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Uninterpretable Features Are Incompatible in Morphology with Other Minimalist Postulates

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In recent work, Manzini and Savoia (2001, 2002a, 2002b, 2004a, 2004b, 2005) argue that accounting for variation across Romance dialects, specifically Italian and Swiss ones, requires a reform of the morphological set {person, number, gender, case}. Comparison with the different data set offered by Albanian dialects (Manzini and Savoia 1999, 2003) confirms this conclusion. In a nutshell, the proposed reform is that syntax and morphology should run on the same categories, namely syntactic categories like N, Q, D etc. to the exclusion of the traditional morphological feature set. Thus linguistic structures are articulated by the merger of lexical items that project such categories both at the phrase (syntactic) level and at the word (morphological) level.

To be more precise, such a reform is needed if basic explanatory adequacy criteria are to be met in morphology; or, to state it otherwise, if we are to preserve basic minimalist postulates such as projection from the lexicon, or the prohibition against comparison of derivations/representations or mechanisms of equivalent power. In this article we shall concentrate on the reform of the feature set, drawing together arguments concerning the phi-set and arguments concerning the case system presented by Manzini and Savoia (2002a, 2002b, 2004a, 2004b, 2005) in connection with various specific problems relating in particular to the clitic set and agreement. We shall briefly indicate what we consider to be the basic inadequacies of the classical model at the end of the article, in comparing it with the model sketched here, thus eventually motivating the title of this article.

1. Plural and dative

As discussed by Manzini and Savoia (2002b), Romance dialects may or may not have a lexicalization for the 3rd person dative belonging to the same *l* (*q*, *f* etc.) series as the lexicalization 3rd person accusatives and nominatives. If they do, in some cases the dative has a morphology different from that of the accusative series, as in the Sardinian dialect of *Làconi* from Manzini and Savoia (2002b), where the accusative is lexicalized as in (1a), while the dative corresponds to (1b).

- (1) *Làconi* (Sardinia)
- | | | | | |
|----|-------------|-------------|--------------|------------|
| a. | <i>qu</i> , | <i>qa</i> , | <i>qus</i> , | <i>qas</i> |
| | him, | her, | them-m, | them-f |
| b. | <i>qi</i> , | | <i>qis</i> | |
| | to him/her, | | to them | |

However in many dialects the dative overlaps with one of the forms of the accusative paradigm; in this latter case, represented in (2) by the dialect of *Vagli*, again taken from Manzini and Savoia (2002b), the overlapping is generally between the dative and the plural (masculine accusative), to the exclusion of other possible forms of the 3rd person paradigm.

- (2) *Vagli Sopra* (Tuscany)
- | | | | | |
|----|-----------------|-------------|-------------|-----------|
| a. | <i>l</i> , | <i>la</i> , | <i>ji</i> , | <i>lə</i> |
| | him, | her, | them-m, | them-f |
| b. | <i>ji</i> | | | |
| | to him/her/them | | | |

Describing the phenomenon in (2) in terms of traditional morphological features yields opaque results. In other words, the coincidence between accusative masculine plural and dative appears to be completely accidental, since there is not a single feature overlap between the two forms. It is in principle possible that this is the correct result and that morphology is a domain of purely accidental variation; however, pursuing an explanatory goal in morphology requires a revision of the relevant set of primitives². In particular, Manzini and Savoia (2002b) propose that

the lexical entry for a clitic form such as *fi* of *Vagli* in (2a) and (2b) is characterized in terms of a quantificational property. This gives rise to two possible readings, namely plurality, as in (2a), and distributivity, which we take to be the proper characterization of ‘dativity’ as in (2b).

To be more precise, clitic pronouns of the form of (1)-(2) are not elementary lexical entries, but correspond to the merger of two separate morphemes, namely an *l/d/f* allomorph, introducing definite reference, and inflectional endings introducing the properties traditionally described in terms of number, gender and Case. This analysis is particularly transparent for series such as (1) where the invariable *d* base combines with *u*, *a*, *i* inflections for masculine accusative, feminine accusative and dative respectively and with *s* for plural. In this dialect, the *i* ending is specialized therefore for distributivity (i.e. the dative), while plurality is lexicalized by *s*, and *a*, *u* lexicalize nominal class (i.e. gender), as schematized in the lexicon in (3).

- (3) *Làconi*
- | | |
|-------|----------------|
| d: | Definiteness |
| a, u: | Nominal class |
| s: | Plurality |
| i: | Distributivity |

Similarly for the *Vagli* dialect, we assume that the *l*, *f* allomorphs are associated with a definiteness property in their lexical entry. Therefore, the quantificational denotation to which we reduce both plural and dative properties is associated with the *i* inflectional ending, as illustrated in (4). The nominal class (i.e. gender) specifications are *a*, *ə* in this dialect. What is of immediate relevance here is that lexical entries of the type in (3)-(4) have no recourse to the traditional morphological phi-features and case set; on the contrary, the characterization of the different morphemes is transparently related to syntactic categorization at least in the case of Definiteness, D, and Quantification, Q. The Nominal class property shall be considered in sections 2-3³.

- (4) *Vagli Sopra*
- | | |
|-------|----------------|
| l, f: | Definiteness |
| a, ə: | Nominal class |
| i: | Quantification |

Manzini and Savoia (2002b) argue that the two different readings that the *i* morpheme in (4) gives rise to depend on its different contexts of insertion. In order to understand the plural interpretation it is sufficient to make reference to the morphological level. Thus we assume that the merger of the *f* definiteness base with the *i* can by itself imply plurality; this can also be restricted to the masculine nominal class, as it is in the *Vagli* dialect, where the feminine is lexicalized by the nominal class morpheme *ə*.

By contrast, the dative interpretation can be understood only in connection with the syntactic properties of the clitic. For the sake of simplicity we assume that the surface order of clitics results from hierarchical constraints on their merger directly in the inflectional domain; we exclude therefore that it results from the interaction of the order of arguments within the VP-shell and of movement, though nothing hinges on this. Under the assumptions just reviewed, the dative interpretation is obtainable from the quantificational property of *fi* when it projects the Q category in the syntactic hierarchy⁴.

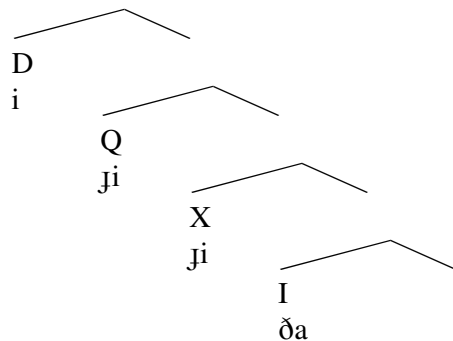
Concretely, we can consider the simple example in (5) where two *fi* clitics can combine in a dative - accusative cluster. We can see that the dative precedes the accusative from clusters where the accusative is morphologically distinct, i.e. *l*, *la*, *lə*.

- (5) *Vagli Sopra*

i	ji	l/	la/	ji/	lə	'ðə
he	to.him/her/them	it-m./it-f./them	-m./them-f.			gives
'He gives it/them to him/her/them'						

We assign to sentences of the type in (5) structures like (6), where the higher *fi*, corresponding to the so-called dative, projects the Q category in the sentential tree, while this is not the case for the lower *fi*, corresponding to the so-called accusative. What is relevant here is that the dative interpretation of the higher *fi* depends on its projection of the Q property at the sentential level. At the word-level the quantificational denotation of the *i* morpheme simply implies the plurality of the *fi* form. It will be noticed that *Vagli* is a subject clitic language, where the EPP argument is obligatorily lexicalized by a clitic (Brandi and Cordin 1989, Manzini and Savoia 2002a). In the tree in (6) the category projected by the EPP argument is identified with D, sticking in essence with the intuition of Chomsky (1995) according to which it is a D-feature that the subject checks in the inflectional domain of the sentence. We shall return to the category projected by the accusative in section 3 (for the subject clitic see fn. 8).

(6) *Vagli Sopra*



The tree in (6) bears no indication as to the labelling of the projections dominating the constituents resulting from Merge. Now, the discussion that precedes strictly adheres to the minimalist principle whereby all structure is projected from the lexicon; indeed we have systematically referred to the categorial content being projected by a given lexical item. Thus we have avoided the more traditional, misleading terminology whereby lexical items are inserted under nodes with a given categorial content; in what follows we shall equally say that the lexical item *x* lexicalizes category *y*. The adoption of the relevant minimalist postulate excludes the presence in the tree of empty nodes, not corresponding to the insertion of any lexical material. This assumption effectively excludes a phrase structure theory of the type proposed by Chomsky (1995), and also Kayne (1994), in which (phonologically) empty heads may support a filled Spec. We therefore need a theory where projection from the lexicon entirely abstracts from the Spec-head mechanism. One such theory, that we adopt in Manzini and Savoia (2005) is Starke's (2000); the blank nodes in (6) and in the trees that follow indicate however that any phrase structure theory which has this crucial property will be acceptable for present purposes.

Finally, many scholars (Cinque 1999, Freidin and Vergnaud 2000, Starke 2000) agree on the assumption that categorial hierarchies are stipulated as part of Universal Grammar, though the exact content of the hierarchies may differ greatly. We follow them, in assuming for instance that the hierarchy (7), implied by (6), is a stipulated constraint on the structures created by Merge. At the same time we expect that at least if the hierarchies we introduce are sufficiently simple, they will eventually be derivable on interpretive grounds. Thus if Q and D are a good guess as to the nature of the subject and the indirect object/dative, their ordering is the one familiar from the internal structure of DP's whereby Definiteness takes wide scope over indefinite Quantification. To be more

accurate, in a perspective such as the minimalist one where structures are projected from the lexicon (as opposed to lexical items being inserted into structures), we expect that the relevant interpretive constraints will work by assigning to any structure a rigid interpretation, where for instance two adjacent clitics can instantiate D-Q but cannot viceversa instantiate Q-D within the same string.

(7) [D [Q [X [I

2. Nominal class and Person

In this section we quickly run through the remaining features of the phi-set, in order to return to Case in the second part of the article. Beside Number, the traditional agreement set includes gender and person. Adopting a view independently proposed within generative models (Harris 1991, Di Domenico 1998), we assimilate gender to nominal class. In terms of the reform of morphology sketched above, we predict that nominal class is but the morphological reflex of some independently needed syntactic category. The very term of Nominal class, already adopted in the partial lexicons in (3)-(4), suggests that the relevant category is N.

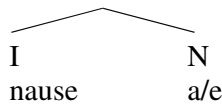
Motivating such a move requires a preliminary discussion of the syntactic category N. One possible view of N, and of the other lexical categories such as V, takes them to be inherent properties of (uninflected) lexical bases. Thus in English the lexical base *cat* would be associated with the N category as a lexical property, while the lexical base *bring* would be associated with V, and so on. An alternative view, recently revived by Marantz (1997), holds however that *cat* or *bring* are just predicative bases and that syntactic specifications such as N or V are a byproduct of the syntactic environment where such predicates appear. The case for such a theory is strongest in case of bases such as *play*, which can appear in both N and V syntactic environments while maintaining exactly the same predicative content. The fact that their phonological and semantic interface properties remain constant provides a compelling argument that we are in presence of a single lexical item. The N or V categorization will then optimally depend on the context of insertion, if we want to avoid an undesirable disjunction in the lexical entry.

Romance languages also abound in predicates that can either surface as a noun or as a verb; one such example is provided by standard Italian (8). The difference with respect to the well-known case of English is that in Italian the predicate stem will be systematically enriched by inflectional morphology; the choice of a lexical base ending in vowel in (8) makes it clear that it is not syllabic constraints that are at stake. At least in (8b), (8c) it is evident that the relevant morphology is sufficient to disambiguate between nominal and verbal contexts.

- (8) *Italian*
- a. nause -a
-fpl/3sg
'nausea/he nauseates'
 - b. nause -e
-fpl
'nauseas'
 - c. nause -o
-1sg
'I nauseate'

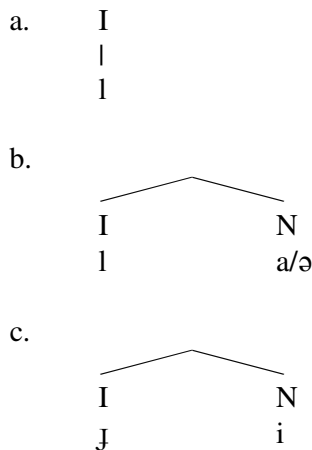
We propose that what is known as a noun, for instance in (8b), is produced by the merger of a predicate with a nominal class morpheme projecting categorial N properties. In structural terms this proposal gives rise to word-internal structures of the type in (9), the position of the predicate inside the word is identified with the ordinary position of predicates inside the sentence, i.e. I. We shall return to the parallelism between phrase-level and word-level structures that this implies throughout the article.

(9) *Italian*



Applying the same general principles we obtain precise structural representations for the clitic series in (3)-(4) as well, as illustrated below for the case of *Vagli*. We take each clitic to have the same internal structure as a noun such as *nausea* in (9); specifically the definiteness morphemes *l*, *f* serve as the predicative base inserted in I with respect to which the vocalic morphemes *a*, *ə*, *i* provide inflectional information. Note that precisely in that they provide such information the latter are inserted in N uniformly in the structures in (10); the fact remains that while *a* and *ə* denote nominal class, *i* has a quantificational denotation, as already indicated in (4). It is important to note that the indications in (4) are meant to specify the intrinsic denotational content of each lexical entry. This content in turn is meant to restrict the occurrences of the relevant entry when the latter is subjected to the combinatorial Merge operation of morphosyntax. However these restrictions do not simply map an element characterized by a property Z to the position that lexicalizes Z in a higher order string. Rather the Z property will determine a range of mappings that it is compatible with. This means for instance that the inflectional N position in (10) can equally well be filled by the nominal class specifications *a*, *ə* and by the quantificational specification *i*.

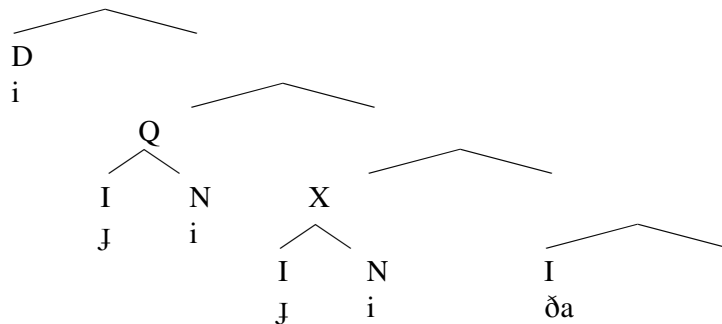
(10) *Vagli Sopra*



For the sake of explicitness, the nesting of word-internal structures like those in (10) into sentential strings of the type in (6) are provided here in (6'). The minimalist point of view adopted here, whereby syntactic structures are directly projected by the insertion of lexical material, means that there cannot be structures such as (7) produced by the syntactic component, to which lexical material is matched by lexical insertion, as in the Late Insertion model of Distributed Morphology (Halle and Marantz 1993). This means that one cannot simply insert a clitic in an already given position as a default lexicalization, not presenting any mismatch with the syntactic category. On the contrary, we must be able to show that in each case it is an internal property of the clitic that projects the relevant categorial properties of the sentential string. In (6') it is evident that the Q position projected by the *f**i* is consistent with the fact that the *i* inflection of the *f* head of the clitic is associated with quantificational properties; in this particular case we could equivalently say that it is *f* that projects the relevant categorial properties, since *f* specializes for the *i* inflection. Crucially

that the same clitic must be able to project the separate X position for accusative clitics. We shall complete this discussion on this point by reference to the dialect of *Corte* in (17)-(20).

(6') *Vagli Sopra*



For ease of reference, we may speak of clitic insertion points. In all cases we will understand by insertion point of a clitic, the category that the clitic itself projects on the basis of its internal constituency. For *Vagli* our provisional list runs along the lines of (10'). This makes the discussion surrounding (6') graphically evident, in the sense that the properties of the *ǎi* clitic make it compatible with more than point of insertion, while those of the *l* series make it compatible with the sole accusative position. A more complete elucidation of the schema in (10') as well as of the structure in (6') will have to wait for the value of X to be fixed, and will therefore be taken up again in connection with the dialect of *Corte* below.

(10') *Vagli Sopra*

<i>l, la, lə</i>	→	X
<i>J(i)</i>	→	X, Q

Going now back to our main line of discussion, it should be acknowledged that the two preliminary assumptions on which our conclusions are based, namely that nominal class is an adequate rendition of gender, and that there is no primitive lexical category N, could themselves be objected to. The issue of nominal class vs. gender reduces to the fact that different morphological endings can imply reference to male or female gender in the case of animates, such as in Italian (11). But this kind of fact precisely suggests that gender be treated as part of the meaning of nominal class, in other words as an interpretation of nominal class morphology.

(11) *Italian*

- a. fidanzato
fiancé-msg
- b. fidanzata
fiancé-fsg

Another problem arising in this connection concerns the notion of agreement in gender involving elements of different classes. In (12) for instance a noun belonging to the (masculine or feminine) *-e* class is matched respectively with a masculine adjective in (a) and a feminine adjective in (b). The interpretive perspective taken above suggests that the *-e* inflection of *docent-* and the *-o, -a* inflections of *brav-* agree in the sense that they are referentially compatible; in this case in fact it is only the adjectival inflection that fixes reference to gender.

(12) *Italian*

- a. docente bravo

- b. teacher-sg good-msg
 docente brava
 teacher-sg good-fsg

In general, we would want to conclude that nominal class, i.e. in present terms simply N, subsumes gender in its aspects relevant for the morphosyntax; the notion of gender contains an interpretive residue that concurs to the fixing of denotation at the interface. Other issues concern the treatment of the predicative base as neutral between the V and N categorizations. Though this treatment has been argued for on the basis of predicates that can turn up in both verbal and nominal environments, it may be objected that there are large classes of predicates that can turn up in only one such environment. This can be treated as a straightforward subcategorization problem, certain lexical bases having a denotation compatible only with nominal or verbal properties.

The last remaining feature of the phi-set is person. This is suggested as a candidate for reform by much recent literature, showing that 1st and 2nd person have an altogether different distribution from so-called 3rd person (Davis 1999 on Salish, Dechaine 1999 on Algonquian). The contrast between 1st/2nd person and 3rd person, i.e. between the speaker/ hearer and other referents, is in fact crucial for a series of grammatical processes, which include person splits in ergative Case assignment (Nash 1995 on Georgian) but also in Romance auxiliary choice (Kayne 1993, Cocchi 1995, Manzini and Savoia 1998). Leaving aside these more complex issues, it is evident that different distribution counts as a powerful argument in terms of distributional analysis for assigning separate categorial status to 1st/2nd person on the one hand and 3rd person on the other⁵.

A straightforward example of different distribution is found within the clitic string of Italian. Thus the two examples in (13) involve the same predicate and the same theta-role array, including an animate object and a locative. Since the locative is the same in the two sentences there is no reason to believe that its distribution varies. However the 3rd person clitic appears in what we have already identified as the accusative position in the analysis of *Vagli* in (6), i.e. the position in the string closest to the verb, where it is preceded by the locative as in (13a). By contrast, the 1st and 2nd person clitics appear in a higher position, preceding the locative, as in (13b)-(13c).

(13) *Italian*

- a. Ce lo mando
 there him send-1sg
 'I send him there'
- b. Ti ci mando
 you there send-1sg
 'I send you there'
- c. Mi ci mandi
 me there send-2sg
 'You send me there'

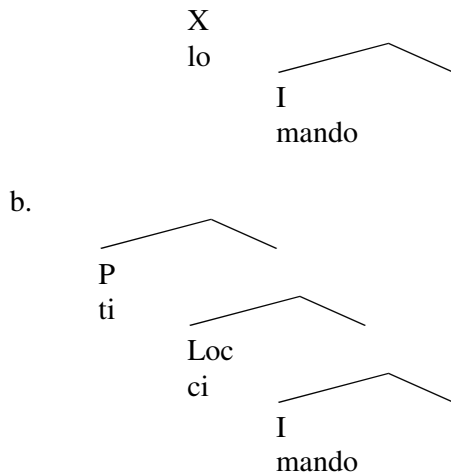
Examples such as (13) provide a strong argument in favor of postulating for 1st/2nd person a category P(erson) whose position in the sentential hierarchy is different from that assigned to the accusative⁶. The locative clitic in turn is taken as the representative of a specialized Loc category. As indicated in (14a), the accusative (on whose categorial nature we return in section 3) is lower than Loc, while as indicated in (14b), the P clitic is higher.

(14) *Italian*

- a.
-
- ```

graph TD
 A[] --- B[Loc]
 A --- C[]
 C --- D[ce]
 C --- E[]

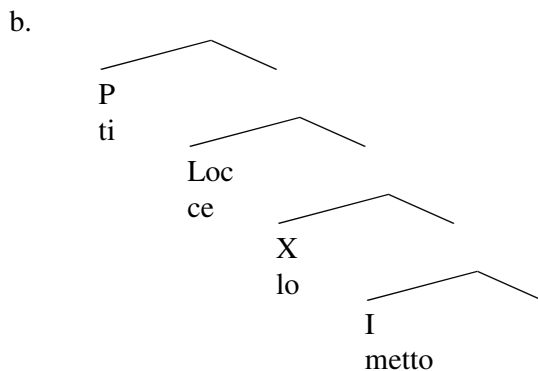
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The discussion of P implies that this category is characterized entirely in terms of the denotational properties of speaker/hearer. This characterization is strongly supported by the observation that the distribution of the P clitic is entirely independent of whether its role is that of accusative or dative respectively, since in both cases it simply precedes the locative. As expected, it also precedes the accusative, as shown in (15). The relation of P to the argument structure of the verb is then irrelevant for its morphosyntax and is simply derived by interpretive principles at the interface.

(15) *Italian*

- a.   Ti     ce     lo     metto sopra  
      you   there   it     put-1sg over  
      'I put it over there (for you)'



Needless to say, a traditional theory holding that there is three-valued feature of person can perfectly well separate 1<sup>st</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup> person from 3<sup>rd</sup> person by stipulation. Similarly, the natural class formed by 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> person at the interpretive interface can be used to insure that in cases of split they will normally pattern together against 3<sup>rd</sup>. The problem with the traditional theory is therefore not a descriptive but an explanatory one. Indeed it is only in syntactic categorization terms that we expect the interpretive split to give rise to different distributional properties. In other words, if P is projected as a categorial property we fully expect it to correspond to an autonomous position in sentence hierarchy, with all of the empirical consequences already noted; these consequences can be stipulated in terms of a 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> person feature set but are in no way predicted by it.

### 3. Accusative

With this background concerning the phi-feature set, we can then proceed to Case. The seminal work of Rouveret and Vergnaud (1980), Vergnaud (1982), in introducing the Case Filter as a principle of Universal Grammar, required that the notion of Case become independent of its morphological instantiation. Indeed a number of languages do not have morphological Case, or only have it in the pronominal system like English; however Case must be present as an abstract feature, i.e. a feature without PF realization, if the Case Filter which imposes a Case on all Noun Phrases is to be satisfied. In what follows we shall attack Case starting precisely with its visible morphological instantiations. However we take the consequences to hold for Case in general, i.e. abstract Case.

Furthermore according to Chomsky (1986) there are two types of Cases. Inherent cases are associated with a particular thematic specification. Dative would presumably be such a Case, and locative certainly would be. They are Cases in that they evidently satisfy the Case Filter of Rouveret and Vergnaud (1980), Chomsky (1981); however they can be reduced to more elementary primitives. By contrast structural Cases do not match any particular thematic configuration; in particular nominative can be the case of both an agent (in the active) and a theme (in the passive). As for accusative, the classical argument in favor of its structural status is Exceptional Case Marking, of which English, as in (16a), is the standard example. Forms of Exceptional Case Marking in which the external argument of an embedded predicate appears as the accusative object of the matrix predicate are however found in most languages, if we take into account causative predicates such as (16b).

- (16) a. I believe him to lie  
 b. *Italian*  
 Lo feci mentire  
 him I.made lie  
 'I made him lie'

Causative examples such as (16b) are generally assumed to instantiate some form of complex predicate formation; in other words the accusative does not really correspond to the external argument of the embedded verb, superficially raised to matrix object position. Rather the embedded predicate and the matrix verb form a complex predicate whereby the external argument of the embedded predicate is evidently identified with the internal argument of the cause matrix predicate. The exact nature of what is happening is not directly relevant for the present discussion; the point is simply that everybody would accept that the accusative in (16b) is connected to an internal argument specification. Thus causatives are generally avoided as motivation for the structural status of accusative. The next step is to notice that the original idea of Chomsky (1975) is that in a sentence like (16a), the accusative *him* is the object of the complex predicate *believe-to-lie*. This direction of research suggests a view of accusative as inherent Case and we therefore abstract from the distinction between inherent and structural Cases in the complement (i.e. non-subject) set.

Both in section 1 and in section 2 we said nothing as to the nature of the accusative position, involved in such representations as (6) or (15). An interesting handle on the question of what categorial properties are projected by the direct object is nevertheless provided by the way so-called accusative Case shows up in those systems which register it morphologically. In Romance, since morphological Case is limited to pronouns, the most relevant languages are those that have subject clitics, including French and Northern Italian dialects. One such dialect, on which Manzini and Savoia (2004b) remark in passing, is that of *Andràz*, more correctly relabelled here as *Corte*. In the feminine the nominative and the accusative forms of *Corte* simply overlap as shown in (17).

- (17) *Corte*  
 la/le            la/ le            'klama  
 she/they-f.    her/ them-f.    call-3  
 'She calls her/ They call her/ She calls them/They call them'

However in the masculine it is evident that the nominative and accusative forms are systematically distinguished, as shown in (18). Thus in the singular nominative *el* contrasts with accusative *lo*, while in the plural nominative *i* contrasts with accusative *ie*. Remarkably, the system *el* vs. *lo* is the one familiar from French where nominative accusative pairs take the form *il* vs. *le*, *elle* [ɛl] vs. *la*, etc.

- (18) *Corte*  
 el/i                    lo/ie                    'klama  
 he/they-m.       him/them-m.    call-3  
 'He calls him/ They call him/ He calls them/They call them'

The system of *Corte*, as well as that of French, admit of an interesting description in terms of the theory of the internal structure of nouns in section 2, as applied to clitics for *Vagli* in (10). In the system of *Corte* the feminine clitics consist in all cases of the definiteness base *l* followed by the nominal class morpheme *a/e*, as indicated in (19a). Consider then the masculine. The accusative singular has the same structure as its feminine counterparts with the *l* base followed by the nominal class morpheme *o*, as in (19a) again. By contrast *el* of the nominative clearly lacks nominal class morphology; we take it to correspond to a lexicalization of an allomorph of the pure base of definiteness *l*, i.e. *el*, as in (19b). In the plural the pure *i* morpheme, to which we impute the same quantificational denotation as in other languages reviewed so far (including *Vagli* above), lexicalizes the plural without attaching to the *l* base. We can attribute this pattern, very frequently found in Romance dialects, once again to the denotational properties of *i*. What interests us here directly is that in the accusative *i* itself acts as the lexical base hosting the nominal class inflection *e*, as in (19c).

- (19) *Corte*  
 a.
- ```

      /      \
     I        N
     l        a/e/o
  
```
- b.
- ```

 I
 |
 el

```
- c.
- ```

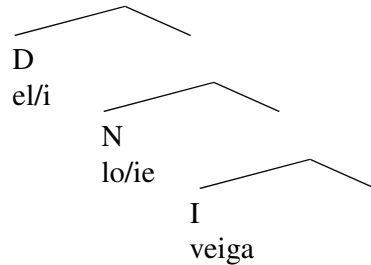
      /      \
     I        N
     i        (e)
  
```

In terms of the analysis in (19) the obvious generalization emerges that accusative Case in the *Corte* language is lexicalized by nominal class morphology. The comparison with French shows that this apparent syncretism is not casual; the same conclusion is supported by the observation that in no system among the hundreds examined by Manzini and Savoia (2005) shows the reverse pattern, i.e. the nominative includes a lexicalization of nominal class while the accusative doesn't. A theory which can only register the coincidence of the two different features of nominal class and accusative Case leaves this coincidence entirely unexplained. Thus the same criticisms of traditional theories apply in this case as for the apparent syncretism of dative and plural in section 1.

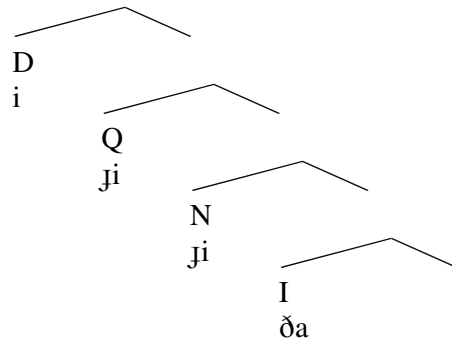
By contrast, within a theory employing the same kind of categorization in the morphology and in the syntax the hypothesis naturally presents itself that the coincidence of so-called accusative

Case with nominal class morphology is due to the fact that accusative projects on the sentential tree the same N categorial properties connected at the morphological level with nominal class. In other words sentences like (18) receive the structure in (20a). Analogously the provisional *Vagli* structure in (6) is completed as in (20b).

(20) a. *Corte*



b. *Vagli di Sopra*



On the basis of the discussion that precede, we can further clarify a point which though it does not advance our main line of discussion, is crucial for understanding the arguments based on cliticization. In the light of the proposal in (19), we can specify the insertion point for *Corte* in (20'a). Recall the discussion of *Vagli* above, where we stated that it always an internal property of the clitic that projects the relevant categorial properties of the sentential string. Even the simplified picture in (19') allows us to see that for the feminine, where *la*, *le* are the only extant forms, both will insert in either D or N, because of their combination of referential properties (definiteness) and nominal class properties. What is more relevant for us here is the existence of a double series *el*, *i* and *lo*, *ie* in the masculine. The series endowed with a class marker (*o*, *e*) will be mapped to N, while the other series will be mapped to D.

(19') *Corte*⁷

<i>la</i> , <i>le</i>	→	N, D
(<i>e</i>) <i>l</i> , <i>i</i>	→	D
<i>lo</i> , <i>ie</i>	→	N

For the dialect of *Vagli*, we confirm the insertion points in (10') simply substituting N for the unspecified X category, as in (10''). In this case the whole series of clitics in (10'') can be inserted in the N position in virtue of the fact that they include in all cases a nominal lexical base in N. In virtue of the quantificational denotation of *i* (and of *f* that selects it), on the other hand, the *ji* clitic can equally insert in Q.

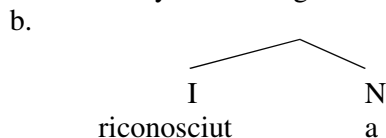
(10'') *Vagli*⁸

l, la, lə	→	N
J(i)	→	N, Q

Before we consider the overall plausibility of this proposal, we shall introduce what counts in our view as the most important piece of independent evidence in its favor. In many Romance languages, while the finite verb agrees with the subject in person and number, the perfect participle agrees with the object in number and gender (Burzio 1986, Kayne 1989), as seen in Italian (21a). For the participle embedded under the auxiliary in (21), our treatment of the nominal morphology of Italian, in section 2, obviously suggests the structure in (21b), where the number and gender agreement, i.e. in present terms the nominal class morpheme, is the N argument of the predicative base.

(21) *Italian*

- a. La hanno riconosciuta
her have-3pl recognized-sgf
‘They have recognized her’



Under the sharp separation of the morphological (word-level) and syntactic (phrase-level) component that characterizes traditional theories it can only be accidental that agreement with the accusative in Romance languages characterizes a nominal form of the verb, i.e. the participle. In other words, under current theories we might equally expect the reverse system to exist, i.e. a system in which it is agreement with the nominative that is uniquely associated with a nominal form of the verb. On the contrary, the present system makes a predictive hypothesis as to the relation between nominal morphology and accusative Case, since so-called accusatives project on the sentential tree the same N categorial properties that are instantiated by nominal class morphology within the noun. It follows that we expect systems where the object agrees only with the participle, as in (21), but we do not expect systems where it is the subject that agrees only with the participle.

Notice that we have been careful to phrase the relevant generalizations so as not to exclude agreement of the N morphology with D subjects, which is of course found in a language like Italian with those subjects that are deep objects, i.e. correspond to the internal argument of inaccusative verbs. What is more, among the many dialects studied by Manzini and Savoia (2005) there are some where agreement of the perfect participle with the (surface) subject is found to the exclusion of agreement with the accusative object. But despite the existence of several parametric options, the system described above remains impossible.

To consider a different issue, the fact that in a language like *Corte* the feminine presents identical forms for nominative and accusative clitic, both endowed of nominal class properties, is allowed for by our theory, which does not prohibit a match of nominal properties to nominative. In fact, all lexical nouns in Italian behave exactly in this way, presenting the same nominal class ending independently of the position they are associated with⁹. Other languages, where both nominative and accusative are morphologically marked, are equally compatible with our theory or actually support it. Thus in pairs such as *reg-s* (*rex*), *reg-e-m* ‘king-nom, king-acc’ of Latin it is evident that the nominative, though overtly marked by *s*, implies the absence of the nominal class morpheme *e* present on the accusative. In turn, the hypothesis as to agreement with the accusative is compatible with languages where perfectivity provokes the shift from nominative-accusative to ergative-absolutive Case system, for instance Hindi within the Indo-European family. Quite simply in such systems agreement with the accusative never arises.

As we have evoked ergativity, it is worth pointing out that though so far, we have presented our hypothesis as bearing on the N nature of the accusative, we could equally well be presenting it as an hypothesis concerning the accusative nature of N. It will have been noted that categorial properties such as Loc, P, Q and even D clearly have interpretive content, i.e. a content interpreted at the LF interface. In terms of the discussion that precedes, the interpretive content of N is that of internal argument of the predicate; in other words the lexicalization of N, both as an inflection and as a sentential argument, means satisfaction of the internal obligatory argument of the predicate itself¹⁰. In this perspective what we are saying is that given a predicative base, by adding an internal argument to it in the form of an N inflection, we form what is traditionally known as a Noun like (9) or a nominal form of the verb like (20b). In essence then a Noun is simply an ergative inflection of a predicate base. By contrast what we call a verb, at least in Italian and similar languages, is a nominative inflection of a predicative base.

It seems to us that the conclusions we have been suggesting represent a step forward with respect to those of Marantz (1997) with which they share the basic idea that Noun and Verb are the names of morpho-syntactic constructs and not of primitive categories. In fact for Marantz (1997), N or V categorization ultimately depends on the merger of the predicate with an *n* or *v* functional category. To the extent that the contrast between the lexical categories N and V is simply restated as a primitive at the level of functional categorie, *n* and *v* respectively, Marantz's (1997) idea weakens the initial hypothesis as to the constructional nature of N and V. What we pursue here is a stronger solution, since N is by no means the dedicated category for deriving Nouns, but rather is an independently needed category, projected in the sentential tree as well, and associated with an independent interface interpretation, i.e. that of internal argument.

Next, we can consider the transformation that the notion of accusative Case and of Case in general undergoes in the present model. In the conception of Rouveret and Vergnaud (1980), Vergnaud (1982), Chomsky (1981), the notion of Case is strictly connected with that of government by a Case assigning head; in other words it is a relational notion. While issues such as the shift from assignment to checking, and the abandonment of government in favor of sisterhood have been treated in detail by the minimalist literature, it seems to us that a deeper issue arises. If the minimalist notion of feature is to have a restrictive enough content, features can only encode *bona fide* lexical properties and not relational ones; it is on these grounds that Chomsky (1995) blocks theta-roles from being encoded as features and theta-role assignment from becoming a matter of feature checking (*contra* Hornstein 1999, Manzini and Roussou 2000). However on the same grounds the notion of Case cannot be considered a relational notion, because otherwise it could not be encoded featurally, nor enter into checking. However if it not relational, it is not evident what the content of Case may be.

It seems to us that the more often noted anomalies of Case features within the minimalist system, such as their radically uninterpretable nature, are just the way in which the conceptual difficulty hinted at here surfaces. This difficulty certainly does not escape Chomsky (2001, 2004) to the extent that he once again introduces a slight technical modifications of the notion of Case. In this version of the model, lexical items are inserted with the relevant range of features, which are however not assigned a value if such features are uninterpretable. Hence uninterpretable features are unvalued. Matching of probe and goal means matching of the features independently of their values, whereas Agree is an operation that assigns a value to the unvalued features and sends them to the phonology, before deleting them from the computation. In this picture it is explicitly said that 'structural Case is not a feature of the probe... Case itself is not matched, but deletes under matching of phi-features' (Chomsky 2001:6). On the one hand, we believe that what Chomsky proposes faces empirical problems, in the sense that there is no certain matching in natural languages between morphological agreement and morphological Case. Thus Romance participial clauses display the type of ergative agreement discussed in (21) while overtly lexicalizing their subject in the nominative (Belletti 1991); the reverse pattern, where an accusative element agrees with a finite verb, is found for instance in Albanian causatives (Savoia 1989, also reported in Guasti 1993).

On the other hand, the theoretical picture proposed by Chomsky (2001) is in a sense exactly the one that we are trying to enforce here through a completely different implementation, since the only properties that have an independent existence are denotational ones, while Case is but a reflex of them. Indeed the reform of Case provided here, though rejecting Case as a feature, has the effect of eliminating the problem for the featural theory of Case. For, if the discussion that precedes is on the right track, the traditional notion of Case with its relational characterization is reduced to a non-relational notion of the type easily manageable by minimalist theories. To repeat it once again, in the present view accusative corresponds to nominal class properties N being projected on the sentential tree. The only relation they bear to the predicate is the interpretive one of internal argument. Crucially, if we are correct (Manzini and Savoia 2005) the present system is more flexible than the checking/ valuation system of Chomsky and correspondingly better equipped to accommodate language variation.

Finally, we are in a position to complete the hierarchy of nominal positions of the sentence, provisionally introduced in (6), as in (22). The relative order of the various positions is in part justified by some of the examples provided above, such as the relative order of P, Loc, N while for other aspects of the ordering (as well as for the R position) we refer the reader to Manzini and Savoia (2002b, 2004b, 2005), who also justify two further theoretical moves. The first one it is that the same skeleton in (22) can be found not only in sentences, but also in Noun Phrases. In fact Q and D are categories first introduced in the literature to account for nominal structures while others have fairly transparent instantiations (as for instance demonstratives as Loc's). The second step toward unification, and hence simplification, of grammar is that the string in (22), justified in the discussion for the clitic positions in the inflectional domains, characterizes the other domains of the sentence as well. Thus it provides the basic order of arguments in the VP-shell below the inflectional domain as well as in the left periphery above the I domain.

(22) [D [R [Q [P [Loc [N [I

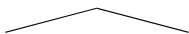
4. Nominative

The same kind of treatment that we have proposed in some detail for accusative has been anticipated for nominative in section 2 above, when we have identified the subject of the sentence with an element projecting a D definiteness property. Again the relational view of nominative is substituted by a view under which the nominative corresponds to the projection of a *bona fide* lexical property on the sentential tree, i.e. Definiteness.

Our primary reason for returning to nominative is to provide an argument in favor of one of the key assumptions of the present model, namely the homogeneity of word-level and phrase-level structure. An argument for such an assumption could be obtained if we could show that elements can occasionally be raised from the lower to the higher level (under conventional assumptions about rules of grammar we expect promotion rather than its contrary); in this case we predict of course that a given element will occupy within phrase structure the same position that it normally occupies within morphological structure. In more accurate terminology, we predict that it will project the same categorial properties in both cases.

Now, in the preceding section we have proposed that N is projected both at the word-internal level as nominal class inflection and at the phrase level as sentential accusative. Manzini and Savoia (2002a, 2004a, 2004b) analogously propose that D is not only the category projected by the sentential subject but also corresponds to the word-internal category projected by the finite verb inflection, as seen for instance in the representation in (23) for Italian (8c) or the verbal reading of (8a).

(23) *Italian*



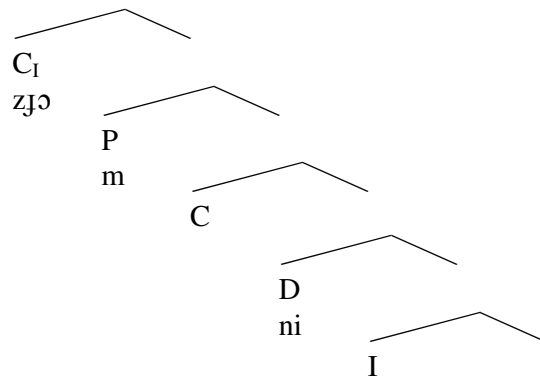
I	D
nause	a/o

The analysis that Manzini and Savoia (2004a) provide for the phenomenon of mesocclisis in the imperative in Southern Italian dialects uses precisely the positioning of the verb inflection in D of the sentential string, rather than in D internal to the verb. The phenomenon, also known from Caribbean Spanish examples in the Distributed Morphology literature (Halle and Marantz 1993, 1994), is exemplified in (24) with an Albanian dialect spoken in Italy (arbëresh), as reported by Manzini and Savoia (1999). Sentence (24a) exemplifies the enclitic position of the accusative clitic, following the verb stem and its inflection, while in (24b) it can be seen that the Person clitic is inserted between the verb stem and its inflection.

- (24) *S. Sofia d'Epiro*
- a. 'zɟɔ -ni -ε
wake.up-2pl -him
'Wake him up!'
- b. 'zɟɔ -m -ni
wake.up-me -2pl
'Wake me up!'

Under the analysis proposed by Manzini and Savoia (2004a) for Southern Italian dialects, in (24b) and similar examples the so-called inflection of the imperative is treated as a subject clitic. In other words, it maintains the D categorization that it would have inside the verb, but it projects at the sentential level, as in (25); the empty heads C and I are just mnemonics to help read the representation, since in the absence of lexical material they are not projected in the sentence. The relevant assumptions are that the stem of the verb is hosted by a specialized head in the left periphery of the sentence, namely C_I; the stranded verb inflection occupies the same position above I that we have adopted for the subject clitic of *Vagli* in (6). Manzini and Savoia (2004a) argue that the high position of the imperative leaves the syntactic space necessary for the stranding of the agreement inflection, effectively a subject clitic. The strict hierarchy that characterizes (22) means that the clitic that appears in between must be hosted by a set of nominal positions in the left periphery, between C and C_I; thus the one stipulated feature of the construction is precisely that the P clitic appears in this higher domain rather than in the ordinary inflectional one.

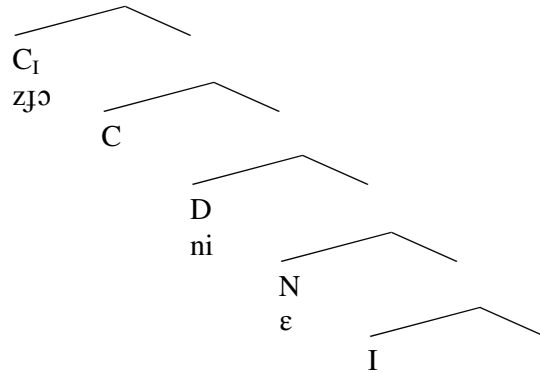
- (25) *S. Sofia d'Epiro*



In fact, the sentence in (24a) can be accounted for along the same lines, except for the position of the clitic, which appears in the normal inflectional domain. The split between P clitics as in (25) and accusative clitics, as in (26) can be seen as a reflex of the deeper conceptual split

between discourse anchored and event-anchored (pro)nominals that was invoked to assign them separate categories in section 2. Thus what needs to be stipulated about the mesoclisism phenomenon is that clitics whose reference is directly anchored to the discourse appear in the C domain bound to modal specifications¹¹.

(26) *S.Sofia d'Epiro*



If this account of mesoclisism is on the right track, then the present view of the verb inflection and of subject clitics as projecting the same categorial properties D at two different structural levels receives important confirmation.

5. Compatibility with minimalism

In the preceding sections, we have pointed to specific empirical evidence that suggests abandoning traditional morphological features in favor of syntactic categorization. While this evidence forms an important part of our motivation, overall conceptual considerations also play a role in motivating the present proposals. In particular, our assumptions are compatible with crucial postulates of minimalism which are possibly violated by alternative models.

One relevant comparison is with Distributed Morphology, with which the present model shares a certain amount of postulates, such as the structuring of morphological units by the basic operation of Merge; Distributed Morphology furthermore takes minimalism into account and is largely interested in the same empirical phenomena that are at the core of this article. Now, the present grammar is construed so that all structures are projected from lexical material; by contrast Distributed Morphology has recourse to Late Insertion. Similarly the present theory has no recourse to comparison between derivations or representations, while arguably Distributed Morphology has recourse to mechanisms that have equivalent power, such as Impoverishment. Thus in principle the lexical item that best matches certain terminal specifications is inserted under them; however phenomena under which underspecified lexical items are inserted require the application of Impoverishment, pruning feature specifications at the interface between syntax and morphology. A rule like Impoverishment is simply not statable in the non-feature based theory that we put forward. In fact, the elimination of features in favor of absolute categorization means more generally that there can be no underspecification and no default. Thus the present theory turns out to be significantly more restrictive than its competitors.

Manzini and Savoia (2002a, 2002b, 2004b) deal with some of the empirical implications of these restrictions of the theory. For instance if Manzini and Savoia (2002b, 2004b) are correct, absolute categorization of the type proposed here is sufficient to describe a phenomenon such as the Spurious *se* in Spanish for which both Distributed Morphology treatments (Bonet 1995, Harris 1994) and Optimality Theory ones (Grimshaw 1997) crucially use underspecification.

We are aware that the reform of the phi-and Case set has an important fall-out for the syntax as well. In particular, the elimination of features, with the attending notions of feature value and

underspecification, leaves us without the formal means for implementing the minimalist rule of Agree as envisaged by Chomsky (1995, 2000, 2001). However generative grammars allow for a different conception of Agree, whereby the agreement between two nominal categories both introduced by Merge allows for their coreference. Following (Manzini and Savoia 2002a, 2004a, 2005) we take it that this interpretive construal of Agree, independently needed for anaphora, can simply be extended to verb agreement.

In general, it seems to us that precisely the conclusion anticipated in the title holds. In other words, while the postulates of the minimalist theory of Chomsky (1995, 2000, 2001) are compatible with one another in the narrow syntax, they cannot be extended to the morphology without need for one or the other of them to be abandoned. In particular it seems to us that an account of morphological structure consistent with projection from the lexicon and absolute (non ranked) constraints must of necessity abandon the conception of feature on which uninterpretability and checking are based. The reverse path is of course in principle possible, and is in fact taken notably by Distributed Morphology. Of course the empirical phenomena sketched above provide a possible ground of comparison between these two (and other) possibilities. In principled terms however it seems to us that abandoning uninterpretability and checking, as we do here, simply means giving up a particular implementation of the grammar. The alternative implies that syntax and morphology, despite their obvious overlapping, will not be unifiable, giving rise to substantial (non-minimalist) redundancy in the computational component. Furthermore, we cannot underestimate the consequences for the syntax of allowing powerful mechanisms such as ranking of constraints or ad hoc elimination of lexical information (features) to be hosted in the morphology. For, if a grammatical subcomponent can make use of them, the principled bar to using them in the grammar in general obviously disappears.

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² An anonymous reviewer suggests that a perfectly transparent description of the *Vagli* system can be obtained while holding on to the traditional system of features, if one has recourse to the notion of default, whereby the *fi* clitic of *Vagli* is the Elsewhere, i.e. the default clitic of the system. This observation is entirely correct, presenting an highly relevant and important challenge for the entire line of work pursued here.

Trying to argue against the ultimate opacity of the notion of default on the basis of the empirical data would take up not just an article but a volume in itself. Here we limit ourselves to a few major shemas of argumentation. First, the dative coinciding with the masculine plural cannot simply be *the* default clitic of the system. Thus *Nociglia* (from Manzini and Savoia 2002b) has the relevant coincidence of dative and accusative masculine plural on *li* as in (a)-(b), but it combines this with the phenomenon whereby in dative - accusative clusters, the specialized dative is substituted by another clitic (in this case coinciding with the partitive and 1pp *ne*) as in (c). By default-theorists explanations *ne* is the default of the system; but then *li* cannot be.

- (i) *Nociglia* (Apulia)
- | | | | |
|----|---------------------------|----------|----------|
| a. | li | 'daje | 'kwistu |
| | to.him | he.gives | this |
| | 'He gives this to him' | | |
| b. | li | 'viʃu | |
| | them-m | I.see | |
| | 'I see them' | | |
| c. | ne | lu | 'daje |
| | to.him | it-m | he gives |
| | 'He gives it/them to him' | | |

The difficulty in (i) can be resolved, by saying for instance that *li* is 3rd person default and *ne* is (no features) default. But more exotic patterns can be found where the default model is impossible as far as we can see. Thus consider *Piobbico* (from Manzini and Savoia 2002b). The dative in isolation is *i* as in (a), the accusative masculine plural is either *i* or *li* as in (b), and the combination of dative and accusative always turns up in the system as *i li*, as in (c).

- (ii) *Piobbico* (Marche)
- | | | | |
|----|---|----|--------|
| a. | i | da | 'kwest |
|----|---|----|--------|

-
- to.him he.gives this
'He gives this to him'
- b. m (l)i 'da
to.me them-m he.gives
'He gives it/them to me'
- c. i li 'da
to.him it/them he.gives
'He gives it/them to him'

Example (ii)(c) requires *li* to be the accusative default. If so the appearance of *i* as an alternative to *li* in (ii)(b) could be explained by saying that *i* is the 3rd person default. One could even say that *i li* is a combination of a 3rd person default with an accusative default. But when the defaults begin to combine the situation really is totally opaque from the point of view of explanatory adequacy. Thus for instance why would the accusative default *li* crop up in (ii)(c), if there is no conflict of (3rd person) features? And viceversa if *i* has in effect a subset of the (3rd person) specifications of *li*, why do they combine at all?

We chose to illustrate empirical difficulties with independently published evidence not only for ease of reference but also to emphasize that such evidence need not be sought very hard. But it is not for empirical reasons that we ultimately reject the notion of default -- rather for theoretical reasons. It seems to us that default is adopted without discussion in morphological treatments in that it is assumed that this notion has abundant independent motivation elsewhere in grammar. We do not wish to question that there could be a well-defined notion of default in phonology, if it were to be true for instance that the unmarked value for consonants is voiceless (Trubetzkoy 1949), or more generally that a markedness theory of the type envisaged by SPE (Chomsky and Halle 1968) holds. Crucially however such notions argued for in the phonological tradition, refer to universal hierarchies. When the notion of markedness is applied to morphological variation of the type considered here, no universal hierarchy could be made appeal to. If default is universally set, by definition it need not be learned and no problem arises. But if it is to be learned, then it requires all other values to be set. Thus default may be a well-defined descriptive notion for the linguist who has the spread of available evidence in front of him, but does not represent a realistic model for the internalization of grammar by the child who is learning his language.

Another reason why it seems crucial to us to avoid recourse to default is that the existence of default forms in the lexicon connects to a grammar where lexical insertion is itself governed by Elsewhere conditions, whereby everything else equal, the non-default form is chosen, while the default form becomes visible where other forms clash etc. Now, it seems to us that this amounts to introducing a notion of comparison between representations/ derivations into the grammar. Because this argument is explicitly made to some extent by Manzini and Savoia (2002b, 2004b), we avoid repeating it here.

³ One general question that can be raised about the evidence presented here is that it all comes from a single language family, namely the Romance one, except for some cursory remarks on English or Albanian. This question is implicitly raised by one of our reviewers who points us to the Serbo-Croatian 3rd person clitic series in (i), asking us whether the same treatment that we give *Làconi* or *Vagli* is possible for it.

- (i) *Serbo-Croatian*
Acc: ga je ih
Dat: mu joi im
him her them

Though we are not in a position (as of now) to provide a morphological analysis for Serbo-Croatian, we would like to remark that many Romance dialects present clitic series where gender, number and Case select specialized bases. An example of this is *Vagli* itself when the more

complete spread of data in fn. 8 is considered. Thus at least three bases are present: *ed* for the feminine nominative, *(i)f* for the masculine and *(ə)l* for the accusative. Any basic knowledge of Romance historical syntax will reveal that *d* and *f* are phonological developments of an etymological *l*. However the relevant process is not alive in the language, so that from the point of view of the internalized grammar, there simply are three different consonantal bases.

In general, it seems to us that in a mentalist and microparametric approach like the one we are adopting here, we may expect that the same significant range of parametrization is to be expected within a large enough statistical sample of genetically close varieties as within a spread of varieties chosen for their genetic and typological diversity. This is of course up to the fact that a certain type of feature is or is not to be found within a given language family, so that trivially the distribution or lexicalization of ergative can indeed not be studied in Romance. This is not to say that for instance the same person split that is relevant for ergative Case systems will turn up in Romance, as in the discussion below.

⁴ Specifically, we propose that datives instantiate the quantificational property of distributivity. This proposal, inspired by the work of Beghelli and Stowell (1997), concerning the mapping of quantificational interpretations to functional structures, is argued for in Manzini and Savoia (2002b).

⁵ As this is not a paper on the person features system, we felt no obligation to be even reasonably complete on the history of this topic in linguistics. In particular, an anonymous reviewer points out that Hale (1973) proposes a system whereby 1st person is [+I, -II], 2nd person is [-I, +II]. Such system is indeed close to ours, in the sense that underlying both is the idea that only speaker and hearer are true ‘person’ referents. But then the same is true of a non formal account such as Benveniste’s (1966). Viceversa, the feature formalization of Hale (1973) does not make his theory directly compatible with ours.

⁶ In the text we exemplify but one instance in which the person split becomes visible in Romance dialects. There are many other such cases. Thus person determines auxiliary choice in many Central Italian dialects, as mentioned in the text. The anonymous reviewer of fn. 3 points out that in Serbo-Croatian, the 3rd person auxiliary *je* follows all argumental clitics, while other forms of the ‘to be’ auxiliary precede them. In the spirit of fn. 3, we limit ourselves to mention that a superficially similar distribution crops up in Calabrian dialects such as *Albidona* in (i), also exemplified in Manzini and Savoia (2004a).

(i) *Albidona*

- | | | | |
|----|------------------|-----------------|--------|
| a. | ddʒ- | u | 'Bistə |
| | I.have | him | seen |
| | 'I saw him' | | |
| b. | l | ε | 'Bistə |
| | him | you.have/he.has | seen |
| | 'You/he saw him' | | |

For *Albidona* Manzini and Savoia (2005) propose that the 1st person auxiliary is inserted in the C area of the sentence, while the other persons are associated with the ordinary I position, because of what may be called the illocutionary salience of the 1st person in declarative contexts. In discussing Serbo-Croatian, Boskovic (2001) provides evidence that under deletion *je* is treated like all other forms of the auxiliary, showing in his terms that they all have the same abstract position and all that varies is the position where they are pronounced. In the framework proposed for *Albidona* the equivalent stipulation would be that under Serbo-Croatian deletion, the auxiliary has to be in C for independent reasons.

⁷ The evidence concerning *Corte* (referred to as *Andràz*) in Manzini and Savoia (2004b) is richer than the one we are able to introduce here, and contains in particular examples like (i); what these show is that the lexicalization of the N position is computed also in reference to the lexicalization of the D position. Thus it may be noted that if D is feminine and hence contains a nominal class marker, a masculine N element will lack it. For an explanation of this further facet of the problem we refer the reader to Manzini and Savoia (2004b). Interestingly, it still remains true that *lo* will be found only in N. Furthermore, as we may expect, *i(e)* is also the dative of the system, cf. Manzini and Savoia 2005.

- (i) *Corte*
 la l/i 'veiga
 she him/them-m sees
 'She sees him/them'

⁸ The discussion of *Vagli* abstracts from the lexicalization of the nominative set, though a subject clitic perforce appears in the example in (5). In a more complete presentation of the data (Manzini and Savoia 2005), it would have been noted that in front of vowel the masculine subject clitic is *ij* as in (i)(a); a careful transcription of the contexts in front of consonant would reveal that as in (i)(b), *i* doubles the following consonant, which means that its lexical entry actually has a consonantal slot following the vowel. Thus the subject clitic for the masculine is actually *ij/iC*. Incidentally (i) and (ii) taken together show that there is no singular/ plural differentiation.

- (i) *Vagli Sopra*
 a. ij a dur'mite
 he has slept
 'He slept'
 b. i lla/ llə 'caməne
 they-m. her/them-f. call
 'They call them'

To complete the picture, in subject position the feminine is lexicalized by *əd(ə)*. The pattern that emerges is summarized in (ii); this is only slightly simplified, in that it does not take any account of the interactions between subject and object clitics of the type alluded to in fn. 7 and analyzed in Manzini and Savoia (2004b).

- (ii) *Vagli*
 la, lə, l → N
 j(i) → N, Q
 ij/C, əd(ə) → D

Vagli is therefore an interesting dialect where in the feminine the N and D points are lexicalized by two different lexical bases, namely *l* and *d* respectively. In the masculine *ij/C*, i.e. an uninflected base, only shows up in D. In N we find the inflected *j(i)* for the plural, while the singular is *l*.

⁹ The anonymous reviewer of fn. 2 notices that one not only finds clitics with class markers mapped to the D node (such as *la* of *Corte*) but also clitics without a class marker mapped to the N node (like *l* of *Vagli*). Crucially the claim we are making is that there will not be no (language-particular) grammar in which, given the availability of a clitic such as *Corte*'s *lo*, inclusive of a specialized nominal class marking, this clitic will serve as a nominative, while the accusative is represented by its bare counterpart such as *el* in *Corte*. Such a generalization cannot be read as a cross-linguistic prohibition against nominal class markers in subject position, for which *Corte*'s *la* is an example, as mentioned in the text; nor can it be read as a cross-linguistic prohibition against inserting a bare stem clitic in accusative position, as exemplified by *Vagli*'s *l*. This is because we do not seek to establish an universal principle of mapping, but only a generalization that holds

internally to each language. In a domain of variation as widespread and subtle as the one represented by Romance clitics, the importance of even such a partial generalization cannot be underestimated. It itself is not part of the theory (a principle of it) but it is what the theory should aim at explaining.

¹⁰ The anonymous reviewer of fn. 2 also wonders why the N position couldn't be coupled with the external role. The answer is of course that association of the N position with the internal argument is an irreducible fact within the present theory. As in all cases where irreducible postulates are encountered, one may legitimately wonder whether one is hitting upon a limit of the theory being considered. In reality an inspection of available alternatives will quickly reveal that in one form or another the same postulate is part of all theories within the generative (minimalist) fold. Thus within the theory of Chomsky (1995) in order to achieve the correct match of arguments and theta-roles it is obviously necessary to assign to the first argument merged with the predicate the internal theta-role. Since a verb may have more than one argument available to it at the point of merger, one may ask the same question of the chomskyan system, namely why the argument isn't assigned, say, the external theta-role.

The only aspect under which the present theory and standard generative ones differ is discussed in the text surrounding (16). In other words, it is not the case, as in standard generative theory, that there is an accusative position (say N) definable independently of the internal argument position, that can therefore bear an external theta-role. To put it in other terms yet, accusative (or N) is an inherent Case in this system. We would emphasize that for us the issue is an entirely empirical one.

¹¹ An anonymous reviewer notices that imperatives give rise to a whole series of quirky interactions with argumental clitics, quoting in this respect the pattern of Greek whereby the dat-acc order in declaratives alternates with the acc-dat order in imperatives (Terzi 1999). Exactly the reverse phenomenon is known to us from Corsican dialects and Western Ligurian ones (close to the Occitan border), as shown in (i) with *Olivetta*, whose (a) example also crops up in Manzini and Savoia (2002b, 2004b); the (b) example displays the imperative.

(i) *Olivetta S.Michele*

- a. el u/ a/ i/ e i 'duna
 he it-m./it-f./ them-m./them-f. to.him gives
 'He gives it/them to him'
- b. duna- i- 'ru/ 'ra/ 'ri/ 're
 give to.him it-m./it-f./ them-m./them-f.
 'Give it/them to him!'

For the analysis of the declarative order in (a) we refer the reader to Manzini and Savoia (2002b, 2004b). What is relevant here is that in Manzini and Savoia (2005) we indeed note that the reverse order of the imperative in (b) can be obtained if we assume that the clitics arrange themselves according to the rules of the Arbëresh imperative in the text, namely the dative in the higher domain and the accusative in the lower one.

Because the Greek pattern reported in the literature is superficially the opposite, no immediate reduction to the present one is possible; however we certainly expect the same principles to be at play.