances of each verb to a certain category, but it has been just the starting point, since the telicity of each case has been evaluated individually using the test described in Section 3.1. Then, the search for instances has been carried out, starting from those verbs, until achieving the pre-established

quantity of instances for each category[2]. When the first ten verbs have not been enough to reach this goal, other verbs that meet the necessary conditions have been added (see Appendix for a complete list of the verbs used for the analysis). Possible changes in meaning or argument structure of the verbs over time have been taken into account using the *Diccionario del castellano del siglo XV en la Corona de Aragón* (DiCCA-XV). Further, it has been checked that the contribution of examples of each verb amounts to a maximum of 10%, thus ensuring that each category is comprised of at least 10 verbs. This measure avoids a situation where the result corresponding to each category reflects the behaviour of single verbs that have higher representation in the corpus.

Having obtained all the examples, they have been described individually according to the presence or absence of DOM (dependent variable) and the aspectual class of the verb (inherent telicity). With regard to the latter, it has been annotated according to the most common argument structure of each verb, taking into account the potential problems this may entail (see Section 3.1). However, this information may be interesting to check the assumptions of previous studies.

3.3 Results

This section describes the results of the corpus-based study according to definiteness, telicity, and aspectual class. The results are presented in five different figures which allow us to observe the evolution of the impact on DOM of the different factors.

The first part of this section is devoted to definiteness. Although the hypothesis of this work does not directly refer to this factor, definiteness is essential in order to understand the evolution of DOM in Spanish. In addition, another reason for including the results of definiteness here is to provide an overview of the evolution of DOM which allows us to check whether this data points in the same direction as the results obtained in previous studies. Figure 1 illustrates the occurrence of DOM according to century (14th/16th/20th) and definiteness (definite NP/indefinite NP). With regard to indefinite direct object NPs, the presence of DOM shows a relative frequency of 28% (44/160) in the 14th century, 35% (85/240) in the 16th century and 70% (279/400) in the 20th century. As far as definite direct object NPs are concerned, the occurrence of DOM has a relative frequency of 50% (242/480) in the 14th century, 65% (468/720) in the 16th century, and 93% (1120/1200) in the 20th century. Although there has been a general increase in the presence of DOM over time, this data shows that definite

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[2] The concept of *category* in this context refers to the different sets of examples that are generated by the factorial design of the search, e.g. definite direct objects in telic VPs from the 16th century.

human direct object NPs have always favoured the presence of DOM over indefinite human direct object NPs. Note also that these numbers largely confirm the results obtained in previous diachronic corpus-based studies (Company Company 2002; Laca 2006; von Heusinger & Kaiser 2011).
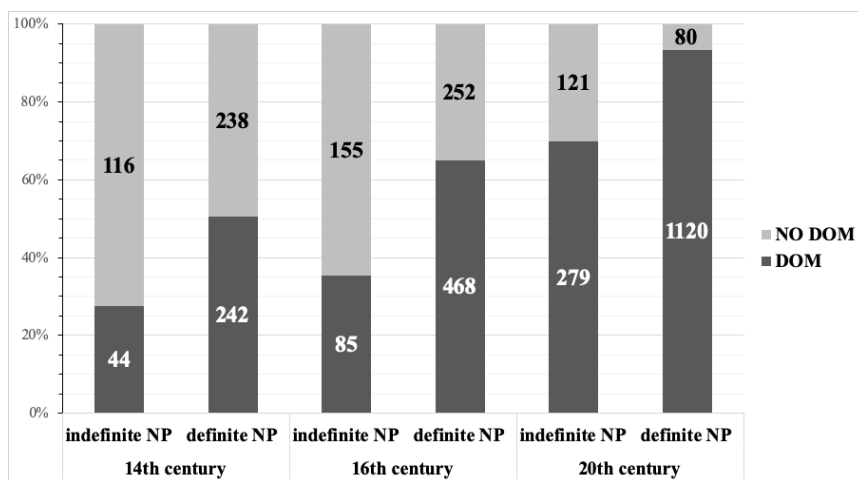
Figure 1: DOM according to century and definiteness

Figures 2 and 3 present the results for telicity according to definite and indefinite NPs, respectively. In the case of definite NPs, the relative frequency of DOM with regard to telicity is distributed as follows: the occurrence of DOM shows a relative frequency of 54% (129/240) with atelic predicates and 47% (113/240) with telic predicates in the 14th century. In the 16th century, the use of DOM registers a relative frequency of 66% (237/360) for atelic predicates and 64% (231/360) for telic predicates. Finally, the presence of DOM has a relative frequency of 95% (568/600) for atelic predicates and 92% (552/600) for telic predicates in the 20th century. The occurrence of DOM increases over time as shown in the results according to definiteness. However, Figure 2 does not show any significant effect of telicity on DOM with definite direct objects in any of the three periods.
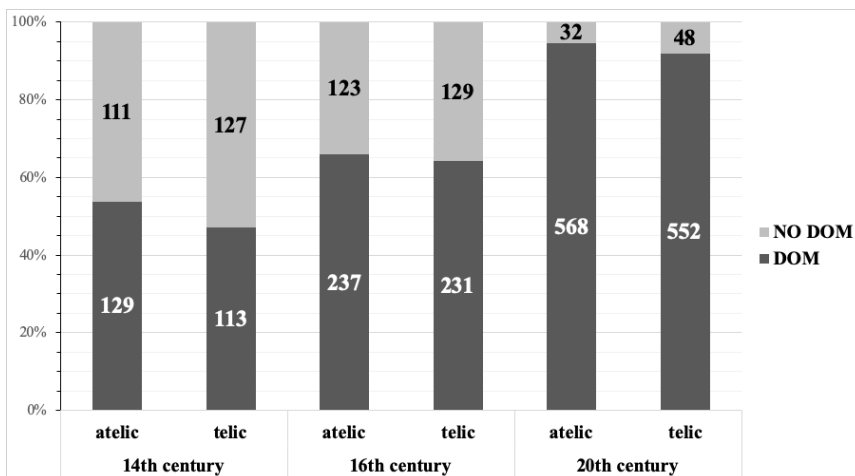
Figure 2: DOM with definite NPs according to century and telicity

Examples of the lack of DOM from twentieth-century Spanish with definite human direct objects are given in (8), where both a direct object of an atelic VP, such as *recordar la hortelana* 'to remember the gardener', and a direct object of a telic VP, such as *abatir sus caciques* 'to overthrew their chiefs' are not differentially marked.

(8) Definite NPs without DOM in twentieth-century Spanish
   a. *¿**Recuerda** usted la pobre hortelana enferma que vimos en la ermita aquella tarde?* (atelic predicate)
      'Do you remember the poor sick gardener we saw at the hermitage that afternoon?'
      (20th century, Blasco Ibáñez, *Entre naranjos*)
   b. *La civilización que [...] **abatió** sus caciques.* (telic predicate)
      'The civilization that [...] overthrew their chiefs.'
      (20th century, Lopetegui y Zubillaga, *Historia de la Iglesia en la América española desde el descubrimiento hasta el siglo XIX*)

Turning to indefinite NPs, i.e. to Figure 3, the relative frequency of DOM is distributed as follows: the occurrence of DOM has a relative frequency of 35% (28/80) with atelic predicates and 20% (16/80) with telic predicates in the 14th century. In the 16th century, the use of DOM registers a relative frequency of 41% (49/120) for atelic predicates and 30% (36/120) for telic predicates. Finally, the presence of DOM shows a relative frequency of 69% (137/200) for atelic predicates and 71% (142/200) for telic predicates in the 20th century. As was observed in the case of definite direct objects, we can see the increase in the relative frequency of DOM with indefinite direct objects over time. Furthermore, in the case of indefinite NPs, the fourteenth and sixteenth

centuries show a slight tendency to favour the occurence of DOM in atelic VPs, however the effect is not significant. Consequently, the assumed hypothesis of the influence of telicity on DOM could not be confirmed.
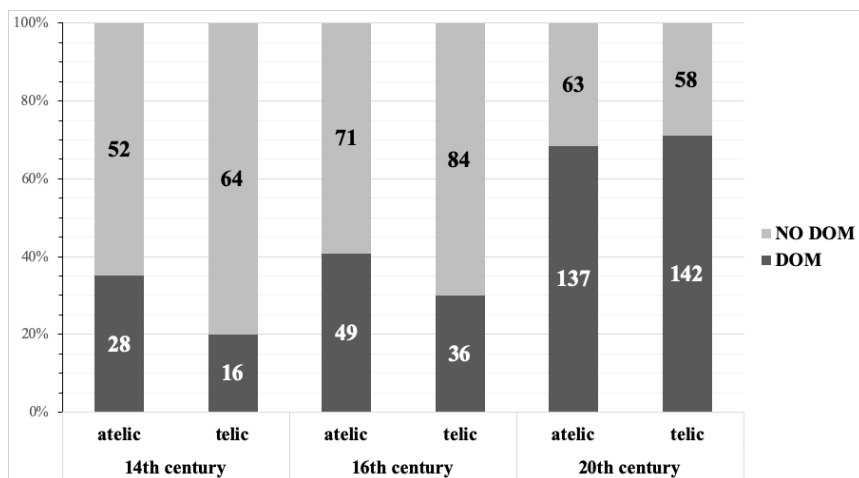

Figure 3: DOM with indefinite NPs according to century and telicity

Examples of the presence of DOM from fourteenth-century Spanish with indefinite human direct objects are given in (9), where all examples present *a*-marking in their direct object regardless of whether the predicate is telic or atelic.

(9) Indefinite NPs with DOM in fourteenth-century Spanish
   a. *Juan Núñez **amava** a un cavallero que desían Gonçalo Gómez.* (atelic predicate)
       'Juan Núñez loved a knight who was called Gonçalo Gómez.'
       (14th century, Anonymous, *Crónica del muy valeroso rey don Fernando el cuarto*)
   b. *En la manyana ella **encontro** a vn ciudadano antigo.* (telic predicate)
       'In the morning she found an old citizen.'
       (14th century, Fernández de Heredia, *Traducción de Vidas paralelas de Plutarco, III*)

Figure 4 and Figure 5 summarise the results for aspectual class according to definite and indefinite NPs, respectively. It is important to remember that the number of instances contained in each category is not balanced in this case since aspectual class is only addressed indirectly in this study. With regard to definite NPs, the relative frequency of DOM is distributed as follows: the occurrence of DOM presents in the 14th century a relative frequency of 61% (43/70) with states, 49% (86/176) with activities, 44% (28/64) with accomplishments, and 50% (85/170) with achievements. In the 16th

century, the use of DOM exhibits a relative frequency of 64% (63/98) for states, 65% (179/277) for activities, 60% (61/102) for accomplishments, and 68% (165/243) for achievements. Lastly, the presence of DOM registers a relative frequency of 90% (150/166) with states, 96% (452/472) with activities, 93% (125/134) with accomplishments, and 92% (393/428) with achievements in the 20th century. Although the increase in DOM over time is again visible in Figure 4, the aspectual class shows no significant effect on the occurrence of *a*-marking with definite objects.
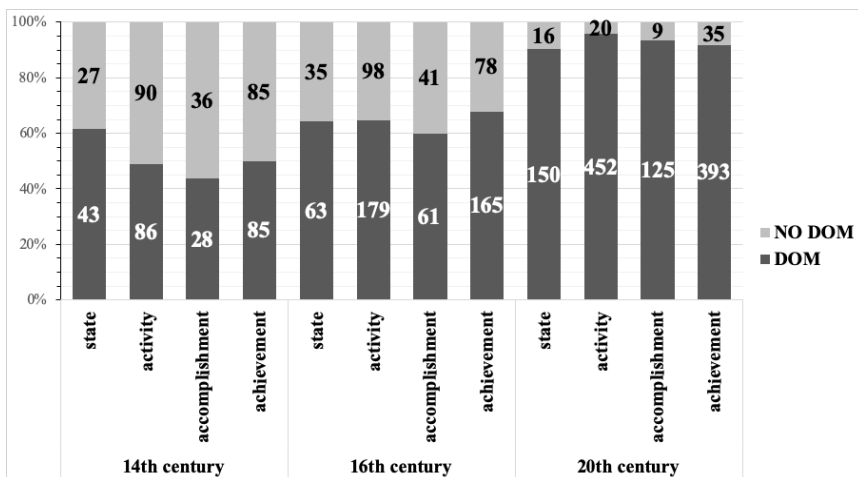

Figure 4: DOM with definite NPs according to century and aspectual class

Examples of the lack of DOM from twentieth-century Spanish with definite human direct objects are given in (10), where both the direct object of an activity verb, such as *guiar* 'to guide', and the direct object of an achievement verb, such as *hallar* 'to find', are not differentially marked.

(10) Definite NPs without DOM in twentieth-century Spanish
    a. *Y **guiaré** los ciegos por camino que no sabían.* (activity)
       'And I will lead the blind by a way which they did not know.'
       (20th century, Anonymous, *Biblia Reina-Valera*)
    a. *entre pescadores **halló** Cristo sus primeros secuaces.* (achievement)
       'among fishermen, Christ found his first followers.'
       (20th century, Pardo Bazán, *San Francisco de Asís. Siglo XIII*)

Turning to indefinite NPs, Figure 5 shows the following distribution: the presence of DOM in the 14th century has a relative frequency of 23% (5/22) for states, 40% (23/58) for activities, 9% (1/11) for accomplishments, and 22% for of achievements. In the 16th century, DOM registers a relative frequency of 20% (7/35) for states, 50% (43/86) for activities, 33% (12/36) for accomplishments, and 28% (23/83) for achievements. Finally, DOM shows a relative frequency of 40% (23/58) for states, 82% (122/149) for activities, 86% (31/36) for accomplishments, and 66% (103/157) for achievements in the 20th century. Like in the rest of the figures, an increase of DOM can be observed in relation to the different periods. Moreover, while the variation between aspectual classes is almost imperceptible in Figure 4, in the case of indefinite NPs a higher variation can be noticed. However, the differences between aspectual classes have turned out not to be significant. Thus, the data presented in this paper cannot confirm the relationship between inherently telic verbs and DOM proposed in previous studies.
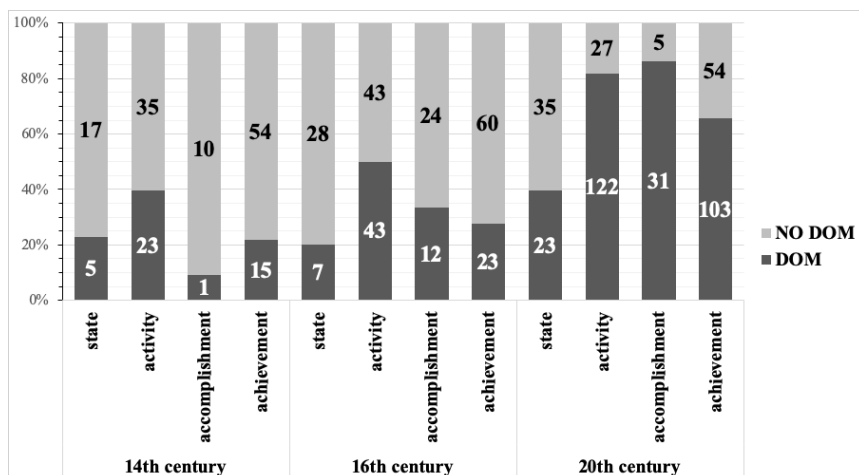

Figure 5: DOM with indefinite NPs according to century and aspectual class

Examples of the presence of DOM from fourteenth-century Spanish with indefinite human direct objects are given in (11), where both present *a*-marking in their direct object regardless of aspectual class.

(11) Indefinite NPs with DOM in fourteenth-century Spanish
   a. *non **guardauan** a otras mugeres sinon a sus madres.* (activity)
      'they did not respect other women apart from their mothers.'
      (14th century, Don Juan Manuel, *Libro de los Estados*)
   b. *et **clamo** a vn cauallero que era aguazil suyo.* (achievement)
      'And he called a knight who was his sheriff.'
      (14th century, Fernández de Heredia, *Gran Crónica de España III*)

3.4 Discussion

The results of the corpus-based study presented in the previous section do not confirm the hypothesis proposed in Section 3.1 repeated herein (12).

(12) Hypothesis for DOM and telicity
      The presence of DOM is more frequent with human direct objects of telic predicates than with human direct objects of atelic predicates.

The corpus analysis has revealed that telicity had no impact on the presence of DOM in previous centuries. Similarly, aspectual class does not show any clear relationship with the use of *a*-marking. These results question Torrego's (1999) first assumption (see 2a), since the inherent telicity of accomplishments and achievements neither implies DOM in the twentieth century, nor triggers its occurrence in previous stages of Spanish.

However, it is interesting to note that with indefinite direct objects a slight variation can be observed which does not exist for definite direct objects. This can be seen in the results concerning both telicity and aspectual class. Although these are not significant differences, it means that telicity or aspectual class might have a slight effect on DOM, perhaps as a consequence of its interaction with other factors, but only on indefinite direct objects. Therefore, if such a slight variation can be explained by the interaction of telicity with some other factor, the effect of telicity is subordinated to definiteness and does not act directly on direct human objects, contrary to what previous studies defended.

Although this study is the only diachronic empirical study that addresses the impact of telicity on DOM for human direct objects, indirect evidence supporting the results presented above can be found in Barraza (2008), which deals with the relationship between DOM and telicity for inanimate direct objects. It is important to note that her concept of telicity refers to the aspectual class of verbs and not to the whole VP. Thus, she groups under the category of *telic* those instances which contain accomplishment and achievement verbs, and brings together under the label of *atelic* those whose verb is a state or an activity. Her study is based on a corpus comprised

of 2260 instances of inanimate direct objects which fall into three different periods (15th - 16th centuries, 18th century and 20th century). The results obtained from her corpus analysis are shown in Figure 6. Interestingly, they point in the same direction as the results of the study I have carried out. Following Barraza, telicity does not have a relevant impact on DOM with inanimate direct objects. However, a minimal effect can be observed that favours the occurrence of DOM with inherently atelic verbs in previous stages of Spanish. This pattern matches the slight tendency that has been described above for indefinite direct objects in this study.
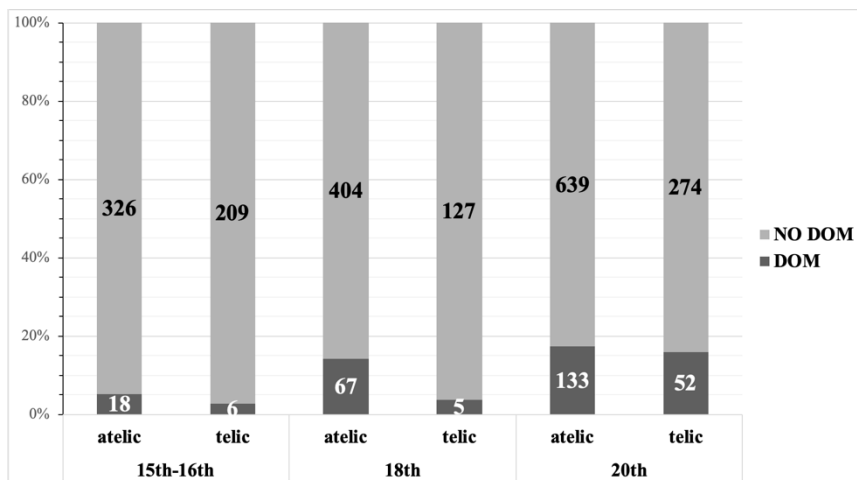

Figure 6: DOM with inanimate NPs according to century and telicity (adapted from Barraza 2008)

It is also interesting to comment on some aspects related to Torrego's second assumption (2b), which holds that DOM triggers a telic interpretation in atelic verbs. I should start by pointing out the difficulty of addressing this issue with a corpus-based study, since it is necessary to have adverbials that explicitly reflect the aspectual reading of the verb. However, the example in (13a) allows us to address this issue, as it contains an activity verb, *maltratar* 'to abuse', with an adverbial that reinforces the atelic reading. Even so, following Torrego, it could be argued that, since the object is marked, the reading of the predicate is telic and that the PP headed by *durante* 'for' leads to an iterative reading of the telic event. However, in (13b) we observe that if the PP indicating duration is replaced by another PP that delimits the event, the result is ungrammatical. This indicates that the predicate *maltrató a su hijo* behaves like an atelic predicate, regardless of DOM, since it does not admit adverbials delimiting the event. Also, note that the example in (13a) would be ungrammatical without DOM. Hence, DOM cannot trigger a change in the reading of the verb if its occurrence is mandatory.

(13) Effect of DOM with an atelic verb on the aspect of the VP

    a. *Un escritor huido de la URSS **maltrató** a su hijo durante el último año de convivencia.*
       'A writer who fled the USSR abused his son during the last year of living together.'
       (20th century, Manuel Vázquez Montalbán, *La soledad del mánager*)

    b. **Un escritor huido de la URSS **maltrató** a su hijo en un mes/año.*
       'A writer who fled the USSR abused his son in one month/year.'

In addition, it is possible to find another argument against Torrego's second assumption in the example presented in (14). In this case, an activity verb such as *arrastrar* 'to drag', which is intrinsically atelic, should get a telic reading when its direct object has DOM. At first sight, this seems to be exactly the case, because no problem arises when the telicity test is applied, as shown in (14a). However, (14b) shows that telicity is not derived from DOM but from the PP indicating the goal of the event, i.e. *hasta las gradas de la catedral* 'to the cathedral steps'. If this goal PP disappears, as in (14b), the predicate stops behaving like a telic one and therefore does not admit a PP headed by *en* 'in'.

(14) Effect of DOM with an atelic verb on the aspect of the VP

    a. *Arnal **arrastró** a su amigo hasta las gradas de la catedral (en dos minutos/*durante dos minutos).*
       'Arnal dragged his friend to the cathedral steps (in two minutes/*for two minutes).'
       (20th century, Wenceslao Fernández Flórez, Fantasmas)

    b. *Arnal **arrastró** a su amigo (*en dos minutos/durante dos minutos).*
       'Arnal dragged his friend (*in two minutes/for two minutes).'

With regard to the effect of DOM on atelic verbs, it might also be interesting to comment on the patterns of the verb *rodear*. As shown in (15), this verb has two readings in Spanish, one dynamic ('circle'/ 'go around') and one stative ('surround'), i.e. telic and atelic respectively.

(15) Aspectual readings of *rodear* ('go around'/ 'surround')

    a. *Los que del castillo baxaron **rodearon al emperador** por todas partes.* (dynamic and telic)
       'Those from the castle circled the emperor everywhere.'
       (16th century, Sierra, *Espejo de príncipes y caballeros, 2ª parte*)

    b. *En la sala, el grupo familiar **rodeaba al patrón.*** (stative and atelic)
       'In the living room, the family group was surrounding the boss.'
       (20th century, Valle-Inclán, *Tirano Banderas*)

Since *rodear* inherently offers two aspectual readings, the aspectual value of the VP will be given by factors different from the verbal head. This situation makes it easier to check not only which factors trigger a change in the lexical aspect, but also whether the occurrence of DOM itself triggers an aspectual change, as proposed in Torrego's second assumption (1999). In this study, all instances of direct objects of this verb are *a*-marked and most of them are definite objects; therefore, without being able to disentangle definiteness from the rest of factors, it is difficult to determine the effect of secondary factors that affect the use of DOM. However, the example presented in (16) includes an indefinite object. Following Torrego, when the verb exhibits its telic meaning, the object has to be *a*-marked. This does not seem to be the case due to the sentence context (*estaban sentadas diez esclavas blancas* 'ten white slaves sat'), which indicates that it is a static situation. On the other hand, if the verb takes its atelic meaning, such as having an object with DOM, it should obtain a telic reading. However, this does not happen either, since the sentence context only allows for the stative reading, as we have just mentioned.

(15) Effect of DOM on the aspect of the VP with *rodear* ('go around'/ 'surround')
*Una pradera en la que estaban sentadas diez esclavas blancas, **rodeando** a una joven.*
'A meadow where ten white slaves sat, surrounding a young woman.'
(20th century, Blasco Ibáñez, *Traducción de las mil y una noches*)

The reported instances question whether DOM functions as a trigger for a telic interpretation on atelic verbs. As demonstrated, atelic verbs keep their natural reading in spite of *a*-marking and, in case of presenting a telic interpretation, this does not seem to arise from DOM.

4 Conclusions

Drawing on diachronic data from a corpus-based study, this paper has contributed to the understanding of the factors that trigger Differential Object Marking (DOM) in Spanish. The aim of this study was to investigate the impact of telicity on DOM from a diachronic perspective and the results have revealed that, in contrast to other factors, such as affectedness (von Heusinger & Kaiser, 2011) and agentivity (García García, 2018), whose influence has been proven from a diachronic point of view, telicity has not produced any clear effect on the evolution of DOM.

As stated above, this work is the first empirical study that addresses the impact of telicity on DOM with human direct objects and, in addition, the first to address this verbal factor from a diachronic perspective.

The contribution of this study points to the conclusion that telicity can no longer be considered an independent factor that has a significant influence on the occurrence of DOM in Spanish, as it has been proposed by previous studies. Nevertheless, it remains open to the possibility that the slight variation found in the case of indefinite direct object NPs can be explained by the interaction of telicity with other factors such as affectedness and agentivity.

In recent years, it has been shown that the occurrence of DOM correlates not only to the highest degree of transitivity, but also to the lowest (see García García, 2018 and Fábregas, 2013 for discussion). Therefore, it has been suggested that the different factors configuring transitivity favour the use of *a*-marking, either by enhancing the transitivity of the clause, e.g. human affected direct objects, or by reducing it to the minimum, e.g. inanimate agentive direct objects. Following this approach, it has been assumed that telicity, like affectedness, increases the degree of transitivity and thus favours the use of DOM. However, according to the results obtained in this study, the idea arises that not all factors linked to transitivity somehow influence *a*-marking, and this is the case for telicity.

The analysis of the verbal factors involved in transitivity continues to be a promising field of study that needs further research to resolve the complex situation that the most recent studies reveal.

Acknowledgements

Corpus

CNDHE = Real Academia Española, *Banco de datos (CNDHE)* [en línea]. *Corpus del Nuevo diccionario histórico del español*, http://www.rae.es, [last access: 16.01.2019]

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Appendix: Verbs included in the study

The following table contains all the verbs used for the analysis carried out in this work according to aspectual class. The numbers that follow some verbs distinguish their different meanings[3]. These meanings has been checked using the *DLE* and the *DiCCA XV*.

STATE		449
abatir_2	to depress	1
admirar_1	to admire	36
amar_1	to love	119
conocer_1	to know	107
identificar_2	to compare	12
preciar	to appreciate	5
recordar_2	to bear in mind	23
recordar_3	to remind	14
rodear_1	to surround	38
tener_1	to have	94
ACTIVITY		**1218**
acorrer	to help	4
acribillar	to riddle	10
admirar_2	to amaze	11
admirar_3	to contemplate	9
agitar	to shake	6
agraviar	to offend	4
alimentar	to feed	2
amar_2	to make love	3
amparar	to protect	1
apalear	to beat	43
apedrear	to stone	29
apretar	to press	38
arrastrar	to drag	61
asediar	to besiege	18
atender	to serve	13
atormentar	to torment	6
ayudar	to help	5
azotar	to flog	14
capitanear	to captain	1
castigar	to punish	23
catar_1	to look	4
cohechar	to force	2
combatir	to combat	48

consolar	to console	6
contemplar	to contemplate	11
contristar	to sadden	2
criar	to raise	79
empujar	to push	47
enseñar	to educate	5
evocar	to remember	17
forzar	to force	3
guardar	to protect	2
guiar	to guide	105
honrar	to honour	15
hostigar	to harass	1
humillar	to humiliate	3
incitar	to encourage	1
investigar	to investigate	4
llevar	to take [sb]	2
maltratar	to abuse	122
martirizar	to torment	4
menospreciar	to despise	10
oír	to hear	119
oprimir	to oppress	30
pendrar	to hold	3
percibir	to perceive	2
proveer	to provide	1
punir	to punish	14
remolcar	to tow	1
sacudir	to shake	12
señorear	to domineer	1
servir	to serve	2
sitiar	to besiege	4
transportar_1	to transport	37
ver	to see	120
vigilar	to guard	52
zarandear	to shake	26
ACCOMPLISHMENT		**383**

[3]

conocer_2	to make love	6	derribar	to knock down	89
conocer_4	to meet	42	descartar	to reject	8
despedazar	to tear apart	36	descubrir_1	to discover	38
destrozar	to destroy	30	descubrir_2	to uncover	9
identificar_3	to ask for the documentation	5	detectar	to detect	9
			eliminar	to eliminate	31
identificar_4	to prove the identity	5	encerrar	to lock [sb] up	1
			encontrar_1	to find	145
neutralizar	to neutralise	12	encontrar_2	to hit	30
olvidar	to forget	78	enviar	to send	17
quemar	to burn	79	hallar	to find	147
recordar_1	to recall	15	herir	to wound	2
recordar_4	to remind	1	identificar_1	to recognise	54
rodear_2	to circle	15	llamar	to call	32
traer	to bring	60	localizar	to locate	62
transportar_2	to transport	1	matar	to kill	111
ACHIEVEMENT		**1150**	mencionar	to mention	36
abatir_1	to take down	46	nombrar	to name	52
arrollar	to mow down	44	reconocer	to recognise	1
catar_2	to find	1	tener_2	to give birth	5
clamar	to call	16	vencer	to defeat	122
conocer_3	to recognise	40	**TOTAL**		**3200**