Conditions on Clitic Doubling: The Agreement Hypothesis

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0. Introduction

If we define agreement as a category X that shares ϕ features with a category Y in a linking relation, it could be said that Spanish object clitics and their doubles constitute an agreement system. In this paper, I claim that this agreement system does not run independently in the grammar of Spanish as a supplementary system, on the contrary, it is part of a more general relation, that is, argument verb agreement. Thus, the label Agreement Hypothesis, stands for an analysis that equates the traditionally called object clitics with subject agreement morphemes.

Any analysis that considers object clitics in Spanish as agreement morphemes, such as Borer's (1984) and Suñer's (1988), must answer the following questions: (I) Why is object agreement not always obligatory like subject agreement is? and (II) why is direct object clitic doubling so much constrained? I propose that a morpho-syntactic theory of Agreement built on the data from Spanish and also on a comparison of Spanish object agreement with agreement patterns found in other languages provides a straightforward answer to those questions.

In Spanish, object personal pronouns of first, second and third person must undergo object-verb agreement obligatorily, as in (1). It is therefore, the non-obligatoriness (or sometimes the impossibility) of object-verb agreement with third person NPs that prevents Spanish from exhibiting a sheer object agreement pattern like the one existing in languages like Basque, as illustrated in (2) and (3):

(1) Juan no *(lo$_i$) escucha a él$_i$ nunca.
Juan not him-CL listen to him never
Juan never listens to him.

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(2) Juan no (lo_i) escucha a $Pedro_i$ nunca.
Juan not him-CL listen to Pedro never
Juan never listens to Pedro.

(3) Guk_i $liburua_j$ $Joni_k$ erosi d_j- io_k- gu_i.
We-Erg book-Abs Jon-Dat buy Abs-3Dat-1Erg
We have bought Jon the book.

On the benefit of the Agreement Hypothesis, I first claim that Spanish DO-NPs, by virtue of their being third persons, may take a zero object-verbal agreement morpheme, patterning in this way with other third person verbal agreement morphemes in other *pro*-drop languages, such as subject verbal agreement morphemes in Basque and Irish, and DO verbal agreement morphemes in Jacaltec, Cuzco Quechua, etc. For example, let us look at (4) and (5) as instances of the latter:

(4) Jacaltec (Craig 1977)
a. Hayin x- Ø- w- ute hun-ti.
I Asp-3Abs-1Erg-do one-this
I did this.
b. Ch -in haw -ila.
Asp-1Abs 2Erg-see
You saw me.

(5) Cuzco Quechua (Ortiz de Urbina 1989)
a. Riku- Ø- ni Juan.
see -3Acc I Juan
I see Juan.
b. Riku-wa- n.
see -1Acc 3Nom
He sees me.

In (4a), the third person Absolutive NP does not have any corresponding phonological agreement marker in the verbal inflexion. This phenomenon, although typical of Ergative languages is also manifested in Nominative/Accusative languages, as illustrated in (5a) by Cuzco Quechua.

1. Clitics as verb-object agreement morphemes: basic considerations

Everett (1989) establishes four basic types of clitics, as shown in (6):

(6) Everett (1989): Clitic Parametrization

A. [+Case, +Argument]: requires thematic role and does not allow clitic doubling.
B. [+Case, -Argument]: allows clitic doubling (Yagua, Rioplatense Spanish)
C. [-Case, +Argument]: does not allow clitic doubling (eg. English passive morpheme: *-en*)
D. [-Case, -Argument]: these clitics have agreement and can identify empty categories (eg. Subject agreement morpheme)

As for Spanish, the choice is between B and D, since all dialects of Spanish allow clitic doubling to a certain extent. A and C classify clitics as arguments. However, for objects clitics to obtain argumenthood they would have to occupy a canonical

object position at D-structure, which would imply that there has been subsequently clitic movement in order to yield the surface representation in (1) and (2). Strozer (1976) and Rivas (1977), within the transformational grammar framework, already proved that a movement analysis turns out to be problematic for sentences like (2) above. To put it simply, if Spanish clitics were originated in an argument position as heads and then cliticized to the verb, the doubled constituent would wrongly occupy the position of the trace left by the clitic. Thus, the structure-preserving principles on movement automatically discard A or C as candidates to categorize Spanish clitics. In the next section, I will attempt to show (a) the advantages of the Agreement Hypothesis over other hypotheses that consider clitics as unstressed pronouns marked with Case, and (b) the problems that an analysis that places Spanish under B may run into.

1.1. Simplification of Case Assignment

To my knowledge, there is no test that discriminates clitics either as B or D. However, Casewise, the classification of Spanish clitics as object-verb agreement morphemes, gives us a clear advantage in the grammatical description of Spanish, since the clitic and its double do not have to compete to receive Case in structures like (1) and (2). Consequently, we could get rid of the machinery of Case absorption and Case transmission put forward in Jaeggli (1982, 1986) and the subsequent problems that this theory entails, as argued in Suñer (1988).

In addition, since structural Case is assigned by lexical heads from left to right, Spanish being a head initial language, if we categorized object clitics as B [+Case, -Argument], the directionality of this type of Case assignment under strict government would have to be reversed for these items, unless one assumes that clitics are generated *post-verbally*, an analysis that, again, we want to avoid for the reasons stated in section 1.

1.2. Historical change in Spanish clitics

Although in Old Spanish some clitics could form chains with prepositional phrases, *hi* 'in that' and *en* 'of that', in today's Spanish clitics only form nominal chains. This could be an indication of the fact that the clitic system has developed into a paradigm of object agreement, as pointed out by Silva-Corvalán (1981).

Probably, the most outstanding difference existing between clitics in Old Spanish and clitics in today's Spanish is their position in the sentence which points directly to a possible change in their syntactic status. Whereas in present-day Spanish, clitics are restricted to preverbal or postverbal position depending on the verb's feature [tense], in Old Spanish, clitics enjoyed an actual syntactic freedom, as shown in the contrast between the following pairs of sentences:

(7) Asi commo le$_k$ él dezia. (Old Spanish)
as how to him-CL he said (*Modern Spanish)
As he said to him. ((20) in Rivero 1986)

(8) Así como él$_i$ le$_k$ decía. (Standard Modern Spanish)
As he said to him.

(9) Que ellos te non digan en que puede finar. (Old Spanish)
that they to you-CL not say in what can-3SG end (*Modern Spanish)
Let them not tell you how it could end. ((13) in Rivero)

(10) Que ellos no te digan en qué puede terminar. (Standard Mod. Sp)
Let them not tell you how it could end.

(11) Priso lo$_i$ al conde$_i$. (Old Spanish, (31) in Rivero)
Catch- PAST-3SG him-CL the count (*Modern Spanish)
He caught the count.

(12) Lo apresó al conde. (Standard Modern Spanish)
He caught the count.

Rivero (1986) accounts for the phenomenon of the syntactic freedom of Old Spanish clitics by showing that these clitics were syntactically equivalent to stressed pronominals generated in A-positions. In other words, their behavior as clitics was restricted to the phonological level in which clitics have to be bound to a stressed vowel.[1]

The obligatory adjacency to the verb of Modern Spanish clitics is even more suspicious when examined cross-linguistically. Normally, the position of clitics is syntactically constrained, but seldom lexically constrained. In Yagua, for instance, Everett (1989) points out that object clitics can be affixed to any constituent as long as the clitic is minimally c-commanding its double. In Czech (Comrie 1989), the object clitic has to be positioned after the first constituent of the clause, regardless of its lexical nature.

Finally, another characteristic that clearly differentiates Modern Spanish from Old Spanish is the obligatoriness versus the non-obligatoriness of clitic doubling with overt object pronouns. The non-clitic version of sentences (13) and (14) below actually occurred in Old Spanish ((6) and (7) in Rivero), which somehow advocates for a different status of object clitics in these two periods of the language:

(13) Dejad *(me) a mí. (Standard Spanish)
Let me.

(14) Lo que a mí *(me) parece. (Standard Spanish)
What seems to me.

In sum, the difference in behavior between Old Spanish and Modern Spanish clitics with respect to clitic doubling with pronouns, the position of clitics, and the types of constituents clitics cliticize to can be best accounted for by an analysis that deems the diachronic development of clitics as a transition from pronominal

(1) This makes clitic doubled constituents in Old Spanish non-arguments. Rivero (1986: 776) states in this regard: "OSp. doubling constructions have pronominal phrases (e.g. clitics) in subcategorized positions, and doubling phrases as base-generated adjuntcs of maximal projections".

elements to verbal agreement morphemes. The fact that Spanish clitics evolved from Latin demonstrative pronouns might have preconized the commonplace grammatical description of today's Spanish clitics as pronominal elements. In strict synchronic terms, however, a pronominal analysis of Spanish clitics can be overridden by the descriptive superiority of the Agreement Hypothesis, as I will try to show in what follows.

2. Default object verb agreement in the paradigm

In answer to the first question raised in the introduction, I defend the idea that there is a zero object agreement morpheme which is responsible for the lack of phonologically overt agreement with certain object nominals. Justification for this zero morpheme might be hard to draw at a first blush, though plausible if we take a closer look at agreement relations crosslinguistically.

From a study of verbal agreement in 26 languages, Paus (1990: 29) concludes: 'The correlation of zero marking with third person categories, especially third person singular, is striking. It appears that in double agreement languages, there is a universal tendency to treat third person as the unmarked person category. Third person contrasts with first and second person which are almost always expressed by means of an overt verbal affix.' In fact, in 20 out of the 26 languages in Paus' sample, the third person was unmarked, suggesting a paradigmatic default zero morpheme, as exemplified in (4) and (5) above.

Moreover, many languages make more finely grained distinctions, and make the cut overt vs. non-overt marking between pronouns and noun phrases as in Welsh (Doron 1988) or between animate noun phrases and inanimate ones as in Eshtehardi object gender marking on the verb (Comrie 1989). Some *leísta*[2] dialects of Spanish, as for instance Basque Spanish (Landa 1990), belong to this second group of languages. Be that as it may, the division in the agreement patterns is often mapped onto an animacy hierarchy whose highest positions are occupied by first and second person pronouns, followed by third person pronouns then, by animate nouns,... and lastly by inanimate indefinite plural nouns (see Comrie 1989 and Silverstein 1976 for further details on the hierarchy).

A hypothesis that can be drawn from all these data is that the categories that occupy a lower position in the animacy hierarchy may be defective categories with respect to the presence of certain features, as in Cole (1991). According to Cole, inanimate nouns in Korean and Chinese are defective since they lack the abstract feature [antecedent α] which allows categories to antecede reflexives. In parallel fashion, one can assume that in Mansi (Paus 1990), for instance, and maybe in Southern Cone Spanish as well, inanimate indefinite nominal objects are defective categories since they take a zero marking on the verb. It would be plausible to expect there to be crosslinguistic and crossdialectal variation as regards the specific categories in the lower parts of the hierarchy that can be defective.

Going back to the first question, it is legitimate to claim that certain varieties of

(2) *Leísmo* is the phenomenon that replaces accusative clitics by dative ones in contexts in which the so-called etymological system requires accusative Case. There are several degress of *leísmo*, the one described in Landa (1990) affects only animate accusatives.

Spanish have a uniform paradigmatic object-verb agreement under the hypothesis that a zero morpheme represents certain third person nominals on the verb agreement and the feature [3rd person] is precisely its only matrix value.

3. Object Agreement in Spanish.

In order to focus on the most challenging data, I am going to devote most of this paper to the verb agreement of direct objects, since indirect objects, whether they are nominal or pronominal, have never posed much problem as far as the objective conjugation is concerned. First, clitic doubling with indirect objects is unrestricted and, second, according to several studies (cf. Silva-Corvalán 1981 and Bentivoglio 1978), the doubling of indirect objects by their clitics has become almost categorical. We can see an example of this type of doubling in (15) below:

(15) Al final ?(le_i) dije la verdad a $Pedro_i$.
At the end 3CL-OI told-1sg the truth to Pedro
At the end, I told Pedro the truth.

3.1. Clitic doubling, specificity and the Matching Principle

Silva-Corvalán (1984) and Suñer (1988), put up some good arguments and empirical evidence in favor of the feature [+specific] as the main trigger for clitic doubling in Southern Cone dialects. For instance, examples (16), (17) and (18) below could be explained by saying that clitic doubling is possible when the doubled element is [+specific]:

(16) Lo_i conocí al nuevo $panadero_i$. (Southern Cone Spanish)
CL-him met-I the new baker
I met the new baker.

(17) Juan la_i sacó la $nota_i$ sin esfuerzo.
Juan it-fem-CL got-3SG the grade without effort.
Juan got the grade without effort.

(18) *Juan la_i sacó una $nota_i$ sin esfuerzo.
Juan it-fem-Cl got-3SG a grade without effort.
Juan got a grade without effort.

In particular, Suñer (1988) posits a Matching Principle which requires that clitics — which are also treated as agreement morphemes — should match the features of the doubled NP. Moreover, according to her analysis, accusative clitics are inherently marked [+specific] in the lexicon and subsequently the NP they double must be also [+specific] in order to set off the Matching Principle.

The first problem that this view entails is that one needs to demonstrate why indirect object clitics are not inherently [+specific], since they may double [-specific] IO-NPs. Otherwise, the argument turns out to be circular, that is, direct object clitics are specific because they can only double [+specific] NPs and, only specific NPs can occur in clitic-doubled DO constructions, because DO-CLs are [+specific].

Even though specificity seems to play a role in the clitic doubling phenomenon, I believe it is the result of a side effect, that is, all elements that do not occupy a low position in the Animacy Hierarchy are likely to be specific. Still, there is some evidence that may shake the whole argument for the kinship between specificity and clitic doubling. For instance:

(19) Juan lo_i invitaba a uno_i y luego se olvidaba.
Juan CL-him used to invite to one and then CL-3sg forgot
Juan used to invite people and then forget all about it.

(20) En ese departamento, lo_i admiten a $cualquiera_i$.
In that department, CL-him admit-3pl to anyone
In that department, they admit anyone.

(19) and (20) are clear examples of DO-clitic doubling with non-specific NPs. In (19), *a uno* 'to one' can be analyzed as a generic pronoun (as suggested to me by Zubizarreta, p.c.), and as in any object-verb agreement with a pronoun in Spanish, a fully specified overt clitic is required. In example (20), however, *a cualquiera* 'to anyone' is an animate noun and even though the nominal itself is not specified for gender, the verbal agreement takes the masculine for this feature, unless AGR inherits the opposite value from a higher NP *à la* Borer (1989), as shown in (21):

(21) Si mi hermana fue admitida para enfermera,
if my sister was accepted for nurse
¡ahí la_i admiten a $cualquiera_i$!
there CL-her accept-they to anyone
If my sister was accepted in the nursing program,
they accept anyone there!

The Matching Principle — although intuitively it might seem to be necessary at some point — is, as stated in Suñer (1988), a rough way to account for agreement facts. Agreement relations contain in most cases partial matchings of features as in (21), and occasionally even mismatches. Thus, a strong version of the Matching Principle, that is, a one-to-one feature matching constraint between the clitic and its double cannot be mantained if we are to account for the grammaticality of (20) and (21). Furthermore, it is not clear at all what the formal status of the Matching Principle is and how it could apply across the board.

Suñer (1988) also tackles the problem of the well-known contrast between DO-clitic doubling and IO-clitic doubling with wh-elements in the light of specificity. Consider the following asymmetry:

(22) *¿A $quién_i$ lo_i viste e_i?
who 3Acc-masc saw-you
Who did you see him/her?

(23) ¿A $quién_i$ le_i hablaste e_i por teléfono?
who 3Dat talked-you by phone
Who did you talk to him/her on the phone?

Along the lines of Suñer (1988), due to the fact that wh-words of the *quién* 'who' and *qué* 'what' type are [-specific] and since accusative clitics, such as *lo*, are the only ones inherently marked [+specific], there is in (22) a feature mismatching that results in a violation of the Matching Principle. Nonetheless, the ungrammaticality of sentences such as (22) and the like cannot be always understood as a specificity[3] issue. For instance, Suñer gives the following example as ungrammatical:

(24) *¿A cuántas\cuáles pasajeras$_i$ las$_i$ rescataron e$_i$?
How many\which passengers-fem. CL-3pl-fem. rescued-3pl.
How many\which passengers did they rescue? ((51b) in Suñer 1988)

Curiously, the *a cuáles pasajeras* 'which passengers' variant has a specific interpretation — though never admitted by Suñer (1988) — yet, the sentence is ruled out by the grammar, contrary to our expectations.

3.2. The Agreement Hypothesis Analysis

Previous works that considered Spanish object clitics as agreement elements generated in situ, such as Borer (1984) and Jaeggli (1982, 1986), treated clitics as affixes attached to the verb. This approach, however, faces quite a problem, as noted in Borer (1986), Borer & Grodzinsky (1986), and Saltarelli (1990). If the [V clitic + verb] constituent is a lexical item, the Lexical Integrity Hypothesis of Chomsky (1970) would impede this item to enter syntactic and morphosyntactic operations such as agreement, giving way to undesired results.

In a development in the theory of Principles and Parameters, Pollock (1989) and Chomsky (1989) decompose the IP node in several functional categories providing us indirectly with a structural possibility to solve the problem mentioned above and determine the canonical position of object clitics in Spanish. For this purpose, I will adopt here a version of phrase markers similar to those of Chomsky's and Pollock's, as illustrated in (25) below. In this way, assuming that the so-called object clitics are verbal agreement morphemes in Spanish, I am going to pursue an analysis in which object clitics are agreement heads (AGR_o) that project agreement phrases ($AGRP_o$). Based on this analysis, I will attempt to derive the Spanish data discussed so far.

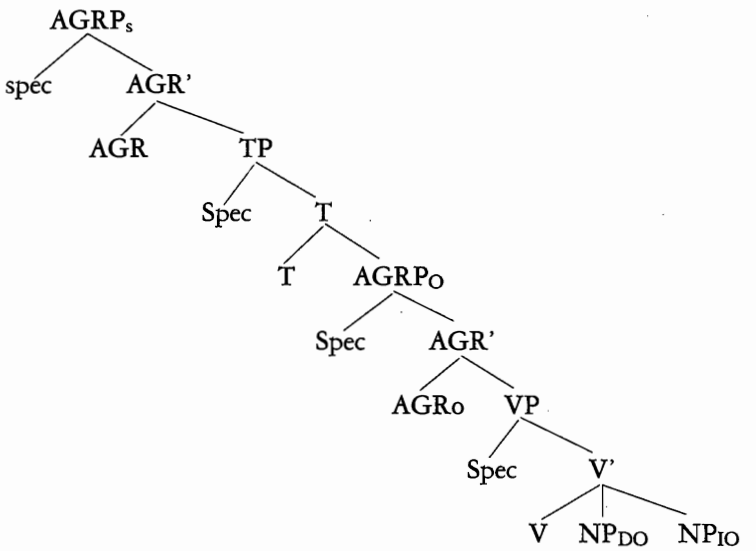
3.2.1. Preliminary considerations

Before we start deriving the relevant data, let us review the grammatical facts involved. Verbal direct object agreement is obligatory with pronouns (in all dialects), truly optional with animate and definite inanimate nominals (in some dialects) and impossible with indefinite inanimate nouns and wh-words.

(3) Suñer's (1988) definition of specificity is quite vague: "Specificity is used in this study to mean that referent(s) of a [+spec] NP can be identified with a particular x in the linguistic context (cf Rivero 1977). This definition of specificity as identifiability comes very close to some definitions on definiteness (e.g. Chafe 1976)", (Suñer 1988: 397).

As regards sentence (24), it seems that the NP 'which passengers' can be identified with a particular subset of people that belong to a specific set, i.e., the passengers involved in the wreck.

(25)



Agreement has several functions: it can have a referential function, an identification function, and a Case-assigning function. Normally one function does not exclude the other, but on the other hand, not all agreement relations fulfill all these functions. If I treat object-verb agreement morphemes as equivalent to subject-verb agreement morphemes, the former should be able to assign some kind of objective Case to the objects under the right configuration. However, if object-verb agreement can be absent sometimes we should infer that the verb has not lost its ability to assign objective Case. These assumptions basically account for the optionality of clitic doubling with certain types of nominals, already described. Thus, for some DO-NPs the speaker can choose between the presence or absence of the verb-object agreement morphology in the same way as s/he can choose between the passive and active morphology.

3.2.2 Object Agreement and Accusative / Dative Case Assignment

Going back to the data, let us derive a sentence like (16) repeated below for convenience as (26), which is an example of DO-clitic doubling or, in my approach, verb-object agreement.

(26) (Lo$_i$) conocí al nuevo panadero$_i$. (Southern Cone Spanish)
CL-him met-I the new baker
I met the new baker.

The particle *lo* 'him' is base generated under AGRo and, as a morpheme, it requires a host to be attached to. Therefore, Head-to-Head movement is triggered, the verb moves to AGRo and adjuncts to it. At this point, in order for the DO *al nuevo panadero* 'the new baker' to receive Case, it has to move to Spec of VP and subsequently to Spec of AGRPo since the verb has lost its power to assign Case. The

latter fact can be explained in two ways. *À la* Jaeggli (1982, 1986), the clitic or the morpheme would absorb the verb's property to assign Case to its object. Alternatively, I will adopt a version of the Comp Indexing device, introduced in Aoun, Hornstein and Sportische (1981) to account for *that*-trace effects, and state that when AGRo is visible at PF the features of the morpheme percolate up to the node immediately dominating it and assign this node an index, as in (27). This index thwarts the possibility for the verb to assign Case under government.

(27)

Once the direct object has landed on Spec of the AGRPo, Case assignment takes place like in any other ordinary Spec-Head Agreement relation (cf. Sportische 1990). Furthermore, it is at this stage of the agreement process that Suñer's Matching Principle can be rescued in a weaker version that we will call the Feature Harmony Principle, as stated in (28):

(28) The Feature Harmony Principle. The feature matrixes of two elements in an agreement relation — although they do not need to match each other exactly — have to be harmonious.

Somehow, the Feature Harmony Principle is more promising than the Matching Principle since the former is flexible enough to generate (26) as well as (20).

The spec of AGR_o position is a very restricted one with respect to the types of elements that it can host since it is an argument position selected by a head. Thus, the head AGR_o imposes selectional restrictions on its specifier in the same way that verbs select their subjects. For the time being, let us say that an element with the features [-definite, -animate] violates the selectional restrictions of AGR_o in Southern Cone Spanish, hence it cannot appear as its specifier. The constraints that the selectional restrictions of AGR_o impose on the element in the Specifier position are independent from those of the Feature Harmony Principle. That is to say, a sentence can be well-formed according to the Feature Harmony Principle and still be ungrammatical if it does not meet the selectional restrictions of AGR_o and viceversa.

Bearing this in mind and the fact that, featurewise, lower members of the Animacy Hierarchy are defective, we can account for the following data in which indirect object and direct object verb agreement are contrasted:

(29) Les$_i$ di fuego a unas maderas$_i$.
To them-CL gave-I fire to some wood
I set some wood on fire.

(30) *Las$_i$ vi unas maderas$_i$.
them-CL saw-I some wood
I saw some wood.

The greater freedom of indirect object verbal agreement is derived straightforwardly from the way indirect objects receive Case in Spanish and Italian as well.

That is to say, since indirect objects obtain Case inherently as in Belletti and Rizzi (1988) or lexically, they always occur with a preposition, they never have to move to the specifier of any agreement head to receive structural Case.[4] Consequently, indirect objects do not need to fulfill the selectional restrictions of AGR_o; moreover, they concord by virtue of a coindexing relation that abides by the Feature Harmony Principle. On the other hand, (30) is ungrammatical because when the "defective" DO *unas maderas* 'some wood' moves to Spec of AGR_o to receive its Case, it becomes subject to and a violator of the selectional restrictions of the verbal morpheme *las* 'them'. Likewise, one could account for the grammatical asymmetry between direct object and indirect object wh-elements when entering verbal agreement relations, as exemplified in (22) and (23) and repeated below as (31) and (32) respectively:

(31) *¿A quién$_i$ lo$_i$ viste e$_i$?
who 3Acc-masc saw-you
Who did you see?

(32) ¿A quién$_i$ le$_i$ hablaste e$_i$ por teléfono?
who 3Dat talked-you by phone
Who did you talk to on the phone?

However, to consider wh-words of the *a quién* 'to whom' type defective categories for object agreement constitutes a bold stipulation which is difficult to motivate on any ground. Alternatively, following our derivation of (26), let us assume that the wh-element in (31) has moved to Spec of AGR_o for Case reasons, and from there to Spec of COMP leaving behind an empty category which is a variable. However, in the flavor of Jaeggli (1986), this empty category is automatically identified as *pro* by the features of the agreement morpheme or the clitic. This deprives the empty category of its status as a variable. Thus, (31) can be ruled out because the empty category left by the wh-element is a *pro* bound by an operator as in Jaeggli (1986), or because the variable has lost its [-anaphoric] value. So far either solution seems to be equally good. Parallel to (29), the grammaticality of (32) can be explained in terms of the fact that the IO-wh-element has been extracted from within the VP and the variable could never be identified by AGR_o in that position.

Furthermore, the same results in grammaticality are reached with the wh-elements in-situ in non-echo questions, a situation that seems to indicate that the identification of empty categories by AGR_o also holds at the LF component where the wh-element moves to Spec of COMP to obtain scope. This is illustrated in (33) and (34) below:

(33) *¿Quién$_i$ lo$_k$ vio a quién$_k$?
who him-CL saw-3SG to whom
Who saw who?

(4) Actually, it would be more accurate to say (as pointed out to me by Joseph Aoun) that the indirect object cannot move to Spec of AGR_o, that is, to a Case position, otherwise, it would violate Chomsky's (1986) *Uniformity Condition* on inherent Case.

(34) ¿Quién$_i$ le$_k$ dio un beso a quién$_k$?
who him-CL gave-3SG a kiss to whom
Who gave a kiss to who?

3.3. Zero object-verb agreement and obligatory overt object verb agreement

Consider the following example:

(35) Vimos a Pedro.
saw-we to Pedro
We saw Pedro.

Previously, I have assumed that when the speaker selects the option of having zero object agreement on the verb, as in (35) — although the object NP qualifies as a non defective category — AGR_o contains only the feature third person since the zero agreement option is not available with second and first persons. Then, since the verb will eventually move up the tree to pick up its tense, Head-to-Head movement applies and as a first step the verb adjoins to the object Agreement head. In the instances represented by (35), AGR_o is phonetically null and unable to assign an index to the mother node. Hence, the DO-NP moves to spec of VP which is an accessible position for the verb to assign it structural Case from the AGRo node.

The last set of data to be explained is that of object verb agreement with pronouns as illustrated in (36):

(36) No *(la$_i$) vi a ella$_i$ por ningún sitio.
neg 3sg.fem saw to 3sg.fem anywhere
I didn't see her anywhere.

Due to the fact that object verb agreement is morphologically rich, one would expect these morphemes to be able to license empty *pro* categories as the subject verbal morphology does. In effect, this is the case, as shown in Jaeggli (1986) and illustrated below:

(37) Juan lo$_i$ mató pro$_i$.
Juan him-CL killed
Juan killed him.

(38) * Juan mató pro$_i$.
Juan killed
Juan killed.

pro= him, Pedro,...

In (37), object agreement identifies the empty pronominal category, hence its obligatoriness, abiding in this way by Rizzi's (1986) version of the Generalized Empty Category Principle (39) and Jaeggli and Safir's (1989) Theory of Identification (40) which state that:

(39) Let x be the licensing head of an occurrence of *pro*; then *pro* has the grammatical specifications of the features on x coindexed with it.
(Rizzi 1986)

(40) AGR can identify an empty category as thematic *pro* iff the category containing AGR Case-governs the empty category.
(Jaeggli & Safir 1989)

However, from the point of view of an identification theory, the data in (36) are puzzling since we have a fully specified overt pronoun that requires verb object agreement obligatorily in order to be licensed. My stand at this point is that, as far as verbal agreement is concerned, overt stressed pronouns in Spanish behave in the same way as empty *pros*. Due to the pronominal nature of verbal agreement, both types of elements are attracted to the specifier position of AGR where a healthy Agreement Case Governed relationship is established (see Koopman 1990 in this regard).

Finally, it seems reasonable to ask why one cannot state that the AGRPo node is not projected when the agreement morpheme is phonologically invisible. In my analysis, $AGRP_O$ has to be projected every time there is a transitive verb. Additionally, I also posited a third person zero object verbal agreement morpheme taking into account that some clitic doubling dialects of Spanish, e.g. Basque Spanish as in Landa (1990), have the phenomenon of null objects in their syntax where neither the object nor the clitic or agreement morpheme are present though always understood. Therefore, if we want to maintain a Theory of Identification, it is necessary to have zero morphemes in order to license these phonologicaly null arguments. Interestingly, my analysis predicts that these null objects can only have as referents nominal defective categories, mostly inanimate nominals, as it turns out to be the case in Landa (1990).

4. Conclusion

This study argues not only for the feasibility of treating object clitics as object agreement morphemes, but also for the superiority of such an analysis over the pronominal-affix analysis. Potential descriptive problems in the literature of clitic-doubled constructions, such as asymmetries in wh-extractions, optional agreement and ill-formed clitic-doubled object nominals are explained by the existence of an object agreement phrase with clitics as heads, and the syntactic, semantic and subsequent morphological restrictions that apply to the objects that move to the spec position of this node. Furthermore, the availability of two accusative Case assigners, namely, the verb and AGRo, allows us to have variation within the language.

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