The grammaticalization of Latin ad as a Romance case-marker: differential object marking, Minimalism, formalism/functionalism:

The grammaticalization of Latin/Romance ad as a marker of indirect objects is very widespread in Romance and its grammaticalization in proto-Romance/Latin has been extensively dealt with (e.g. Adams (2013:278-294)). The grammaticalization of ad as a marker of direct objects, however, has received relatively less attention, despite strong evidence that it is related to the grammaticalization of ad as a direct case-marker (Nocentini (1985:300)). In this paper, I trace the grammaticalization of ad as a case-marker of both direct and indirect objects in proto-Romance/Latin, which is important not only for Romance linguistics, since this accounts for the origins of differential object marking in Romance, but also for Latin philology, as it is an expansion of the traditional analysis of Latin ad. Furthermore, I test the Minimalist framework of grammaticalization (Roberts and Roussou (R & R) (2003), Tse (2013a, b)) with my analysis of Latin/Romance ad, since it poses important methodological questions about the relationship between formalism and functionalism.

ad functions as a case-marker of direct objects in many modern Romance languages (Rollfis (1971)), and while its use as a case-marker of indirect objects is held to be pan-Romanic (Adams (2013:278ff)), its use as a case-marker of direct objects displays dialectal differences: in certain varieties, it is only used vestigially in order to avoid ambiguity between the subject and object (Zamboni (1993:789)).

In some other varieties, it is used as a case-marker of human/animate direct objects (Zamboni (1993:792)).

In Latin, clamare ‘to shout’ is clearly a three-place predicate, as it is attested with three arguments, namely an agent (<ego > T (4a), omnes (4b)), an experiencer/recipient (mihi (4a), ad me (4b)), and a theme/proposition (numera annos tuos (4a), tanus culpua tua est (4b)). In Romance, however, clamare has undergone semantic change and has changed from being a three-place predicate to a two-place predicate e.g. Latin clamare (Sornicola (1997:72-73)).

Furthermore, the use of ad as a marker of direct objects is attested in many branches of old Romance (Sornicola (1998:422)) where animacy and specificity are important factors in conditioning the use of this ad, given that ad only marks animate objects, with which it is rarely used with plural, mass, generic ones i.e. it is mainly used with specific and referential direct objects (Zorraquino (1976:563), Nocentini (1985:304)). There is another factor, namely the fact that there is comparative evidence that ad is obligatory with ticate personal pronouns and highly preponderant with proper names (Sornicola (1997:77, 1998:422)). Such a wide geographical and historical distribution of this use of ad suggests that it is grammaticized in proto-Romance/Latin. Furthermore, there is evidence that its grammaticalization as a marker of a direct object is related to its grammaticalization as a marker of indirect object since in the history from Latin to Romance, there are certain predicates that are ambiguous between trivalency and bivalency. On the one hand, there are predicates that have undergone semantic change and have changed from being three-place predicates to two-place predicates e.g. Latin clamare (Sornicola (1997:72-73)).

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9a) cred-o AD
'seems to believe'
trust-ISG.PRES
9b) ego-mi non
'do not myself trust'
mihi

ad-PPs are also semantically stronger than the morphologically accusative/dative with bivalent verbs, since in 8a), the ad-PP retains its spatial meaning in marking the 'direction' of gaze (cf Ovid’s Metamorphoses 1.628 'spectare ad', 11.546 'exspectare ad') whereas in 9a) ad is more emphatic than the dative (mihi in 9b).

There is therefore a synchronous distribution of morphological dative/accusative case and ad-PPs already in (pre-)classical Latin, which, as Ledgeway (2012:21-23) argues, creates a 'layered' distribution of synthetic (morphological case) and analytic (ad-PPs) forms, the former unmarked while the latter marked.

It is conceivable that the spatial meaning of ad would be grammaticalized as marking animate non-human objects (as above for the dative in 1.628 'spectare ad', 'expectare ad'), as with trivalent verbs, the idiom ad is the marker to grammaticalize ad as a case-marker of direct objects, as verbs recur throughout all the major branches of Romance where this use of ad is attested (aguardar ‘to look at’ and ver ‘to see’ in Medieval Spanish (Zorraquino 1976:561), guardar ‘to watch’ in Medieval Neapolitan (Sornicola 1997:74), vidiri ‘to see’ in Medieval Sicilian (Sornicola 1997:71)). By this stage, the spatial meaning of ad has become weakened as the use of ad with asperrere ‘to look at’ is already incoherent with the morphological accusative (Villierard 1927:200), except that the four examples of asperrere as mark specific objects rather than generic ones. Furthermore, there is evidence that ad-PPs displacing the morphological dative in direct object function in post-classical Latin: servire ad (cf 6a-c), obtendere ad (cf 9a-b) (Adams 2013:292), as well as fluctuation between trivalency and bivalency e.g.:

11) 'He was begging the Lord for mercy’ (Chronicon Salernitanum 11)

As poposcere an animate/human object (ad Domino) and an animate object (venium), ad is strongly associated with animate/human objects, which are indeed the Romance outcomes: rogare ‘to beg’ (Medieval Spanish) (Zorraquino 1976:561), pregari ‘to beg’ (Medieval Sicilian) (Sornicola 1997:71), supplicare ‘to beg’ (Medieval Neapolitan) (Sornicola 1997:75). The association of ad with human/animate/animus is therefore attested in Latin, and Adams (2013:286) shows that by the time of the Actus Petri cum Simone (6th century AD), ad occurs as a marker of names, titles and personal pronouns, whereas inanimate objects become marked by prepositions (Sornicola 1997:77). By this stage of Latin, ad is marking both indirect objects and certain types of direct objects (animal/animate) specifically (referential), as in Romance (2a), (3a), (b)). The differential marking between subject and object is (1) unattested in Latin and can be analysed as a secondary development, which is conceivable given that it is attributable to the need for resolving the ambiguity between subjects and objects.

Finally, the grammaticalization of ad provides new evidence for the Minimalism framework of grammaticalization, as R & R (2003) only analyse auxiliary verbs (T), complementisers (C) and determiners (D) when case-markers constitute another important functional category, namely (Case) (van Krieken and Caramazza (1997)). Tse (2013b) who compares the occurrence of Latin/Roman ad as a dative case-marker to English to and shows that there are remarkable similarities, namely that the fact they are both spatial prepositions denoting direction ‘towards’ and their complement is re analysable as the beneficiary/recipient/experiencer of the main verb (Tse 2013b:section 3)). The grammaticalization of Latin/Roman ad as a marker of differential objects requires two case functions for ad, namely (acceptor) and R & R (2003)) propose these two types of K, functional factors, like the semantic and pragmatic usages outlined above, have to be considered in order to determine whether ad represents (K) (structurally determinant) in Romance.