

On the Absence of Spanish Past Participial Object Clitic Agreement: the AGRo Parameter in Romance

JON FRANCO
(Universidad de Deusto)

1.0. Introduction¹

One of the still standing puzzles in comparative studies in Romance is the asymmetries with respect to participle object agreement between Spanish, on the one hand, and French and Italian, on the other. While analyses such as Sportiche's (1990, 1992) might account for participle object agreement in French, the impossibility of having participle agreement with accusative clitics in Spanish is in need of a satisfactory explanation. One of the purposes of this article is to attempt such an explanation. Thus, the main contrast we will be concerned with here is the following:

- (1) Juan *la* ha comido/*a. (Spanish)
Juan it-FEM has eaten-MASC/*FEM
Juan has eaten it.
- (2) Gianni l'ha mangiata/*o. (Italian)
Gianni it-FEM has eaten-FEM/MASC
Gianni has eaten it.
- (3) Jean l'a mangé/ée. (French)
Jean it-FEM has eaten-MASC/FEM
Jean has eaten it.

In the Spanish sentence in (1), the agreement between the feminine accusative clitic *la* and the past participle yields ungrammaticality. Conversely, agreement between the clitic and the past participle is obligatory in Italian, as shown in (2). Finally, French makes this type of agreement completely optional in the spoken language, so that neither the presence nor the absence of participial agreement with the accusative clitic will incur in ungrammaticality, as (3) illustrates.

(1) This is an improved version of chapter four of my dissertation completed at the University of Southern California in September 1993. Also, an early version of this paper was presented at the Pre-session on Hispanic Linguistics of the Georgetown University Round Table (GURT) in Languages and Linguistics conference held on March 9-10, 1993. I would like to thank the conference audience as well as Gorka Elordieta and Mario Saltarelli for their helpful comments at that time.

A logical and desirable way to approach this problem is to derive the parametrization of participial object agreement from other syntactic differences found among the Romance languages under study. Hence, the real issue at stake is to determine which of the characteristics that distinguish Spanish from French or Italian is responsible for the absence in the former of participle agreement in active sentences.

Here I argue for the hypothesis that the absence of participle agreement with accusative clitics must be attributed to the fact that object clitics in Spanish are verbal morphemes that head an independent functional category (AGRoP) in the articulation of the IP node (as suggested for Hindi in Mahajan 1990), whereas in French and Italian they are still pronominal arguments originated within the VP in complement positions. This claim is supported by a piece of clinching evidence that really distinguishes Spanish from the other two languages, that is, the phenomenon of clitic-doubling with elements in argument positions, which has been considered by Silva-Corvalán (1981), Borer (1984), Suñer (1988), Fernández Soriano (1989), Franco (1991, 1993a, b) and other studies cited in these works as a manifestation of verb object agreement. The second claim presented here is that the past participle morphology—and non-finite morphology in general—is an X^0 category that projects a functional phrase (AFP) to which the verb moves to pick up the non-finite endings. Bearing these two hypotheses in mind, we can safely conclude that the absence of agreement between the clitic and the past participle in Spanish correlates with the absence of a clitic argument in a Spec-Head relation with the participial morphology.

1.1. Some Previous Analyses

Kayne (1992) claims that the absence of participle agreement in active sentences in Spanish is due to the fact that Spanish, unlike French and Italian, has only one type of auxiliary for the Present Perfect and Pluperfect tenses, namely, *haber* 'to have', and this auxiliary has incorporated an abstract preposition that blocks past participle agreement. However, this proposal based on the mono-lexical use of auxiliaries in Spanish perfect tenses could only have some relevance at the most for past participle subject agreement with intransitive ergative verbs, types of verbs that in the Italian and French perfect tenses require the auxiliaries *essere* and *être* 'to be' respectively, as opposed to Spanish that uses the auxiliary *haber* with all intransitive and transitive verbs.

Despite the reservations one may have with respect to Kayne's characterization of the auxiliary *haber* (its motivation is also purely analysis internal), let us assume for a moment Kayne's analysis and see its potential for adjustment when applied to the Spanish data. On a first approach, the sentences presented in (1), (2) and (3) cannot be covered by Kayne's auxiliary hypothesis as it is, since the asymmetry in participle object agreement between Spanish and French and Italian is not paralleled by any auxiliary distinction. Thus, in order to account for the data in (1-3), the required amendment to Kayne's analysis would be to state that Spanish *haber* also differs from Italian *avere* or French *avoir* since the former is the only auxiliary that has an incorporated abstract preposition. It is not clear what the source of this preposition might be in Spanish; one may suggest that it stems from the so-called personal *a* of Spanish accusatives, however, inanimates in general do not bear this preposition and

still lack agreement with the participle. In any case, we have to keep in mind that we are dealing with verbs in all three languages, and establishing another categorial distinction just to account for participial agreement seems unnatural and ad-hoc. Moreover, passive sentences in the present perfect or pluperfect in Spanish pose a further problem for analyses of the Kayne-type since, in these instances, the auxiliary *haber* does not prevent participle agreement from taking place, as shown in (4):

- (4) María ha sido atacada por un ladrón
 María-FEM has-PRF been attacked-FEM by a burglar.
 María has been attacked by a burglar.

Probably, in order to account for example (4), Kayne's analysis could be salvaged with another patch. However, the growth in complexity of this analysis invites us to consider an alternative approach.

Additionally, Kayne (1989a) and Sportiche (1990, 1992) claim that past participial agreement with the direct object in Romance is a manifestation of object-verb agreement and should be analyzed similarly to subject agreement, that is, as a local Spec-Head/AGR relation. In this way, along the lines of Sportiche (1990, 1992), French and Italian participle agreement is obtained when an XP moves through the specifier of the agreement head *AGRO*, whose projection is identified with the syntactic projection of the participial morphology. This analysis would explain why participle agreement is not triggered when the direct object is in its canonical position. Nevertheless, as good as this account might be for French or Italian, still, it leaves unexplained why the Spanish example in (1) becomes ungrammatical when the clitic and the participle agree.

Moreover, on a closer look at the participial agreement morphology, one wonders to what extent AGRs and Sportiche's *AGRO* should be treated equally given the difference in the kind of ϕ features involved in both cases. Whereas AGRs bears person and number concordance with the subject argument, *AGRO* agrees in number and gender with the accusative clitic. The lack of person agreement in the latter weakens the analysis that treats in parallel AGRs and the head of the projection of object participial agreement (Sportiche's *AGRO*) and suggests that this may not be the type of verb-object argument agreement relation found in languages with attested object conjugations. Incidentally, contra Rizzi (1986), it has been claimed for various languages (cf. Borer 1984 for Hebrew, Benmamoun 1992 for Arabic, Franco 1991 for Spanish, Kayne 1989b for English, Rigau 1991 for Catalan) that the feature [person] and not the feature [number] is the one that must prevail to carry out the typical roles of verbal agreement, namely, *pro* licensing and Case assignment. This claim accounts for the fact that Romance past participle agreement does not license *pro* elements. That is to say, since participial agreement is only encoded by the features [number] and [gender], the identification of a null pronominal element turns out to be impossible, as shown in (5):

- (5) *Gianni *pro*_i ha mangiata_i. (Italian)
 Gianni it-FEM has eaten-FEM (*in the relevant reading)
 Gianni has eaten it.

Bearing this in mind, I am going to entertain the idea that the agreement

morphology on the participle does not head an independent agreement projection in the articulation of IP (cf. Chomsky 1989, 1992 for an alternative view), but this type of morphology is adjoined to a functional category that heads the projection of non-finite inflection. On the other hand, participial agreement belongs to another type of agreement characteristic of Romance and many other languages, that is, nominal agreement, as opposed to verbal agreement.

1.2. An Alternative Analysis

In the spirit of Marantz (1984), Baker (1988) Chomsky (1989) and Laka (1993), let us assume that inflectional morphology is derived from the syntactic component, where it belongs. In other words, inflectional structure and syntactic structure correspond to one single structural configuration. Under this view, the linear order and the grammatical processes in which inflectional morphemes participate are obtained from the hierarchical relations they hold in the initial structural mapping and the subsequent application of X^0 movement since inflectional morphemes are assumed to be functional heads. In this way, we can also assume along the lines of Baker (1985) that the degree of closeness (adjacency-wise) of the inflectional morpheme to the root somehow tells us something about the history of the syntactic process in which the morpheme was involved.

Going back to the issue that concerns us here, it would be logical to assume that the past participle morphology heads its own maximal projection in the syntax. Furthermore, we are going to assume in the flavor of Jaeggli and Hyams (1993) that there is an Affix head node (Af^0) which contains the verb's non-finite morphology, that is, the participial and progressive suffixes and maybe the infinitival endings too. Hence, the so-called non-conjugated verb forms will also raise outside the VP to pick up the non-finite morphology that, in turn, has been selected by the auxiliary verb under which it is embedded. For instance, according to Jaeggli and Hyams (1993), the English auxiliary *have* will select as a complement an AfP headed by the morpheme *-ed/en*, whereas the auxiliary *be* will select a complement headed by *-ing*. Other verbs like modals may be heading a Modal Phrase that selects a complement with infinitival endings. The position for these auxiliaries has not been determined thoroughly beyond controversy. They can be generated as heads of an AuxP as in Laka (1990) or Belletti (1990), or as heads of an Aspectual Phrase as in Ouhalla (1990) or Landa and Franco (1992).

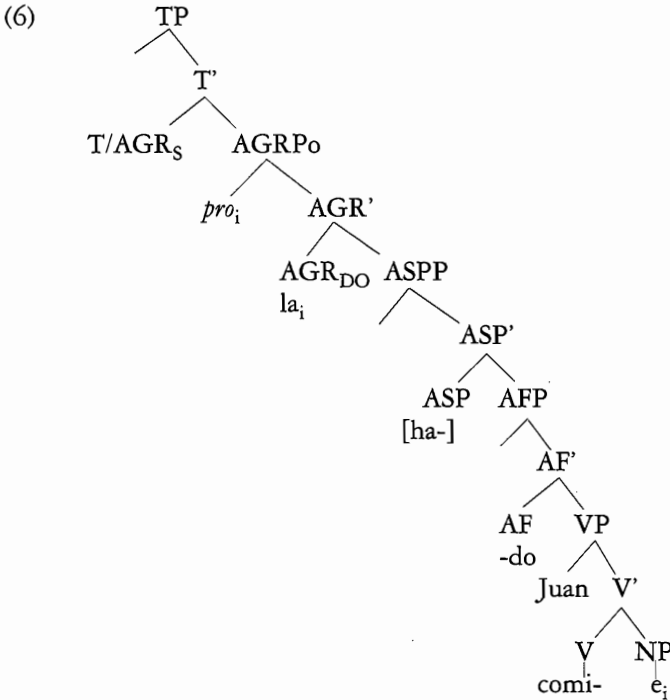
However, a word of caution should be said about the Spanish verb complex with *haber* since it does not behave like other auxiliaries with respect to question inversion and adverb placement or even clitic placement.² In principle, Spanish modal

(2) In Spanish, the unit of the auxiliary *haber* 'to have' and the verb in the participle form seems unbreakable at least in the so-called present perfect. For instance, unlike in Italian, no adverb can intervene between the two elements:

- (i)* Juan ha siempre hablado de él. (Spanish) (ii) Gianni ha sempre parlato di lui. (Italian)
 Juan has always talked about him. Gianni has always talked about him.

Also, although it is not specific to Spanish, both the verb and the auxiliary move together in front of the subject in question inversion contexts. This contrasts deeply with the behavior of other verbal complexes such as those construed with modals and *estar*, cases in which it is possible to raise the auxiliary alone and have the subject between the auxiliary and the verb in interrogative sentences:

verbs and *estar* sit in the same projection as that of *haber*, yet, along the lines of Suñer (1987), obligatory cliticization onto the main verb must apply in the Present Perfect Tense to yield the required unit [*haber*+Verb]. Be that as it may, the initial structural representation proposed in this paper for the grammatical version of (1) would be the one illustrated in (6):



Details aside, there are three basic assumptions that we need to adopt in order to fully understand (6) and the subsequent derivation in (7). First, the accusative clitic

- (iii)* ¿Ha Juan comido? vs. ¿Ha comido Juan?
 Has Juan eaten?
 (iv) ¿Está Juan comiendo? or ¿Está comiendo Juan?
 Is Juan eating?

Finally, there is another contrast between the [*haber*+Verb] complex and the others, which is that the former does not allow enclitics.

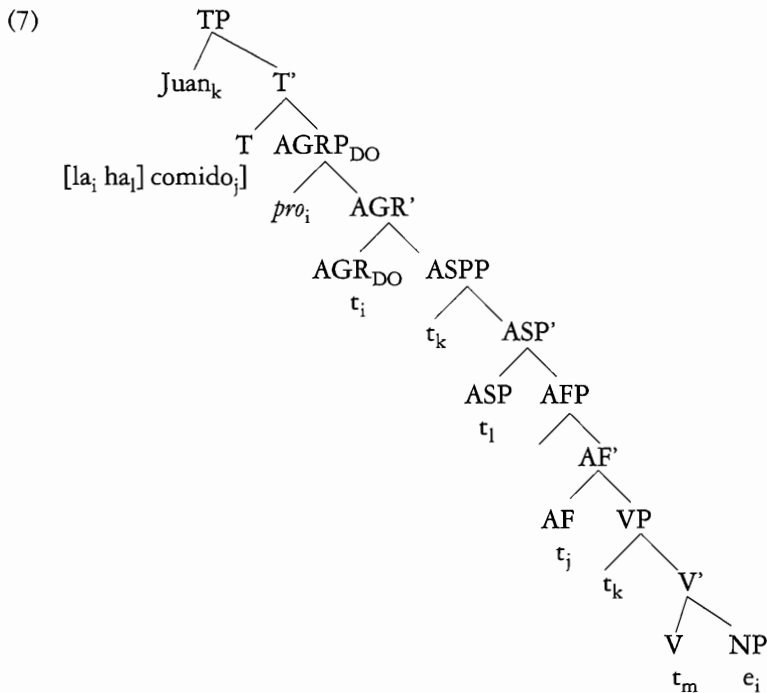
- (v) *Juan ha comíðolo. vs. Juan lo ha comido.
 Juan has eaten it(CL) Juan it(CL) has eaten.
 (vi) Juan está comiéndolo or Juan lo está comiendo.
 Juan is eating it(CL)

A possible account for the data involving the Present Perfect forms of the auxiliary *haber* could be posited in the spirit of Suñer (1987), who claims that the monosyllabic status of most of the Present Perfect forms of the auxiliary *haber* is responsible for its obligatory cliticization onto the verb. Support for this claim is found in examples with other tenses in which the phonological strong forms of the auxiliary *haber* can occur separated from the verb:

- (vii) Si hubiera él dicho la verdad...
 (if) had he told the truth

Still, although the explanation above can account for the word order outputs, the impossibility of enclisis with [*haber*+Verb] complexes opens the door to another topic of investigation.

has been generated as the head of AGR_O and, as agreement morphology, is able to license a null pronominal element in the specifier position of the object, satisfying in this way the Projection Principle and Theta Theory at LF. The clitic and the auxiliary verb move upwards via Incorporation à la Baker (1988) picking up the finite inflectional morphology,³ and the main verb does the same with the non-finite one. Second, even though I will assume that the auxiliaries sit in the ASP head in complex tenses, Aspect is not uniquely given the feature [+perfective] by any specific item that appears in the ASP head; rather, it can also be determined compositionally by Tense, adverbs, etc. Third, the ASP head can select an Affix Phrase. Thus, for the final output, we have the derivation illustrated in (7):



We have seen in section 1.1. that the past participle agreement morphology cannot license a *pro*. This induces us to assume that if the licensing of argumental *pro* is to be kept to a Spec-Head agreement relation, the agreement heads ought to be T/AGR_S, AGR_{DO} and AGR_{IO}, so the *pro* licensing is realized in the specifier of these heads when in the spirit of Chomsky (1992) and Franco (1993a) the checking of NP-features takes place. On the other hand, given the derivation in (7) and the analysis proposed in these works, under which arguments check their Φ -features in specifier positions of functional categories, it would be legitimate to ask what rules out the possibility to have agreement with the participle when the direct object is clitic doubled. That is to say, if the clitic doubled direct object has to raise to Spec of

(3) See Chomsky (1992) for a different conceptual implementation, namely, verb movement as a requirement for the checking of V features.

AGR_{DO} through Spec of AF, why —as shown in (8) below— does not the object trigger agreement with the past participle?:

- (8) Juan la_i ha visto/*a_i a María_i.
 Juan Acc.CL-3Sg.F has seen-Partpl/F to María
 Juan has seen María.

At this point, we are going to claim that Spanish *strong* AGR_{DO} heads, that is, those that contain an accusative clitic, as claimed in Franco (1993a), neutralize the value of the AF head for the NP-feature checking.⁴ Hence, the clitic-doubled direct object does not check any of its features until it lastly reaches the Spec of AGR_{DO} position.

Our next point of concern is the asymmetries in participial agreement in Spanish versus French and Italian; we are going to assume that its source is not related to language idiosyncrasies in the nominal participial agreement morphology, which we have already considered to be generated adjoined to the head AF in the three languages. It is worth of note that the initial structural representation in (6) proposed for the Spanish data does account for the absence of participial agreement in Spanish by precluding the subsequent syntactic operations from yielding the necessary configuration between the elements for this type of agreement to happen, as shown in (7). That is to say, the required Spec-Head agreement relation between the clitic and the participle will never be met since both elements are heads.

On the other hand, there is no hindrance for the past participle in French, Italian, and also Catalan to enter into a Spec-Head agreement relation with the accusative clitic. I claim that this fact is due to the XP argument status of the accusative clitics in these languages, as opposed to the X⁰ inflectional status of Spanish object clitics.⁵

(4) This neutralization of the functional category AFP could be somehow similar to that of the neutralization of AGR_{DO}P by the passive inflectional morphology. Another way to view the presumed effects of AGR_{DO} on AFP is to claim that the *strong* head AGR_{DO} absorbs the concordance of the AF head.

(5) Although a full discussion on the categorization of object clitics in the three languages at stake would go beyond the scope of this paper, there are some significant asymmetries, pointed out in Franco (1993a), between Spanish clitics and those of these Romance languages that seem to support the latter claim. To mention some, avoiding the risk of getting out of focus, I would like to emphasize the following characteristics which single out Spanish from the other two languages under comparison:

I. Probably, the occurrence of Spanish clitic doubling with verb complements in argument position is the strongest difference between the two groups of languages in question. Furthermore, certain complements in Spanish, such as strong pronominal objects or logical subjects of inversion predicates, that is, surface Datives, demand clitic doubling obligatorily.

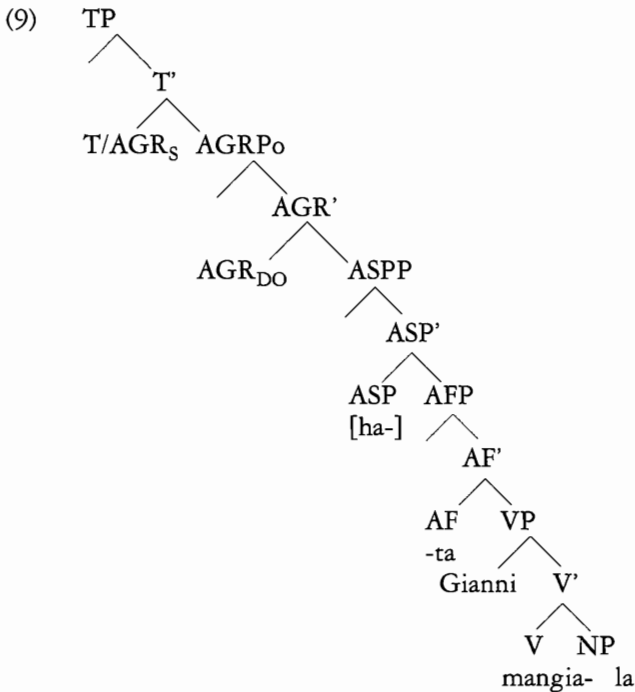
II. The Spanish argument clitic system is, like most agreement systems, a very limited one in regard to forms and functions when compared with the extensive clitic systems of other clitic languages, that is, Spanish lacks locative or partitive clitics, which are so common in French and Italian.

III. Only the Spanish clitic system exhibits paradigm variation, a feature typical of agreement systems, a variation that is conveyed by the phenomenon of *leísmo* and *loísmo/laísmo*.

IV. Spanish clitics strongly obey morphological constraints. Thus, Spanish clitics observe a rigid fixed order Dative + Accusative, unlike French which reverses this order for the third person clitic combinations. Also, Spanish requires object clitics to be strictly adjacent to the verb, as opposed to Italian that interpolates reflexive or inchoative clitics between object clitics and the verb.

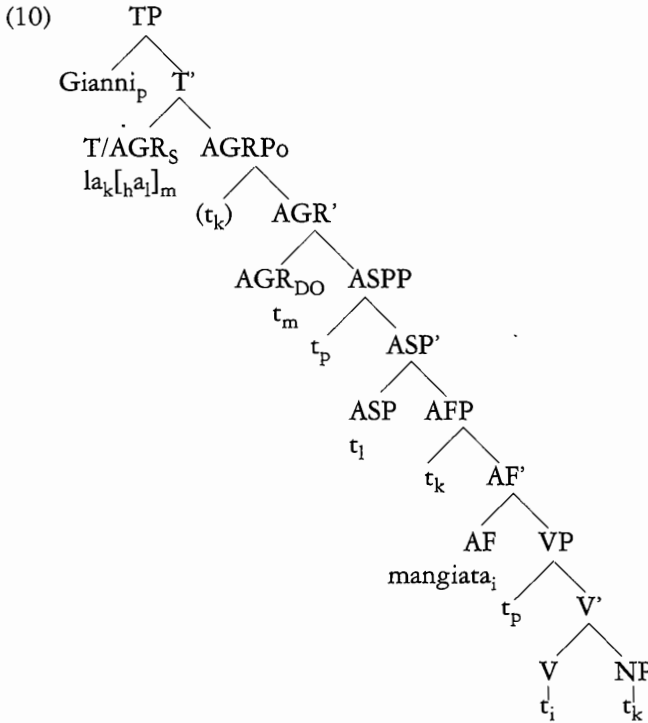
All these facts may suggest that the Spanish language has reanalyzed itself and relegated argumental clitics to express object agreement relations.

Returning to the French and Italian data, the accusative clitics in (2) and (3) are generated in an argument position as sisters to the verb, as shown in (9) below:



Following this line of reasoning, the phrasal accusative object clitics in French and Italian undergo NP-movement, so that the pronominal clitic does not disassociate completely from the verb. Since NP-movement is realized stepwise through SPEC positions, the object clitic is bound to enter into a SPEC-Head relation with the participle, which will trigger agreement at that point of the derivation. Also, in accordance with other analyses of Italian functional elements such as that of Belletti (1990), we propose in (9) and (10) that the Italian auxiliary *avere*, given its word order properties, originates in a functional category above the VP as well. Now, in order to reach the final surface form that appears in (2), we can proceed in (9) along the lines of Sportiche (1990), according to which clitic movement consists of two types of movement: the first one is XP movement to a position from which the clitic undergoes head movement to incorporate to the auxiliary verb. For the first stage, we can hypothesize that the clitic moves to Spec of AF in the overt syntax and even abstractly to Spec of AGR_O via covert movement at LF, following Chomsky (1992). From this position in the structure, head movement applies and the clitic is attached to the auxiliary verb. Bearing in mind that French and Italian clitics are not inflectional morphemes, once the clitic has raised to the relevant Spec positions in the syntax, the remaining operations of clitic placement will be presumably taken care of by the principles that govern the morphophonological component. To put it simple, prosodic cliticization would be a type of operation that moves the clitic from

a Spec position to an independent head. For the time being, we are going to assume that the syntactic and morphological derivation of (2) will be as in (10):



Lastly, participial agreement with nominal direct objects is banned due to the nature of past participial agreement which is bound to only occur with pronominals like many other agreement systems in other languages, as for instance, the Welsh subject-verb agreement system, which never co-occurs with nominals.⁶ Furthermore, one could elaborate on this descriptive generalization in this particular case and state that on their way to INFL, verbs drag along pronouns in the overt syntax, whereas true nominals do not seem to undergo this movement obligatorily.⁷ Be that as it may, this dragging of pronouns outside the VP increases the possibility for the

(6) The frequent categorization of pronouns as elements that are most likely to participate in an agreement relation is a rather complex issue. There seems to be a correlation between salient, topical or animate arguments, that is most pronouns, and agreeing elements (see Silverstein's 1976 Animacy Hierarchy or Franco 1993b in this regard). In relation to this study, it is worth mentioning the obligatoriness of clitic doubling with pronouns versus the optionality of clitic doubling with nominals in Spanish. Unfortunately, to the best of my knowledge, no satisfactory explanation of this phenomenon has been offered. Still, we could conjecture that due to the fact that pronouns lack any semantic lexical content, the checking of the pronoun's ϕ features via an agreement relation is highly desirable for the grammar to guarantee the convergence of the derivation.

(7) For the sake of illustration, the behavior of objects with English phrasal verbs also constitutes another phenomenon subject to the pronoun/noun asymmetry, as shown by the contrast between (i) and (ii) below, in which the pronoun obligatorily has to occur adjacent to the verbal head:

(i) She woke Peter/him up (ii) She woke up Pete/*him

French and Italian clitic pronoun to enter in a Spec-head agreement configuration with the participial morphology.⁸

1.3. Passive Constructions

Remarkably, the obligatoriness of past participial agreement with passive surface subjects in Spanish (see example (4)), Italian and French constitutes *prima facie* evidence in support of the hypothesis that this type of agreement can only be achieved by phrasal movement. Thus, it is reasonable to assume that when the verb internal argument in passive constructions undergoes NP-movement to a SPEC position outside the VP in order to receive nominative Case from a higher up verbal inflection, such as Tense or AGRs, it goes through the specifier position of the AFP headed by the past participle, whence agreement conditions can be met. Suffice it to say, that this intermediate step of NP-movement takes place in equal fashion to that of French and Italian accusative clitic movement. Notice that participial agreement with post-verbal nominatives in Spanish passive constructions are not problematic either, but can also follow straightforwardly from this analysis without supplementary amendments. In this regard, all we need to say is that the NP-movement operation raises cyclically the agreeing argument all the way to SPEC of T/AGRs, whereas the verb complex has to further move up to the last upper functional head which in accordance with Saltarelli's (1993) proposal, is the Voice head I. Presumably, this head hosts a voice feature and checks the active/passive status of the verb which comes specified from the lexicon.

2. Other Issues Related to Participle Agreement

Italian absolute participle constructions are rather known for triggering participle agreement with accusative clitics, in contrast with their French and Spanish counterparts, in which this type of agreement never takes place, as illustrated in (11) and (12):

- (11) a. *Affondata la nave, Garibaldi...* (Italian)
 sunk-FEM the ship-FEM Garibaldi
 (Once) the ship sank, Garibaldi...
 (PRO_i) having sunk the ship, Garibaldi_i
- b. *Affondatala, Garibaldi...*
 sunk-FEM-CL-ACC-FEM Garibaldi
 (After) PRO_i sank it, Garibaldi_i...
- (12) a. *Hundida la nave, Garibaldi...* (Spanish)
 sunk-FEM the ship-FEM Garibaldi
 (Once) the ship sank, Garibaldi...
 (PRO_i) having sunk the ship, Garibaldi_i
- b. **Hundidala, Garibaldi...*
 sunk-FEM-CL-ACC-FEM Garibaldi
 (After) PRO_i sank it, Garibaldi_i...

(8) Even though we are not ready to discuss the optionality of parameters, we assume that in those instances in which the option of not having participial agreement has been chosen in French and sometimes in Italian, an alternative route outside the VP has been taken by the non-agreeing element.

The impossibility of a construction in French parallel to the one exemplified by (11) is explained in Kayne (1989a: 97), independently of the issue of participial agreement, as a result of the absence of a full-fledged Aux-to-Comp rule in this language. In any case, the data in (11) could be considered as direct evidence in favor of the hypothesis that argues for the initial XP status of accusative clitics in Italian, since both the clitic and the corresponding nominal are mutually interchangeable in the same structure. However, it is worth of note that the sentence in (11a) has an ambiguous reading between the unaccusative interpretation and the transitive one, as shown by the English glosses, whereas in (11b), the absolute participle occurs with an accusative clitic and only the transitive interpretation is possible. As for Spanish, (12a) patterns like the Italian counterpart in (11a), nevertheless, the cliticized version of (12a) is not available in Spanish, as shown in (12b). In order to account for the ungrammaticality of (12b) in Spanish, we may need a further introspection into this language. In principle, (12b) should be possible since the accusative clitic as such eventually needs a lexical head and the participle is the closest one. Alternatively, we are going to argue that the accusative clitic cannot occur in Spanish absolute participles for the simple reason that there is no accusative Case to be assigned in these constructions. This claim is supported by the fact that the agreeing argument cannot take the so-called Spanish personal *a* for animate direct objects, as one would have expected had this agreeing XP been an argument bearing accusative Case:

- (13) Defendida (*a) María, Carlos...
 Defended-FEM to María, Carlos...
 (Once) María was defended, Carlos...

As a matter of fact, Spanish absolute participle constructions, as opposed to the Italian ones (cf. Belletti 1992), have been analyzed as a type of passive structures in De Miguel (1992). Thus, (12a) would be the short version without auxiliaries of the paraphrases in (14):

- (14) a. *Habiendo sido hundida la nave, Garibaldi...*
 Having been sunk-FEM the ship, Garibaldi...
 (Once) the ship was sunk, Garibaldi...
 b. *Habiendo sido hundida la nave por Garibaldi,...*
 Having been sunk-FEM the ship by Garibaldi...
 Having been sunk the ship by Garibaldi...

(14a) and (14b) correspond to the two semantic interpretations of (12a). Incidentally, another contrast between Italian and Spanish absolute participles is that only the latter allows the *by*-phrase in these constructions, as shown by (15) ((1f) in Belletti 1992) and (16):

- (15) **Salutata Maria da Gianni, tutti uscirono della sala.* (Italian)
 Greeted Maria by Gianni, everybody left from-the living room.
 Greeted Maria by Gianni, everybody left the living room.

- (16) Saludada María por Juan, todos salieron de la sala. (Spanish)
 Greeted Maria by Juan, everybody left from the living room.
 Greeted Maria by Juan, everybody left the living room.

There are two more pieces of evidence that argue in favor of the passive status of Spanish absolute participial structures, namely, anaphoric constructions and idiomatic expressions. Belletti (1992) claims that the fact that the agreeing NP in absolute participle constructions can be an anaphor indicates that these constructions cannot correspond to passive sentences in Italian since internal nominative arguments of regular passives are never anaphoric. Contrastively, anaphors never occur in the absolute participle clause in Spanish:

- (17) *Besados los unos a los otros, los familiares, partieron.
 kissed each other the relatives left.
 (after) Having kissed each other, the relatives left.
- (18) Letti gli uni i libri degli altri, gli autori attribuirono il premio.
 read each other's books the authors awarded the prize.
 Having read each other's books, the authors awarded the prize.
 ((22c) in Belletti 1992)

Finally, De Miguel (1992) contrasts Italian and Spanish in regard to the possibility of having idioms in the absolute participial forms and in passives. The results of the comparison show that in Spanish, idiomatic expressions are equally banned from absolute participle, and passive constructions,⁹ whereas in Italian, idioms are allowed to occur in absolute participles:

- (19) Fatta mente locale sulla questione, Gianni prese la sua decisione.
 (Having) thought about the issue, Gianni made the his decision.
 ((31c) in Belletti 1992)
- (20) *Tomado el pelo, Juan salió rápidamente.
 Taken the hair, Juan left quickly (literally)
 (Having) pulled his leg, Juan left quickly.
- (21) *El pelo fue tomado por Juan.
 The leg was pulled by Juan

Again, the facts from idiomatic expressions show in (19), (20) and (21) that Italian absolute participles pattern like active sentences, as opposed to the Spanish ones that behave like passive constructions.¹⁰

(9) It goes without saying that Italian passive constructions do not allow idioms either.

(10) We would like to suggest that for the transitive reading, the true absolute participial construction in Spanish that is syntactically equivalent to the Italian one is like the example in (i):

(i) Habiendo hundido la nave, Garibaldi...
 PRO_i having sunk the ship, Garibaldi_i...

The presence of the aspectual auxiliary *haber* 'to have' in the gerund form endows the construction under study with the syntactic characteristics of an active sentence, as shown by its behavior with respect to the four tests applied in the main text.

(ii) Habiendo defendido a María. Having defended to María.	Personal <i>a</i>
(iii) Habiéndose besado los unos a los otros, Having-Rfl.CL kissed each other.	Anaphoric internal arguments

To summarize, Spanish absolute participial constructions are characterized by the absence of the personal *a* with animate NPs, the possibility of having a *by*-phrase, and the impossibility to take anaphors and idiomatic expressions, which constitutes robust evidence in favor of the passive status of these constructions. Now, from the assumption that absolute participial constructions have a passive-like argument structure, we can conclude that the AGR_{DO} phrase is deactivated in these constructions in Spanish. Consequently, there is no structural head position for the mapping of accusative clitics, as shown by the ungrammaticality of (12b), nor is a Specifier position to make accusative Case available, as illustrated in (13) above.

In this way, for the derivation of (12a), I propose that the internal argument and the participle establish a Spec-Head agreement relation in the domain of AFP and subsequently, the verb moves to a higher functional node, probably to the Asp head and then to COMP, so that, the surface order V + NP can be obtained.

Actually, this Spec-head agreement relation with the participle is reminiscent of another subcase of what we have been referring to as nominal agreement. Small clauses of the type illustrated in (22) also exhibit this nominal agreement:

- (22) a. Tiene la tarea terminada.
 have-3 the homework-FEM finished-FEM
 S/he has the homework (all) finished.
- b. Tiene terminada la tarea.
 have-3 finished-FEM the homework-FEM
 S/he has the homework (all) finished.

The only important difference in regard to participle or nominal agreement between absolute participles and these small clauses is that in the former, upward head movement of the participial form is obligatory in the overt syntax, whereas in the latter this movement is completely optional, as shown by the two possible outputs given in (22).¹¹

- | | |
|---|-----------|
| (iv) *Habiendo defendido a María por Juan,... | By-phrase |
| Having defended to María by Juan | |
| (v) Habiendo tomado el pelo a los amigos, | Idioms |
| Having pulled their leg to the friends. | |

Moreover, since AGR_{DO} is projected in this type of sentences, as shown by the presence of the accusative clitic in (vi), participial agreement is banned again, as (vii) illustrates:

- | | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| (vi) Habiéndola hundido,... | (vii) *Habiendo hundida la nave, Garibaldi |
| Having-Acc.CL-Fm sunk. | PRO _i having sunk-Fm the ship, Garibaldi;... |

(11) Héctor Campos pointed out to me that some South American dialects of Spanish can have sentences like those illustrated in (22) without agreement. As for instance:

- (i) Tengo enviado las cartas.
 have-1 sent the letters-FEM
 I have the letters sent.

I am not in a position to establish how standard the utterance in (i) is. In any case, on a first tentative approach, the XP *las cartas* could be reanalyzed as part of a bigger NP/DP, for example like in the structure [NP...[[*las cartas*]]] for *el paquete de las cartas* 'the parcel of the letters'. Moreover, assuming that we want to maintain the concept of agreement as a Spec-head relation, there is at least another alternative solution to this piece of data. In the flavor of Zubizarreta (1993), one could state that there is an expletive *pro* in Spec of AGR_{DO} coindexed with the NP *las cartas* which is sitting in a canonical position sister to V. Subsequently, this expletive *pro* is replaced by the NP *las cartas* at LF. The relevance of this example is highlighted, however, when contrasted with the clitic counterpart structure, as given in (ii):

3. Conclusion: The AGR_o Parameter

From a theoretical perspective, this type of analysis for Romance languages and languages in general somehow underlines the line of thought put forward in Chomsky (1992). That is, languages can be parametrized with respect to the particular syntactic participation of the functional categories that they project, which ultimately is responsible for their differences. This is illustrated in the parameter given in (24) below, which slightly contrasts with the one in the flavor of Chomsky (1986a, b) given in (23). In this way, we have claimed on independent grounds that, unlike Italian and French, Spanish has an overt AGR_oP activated in de overt syntax by an accusative clitic as its head.¹² Hence, it is impossible to obtain past participle object clitic agreement by any derivation in this language since the clitic and the past participle morphology, the former being a primitive head and the latter another head, are not able to enter the Spec-head configuration required for this purpose. Thus, the proposed parameters are:

A. In the line of Chomsky (1981, 1986a, b) and related work.

- (23) T' = Tense, AGR_oP → Spanish
 T' = Tense, ASP → Italian & French

B. In the line of Chomsky (1992).

- (24) IP functional categories activated before LF:
 - Spanish: AGRs/T, AGR_o, ASP, AF.
 - Italian & French: AGRs/T, ASP, AF.

Finally, a logical conclusion that could come out of this analysis is that languages with clitic doubling lack past participial agreement with the accusative clitic. However, this statement could only be accurate as long as the clitic-doubled elements occupy an argument position, so that we can discriminate languages like Catalan, that have clitic doubling with adjuncts/adnominals and past participial object clitic agreement, from languages of the Spanish type (or even the Basque type for that matter).

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- (ii) Las tengo enviadas.
 CL-Fm.Pl. have-1 sent-Fm.Pl.
 I have them sent.

In fact, (ii) does not constitute a problem for the analysis proposed here since once we have assumed the small clause analysis. The *pro* licensed by the clitic (AGR_{DO}) with the phi features would be generated in the Spec position of AGR_{DO}, so the adjectival participle head can agree via incorporation to the main verb, which ultimately raises to the last inflectional head through AGR_{DO}. So, nothing else needs to be said in this regard.

(12) Given the derivation in (7), we are left with an execution problem, that is, if the morphological items have been attached to the left and right of the verbal complex it is legitimate to ask how the Tense or the AGRs morphemes can read inside the complex head to find their attachment slot on the auxiliary and not violate the Lexical Integrity Hypothesis (Chomsky 1970). Actually, the problem is not such since the LIH only affects operations that take place at S-structure. Supposedly, the derivation in (7) takes place in the mapping from S-structure to Phonetic Form. Hence, one could hypothesize that when the Tense/AGRs morphology finds its ordinary attachment slot filled by the non-finite morphology, the former moves left to the next available lexical head, namely, the auxiliary *haber*. In the spirit of Laka's (1993) account of Ergative Displacement in Basque this movement would be an instance of subatomic morpheme movement, that is, movement inside a complex atomic head. Notice, moreover, that this slight complexity in the derivation does not arise with the rest of the verbal complexes since in these cases, the main verb does not need to move any further up than the AF head.

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