

On the Syntactic Nature of the *me-lui* and the Person-Case Constraint

JAVIER ORMAZABAL
University of the Basque Country (UPV-EHU)

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JUAN ROMERO
MIT

0. Introduction

This paper is part of a more extensive project whose main topic is the role of Case-theory in the general design of the language faculty¹. The ultimate goal of this work would be to show that Case does not play the central role current linguistic theories attribute to it, and to derive its effects from other general conditions of the system. In this paper, we will focus on several phenomena that show, contrary to standard assumptions, that Case and Agreement-checking are independent processes. We will argue that Case-features are not the relevant trigger for overt agreement-inducing movement; in particular, in the cases we will analyze, we will show that verbal agreement is sensitive to some animacy feature of the attracted object. Case-marking will then be analyzed as a property of the morphological component, with no bearing on the issue of syntactic movement.

The central empirical domain we will consider in this paper concerns a general restriction on clitic and agreement clusters, the so-called *me-lui* constraint, which has been traditionally analyzed in morphological terms. We will discuss some new properties of the *me-lui* constraint that have been gone unnoticed in the literature, and argue that standard morphological approaches to the phenomenon fail to present an integral account of all the properties of the constraint. In addition, our inquiry will reveal a property of this phenomenon that is shared with other agreement relations of a more syntactic nature: its sensitivity to the animacy properties of the syntactic arguments.

We will show that all the evidence supports the syntactic nature of the *me-lui* restriction, and that animate objects move to a position where they establish an agree-

(1) Parts of the material in this paper were presented at the Universities of the Basque Country, British Columbia, Connecticut, MIT, the Linguistic Seminar at Deusto and the 21st GLOW Colloquium at Tilburgo. We are very grateful to these audiences for helpful comments and discussion. This research was supported in part by the CICYT (Interministerial Commission of Science and Technology, Spanish Government) grant number PB96-0272 and the Basque Government grant number PI-1998-127 to the Basque Center for Language Research (LEHIA) and by a University of the Basque Country grant (UPV 033.130-HA036/98) and a Fullbright Postdoctoral Fellowship to the authors.

ment relation with V, a property not shared by inanimate objects. We will then propose a syntactic analysis of the phenomenon, in terms of the Minimal Link Condition, that assumes a Larsonian-type analysis of double object constructions, and capitalizes on the mentioned asymmetry between animate and inanimate objects.

An immediate general consequence of our approach will be that Case cannot be the relevant feature that triggers NP-movement. The displacement effects generally attributed to the Case-properties of arguments must therefore be reanalyzed throughout, in line with the proposal in this paper.

In the last section, we will present some possible extensions of our analysis. That section, of a more tentative nature, tries to account for the high degree of parametric variation languages show in unaccusative and passive constructions in connection with both the *me-lui* constraint and the possibility of applicative structures. We will argue for the existence of a parameter concerning agreement. Specifically, we will propose that languages divide into two basic groups: what we will call double agreement languages, and triple agreement languages. This parameter, whose properties will become clearer as we proceed, is made on the basis of the presence of independent dative morphology in applicative contexts.

Our account also extends to the contrast between tensed and nominalized structures that languages like Basque show with regard to the *me-lui constraint* and, more generally, concerning their Case and agreement properties. Considered from the point of view of Attract-F, these contrasts have a natural explanation within our system.

We will conclude our paper by wrapping up our view on Case theory and agreement, and by pointing out at several theoretical and conceptual consequences of the account we are developing.

1. The *me-lui* Constraint

The contrast in (1a)-(1b) illustrates a particular case of a well-known phenomenon observed first by Perlmutter (1971) in the early seventies:

- | | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| (1) a. Pedro me lo envía | b. *Pedro le me envía |
| Peter CL1DAT CL3ACC send(3NOM) | Peter CL3DAT CL1ACC send(3NOM) |
| ‘Peter sends him to me’ | ‘Peter sends me to him’ |

Both (1a) and (1b) combine two preverbal clitics, which correspond to the dative and accusative arguments of the sentence respectively. However, while the combination of dative first person and accusative third person clitics —*me-le* in (1a)— is possible, the reverse combination in (1b) yields an ungrammatical result. The paradigm in (1) illustrates a more general contrast between third person and first/second person accusative clitics in ditransitive structures, known in the literature with the name of *me-lui constraint*.

Similar restrictions are found in languages with multiple agreement; these languages systematically show certain gaps in the paradigm of ditransitive verbs where only third person accusative or absolutive markers cooccur with dative agreement.

The minimal pair in (2) illustrates this point in Basque. The grammatical (2a) is a ditransitive construction where the object is third person; (2b) contrasts minimally with (2a) in that the object is first person, yielding an ungrammatical result [examples from Albizu 1998]:

- (2) a. Azpisapoek etsaiari misila saldu d- ø- I- o- te
 Traitors-ERG enemy-DAT missile-ABS sell PRES-3ABS-root-3DAT-3ERG
 'The traitors sold the missile to the enemy'
- b. *Azpisapoek etsaiari ni saldu na-I-o-te
 Traitors-ERG enemy-DAT me-ABS sell 1ABS-root-3DAT-3ERG
 'The traitors have sold me to the enemy'

This restriction in the type of object, generally known as the *Person-Case Constraint* is common to rich agreement and clitic systems in general.²

Bonet (1991) has argued that the co-occurrence restrictions in (1) and (2) form part of the very same pattern. She proposes the descriptive generalization in (3), according to which the presence of a dative agreement or a dative clitic blocks accusative or absolutive agreement other than third person:

- (3) *Person-Case Constraint*: If DATIVE, then ACC/ABS=3rd person.

In the next section we will consider some refinements; these modifications will open a new way to approach the problem.

2. The Person-Case Constraint revisited

The generalization in (3) captures the general properties illustrated in (1) and (2), which have traditionally been treated as morphological phenomena; however, when we extend the paradigm to other cases, the *Person-Case Constraint* in (3) does not seem to be the right descriptive generalization. As formulated in (3), the generalization can only be understood as a filter of the morphological component. However, we will present evidence that shows that this constraint has to be analyzed in syntactic terms. Specifically, we will show that the restrictions at stake emerge in the derivation of Double Object Constructions.

2.1. *Me-lui* restrictions in *leísta* dialects

The first kind of data that does not fit with the generalization in (3) comes from certain dialects of Spanish, the so-called *leísta* dialects. In peninsular Spanish, there are two main groups of dialects with respect to the clitic system. Standard Spanish, which is represented in Table 1, splits clitics into two groups: accusative and dative clitics. On the other hand, *leísta* dialects do not mark object clitics for Case, but rat-

(2) Bonet (1991) and Albizu (1997b) give an impressive list of languages that show, with some parametric differences, the same cooccurrence restrictions. Albizu's thesis presents a study including 43 languages, corresponding to families of very different typological properties.

her for animacy, as represented in Table 2. Thus, the clitic *le*, which marks dative arguments in Standard Spanish, in *leísta* dialects represents animate arguments.³

Table 1. Object clitics in Standard Spanish.

	Masculine	Feminine
Accusative	lo	la
Dative	le	

Table 2. Object clitics in *leísta* dialects.

	Masculine	Feminine
Animate	le	la/le
Unmarked for animacy	lo	la

Contrary to the generalization in (3), in this dialects the *me-lui* constraint applies even with third person objects under certain circumstances: thus the object animate clitic *le* can never coappear with a dative animate clitic. This is shown in examples (4)-(5). As the glosses in (4) indicate, in *leísta* dialects the accusative clitic is *lo* if the object is not animate, and *le* if the object is animate. According to Bonet's generalization in (3), both inanimate *lo* and animate *le* should be compatible with a dative clitic, since they both mark third person objects. However, as shown in (5b), dative clitics are excluded if the object clitic is of the animate type [examples from Romero 1997]:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>(4) a. lo vi
 CL3ACC_[BAnimate] saw
 'I saw it'</p> | <p>b. le vi
 CL3ACC_[+Animate] saw
 'I saw him'</p> |
| <p>(5) a. te lo di
 CL2DAT CL3ACC gave
 'I gave it to you'</p> | <p>b. * te le di
 CL2DAT CL3ACC gave
 'I gave him to you'</p> |

Given these facts, we can easily modify Bonet's generalization without making reference to person features. Since 1st and 2nd person are always animate, the generalization can be reformulated in the following way:

- (6) *Person-Case Constraint (2nd version)*: If DAT, then ACC/ABS = [BAnimate]

2.2. If DAT, then ABS=1st Is Still Possible

There is a second sense in which Bonet's Person-Case Constraint is still not very accurate. The *me-lui* constraint does not depend only on the presence of the dative

(3) The term *leísmo* covers different phenomena: in some *leísta* dialects, the clitic forms *le* (singular) and *les* (plural) cover all forms of direct and indirect objects, and therefore they do not make any distinction between animate and inanimate objects. These dialects are not very interesting from the point of view of the problem we are discussing here, since they do not make any relevant morphological distinction, not even the standard direct object/indirect object. What is important is that in other areas, the use of clitics *lo* and *le* clearly distinguishes between inanimate and animate objects.

argument, as assumed generally, but it also requires the presence of a third (subject) argument. Consider the examples in (7), from Basque. Unlike in ditransitive constructions, in unaccusative constructions like (7) there is no ergative subject, and only the absolutive and dative arguments are present. Albizu (1997a) observes that, in contrast with ditransitive constructions like (2), these constructions do not show *me-lui* effects, and first or second person absolutive combine freely with third person dative, contra Bonet's generalization. This is illustrated in (7b):

- (7) a. Jon etorri \emptyset - zai- t b. Joni joan na- tzai- o
 John-ABS come 3ABS-root-1DAT John-DAT go 1ABS-root-3DAT
 'John came to me'

Consequently, we could modify the descriptive generalization on the basis of (7) as in (8):

- (8) *Person-Case Constraint (3rd version)*: If DAT and Subject, then ACC/ABS = [-Animate]

2.3. Strong Pronouns and Binding Effects

So far, we have shown that the *me-lui* phenomenon involves restrictions more complex than the pure first/second person versus third person object clitics traditionally assumed in the literature. However, nothing said until now challenges the morphological character of the *me-lui* restriction itself. There is a general phenomenon in Romance that suggests that the restrictions we are considering here go beyond the clitic and agreement systems and that (8) cannot be considered simply a morphological condition involving animacy instead of person. Contrary to predictions, non-clitic strong pronouns pattern together with first and second object clitics; this is illustrated by (9). Contrasting with the grammatical (9a), where a third person clitic coappears with a dative clitic, when a third person accusative strong pronoun is introduced in the same structural context, as in (9b), the sentence becomes ungrammatical [examples from Ormazabal 1998]:⁴

(4) The status of the marker *a* which accompanies some types of internal arguments is controversial; see Romero (1998). Concerning the point we are making, this property of Spanish is irrelevant, given that the French parallels to (9) pattern the same way:

- (i) a. Nous te l' ammenons
 We Cl2Dat Cl3Acc brought-1Nom
 'We brought her to you'
 b. * Nous te l' ammenons elle
 We Cl2Dat Cl3Acc brought 1Nom her
 'We brought her to you'

As a matter of fact, in some languages with no object agreement/clitic marking such as English, most speakers show this effect with animate strong pronominals as well:

- (ii) a. He gave you it
 b. * He gave you me

See Ormazabal & Romero (in preparation) for discussion of these facts.

- (9) a. Te la llevamos
 CL2DAT CL3ACC brought-1NOM
 'We brought her to you'
- b. * Te (la) llevamos a ella
 CL2DAT CL3ACC brought-1NOM A her
 'We brought her to you'

The contrast between the ungrammatical (9b) and grammatical cases like (9a) challenges the empirical adequacy of morphological approaches to clitic clusters, since there is no difference in the clitic cluster of the two sentences. The ungrammaticality of (9b) is rather related to the behavior of the clitic *le* in *leista* dialects, since strong pronouns like *él/ella* ('he' or 'him' / 'she' or 'her') in Romance are obligatorily interpreted as [+animate] in all syntactic contexts where there is a contrast between strong and weak pronouns. As (10) shows, strong pronouns cannot correfer with expressions denoting inanimate objects as their antecedents:

- (10) a. (La₁) vimos a ella₁ en esa librería (a tu amiga₁)
 CL3sgfem saw her in that bookstore (your friend)
 'We saw her (your friend) in that bookstore'
- b. * (La₁) vimos (a) ella₁ en esa librería (la mesa₁)
 CL3sgfem saw her in that bookstore (the table)
 'We saw it (the table) in that bookstore'

The clitic pronoun *la*, on the other hand, can freely correfer with inanimate as well as with animate objects:

- (11) La mesa/tu amiga, la vimos en esa librería.
 The table/your friend, CL3sgfem saw in that bookstore
 'The table/your friend, we saw it/her in that bookstore'

Therefore, the morphological approach has nothing to say about the unexpected ungrammaticality of (9b), where no clitic cluster is involved. Furthermore, the paradigm in (9) confirms that it is the animacy property that makes the right distinction between elements that may enter into the ditransitive constructions and those that may not. As far as we can see, only animacy puts strong pronouns together with first and second person pronouns and third person clitic *le* of *leista* dialects.⁵ Finally, it is also important to note that Case does not make a clear cut between the two classes.

(5) There is a second kind of evidence, based on binding facts, that also supports our claim that the relevant feature is animacy, rather than Case. Sentences in (i) and (ii) exhibit an interesting contrast with respect to binding possibilities [Roca 1992]. In (ia), as it is expected, the subject of the matrix clause can bind the object clitic in the embedded sentence. However, as can be seen in (ib), pronominal binding of the object clitic by an animate antecedent is not possible whenever an object clitic coappears with a dative clitic. The non availability of binding in (ib) is not related to the fact that clitics form a cluster that somehow makes invisible the clitic. In the clitic left-dislocation structure exemplified in (iia), the antecedent, *the gun*, can bind the pronoun. However, as in the previous example, if the antecedent is animate, binding is blocked.

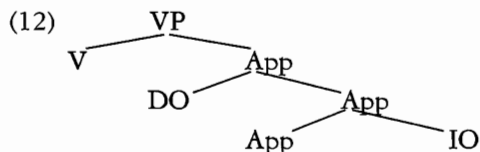
In Case-theoretic terms, it is generally assumed that all members in both groups share accusative or absolutive Case.

In short, the evidence presented here supports the idea that the Person-Case Constraint is a syntactic phenomenon.⁶ In the next section we will sketch an explanation of how this restriction can be accounted for.

3. The Person-Case Constraint as a Minimal Link Condition (MLC) effect

3.1. Double Objects and the MLC.

As data from unaccusatives in Basque show, *me-lui* restriction arise in ditransitive contexts. The proposal that we are going to develop is based on the idea, proposed by Larson, that double object constructions are derived by movement. Under this theory, in ditransitive constructions the direct object argument c-commands the indirect object in its base position. Specifically, we assume the structure in (12) [see Romero 1997 and references therein].



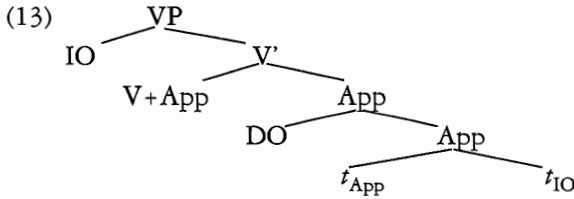
In (12), the verb selects a complex complement headed by an applicative preposition. The specifier of the applicative projection is filled by the theme, and the complement position by the goal. Double Object Constructions are derived in two steps.

-
- (i) a. Maria₁ piensa que la₁ entregaste a la policia.
M. thinks that Cl3Acc handed to the police
'Mary thinks that you handed her over to the police'
- b. Maria₁ piensa que se la*₁ entregaste a la policia
M. thinks that Cl3Dat Cl3Acc handed to the police
'Mary thinks that you handed her to the police'
- (ii) a. La pistola₁ (se) la₁ entregué a la policía
The gun (Cl3Dat) Cl3Acc handed to the police
'The gun, I handed it to the police'
- b. A la niña₁ (*se) la₁ entregué a la policía
The girl (Cl3Dat) Cl3Acc handed to the police
'The girl, I handed her to the police'

It is not totally clear for us why binding relations behave this way, but these data seem to show that whenever binding relations are established, they have to be sensitive not only to person features, but also to other features of nominal items. Thus, only an animate clitic can be bound by an animate antecedent. Interestingly, the interpretation of object clitics in (ib) is not restricted to non animate objects; thus the clitic can be interpreted as animate as long as it is not bound. Therefore, what is restricted is just the possibility to get into binding relations with animate antecedents.

(6) This conclusion is not surprising, given the argumental nature of the phenomenon at stake. As ethical datives in Romance and allocutive forms of Basque show, non-argumental clitics do not show these effects; see Bonet (1991) and Albizu (1997).

First, the applicative morpheme incorporates into the verb, and next the complement of the preposition raises to the specifier of the VP. This process is represented in (13).



Likewise, we will assume that the presence of a dative clitic in Romance languages is the consequence of a Double Object type movement. This assumption is supported by syntactic and semantic arguments. Thus, clitic doubling structures are subject to the same c-commanding asymmetries discussed by Bars and Lasnik, as shown in Uriagereka 1988, Demonte 1995 and Romero 1997. Moreover, these structures are also constrained by the same semantic restrictions that affect Double Object Constructions in English. Specifically, clitic doubling structures are subject to the possession restriction exemplified in (14c-d) [see Romero 1998]. As a consequence, we propose that (14a) and (14b) are derived by exactly the same operations, namely, the operations described in (13).

- (14) a. Yo le envié un libro a tu hermano
 b. I sent your brother a book
 c. * Yo le_i envié un libro a Nueva York_i
 d. * I sent New York a book

With this in mind, our analysis goes through the following steps: once the verb has attracted the applicative morpheme in the Doble Object Construction, V attracts an animacy feature. At this point, there are two possibilities: if the direct object is [Banimate], the verb attracts the [+animate] feature of the indirect object, as in (15a); if the direct object is [+animate], being closer to the verb, the Minimal Link Condition forces movement of this argument before the indirect object, as in (15b); in that case, the indirect object can only be realized as a PP.

- (15) a. le entregó el libro b. te entregó a la policía
 Cl3[+A] he-gave the book Cl2 gave to the police
 'He gave him the book' 'He handed you over to the police'

Thus, given that the verb provides a unique specifier position, dative shift cannot take place whenever a closer [+animate] object intervenes.

To finish, some explanation is also needed to account for why the dative cannot stay in place if the applicative has incorporated, yielding the structure in (16):

- (16) * He [gave+appl] you_{ACC} [t_{app} me_{DAT}]

Our proposal is that the Indirect Object must check some feature of the applicative. Therefore, if the direct object raises to the specifier of the VP, the feature selected by the applicative is not checked and the derivation crashes. Although this

proposal will need some revision later on, so far it is all we need to account for the *me-lui* effects in (1) and (2) and its extensions in section 2.

Regarding inanimate object clitics (*lo*, *la*) in Romance, they seem to cliticize only at the PF level, as a consequence of their morpho-phonological properties. Concerning its syntactic derivation, (17) is thus exactly parallel to Double Object construction with inanimate objects such as (15a), where the object stays in its VP-internal position:

- (17) te lo entregó
 Cl2dat Cl3acc gave
 'He handed you it'

This conclusion receives further support from the different behavior of animate and inanimate objects in languages like Mohawk, as will be discussed in the next section.

3.2. Mohawk Animate Objects

In Mohawk, animate objects must trigger some overt operation either by head-incorporating into the verb, as in (18c), or by overt agreement with the verbal auxiliary (i.e. movement to an agreeing position), as in (18b). The complete range of possibilities is illustrated in (18). As example (18a) shows, if neither object incorporation or agreement takes place, the result is ungrammatical. On the other hand, (18d) also shows that incorporation of and agreement with the object are not possible either [examples from Baker 1996: 21, ex. 17].

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>(18) a. * Ra-núhwe's ne owirá'a
 MsS-like-HAB NE baby
 'He likes babies'</p> | <p>b. Shako-núhwe'-s (ne owirá'a)
 MsS/3pO-like-HAB NE baby
 'He likes them (babies)'</p> |
| <p>c. Ra-wir-a-núhwe'-s
 MsS-baby-i-like-HAB
 'He likes babies'</p> | <p>d. *? Shako-wir-a-núhwe'-s
 MsS-3pO-baby-i-like-HAB
 'He likes babies'</p> |

Inanimate objects, on the other hand, may optionally incorporate, but they never trigger agreement.

In double object constructions, the argument that agrees with the verb—that is, the argument that moves to the specifier position—is necessarily the dative; consequently, the animate object loses its option to agree with the verb. However, unlike Romance or Basque, Mohawk allows the alternative strategy of incorporation, which saves the derivation. Thus, head-incorporation of the object takes place, as in (19b), and no Person-Case effects arise [ibid. p. 206, eexx (38) & (40)].

- (19) a. * káskare' L-hi-tshLry-a-'s-e'
 girlfriend Fut-1sA/MsO-find-Ben-Punc
 'I will find him a girlfriend'
- b. L-hi-skar-a-tshLry-a-'s-e'
 Fut-1sA/MsO-friend-i-find-i-Ben-Punc
 'I will find him a girlfriend'

Contrasting with (19), inanimate objects do not require incorporation in these contexts:

- (20) Ká'sere' L-hi-tshLry-a-'s-e'
 car Fut-1sA/MsO-find-Ben-Punc
 'I will find him a car'

The different behavior of animate and inanimate objects in (19)-(20) reveals two aspects of the verbal properties. First, as mentioned, non-animate objects do not need to satisfy any of the relevant conditions; this, together with the different behavior of clitics *lo* and *le* in *leista* dialects, supports the idea that movement of non-animate clitics in Romance is just a PF effect and does not affect the syntactic process. Second, in applicative contexts, at least in some cases, there must be two features in the verb, one that incorporates the animate direct object, and a second one that raises the indirect object to the specifier position. Moreover, animacy and agreement must be kept separated, if Agreement requires satisfying an EPP feature, and therefore, projecting a specifier.

3.3. Unaccusatives in Basque

Assuming the preceding discussion, let us go back to unaccusative constructions in Basque, where no *me-lui* effects arise. Without further refinements, the analysis in section 3.1 does not directly explain why unaccusative constructions in Basque do not show *me-lui* effects. In particular, it does not explain why the absence of an ergative subject makes the derivation possible in (21).

- (21) Joni joan na-tzai-o
 John-dat go 1abs- -3dat
 'I went to John'

Descriptively speaking, languages like Basque show a three-way agreement system with the verbal auxiliary; example (21) shows a case where absolutive and dative agreement are present, and (22) illustrates a case of absolutive and ergative agreement:

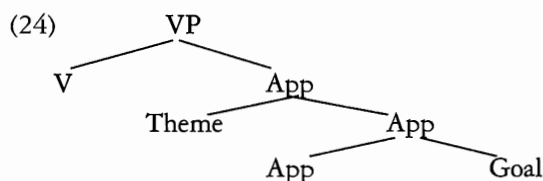
- (22) Zuk saldu na- u -zu
 you-erg sell 1abs- -2erg
 'You sold me'

However, the three agreements are never realized in the same auxiliary form. That is precisely what we see in the cases of *me-lui*-constraint introduced above, slightly modified in (23) to make the parallelism with (21)-(22) more direct:

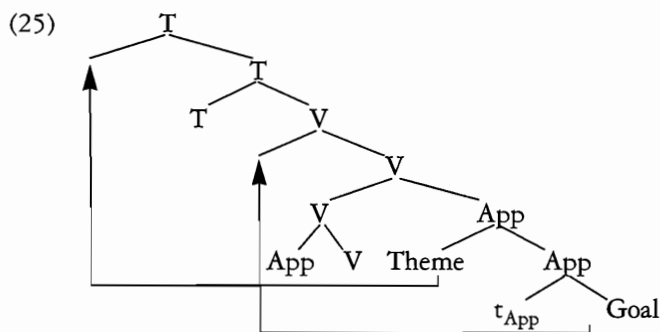
- (23) *Zuk etsaiari ni saldu na- i -o -zu
 You-Erg enemy-Dat me-Abs sell 1abs- -3dat-2erg
 'You have sold me to the enemy'

Other languages with three agreements, such as Southern Tiwa (Rosen 1990), show the same restrictions. If the distinction between dative and absolutive agree-

ment is an indication of something deeper, as we think, we can safely assume that these systems have two agreements to check VP-internally: the absolutive agreement associated to the verb and the dative one, linked with the applicative head. However, they both are checked in the VP projection, after the incorporation of the applicative morpheme. In ditransitive constructions, the goal must check dative agreement with the applicative morpheme in the projection of V, since the applicative element is incorporated. Whenever V must check the animacy feature with the object, two agreements are competing to be checked, and only one position is available as landing site for both the theme and the goal:



In unaccusative constructions, the agreement associated to the applicative is also checked by the Goal in the projection of V, after incorporation of the App head; but in this case, the unaccusative verb does not need to attract the animate object. Given the absence of an external argument, agreement in Tense is checked with the object, and no conflict arises.



The same mechanism is at stake in three-way clitic systems such as Romance. Hereafter, we will refer to these languages as *triple agreement languages*. A characterizing property of these languages is the fact that in Double Object Constructions, the indirect object triggers different agreement morphology than the direct object. In this sense, languages such as Basque, Romance and Souther Tiwa contrast with Bantu languages such as Chichewa or with Tzutzil, where indirect objects triggers the same object agreement in Double Object Constructions as direct objects in transitive clauses.⁷ On the basis of this parametric difference, we will call these languages *triple-agreement* and *double-agreement languages* respectively.

(7) Morphological differences in the examples are due to noun classes.

- (26) a. Mikango yanu i- na- zi- thamangits-a mbuzi zathu
 lions your SP-PAST-OAGR-chase- ASP goats our
 'Your lions chased our goats'
- b. Amayi a- ku- mu- umb- ir- a mtsuko mwana
 woman SP-PRES-OAGR-mold-APP-ASP waterpot child
 'The woman is molding the waterpot for the child'

3.4. Conclusion

Given the discussion so far, we can conclude that the feature relevant in object movement is Animacy rather than Case. As a matter of fact, if Case were the feature checked in all the preceding configurations, the contrast observed so far would remain unexplained. Thus, an additional animacy feature would have to be introduced in the system anyway, to account for these phenomena. On the other hand, we have presented strong evidence that certain inanimate objects do not have to move at all in the syntax. All this suggests that Case is irrelevant in these configurations.

Notice that this result has important conceptual and theoretical consequences: we are eliminating a class of features that are motivated only for internal reasons of the computational component —the Case features— and that, being non-interpretable, violate Inclusiveness [see Chomsky 1995]. We are arguing, instead, that an interpretable feature —Animacy— does part of the work; this eliminates the conceptual problems induced by a system where features that are unjustified at the interface levels are responsible for such a central property of natural languages as it is movement or attraction. Ideally, the goal is to extend these results to the entire system, and to eliminate Case from the syntax altogether.

In the next section we will explore some possible extensions of our analysis to other constructions. In particular, we will try to extend the difference between double agreement and triple agreement languages to account for some of the diversity and parametric variation natural languages show in double object constructions when combined with passives or unaccusative predicates. The results of section 4 are, however, of a more speculative nature and must be taken as such.

4. Attract-F: parametric differences

The morphological analysis of the *me-lui constraint* was partially based on the observation that it only shows its effects in rich clitic and agreement systems. Bonet (1994), for instance, observes that English does not show these effects in double object constructions:

- (27) She showed him me.

Judgements are considerably more complex, and English speakers seem to split with regard to constructions like (27). Although we do not have enough space to consider it in detail, it is tempting to link this split with some other differences English speakers show concerning the syntactic "scope" of pronominal subjects in ECM-constructions discussed by Postal (1974), Lasnik & Saito (1991) and Ormaza-

bal (1995), and of object pronouns in different tests of the type discussed by Johnson (1991).

Given the syntactic nature of our explanation, the difference between say English, Mohawk and Romance suggests the existence of some parametric difference related to Agreement, in the direction proposed in this paper.

Languages differ with respect to the inventory of features lexical heads must check. In particular, there must be some parametric differences concerning the features verbal and applicative heads check in the syntax. We have seen in the previous section that in three-agreement languages like Basque the dative agreement is an indication of a feature checking relation between the applicative head incorporated into V and the goal argument raised to the specifier of VP. The same analysis extends naturally to Romance dative clitic, as discussed above. The cluster restrictions discussed through this paper then show that, in triple agreement languages indirect object and direct object compete for a unique agreement position, unless a second checking position is available for the object, as in unaccusative contexts. Consequently, when they are both syntactically realized, at least one of them must be of the type that is not forced to move: if the object is [+animate], the dative must appear as a prepositional phrase; if the animate dative must move, the only possible object is a non-animate one.

In double agreement languages, like Mohawk or Chichewa, there is only one agreement internal to the VP. If this agreement is satisfied by the direct object, a mismatch with the features of the applicative morpheme will result, and the derivation will be cancelled. Therefore, the direct object, as in triple agreement languages, must be of the type that is not forced to move.

Finally, if a language has no agreement internal to the VP, and thus the language does not show *me-lui* effects, it is the applicative morpheme the only attractor in the verbal complex, and, therefore, no *me-lui* effects arise. If this is correct, the applicative morpheme must have its own EPP feature, even when it is not associated with any agreement.

The type of distinction proposed here in terms of the feature-checking inventory that lexical items encode in each language could help us understand the high degree of variation languages show with regard to two constructions directly bearing on the issues discussed here, namely passivization and unaccusative predicates.

4.1. Dative-passivization in DOC

The fact that the IO argument does not raise in passive constructions in Romance has been considered a strong argument against the Double Object analysis of dative clitic doubling in these languages. Consider the following contrast:

- (28) a. He was given a book. b. *El fue dado un libro.

In order to account for this distinction, we will assume that once a feature enters into a checking relation with a head, it cannot move up to a higher position to enter

into a second checking relation with a different head.⁸ If that is correct, the different checking properties of V and the applicative in English and Romance explain the contrast in (28) straightforwardly. Let us consider the situation after the incorporation of the applicative head to V.

In the case of English, the verbal agreement is generally activated by the incorporation of the applicative morpheme. When passive morphology is involved, the applicative morpheme attracts the dative argument to the verbal specifier, but no object agreement with the verbal head is activated. That is precisely the property of passive constructions. Since the dative argument still has the agreement features unchecked, this argument can be attracted further to the higher specifier by T, and the passive construction in (28a) is derived.

On the other hand, remember that there is a strong agreement checked by the dative argument and the applicative head incorporated into V in Romance, which is manifested in the presence of an overt dative agreement element. Unlike in the case of verbal agreement, there is no reason why the applicative head should change its feature-checking properties depending on whether the passive morphology is present. Consequently, the applicative attracts the indirect object also in these contexts in Romance. Once the indirect object enters into an agreement checking relation with the applicative head, it gets "frozen" in the specifier of VP. Therefore, it cannot move up to the subject position to re-check the same feature set with Tense. As a consequence, the direct object is the only argument that can move in these constructions to subject position, and the opposite situation to English arises, as illustrated in (29)–(30):

- (29) a. * The book was given Mary b. Mary was given the book
 (30) a. El libro me fue entregado b. * Yo fui entregado el libro
 the book C1dat was given I was given the book
 'the book was given to me'

There is an interesting fact about English that gives some indirect support to our analysis: all English speakers we have consulted that show *me-lui* effects in regular double object constructions lack the same effects in passive constructions. Thus, they all see a clear contrast between (31a) and (31b):

- (31) a. * The enemy sold him you. b. He was sold you.

The lack of *me-lui* effects in the passive version indicates that the verb in the passive construction in (31b) has lost its agreement features, and therefore cannot attract the object anymore. It is thus the applicative that attracts its complement and no *me-lui* effects arise.

4.2. Unaccusatives

When explaining unaccusatives in Basque, we argued that the attraction of Indirect Objects were not subject to the *me-lui* effects because, in ergative languages, the

(8) See Romero in progress for details, or Uriagereka 1997 for related proposal.

object agreement can be satisfied in the specifier of Tense. In Romance languages, the solution is slightly different. As in passives, the indirect object raises to the specifier of the VP skipping the animate Direct Object. Once its features are checked, the argument cannot raise further, so the agreement in Tense has to be satisfied by the direct object. However, this is not the case in other languages. As a matter of fact, Baker notes that unaccusatives in applicative constructions are generally barred. Thus, sentences as (33b & c) are not possible in languages with a two-agreement system [examples from Baker 1996a: 9-10]:

- (33) a. The ring passed *t* to Mary b. * The ring passed Mary *t*
 c. * Mary passed *t* the ring

Example (33b) shows that it is not possible to form an unaccusative in English, as it is in Basque, by raising the direct object. In (33c) it is shown that it is not possible to follow the strategy of passives either, and that raising the indirect object from the specifier of V to the specifier of T does not save the derivation. This must be so because the indirect object is rich enough to be attracted by T, but at the same time it is too poor to check all the features in T. Thus, by the Minimal Link Condition, unaccusative constructions are not a possibility, because the indirect object is going to be always attracted by T, but unfortunately it is unable to check all the features in T. There are two pieces of evidence that confirm this explanation:

The first piece of evidence comes from languages such as Sesotho, a double agreement language. As we expect, Sesotho forbids unaccusative constructions when the verb shows applicative morphology; no matter whether it is the direct object the argument that raises to subject position, as in (34a), or the indirect object, as in (34b), they both are ungrammatical.

- (34) a. * Lintja li- hol-el -a nkhono
 dogs SP-grow-APPL-fv grandma
 ‘The dogs are growing for my grandma’
 b. * Nkhono li- hol- el-a lintha
 Grandma SP-grow-APPL-fv dogs
 ‘The dogs are growing for my grandma’

Notice that in Sesotho, like in English, passive of an applicative may be formed by raising the indirect object argument and leaving the direct object in situ, as in (35):

- (35) ‘Me o-pheh -ets -o -e nama
 Mother SP-cook-APPL-pass-fv meat
 ‘My mother has been cooked the meta’

Interestingly, Sesotho allows unaccusatives from applicative constructions when the indirect object is a pronominal clitic. This is shown in (36).

- (36) Letebele leo le-re - hol -el -e
 Letelbele that SP-us-grow-APPL-fv
 ‘May that Letebele (clan name) grow up for us’

This suggests that pronominal agreement is more marked in Seshoto than nominal agreement. This is not a unique situation; Romance languages trigger obligatory object agreement only with pronominals. Thus, in Standard Spanish clitic doubling for direct object is mandatory with pronominals and forbidden in other cases:

- (37) a. * (la) vi a ella
 (Cl3) saw her
 b. (*la) vi la mesa
 (Cl3) saw the table

We thus can assume that when the indirect object is a pronominal, the object agreement is richer and the indirect object checks all of its features. Therefore, the indirect object is no longer eligible for raising, and the direct object can raise to the specifier of Tense and satisfy the agreement features of this projection. Under this analysis, the example in (36) clearly shows that agreement features are active in applicative contexts even with unaccusative verbs in Romance.

Interestingly, Seshoto also allows passives in unaccusative verbs. As expected, in all these cases it is the indirect object the argument that raises to the specifier of Tense; if our explanation of passives developed in the previous section is correct, passive morphology blocks object agreement. Therefore, the indirect object has all of its agreement features unchecked and it is eligible for a new raising operation to the specifier of Tense.

- (38) a. * Baeti ba-fihl-ets-e morena
 visitors SP-arrive-app-fv chief
 ‘‘The visitors have arrived for the chief’’
 b. Morena o-fihl-ets-o-e ke-baeti
 chief SP-arrive-app-fv by-visitors
 ‘‘The visitors have arrived for the chief’’

The second kind of evidence comes from Mohawk. Mohawk can form unaccusatives with applicative morphology, but, in these cases, there is no subject agreement; therefore, Mohawk suppresses the agreement in Tense, but only with unaccusative verbs. The sentence in (39) is grammatical regardless the fact that there is no subject agreement, but only object agreement:

- (39) Sak wa-hó-[a]hs?'-s-e' ne ówise'
 Sak FACT-MSO-fall-APP-PUNC NE glass
 ‘‘Sak dropped the glass’’ (Lit. ‘‘The glass fell on Sak’’)

As in the case of Seshoto, the applicative morpheme in Mohawk clearly triggers the presence of an agreement in the verbal projection. In this case, the output is grammatical because there is no subject agreement to be checked. What is more interesting is the fact that if no applicative morpheme incorporates into the verb, as in (40), the unique argument of the verb —namely, the direct object— triggers subject agreement with the verb.

- (40) a. Wa'-e-ya't-Ĕ'-ne' ne owirá'a
 FACT-FsS-body-fall-PUNC NE baby
 ‘‘The bay fell’’

- b. Wa'-k-atate-nohare-'s-e' ne atya'tawi
 fact-1sS-PASS-wash-APP-PUNC NE shirt
 "I washed the shirt for myself"

Therefore, Mohawk clearly shows that object agreement is associated in Double Agreement languages with the applicative morpheme; as expected, unaccusative verbs in these languages are subject to the *me-lui* constraint, contrary to what happens in triple-agreement languages. This is so because, by the Minimal Link Condition, object agreement attracts the first animate object, and the direct object c-commands the indirect object, as argued in section 3.1.

If this is correct, the explanation for the impossibility of unaccusative constructions in applicative contexts may be due to the fact that in double-agreement languages the applicative morpheme triggers the presence of an object agreement in the verb. Therefore, when the indirect object raises to the specifier of the VP it checks agreement features, but not all the features in the Indirect Object are checked with V. In particular, its D feature remains unchecked. Then, Tense attracts the closer D feature. Since some of the agreement features have been checked and are not available for further checking, a mismatch is obtained and the derivation is cancelled.

5. Final Considerations on Case and Agreement

In this paper we have shown that the Person-Case restrictions have a syntactic nature; we also have argued that Case and agreement are dissociated in many situations, and that they must correspond to different phenomena. Consider thus the general picture that comes out from our analysis in connection with Case theory. In standard theories of Case, every argument is associated with a Case-checking head in the structure. Specially in the last years, a general trend of the theory has been to connect Case and Agreement as two different sides of the very same coin. In this talk, we have largely shown that Case and agreement are dissociated in many situations, and that they must correspond to different phenomena. We have seen, for instance, that three agreement patterns are never realized in the same structure, not even in three-agreement languages, when more than two arguments are syntactically realized.

This dissociation between agreement phenomena and Case not only weakens the role of Case theory, but in fact it makes it almost untenable. We have argued that, when considered in detail, a picture arises where the features associated with the agreement, and not Case, must be the trigger for the movement of arguments in the syntactic component. In particular, we have seen that the animacy feature encoded in the agreement system is the attracting force of the verbal arguments in many cases. Moreover, we have also shown that agreement properties are responsible for stacking arguments once they have checked their agreement features.

In fact, there is a very puzzling paradigm in Basque that has been the object of interesting discussion among Bascologists for quite a long time and that seem to bear on the same issues. A well-known fact about the agreement restrictions in Basque is that the argument combinations that are not possible when overt agreement is pre-

sent are nevertheless allowed in nominalized constructions, where no overt agreement with the verbal head is manifested. Interestingly, this difference does not correlate with a contrast in the Case-properties of the arguments, which show the same Case-marking system in tenseless clauses and in standard tensed clauses [examples from Laka 1993, Albizu 1997]:

- (41) a. *Zuk ni etsaiari saldu na- i -o -zu
 You-erg me-abs enemy-dat sell 1abs- -3dat-2erg
 'You sold me to the enemy'
- b. Gaizki iruditzen zait {zuk ni etsaiari saltzea}
 wrong seem Aux {you-erg me-abs enemy-dat sell-nominalization}
 'Your selling me to the enemy seems wrong to me'

Considered from the point of view of Attract-F, the lack of agreement in the verbal complex may be interpreted as an indication that nominalizations lack the relevant attracting features in T and in V; given the nominal nature of these constructions, a plausible conclusion. In the absence of attracting features, the object has no independent trigger that forces it to move, no matter whether this argument is specified for the value + or - animate, and no *me-lui* violation arises in the nominalization in (41).

Given all the above, Case seems to play no role in the computational system. As a matter of fact, Case would be a striking property in a theory based on attraction. It is rather a residue of the theory of movement, where objects were assumed to move to satisfy their own requirements. Many years of research have attributed a lot of the properties of natural languages to the restrictions imposed by Case theory, but they must be just byproducts of other conditions and properties of the language faculty and, therefore, we should try to reduce them, at least if the approach presented in this paper is on the right track.

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