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The Object Agreement Constraint *

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Abstract

This paper deals with the so-called Person Case Constraint (Bonet 1991), a universal constraint blocking accusative clitics and object agreement morphemes other than third person when a dative is inserted in the same clitic/agreement cluster. The aim of this paper is twofold. First, we argue that the scope of the PCC is considerably broader than assumed in previous work, and that neither its formulation in terms of person (1st/2nd vs. 3rd)-case (accusative vs. dative) restrictions nor its morphological nature are part of the right descriptive generalization. We present evidence (i) that the PCC is triggered by the presence of an animacy feature in the object's agreement set; (ii) that it is not case dependent, also showing up in languages that lack dative case; and (iii) that it is not morphologically bound. Second, we argue that the PCC, even if it is modified accordingly, still puts together two different properties of the agreement system that should be set apart: (i) a cross-linguistic sensitivity of object agreement to animacy and (ii) a similarly widespread restriction on multiple object agreement observed crosslinguistically. These properties lead us to propose a new generalization, the *Object Agreement Constraint (OAC)*: if the verbal complex encodes object agreement, no other

* This paper is an extensively revised and expanded version of the first part of a broader paper that was circulated as Ormazabal & Romero (2002) and also included a syntactic analysis of the agreement restrictions discussed here. The syntactic proposal analyzed the properties of a series of ditransitive constructions that were shown to be subject to the restriction: dative Constructions, dative Clitic Constructions and Double Object Constructions, all in a broad variety of languages. Due to editorial requirements, we have extended the descriptive sections of the work, leaving the more theoretically-oriented parts of our proposal for a forthcoming paper. Parts of this material were presented at the Universities of the Basque Country, British Columbia, Connecticut, Melbourne, MIT, Paris 8-Saint Denis, the Linguistic Seminar at Deusto, the 21st GLOW Colloquium at Tilburg, and the Journées d'Études Linguistiques de Nantes, JEL 2004. We are very grateful to these audiences for helpful comments and discussion. We are also thankful to Pablo Albizu, Joseph Aoun, Elena Anagnostopoulou, Mark Baker, Mario Barra, Brendan Costello, Michel DeGraff, Violeta Demonte, Beatriz Fernández, Jon Franco, Mélanie Joitteau, Itziar Laka, Alazne Landa, Howard Lasnik, Milan Rezac, Koldo Sáinz, Juan Uriagereka and Myriam Uribe-Etxebarria and to three anonymous reviewers for their comments to previous versions of this paper. This research was supported in part by the Basque Government grant number PI-1998-127, the Spanish Government/FEDER (European Commission) grant number BFF2002-04238-C02-01, the University of the Basque Country research numbers 9/UPV 0033.130-138888/2001 and 9/UPV 00114.130-16009/2004 to the first author and his research group, and by the Comunidad Autónoma de Madrid Postdoctoral Grant number 986-99 and a Fullbright grant to the second author.

The two preverbal clitics in both (3a) and (3b) correspond to the dative (goal) and accusative (theme) arguments of the ditransitive verb *enviar* ('send'). As in the agreement paradigm in (1)-(2), the grammaticality contrast in (3) illustrates a general gap in the combination of possible clitic clusters that distinguishes between third person (3a) and first/second person (3b) accusative clitics in ditransitive structures. While third person accusative clitics are compatible with the presence of a dative clitic in the same cluster, first and second accusative clitics can never co-occur with an argumental dative clitic. This constraint only restricts the distribution of direct object pronominal clitics; thus, although it is the presence of the dative clitic that triggers the constraint, its person feature specifications are irrelevant. That is, contrasting with the ungrammaticality induced by the first and second person object clitic in (4a-b), first and second person dative clitics do not yield an ungrammatical result, so long as the object clitic is third person. This is illustrated in (3a) above and in (5):

- (4) a. * Pedro le/se te envía
Peter 3DAT 2ACC send-3sgSUBJ
 Peter sends you to him
- b. * Pedro le/se me envía
Peter 3DAT 1ACC send-3sgSUBJ
 Peter sends me to him
- (5) Pedro me lo envía
Peter 1DAT 3ACC send-3sgSUBJ
 Peter sends it to me

Bonet (1991) and Albizu (1997b) give an impressive list of languages that show, with some range of variation, the same co occurrence restrictions.² Bonet proposes the descriptive generalization in (6) to cover the instantiation of the phenomenon in both clitic and agreement systems:

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

In other words, the presence of a dative agreement or a dative clitic blocks accusative or absolutive agreement other than third person. As observed in the literature, this constraint is active only in contexts that involve simultaneously an accusative *and* a dative marker.³ According to Bonet, the syntactic contexts subject to the PCC are the following: (a) ditransitive verbs of the type illustrated above, (b) causative constructions, (c) benefactive (or applicative) constructions, (d) inherent reflexives, (e) clitic climbing constructions, and (f) inalienable possession (see Harris 1981, Bonet 1991 §4.2.2). Otherwise,

² Albizu's thesis presents a study including 43 languages, which correspond to families of very different typological properties (Algonquian, Athabaskan, Iroquian, Kiowa-Tanoan, Mayan, Salishan, Caucasian, Tibeto-Burman, Semitic, Pama-Nyungan, etc.).

³ For discussion of Bonet's (1991:182) weaker version of the PCC, see 2.3.3.2 below.

the occurrence of first or second object marker will not be restricted; specifically, no restriction applies when there is no dative marker, as in (7), or when the dative is an ethical dative, as in (8):⁴

- (7) Pedro me envía a tu casa [Spanish]
Peter IACC send(3SUBJ) to your home
 Peter sends me to your place
- (8) Te me van a desnucar
2ACC IDAT(ETH) will to break the neck
 They are going to break your neck (and I am affected by it)

With a few exceptions, most explanations in the literature until very recently have had a morphological basis. They do not consider the syntactic configurations where the phenomenon appears as the basis for the constraint, but rather the morphological shape or combination of the multiple agreement and clitic clusters. They thus appeal either to alignment constraints between hierarchies or to specific person slots in the paradigm or to optimality oriented rankings of morphological constraints.⁵ As a consequence, these accounts predict that the PCC will only apply to particular combinations of clitic and agreement clusters, and will have no effect on contexts where the direct and indirect object, being syntactically active, are not encoded overtly in the verbal morphology. They are, therefore, designed to account for pairs like (9), where the grammatical (9b) contrasts minimally with (9a) in that the dative is not represented by a clitic:

- (9) a. *me le enviaron
IACC 3DAT sent-3SUBJ
- b. me enviaron a él
IACC sent-3SUBJ to him
 They sent me to him

In this paper we argue that the scope of the PCC is considerably broader than assumed in previous work and that neither its formulation in terms of person restrictions nor its characterization as

⁴ Ethical datives refer to discourse participants that are not part of the argument structure of the sentence, but are affected by the event it denotes. In some languages, these non-argumental participants may be encoded in the verbal system, although their occurrence is heavily constrained. See section 2.3.3.1 below and references there for discussion of different non-argumental datives in connection with the PCC.

⁵ See Haspelmath (2001) for a survey. The only syntactic analyses in the literature we are aware of are Albizu (1997b), the series of articles by Ormazabal & Romero (Romero 1997, Ormazabal 2000, Ormazabal & Romero 1998a, b, 2002), and by Anagnostopoulou (especially 1999, 2002) and recent analyses by Bejar & Rezac (2003) and Adger & Harbour (2004); see also Albizu (1997a) for a morphological analysis that indirectly hints at the relevance of syntactic configurations between verbal arguments.

morphological agreement are part of the right descriptive generalization. We then propose a more accurate generalization that covers the new empirical domains considered throughout the paper.

The paper is organized as follows. In section 2 we show that the PCC is a subcase of a more general constraint on agreement relations. We first show that (i) the prominent feature to be considered is animacy rather than first/second person (section 2.1). We then argue that (ii) not only languages with dative marked arguments but also languages in which no dative/accusative distinction is made in ditransitive constructions are affected by the constraint (section 2.2). Furthermore, we present evidence that challenges morphological explanations and supports a syntactic analysis (section 2.3). As a consequence of our shift in the conception of the PCC, we extend the coverage of the constraint to other configurations and languages that have never before been considered part of the same phenomenon. In particular, data from languages that lack dative case and/or overt morphology in the agreement system (especially KiRimi, Mohawk, English, and Haitian Creole) are incorporated into the analysis. In section 3, we argue that our modified version of the PCC makes it evident that all previous studies on the topic, including our own, have been misleading. The reason is that they conflate two different properties of the agreement system that should be considered distinct generalizations: (i) a cross-linguistic sensitivity of object agreement towards animacy and (ii) a similarly widespread restriction on multiple object agreement observed crosslinguistically, the residue of the PCC, which we formulate as the Object Agreement Constraint (OAC).

Our point of departure is Bonet's proposal that the cases covered by the *me-lui* Constraint and the Agreement-related cases fall under a single explanation. Consequently, unless otherwise explicitly noted, every statement concerning clitics should be considered applicable to agreement systems, and any observation concerning accusative/objective case in nominative languages can also be interpreted as valid for absolutive case in ergative languages.

Before we proceed, it is important that we clarify what our general conception of agreement is. Following traditional insights within generative grammar, we consider agreement as an asymmetric *syntactic* relation between a head that encodes agreement features (person, number, etc.) and an NP that checks those features. Within this model, the agreement relation is determined by the features in the head, *not by those of the NP*. Therefore, if a head H encodes just one feature, say number, the agreement relation will be established just for that feature, independently of other features encoded in the NP. Agreement is an abstract relation that manifests itself in specific syntactic terms; agreement morphemes and clitics are, from this view, the means some languages make use of to represent these relations overtly in their verbal system. Morphological agreement is thus a subset of what we consider a more basic, configurational agreement relation.

2. Extending the Person-Case Constraint

2.1. The PCC is not about Person.

Based on the analysis of *leísta* dialects of Spanish and of KiRimi, in this section we raise a case for animacy as the relevant feature for the PCC.

2.1.1. Spanish Clitic *Le* as an animacy marker

The first set of phenomena that do not fit with the generalization in (6) comes from a group of dialects of Spanish, namely 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 clitics, which in turn are marked for gender, and dative clitics.

Table 1

Accusative and dative clitics in Standard Spanish

	MASCULINE	FEMININE
ACCUSATIVE	lo	la
DATIVE	le	

In contrast, a property common to many dialects —represented in table 2— is the use of *le* not only for dative arguments but also for accusative *animate* ones. These dialects make a twofold distinction among accusative clitics: animacy and gender.⁶

Table 2

Accusative and dative clitics in Spanish leísta dialects

	MASCULINE	FEMININE
ACCUSATIVE ANIMATE	le	la/le
ACCUSATIVE UNMARKED	lo	la
DATIVE	le	

⁶ 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 between 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. See Landa (1995), Fernández-Ordóñez (1999), Bleam (2000) and references there for an extensive description of these dialectal differences and their theoretical consequences. See also Ormazabal & Romero (2004, 2006) for a discussion of some consequences in the analysis of the Spanish clitic system.

An anonymous reviewer has suggested that animate *le* might in fact be analyzed as a dative clitic; that is, when the theme is animate it would be marked with dative case instead of accusative in these dialects (see also Bleam 2000 for discussion). At a first glance this idea could be supported by the fact that accusative-marked animate arguments, when they are full NPs or strong pronouns, appear preceded by the preposition *a*, the same preposition that precedes datives.⁷ There are, however, several facts that lead us to reject this hypothesis. Notice, to begin with, that in standard dialects animate objects are preceded by the same prepositional element *a* despite the fact that the corresponding clitic is unambiguously accusative (see Table 1):

- (10) A Mateo, lo vi sentado en el bar
A Mateo, 3ACC saw sat in the bar
 Mateo, I saw him sitting in the bar

Consequently, the potential connection between case marking and clitic form breaks down. In addition, several differences between dative and accusative *le* also suggest that they are two different elements (see Romero 2001a for details): first, dative *le*, but never accusative animate *le*, is compatible with passive constructions.

- (11) a. El libro le fue entregado
The book 3DAT was given
 The book was given to him/her
- b. * Le fue visto
3ACC was seen

The same contrast also holds for accusative and dative 1st and 2nd person clitics, to which the unitarian analysis would also have to be extended:

- (12) a. El libro me/te fue entregado
The book 1 / 2DAT was given
 The book was given to me/you
- b. * Me/te fue visto
1 / 2ACC was seen

Second, while dative *le* can --in some contexts *must*-- double (13a), some *leísta* dialects do not allow doubling of the clitic *le* when it corresponds to an animate accusative clitic (13b).

⁷ The status of the marker *a* which accompanies some types of internal arguments is controversial (see Brugè & Brugger 1996; Romero 1997; Torrego 1998 and references therein). Historically, it appeared before proper nouns when Latin case markers disappeared (see de Jong 1996 and references therein). Nowadays it is generally used before animate specific nouns in object position, and it is homophonous (or the same preposition for some authors) to the marker preceding dative arguments, i.e., those that enter into a clitic doubling relation with the dative clitic *le*.

- (13) a. Le di una manzana a Mateo
 3DAT gave an apple to Mateo
 I gave Mateo an apple
- b. (*) Le vi a Mateo
 3ACC saw A Mateo
 I saw Mateo

Third, unlike accusative *le*, dative *le* is not selective with respect to animacy and in fact may refer to inanimate entities:

- (14) Le puse azúcar al pastel
 3DAT put sugar to-the cake
 I put sugar on the cake

Consequently, *le* must be analyzed as an accusative third person clitic, which minimally differs from *lo* in the value for the animacy feature. Similarly, accusative *me* (1st person) and *te* (2nd person) must be distinguished from dative *me* and *te* in all dialects of Spanish.

Coming back to our main discussion, *leísta* dialects pose a serious problem to the PCC as formulated in (6). If (6) were correct we would expect it not to have any effect on third person animate objects in *leísta* dialects. However, as shown in examples (15)-(16), this prediction is not borne out: the object animate clitic *le* can never co-occur with a dative clitic. In *leísta* dialects, when the accusative clitic appears isolated, it must get realized as *lo* if the object is not animate (15a), and as *le* if the object is animate (15b). Interestingly, PCC effects show up if the object clitic is the third person animate clitic *le* (16b), but not with the unmarked one (16a)⁸:

- | | | | | | | | |
|------|----|----------------------------|-----|--|----|----------------------------|-----|
| (15) | a. | Lo | vi | | b. | Le | vi |
| | | 3ACC _[-Animate] | saw | | | 3ACC _[+Animate] | saw |
| | | I saw it | | | | I saw him | |
-
- | | | | | | | | | | |
|------|----|-------------------------------|------|------|--|----|-------------------|------|------|
| (16) | a. | Te | lo | di | | b. | * Te | le | di |
| | | 2DAT | 3ACC | gave | | | 2DAT | 3ACC | gave |
| | | I gave it to you ⁹ | | | | | I gave him to you | | |

Since first and second person pronouns are inherently animate, these facts receive a straightforward explanation if we substitute the reference to 3rd person in the characterization of the PCC in (6) by animacy. This modification, which considerably extends the set of phenomena to be analyzed, will be

⁸ Examples from Romero 1997; see also Ormazabal 2000.

⁹ Under certain circumstances this sentence could also mean *I gave him to you*. The PCC contexts are precisely the only environments where the unmarked clitic *lo* referring to animate objects sounds natural for many *leísta* speakers. See Ormazabal & Romero (2004, 2006).

crucial for linking the PCC to new restrictions in languages not yet included in the sample standardly analyzed in previous works.

2.1.2. KiRimi's animacy agreement and the PCC

If animacy, instead of person, is considered as the key feature in the PCC, restrictions on agreement relations observed in a number of languages that could not be captured by Bonet's constraint can now be reanalyzed and unified under a single condition. A very neat case is KiRimi object agreement (Hualde 1989, Woolford 2000).¹⁰ In this language, agreement with an overt object is only possible with animate objects. More specifically, according to Hualde's description, animate definite objects must show agreement, while inanimate objects cannot do so.¹¹

- (17) a N -a -mU-on-aa Maria
ISUBJ-TNS-OM-saw Maria
 I saw Maria
- b * N -a -on-aa Maria
ISUBJ-TNS-saw Maria
 I saw Maria
- (18) a. * N -a -ki -on-aa kitabu
ISUBJ-TNS-OM-saw book
 I saw a book
- b. N -a -on-aa kitabu
ISUBJ-TNS-saw book
 I saw a book

Ditransitive constructions in KiRimi show the typical Double Object Construction (DOC)/*to*-construction alternation observed in many languages; in the *to*-construction the goal is headed by a prepositional element, and the verbal system shows agreement with the direct object only if this is animate (19):

- (19) N -a -mU -tUm-aa Yohana kU alimu
ISUBJ-TNS-OM(pl)-send- Yohana for teachers
 I sent Yohana to the teachers

As is the case in many other languages (see, among others, Dryer 1986, Baker 1998, Woolford 2000 and references there), in Double Object contexts it is the applicative/goal argument that shows agreement with the verb, and direct object agreement is blocked. In consequence, when the direct

¹⁰ All the KiRimi examples in the text are from Hualde 1989.

¹¹ See section 3 for some interesting complications.

object is not animate and definite, it is not required to maintain agreement with the verb and the sentence is grammatical, but when it is animate and definite, as in (20), the double object construction is ungrammatical:

- (20) * N -a -va -tUm -I-aa alimu Yohana
ISUBJ-TNS-OM(pl)-bring-APPL teachers Yohana
 I sent the teachers Yohana

It seems obvious that if, as we have already argued for Spanish *leísta* dialects, the PCC is reformulated in terms of animacy instead of person, paradigms like the KiRimi one discussed here may be integrated into the PCC in a natural way.

2.2. The PCC is not about Dative either

The discussion of KiRimi in the previous subsection not only supports our claim that animacy, and not person, is the key property of the constraint, but it also presents evidence that the case specifications of the trigger are not relevant for the constraint either. In this language, the applicative object of ditransitive constructions does not show dative case. Thus dative marking is not involved, but the effects of the constraint still show up between the two internal arguments of ditransitive constructions, the main context for the PCC. In this section we present additional evidence from languages such as Mohawk and English supporting the claim that the PCC is not dependent on case specifications, but rather on agreement. At the same time, extending the range of languages and constructions subject to the PCC allows us to look further into the nature and limits of the grammaticalization of animacy and into its syntactic and morphological characterization. It also indirectly provides us with an additional argument for the structural nature of dative case, an issue that is briefly discussed in section 2.2.2.

2.2.1. Double Object Constructions in Mohawk and other languages

The case of Mohawk (Baker 1996) introduces some interesting subtleties in the properties of the constraint. In this language, animate objects must be licensed either by incorporating into the verb, as in (21a), or by overt agreement with the verbal auxiliary, as in (21b). If neither of these two options takes place, as in (21c), or if the two of them take place together, as in (21d), the result is ungrammatical.

- (21) a. Ra -wir- a- núhwe'-s b. Shako -núhwe'-s (ne owirá'a)
SGMASC-baby-Ø-like -HAB SGMASC/3PLO-like -HAB NE baby
 He likes babies He likes them (babies)
- c. * Ra -núhwe'-s ne owirá'a d. * ?Shako -wir- a- núhwe'-s
SGMASC-like -HAB NE baby SGMASC3PLO-baby-Ø-like -HAB

He likes babies

He likes babies

However, since incorporation of animate arguments is heavily restricted in Mohawk,¹² as it is in Universal Grammar (Mithun 1984, Evans 1997), and only half a dozen animate nouns or so can be regularly incorporated, the option of agreement is strongly preferred. Inanimate objects, on the other hand, may optionally incorporate but, as in the case of KiRimi, they never trigger agreement.¹³

Given that incorporation is universally restricted to basic objects (Baker 1988), in Mohawk applicative constructions the benefactive/goal argument must be licensed via object agreement with the verb. Given that only one object agreement is available in this language, in ditransitive contexts the theme object loses its ability to agree with the verb. When the object is inanimate, as in (22), no conflict arises, since the inanimate object does not enter into an agreement relation. The benefactive argument is licensed through agreement with the verb, and the inanimate object optionally incorporates (22a,b).

- (22) a. Ká'sere' Λ -hi -tshΛry -a' -s-e'
car FUT-ISGA/SGMASCO-find -BEN-PUNC
 I will find him a car
- b. t -a' -khey -athAnó-tsher -u -' ne owirá'a
CIS-FACT-ISGA/SGFEMO-ball -NOM -give-PUNC NE baby
 I gave the ball to the baby

However, as we just noted, animate objects must trigger some operation, either incorporation or agreement, in order to be licensed; the ungrammaticality of (23), where neither operation takes place, illustrates this point:

- (23) *káskare' Λ -hi -tshΛry-a-'s -e'
girlfriend FUT-ISA/MSO-find -BEN-PUNC
 I will find him a girlfriend

Given that, as said before, the benefactive argument cannot incorporate and must trigger agreement, the only agreement slot is occupied by the benefactive argument. Consequently, agreement with the animate object is not possible, as illustrated in (24a), and the only option left for animate objects is to incorporate, as in (24b):

- (24) a. * Λ -ku-(ya't) -óhare-'s -e' ne owira'a
FUT-ISA/2SO -wash -BEN-PUNC NE baby
 I will wash the baby for you
- b. Λ -hi -skar -a -tshΛry-a -'s -e'
FUT-ISA/MSO-friend-∅-find -∅-BEN-PUNC

¹² According to Baker (1996:316), “animate objects [...] often resist incorporation for reasons that remain unclear”. He further observes that contexts where incorporation is well formed, “[they] involve treating the person as thing, without desires or self-control”.

¹³ See Baker 1996, pp. 21-22, 193-194 and 206-207.

I will find him a girlfriend

Recall, in addition, that the incorporation option is very marked for animate arguments. Consequently, in all cases where incorporation is not possible —such as proper names and pronouns— and the only option for the animate object is agreement with the verb, ditransitive constructions are completely barred:¹⁴

- (25) *Érhar Λ -kú -nut-e'
dog Fut-1sA/2sO-feed-PUNC
 I will feed you to the dog

The paradigm discussed here is very reminiscent of the discussion of the PCC in the previous section. In fact, the intuitive explanation Baker (1996:194) gives to the paradigm already points to an account in terms of the PCC; as he observes, “intuitively, the reason the theme of a triadic verb must be neuter is that agreement with a neuter object is phonologically null.[...] Hence, this type of argument does not overtax the agreement system in Mohawk, which can only represent two elements at a time”. The key feature of the Mohawk paradigm, as well as the cases discussed in the previous section, is the impossibility for both the animate object and the benefactive/goal/etc. argument to maintain agreement with the verb at the same time. We will return to this issue in section 3 below.

In any event, it is important to observe that the Mohawk configuration also shows that the constraint is independent of the case specifications the arguments have in each language. Although Bonet’s Generalization is cast in terms of dative case, and most cases discussed in the literature involve dative case marking, the Mohawk paradigm shows that specifications on the type of morphological case are not relevant for the constraint under discussion.¹⁵

In fact, Bonet herself inadvertently extends the PCC to accusative configurations when she discusses the cases of weak pronouns in Swiss German and English. Citing David Pesetsky (personal communication), she observes that English is subject to the PCC when the object pronoun is phonologically cliticized onto the verb (Bonet 1991, 185-6).

- (26) a. Mary showed me [əm]
 b. * Mary showed [əm] me
 c. Mary showed [əm] ME

¹⁴ Baker marks (25) as #, since he observes that the sentence is grammatical if interpreted as ‘*Dog, I will feed you (something)*’; this last interpretation is irrelevant for the discussion, since *dog* is not a benefactive argument but an extraargumental element which does not require agreement.

¹⁵ The same conclusion can be drawn from analyses that link the PCC to some properties of subjects – either to quirky subjects (Boeckx 2000; Anagnostopoulou, 1999, 2002; Romero, 2001b) or, more generally, to agreement restrictions targeting subjects in the presence of certain (hierarchically lower) objects (Albizu 1997b). Insofar as these proposals are correct (but see Boeckx 2004), some version of the PCC also arises in combination with nominative arguments.

But notice that these cases do not involve dative case but rather Double Object pronouns; if, as we are arguing, they belong to the same phenomenon, they also show that the PCC must be independent of the dative marking in agreement and clitic systems.

Summarizing, in this section we have shown that if the PCC is formulated in (i) terms of animacy instead of person, and (ii) neuter terms with respect to case, the same restriction is at work in both dative constructions and double object constructions. It is worth noticing also that the relation between incorporation and agreement clearly stated by Baker for Mohawk, and the fact that the constraint is also present in English, where no incorporation process is available, strengthen the relation between the effects discussed in previous sections and the constraint active in non-dative languages such as Mohawk and English.

2.2.2. Case and agreement: Structural Datives

In recent developments of the Minimalist Program, the role of Case theory has been reduced to a mere byproduct of the agreement system (see Chomsky 2000, 2001). Despite initial appearances, the conclusion we have reached does *not* imply that case and agreement should be understood as two independent mechanisms of the system. Rather, we can conclude from the previous discussion that the properties of the constraint are sensitive to some specific checking configurations, but independent of the particular case specification (whether it is accusative, nominative or dative), a property that can still be considered a by-product of the agreement relation. In other words, the only consideration required in order to keep us within the limits of recent formulations of the Minimalist Program is that all relevant configurations involve structural case/ agreement relations.

The relevance of the last observation rests on the widespread assumption that dative case in dative Constructions is an instance of inherent case. However, this assumption has been independently questioned on several grounds: (i) in many languages dative case is encoded as an agreement relation, in the same way other structural cases are; (ii) dative case is not specifically related to any theta role as inherent cases are; (iii) in fact, dative case/agreement is assigned in many languages to the embedded subject in ECM and causative constructions, which are paradigmatic cases of ‘derived’ objects.

In Basque, for instance, the *to*-Construction/dative Construction alternation shows up in several contexts. This alternation can be observed, for example, between a goal morphologically marked with the allative postposition, *niregana* in (27a), and a dative marked goal, *niri* in (27b). In the allative construction no agreement is encoded in the auxiliary form, *duzu*; dative arguments, on the other hand, show obligatory agreement with the verbal auxiliary, *didazu*.

- (27) a. Eskutitz-a ni-regana bidali d- -u -zu
letter -the me-ALLOC send PRES-aux-2ERG
 You sent the letter to me

- b. Eskutitz-a ni -ri bidali d- -i -da -zu
letter -the me-DAT send PRES-aux-IDAT-2ERG
 You sent me the letter

Similarly, benefactive arguments can surface either as postpositional phrases, with no agreement in the verb (28a), or as dative marked NPs agreeing with the verb (28b), and the same is true for possessor arguments in certain circumstances (see Albizu 2002, Arregi 2003a,b for discussion).

- (28) a. Kafe -a ni-retzat egin d- -u -zu
Coffee-the me-BEN make PRES-aux-2ERG
 You made coffee for me
- b. Kafe -a ni -ri egin d- -i -da -zu
coffee-the me-DAT make PRES-aux-IDAT-2ERG
 You made me coffee

Therefore, as in the case of other structural cases, dative is licensed by means of an agreement relation.

Furthermore, a quick comparison of the examples in (27) and (28) and similar alternations where dative agreement appears also shows that dative case/agreement is not linked to any theta role in a straightforward way, since the dative-marked arguments in these examples receive very different theta roles: goal in (27b), benefactive in (28b) and possessor in other contexts. Observe that even if we assume a theta theory like the one proposed by Dowty (1991), where some of these theta relations (together with others such as locative, allative, etc.) are instantiations of the same macro-role, the argument still holds. The relevant issue here is that these arguments fit into alternate structures. In one of these structures, the argument receives different inherent cases (allative, instrumental, etc.) from a prepositional element, not mediated by any agreement relation. In the other construction, structurally quite different, they uniformly receive dative case and enter into agreement relations (see, for instance, Blake's 1987 discussion regarding Australian aboriginal languages).

A similar conclusion can be drawn from the behavior of dative arguments in clitic-languages. As observed by Rivero & Sheppard (2003), the dative clitic in the anticausative reflexive construction in Romance (29a) and Slavic (29b) is three-way ambiguous, receiving a possessor interpretation ('John's glasses broke'), a benefactive/malefactive interpretation ('John was affected by the glasses breaking') or an agent/'involuntary causer' one ('John broke the glasses involuntarily'):

- (29) a. A Juan se le rompieron las gafas Spanish
To John 3sg-REFL 3DAT broke the glasses
- b. Jankowi złamały się okulary Polish
Jankowi-DAT broken 3sgREFL glasses

Finally, it is also worth observing that while many languages mark causee subjects of causative constructions with accusative case, in many others dative is the case borne by the causee subject in the same contexts.

- (30) a. You made me fix the washing machine
 b. Garbigailua kompon-arazi d- -i -da -zu Basque
washing-machine-ABS fix -cause PRES-aux-IDAT -2ERG
 You made me fix the washing machine

The evidence presented in this section strongly supports the idea that dative case licensing requires the same mechanisms as accusative or nominative case (see Fernández Soriano 1989, Masullo 1992, Laka 1993, Franco 1993, among others). Therefore, we can preserve the idea that structural case is a by-product of agreement checking, relating differences between accusative and dative to particular parametric specifications (see Ormazabal & Romero 1998b, 2002; Anagnostopoulou 2002).

2.3. The PCC is not morphological.

2.3.1. Binding into clitic clusters.

There is an interesting asymmetry concerning the behavior of isolated clitics and clitic clusters with respect to binding that was first observed, as far as we know, by Roca (1992). Consider the following sentences:¹⁶

- (31) a. Mateo_i piensa que lo_i entregaste a la policía.
Mateo thinks that 3ACC handed-2sgSUBJ to the police
 Mateo thinks that you handed him over to the police
 b. Mateo_i piensa que se lo_{*i} entregaste a la policía
Mateo thinks that 3DAT 3ACC handed-2sgSUBJ to the police
 Mateo thinks that you handed him over to the police

The sentences in (31) exhibit an interesting contrast with respect to binding possibilities. In (31a), the subject of the matrix clause can bind the object in the embedded sentence, as we would expect given general properties of binding. However, contrary to expectations, pronominal binding of the object by an animate antecedent is impossible whenever an object clitic co-occurs with a dative clitic, as in (31b). The unavailability of binding is not related to the fact that clitics form a cluster in (31b); contrasting with the impossibility of coreference in (31b), the matrix subject in (32b) —*el paquete* ('the package')— can be the antecedent of the clitic *lo*:

- (32) a. El paquete_i especifica que lo_i entregues en la portería
The package specifies that 3ACC hand-SUBJUNCTIVE at the frontdoor
 The package specifies that you should hand it over at the front door

¹⁶ We are thankful to Richard Kayne for bringing these data to our attention.

- b. El paquete_i especifica que se lo_i entregues a-1 portero
The package specifies that 3DAT 3ACC hand-SUBJUNCTIVE to-the doorman
 The package specifies that you should hand it over to the doorman

An anonymous reviewer observes that the reason for the impossibility of coreference in (31b) could alternatively be that the governing category of the accusative clitic in the presence of a dative clitic is extended beyond the domain of the embedded subject, possibly because clitic clusters check formal features in the same position, and the position where the animacy feature is checked is above the subject, as in Uriagereka (1995). However, note that, contrary to this hypothesis, the same obligatory disjoint reference effect is obtained no matter how far away from the potential antecedent the clitic cluster is:

- (33) *Mateo_i cree que Sara piensa que se lo_i entregaste a la policía
Mateo believes that Sara thinks that 3DAT 3ACC handed to the police
 Mateo believes that Sara thinks that you handed him over to the police

Although we do not have a full-fledged analysis of these facts, descriptively speaking they seem to show that whenever pronominal binding relations are established, they have to be sensitive to the agreement relations established by the arguments involved in the binding chain. In particular, an animate antecedent can only bind an animate object.¹⁷ An anonymous reviewer suggests that these facts nicely fit within Reinhart & Reuland's (1993) binding theory, where binding conditions operate on formal features. Thus, if two arguments do not have the same agreement features, they must be disjoint in reference. Based on Reinhart & Reuland's theory, Rivero & Sheppard (2003) discuss some facts in Polish and Slovenian (30a-b) reminiscent of (31)-(33). According to these authors, "the indefinite pronoun lacks phi-features, so cannot antecede expressions with those features, including pro, and NPs for people" (Rivero & Sheppard 2003, ex. (56)).

¹⁷ An anonymous reviewer suggests that the relevant relation in the phenomenon discussed in this subsection is coreference, rather than binding. This comment is motivated by the fact that, as (s)he notes, "it is NOT the case that the binder and the bindee must match fully in phi-features –QPs can famously disagree in number features with the pronouns that they bind, as in English *everyone thinks they're smart*." A detailed discussion of this issue is far beyond the scope of our paper. However, as far as we can see, everything suggests that the phenomenon is sensitive to structural conditions. This is illustrated by (ia), where the potential antecedent is in topic position, and (ib), where it is embedded within an NP. In both cases coreference is possible:

- (i) a. El niño, te lo llevamos a las cinco
The child, 2DAT 3ACC bring-1SUBJ at the five
 'The child, we will bring him to you at five'
- b. La madre de Mateo dice que se lo lleves a casa
the mother of Mateo says that 3DAT 3ACC bring-2SUBJ to home
 'Mateo's mother says that you should bring him to her place'

- (34) a. *Jeśli się gra źle, *pro* przegrywa *Polish*
 b. *Če se igra slabo, *pro* izgubi *Slovenian*
 If refl plays badly, *pro* loses
 If one₁ plays poorly, he₁ loses

As an explanation for this paradigm, one could postulate two different but homophonous object clitics, one animate and the other one inanimate, parallel to the distinction in *leísta* dialects described in section 2.1, where this difference is morphologically encoded by means of two different clitics, *le* [+animate], and *lo* [-animate]. Under this assumption, the binding facts discussed above could be accommodated in a morphological approach in the following way: when the clitic appears in isolation, as in (31a) and (32a), either clitic could be inserted and binding conditions would be satisfied in the regular feature-identity manner. However, in the presence of a dative clitic, the PCC excludes the possibility of inserting the animate version of the object clitic; consequently, binding of animate objects becomes impossible.

An approach along these lines must crucially rely on the idea that whenever a dative clitic and a [+animate] object agreement feature are encoded, the morphological component cannot produce a legitimate output and the resulting structure is morphologically ill-formed. This would block the only possible combination permitting binding of the animate object. Consider, however, the examples in (35), the passive versions corresponding to the sentences in (31).

- (35) a. Mateo₁ piensa que *pro*₁ fue entregado a la policía.
Mateo thinks that pro was handed to the police
 Mateo thinks that he was handed over to the police
 b. Mateo₁ piensa que *pro*_{*1} le fue entregado a la policía
Mateo thinks that pro 3DAT was handed(MSC) to the police
 Mateo thinks that he was handed over to the police

In these cases, the animate object in the embedded clause is not encoded morphologically by a clitic, since it ultimately becomes the subject of a passive sentence. But binding relations are not affected by this difference, and the same asymmetry arises: binding of the embedded subject is possible when the dative argument is not doubled (35a), but becomes impossible in the presence of a dative clitic (35b). It must also be noted that the subject of the passive agrees with the participle in gender, most plausibly a morphological manifestation of an (object) agreement relation between the verb and its complement. Approaches that consider the PCC as a constraint on the morphology of the agreement/clitic clusters and those that take into account the agreement configurations in which the arguments participate make different predictions. In (35b) no PCC configuration can possibly arise from the morphological point of view, but syntactic agreement conflicts are still present in the course of the derivation, no matter how these relations are encoded morphologically. The PCC must therefore be syntactic in nature as would be expected from the invariance it shows across languages.

2.3.2. Animate Restrictions Without Overt Morphology

We have argued that the phenomenon under consideration is of a syntactic nature. If so, we predict that it will show up also in languages and contexts where no morphological marking is involved. This prediction is borne out. Thus, in languages such as Haitian Creole (M. Degraff, personal communication) the PCC effects coexist with a general lack of overt agreement morphology. In the case of Haitian Creole the constraint is triggered not only by direct object pronouns (*-l* ‘her’ in (36a)), but also by direct object proper names (*Mary* in (36b)). On the other hand, as exemplified in (36c), double object constructions in Haitian Creole become grammatical as soon as other kinds of NPs are used.

- (36) a. * mwen pral bay li -l
 will. I give him -her
 I will give her to him
- b. * mwen pral bay Jan Mary
 will. I give Jan Mary
 I will give Mary to Jan
- c. mwen pral bay Jan yon menai
 will. I give Jan a girlfriend
 I will give Jan a girlfriend

Albizu (1997b, sect. 2.2.1.2) presents a very detailed discussion of similar facts in languages such as Zuni, Cherokee and Ojibwa, among others. Moreover, abstracting away from interpretations where the object is focalized, there is general consensus among our informants that the sentence in (37) is ungrammatical and that, consequently, the restriction is also present in English.¹⁸

- (37) *They showed him me

¹⁸Bonet, following Pesetsky (personal communication), marks (37) as grammatical. According to her, only phonologically cliticized forms of the pronoun show PCC effects in English (see section 2.2.1. above). However, our informants not only disagree in this respect, they also note that the sentence is grammatical only if the object pronoun (*me*) is focalized and heavily stressed. We are aware of the possible dialectal differences in the paradigm regarding other pronoun combinations. Specifically, judgments tend to vary with third person object pronouns. Some speakers consider (ii) somewhat degraded in contrast with the perfectly grammatical (i):

- (i) they showed me it
 (ii) ?they showed me him

This is precisely the area where we expect to find dialectal variation; in fact, the situation in English is not very different from the dialectal differences between *leísta* and Standard dialects of Spanish described in section 2.1.

As discussed elsewhere in the literature,¹⁹ these facts by themselves do not constitute a lethal argument against a morphological approach to the problem, but they require a certain amount of theoretical apparatus to accommodate them, since they show that the same auxiliary form –both from the point of view of its phonological shape and in their case feature-structure— may appear in some configurations that violates the PCC and in some that do not. From a syntactic point of view, on the other hand, these contrasts reveal in its most evident form what appears to be the crucial property of the constructions subject to the PCC. Ethical and allocutive datives are not part of the argument structure of the verb and, consequently, all apparent violations of the PCC of this sort correspond to regular transitive constructions, where there is a single object in the VP-structure. In contrast, all the real violations of the PCC involve ditransitive structures where –either lexically or derivationally-- a direct object and an indirect object are syntactically active and form part of the argument network in the syntactic structure.

2.3.3.2. A weaker version of the constraint?

For some speakers, there are combinations of 1st and 2nd person clitics in Romance that are perceived as considerably better than the cases where the dative clitic is third person. For those speakers, for instance, while DO second person and IO third person are completely ungrammatical, the acceptability of the sentence improves somehow when the IO is first person, as in (40b):²⁰

- (40) a. * Te le han recomendado para el puesto *Spanish*
 2ACC 3DAT have-3SUBJ recommend for the job
 They recommended you to him for the job
- b. ?(*) Te me han recomendado para el puesto
 2ACC 1DAT have-3SUBJ recommend for the job
 They recommended you to me for the job

Bonet (1991:182) suggests that these and similar facts might support some weakening of the PCC and proposes the following version of the constraint:²¹

¹⁹ See especially Albizu (1997b, sect. 2.2.2.), and Anagnostopoulou (2002) for discussion of different non-argumental datives in connection with the PCC and important consequences for morphology and syntax.

²⁰ Bonet reports similar facts in Catalan, Spanish, Italian, French. See Albizu (1997b, sect. 1.2.2.1) for a different interpretation of these contrasts. The star in the parenthesis is intended to cover the idiolectal differences in acceptability. The star in parenthesis is intended to mark the idiolectal differences among speakers in grammaticality judgments.

²¹ We are grateful to an anonymous NLLT reviewer for bringing the relevance of this weaker formulation to our attention.

- (41) In a combination of a direct object and an indirect object, if there is a third person it has to be the direct object.

According to this formulation, first and second person indirect objects are allowed to co-occur with first and second person direct objects; i.e. the restriction arises only in combinations of first/second with third person.

It is rather difficult to evaluate the relevance of these counterexamples, but some of their properties strongly suggest that they do not constitute a robust challenge for the strong version of the constraint, and that the weaker version is in fact a step backwards: (a) For one thing, these counterexamples only appear in clitic clusters; instead, agreement systems do not seem to allow first-second person combinations. For instance, (42b) in Basque is as impossible as (42a) for all speakers:

- (42) a. * Gomendatu za -(izk) -i -o -te *Basque*
recommend 2ABS-(PLUR)-Aux -3DAT-3plERG
 They recommended you to him
- b. * Gomendatu za -(izk) -i -da -te
recommend 2ABS-(PLUR) -Aux-1DAT-3plERG
 They recommended you to me

(b) Even in languages where they are allowed, there is a considerable range of variation among speakers, as already observed by Bonet (1991:179). Moreover, (c) judgments vary considerably depending on the choice of the lexical verb: thus, some speakers marginally accept 1st and 2nd person clitic combinations with a few ditransitive verbs [*encomendar* ('to entrust'), *enviar* ('to send'), *recomendar* ('to recommend'), *entregar* ('to hand'), *presentar* ('to present')], but the same speakers tend to reject this combination with other predicates [*vender* ('sell'), *comprar* ('buy'), *dar* ('to give'), *enseñar* ('to show')]. Even almost synonymous predicates [*donar* ('donate') vs. *dar* ('give'); *enviar* vs. *mandar* ('send'); *mostrar* vs. *enseñar* ('show'), etc.] show strong contrasts in that respect, as the minimal pair in (43) illustrates:

- (43) a. ?(*) Te me han enviado para que aprendas un oficio
2ACC 1DAT have sent for that learn-SUBJUNCTIVE-2SUBJ a trade
 They sent you to me in order for you to learn a trade
- b. * Te me han mandado para que aprendas un oficio
*2ACC 1DAT have sent for that learn-SUBJUNCTIVE-2SUBJ a trade*²²
 They sent you to me in order for you to learn a trade

²² Compare (43b) with (i), and (44) with (ii), where the Direct object is third person and thus no PCC violation arises:

- (i) Al aprendiz, me lo han mandado para que aprenda un oficio conmigo
1DAT 3ACC have sent

In particular, these combinations are especially infelicitous when in colloquial or idiomatic expressions such as *endilgar* or *encajar* ('to foist something/someone off on somebody'):

- (44) * Te me han endilgado para toda la semana *Spanish*
 2ACC IDAT have foisted for all the week
 They foisted you off on me for the whole week

(d) In addition, even when these clitic combinations are accepted, they do not allow all possible readings; thus, the clitic cluster is interpreted only as 2nd person direct object-1st person indirect object and never the reverse; that is, example (45) is uniformly interpreted as "You were sent to me", not "I was sent to you".²³

- (45) ?(*) Te me han enviado *Spanish*
 2ACC IDAT have sent
 They sent you to me (#they sent me to you)

Summarizing, the weak version is too weak to cover the restrictions most speakers show, and it does not clarify very much what these idiolectal variations might be, especially given Alsina's observation in footnote 23. In addition, it undermines what probably is Bonet's most important contribution to the discussion: her observation that the Person-Case Constraint in agreement systems and the *me-lui* constraint of clitic systems are two versions of the same condition.

Although these datives are not identical to the ethical or allocutive datives discussed in the previous subsection, they share with them some peculiarities that suggest that they are non-argumental; in particular, they pattern similarly with respect to the classical tests that identify non-argumental clitics (see Borer & Gordzinsky 1986; Arregi 2003b), especially the impossibility of wh-movement (46a), focused pronominals (46b) or full NPs (46c):^{24 25}

-
- The apprentice, they sent him to me in order for him to learn a trade with me
 (ii) A mi sobrino, me lo han endilgado para toda la semana
 IDAT 3ACC have foisted
 My nephew, they foisted him off on me for the whole week

²³ Bonet (1991, p.180) attributes this observation to Alex Alsina (personal communication). Albizu (1997b, ch. 1) mentions Luis Eguren's comments according to which some speakers accept only the reading mentioned in the text and some other accept both. All the speakers we have consulted either do not accept these combinations at all or belong to Alsina's group.

²⁴ Once again, the paradigm in (46) minimally contrasts with the one in (i), where the object is third person and no PCC environment arises:

- (i) a. No recuerdo a quiénes nos lo presentó María
 Not remember-1SUBJ to whom-PLUR 1plDAT 3ACC introduced-3SUBJ María
 I do not remember to whom (us) Mary introduced him

- (46) a. * No recuerdo a quiénes te nos presentó María
Not remember-1SUBJ to whom-PLUR 2ACC 1plDAT introduced-3SUBJ María
 I do not remember to whom (us) Mary introduced you
- b. * María te nos presentó A NOSOTROS
María 2ACC 1plDAT introduced-3SUBJ TO US
 Mary introduced you TO US (and not to somebody else)
- c. * María (sólo) te nos presentó a sus amigos más íntimos
María (only) 2ACC 1plDAT introduced-3SUBJ to her friends most close
 Mary (only) introduced you to (us) her closest friends

Consequently, there are strong empirical and theoretical reasons that favor the strong version of the constraint over the weaker one. Furthermore, our discussion in this and the next sections suggests that in fact the descriptive generalization should be restricted even further.

2.4. Summary and conclusion

In view of the discussion in this section, it is necessary to reconsider Bonet's generalization in (6), repeated here as (47), in different terms.

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

In particular, this condition must be modified in such a way that it captures the following properties:

- (i) Animacy: in section 2.1, on the basis of *leísta* dialects we have argued that the relevant generalization should be cast in terms of animacy instead of person. According to this, the '3rd person' part of the formula has to be substituted by '[-animate]' (see section 3.1.1 for some qualifications).
- (ii) case: in section 2.2 we have also shown that the constraint is not related to the morphological case of the NPs, but rather it depends only on the agreement relation between the verb and its arguments. Therefore, the 'DATIVE' part of Bonet's Generalization must be understood in its broadest terms, making reference to objects undergoing dative shift, applied objects, etc., and not only to strictly dative marked objects. Furthermore, it is also possible that the reference to ACC/ABS is also misleading, since nominative marked elements may also trigger this constraint (see references in footnote 15).

-
- b. María nos lo presentó A NOSOTROS
María 1plDAT 3ACC introduced-3SUBJ TO US
 Mary introduced him TO US (and not to somebody else)
- c. María (sólo) nos lo presentó a sus amigos más íntimos
María (only) 1plDAT 3ACC introduced-3SUBJ to her friends most close
 Mary (only) introduced him to (us) her closest friends

²⁵ The same observations extend to what Bonet calls "real reflexives".

(iii) Syntax: finally, in section 2.3 we have argued that the constraint is not morphological in nature, but it rather must be coined in syntactic terms, since it also arises in contexts and in languages where no morphological elements are involved.

We thus propose a reformulation of the PCC in (48) that captures the properties of the constraint discussed so far:²⁶

(48) *Person Case Constraint (revised)*: If object agreement encodes animacy, no other argument can be licensed through verbal agreement.²⁷

Once these changes have been introduced, the range of phenomena covered by the condition extends considerably and incorporates both languages and constructions that previously required independent explanations. In fact, according to the formulation in (48), any construction expressing abstract (syntactic) agreement should be subject to the PCC effects as considered here.²⁸

3. The Object Agreement Constraint

According to (48), the PCC is restricted to object agreement configurations involving an animacy feature. Even though from a descriptive point of view animacy perfectly sets apart the contexts subject to the PCC discussed so far, from a theoretical perspective it is hard to see why animate agreement should behave so differently from inanimate agreement. In consequence, we propose to split the PCC into two different generalizations. The first, in (49), states the empirical discovery concerning the role played by animacy in object configurations. This generalization relates to at least two different constraints observed in the literature, the PCC and the animacy restriction on incorporation briefly discussed in section 2.2.1.

(49) *Object Animacy Generalization*: object relations, in contrast to subject and applied object relations, are sensitive to animacy

In section 3.1 we briefly discuss the properties of this generalization, its parametric variation possibilities, and its differences with respect to other kinds of agreement.

²⁶ For convenience, we will refer to the internal arguments as object and applied object; however, no theoretical implication is intended whatsoever.

²⁷ We follow the standard assumption that subject agreement is specified in Tense.

²⁸ In his analysis of ditransitive constructions, Romero (1999) proposes, contra Koizumi (1995) and Chomsky (1995), that object agreement is not universal and languages such as Chinese, Japanese and Turkish lack object agreement. The proposal is founded on the lack of PCC effects and by taking the behavior of null objects as belonging to Huang's (1984) Null Topic Parameter.

The second generalization concerns the proper formulation of the constraint under discussion. We have seen that in KiRimi and Mohawk animate arguments must agree but inanimate objects cannot. What is important is that in contexts such as ditransitive constructions where more than one potential agreeing element appears, only one can in fact agree with the verb. Thus, when applicative agreement applies only non-agreeing inanimate objects are possible, and inversely, when verbal agreement with an animate object is required no applicative construction is possible. We propose that this is indeed the general situation, and that the verbal complex may only encode one agreement relation. Accordingly, we propose the much more general condition in (50), which subsumes the Person Case Constraint:

(50) *Object Agreement Constraint (OAC)*: If the verbal complex encodes object agreement, no other argument can be licensed through verbal agreement.

In section 3.2 we explore some of the theoretical consequences of the constraint and analyze one potential empirical problem for the OAC, showing that once we consider it in more detail it in fact supports this stronger formulation of the constraint over the PCC.

3.1 Animacy and Object Agreement

In section 2 we showed that animacy plays a role in restricting the possible agreement combinations, and we have made use of this notion to extend the range of phenomena covered by the PCC/OAC considerably. In the literature on object relations, specific relations between the verb and animate internal arguments abound. To mention just a few contexts: special case marking on animate objects in Nez Perce (Rude 1986) or Wagawaga (Wurm 1976); prepositional marking in Spanish, Romanian, and many other languages (see Pensado 1995 and references therein); impossibility of incorporation in polysynthetic languages (Mithum 1984); obligatory overt realization in Baule, Akan and other Kwa languages (Saah 1992, Larson 2002); obligatory agreement in KiRimi (Hualde 1989, Woolford 2000) and Mohawk (Baker 1996). Other asymmetries are found in Hungarian and Swahili, and many other languages as well (see Baker 1996 for discussion). However, as we have seen, not all languages grammaticalize animacy in the same way, and the properties of this relation require further analysis. In section 3.1.1 we briefly discuss the role of animacy in object agreement and the level of parameterization. We observe that we are not dealing with semantic or logical properties of the noun phrases but with a formal relation between the verb and its complement and consequently, as in other agreement relations, what counts as a candidate for animacy agreement is subject to language variation. Section 3.1.2 shows that applicative object agreement relations are not sensitive to animacy. This asymmetry between object agreement and other agreement relations, as surprising as it may be, is empirically well-grounded, and it has important consequences for the PCC/OAC. In particular, the

specific properties of other arguments involved (goal, benefactive, etc.) concerning animacy will not be relevant for the constraint.

3.1.1. On animacy and language variation

Formally, animacy can be considered part of the agreement system, together with person, number, gender, case and other features involved in agreement relations. The presence of the animacy feature, just like the presence of any other syntactic feature, triggers certain operations in the grammar. Its effects can be seen not only in the OAC configurations discussed throughout this paper but, as we have just mentioned, in a whole range of grammatical phenomena. Although there are a few other differences between the various paradigms discussed throughout this paper, the most obvious and interesting distinction concerns the type of relations that fall into the category *animate* in each language. Silverstein's (1976) seminal paper observes that languages differ in the grammaticalization of animacy according to the following hierarchy:

- (51) 1st person (speaker) > 2nd person (addressee) > 3rd person pronoun > personal name, kin term > human > animate > inanimate

Thus, while only first and second person pronouns are subject to the animacy restrictions in languages like Standard Spanish or English, Haitian Creole in addition includes 3rd animate pronouns and proper names, and Mohawk goes all the way down the hierarchy to *human* in the consideration of grammatically active animate objects. Interesting as it is, the precise nature of this hierarchy goes far beyond the scope of this paper.^{29 30}

²⁹ This hierarchy might reflect an increasing level of complexity within an implicational feature system (see e.g. Uriagereka, 1996), where animacy would be the most specific feature. Each term of the hierarchy would then correspond to an agreement feature. See Harley & Ritter (2002) for a full-fledged proposal, although not totally compatible with ours, and Bejar & Rezac (2006) for an account of the PCC in these terms; see also Hanson (2000). Microparametric differences would then derive from specific codification of agreement features for each language or dialect.

³⁰ As a side note, grammatical animacy does not intend to reflect any property of the biological world but just the way we, humans, conceptualize the external world. Thus, for instance, in Duudidjawu, a Wagawaga dialect, accusative case is restricted to animate objects. In this language dogs, but not kangaroos, are paired with humans (Wurm 1976):

- (i) unam-bu bugin^y-na bum-be:
children-ERG dog-ACC beat-PRES
 Children are beating the dog
- (ii) Da-d^yu bum-I man goro:man (*goro:man-na) d^yuyume
I-ERG kill-PAST this kangaroo (kangaroo-ACC) yesterday

It is important to keep in mind that it is not the properties of the Noun Phrase that matter, but those of the verb-object relations. The very same noun that triggers a distinctive animacy relation in object position does not trigger such a relation in subject position. The animacy feature is relevant to the OAC when it is encoded as part of object agreement in the verb, but not when encoded in the object itself, and the same thing can be said about the other phenomena just mentioned. Thus, although the animacy feature is always related to an animate noun (otherwise the agreement relation would fail), it is not necessarily the case that when the object is animate, V encodes such a feature.³¹

The dissociation between the animacy of the object noun and the agreement specifications of the verb is best observed in the behavior of objects in Spanish. We have seen in section 1 that first and second person pronouns are subject to the OAC. In addition, in *leísta* dialects there is a morphological difference in 3rd person masculine object agreement when it is animate (*le*) and when it is not (*lo*). In these dialects the presence of the object clitic *le* also triggers the OAC (52a). Interestingly, although *le* stands for animate NPs, animate NPs by themselves do not trigger the OAC (52b).

- (52) a. *Me les entregaron
IDAT 3ACC hand-over-3plSUBJ
 They handed them over to me
- b. Me entregaron a los sospechosos
IDAT hand-over-3plSUBJ A the suspects
 They handed the suspects over to me

However, it is a well-known fact about Spanish that animate (specific) objects require *a*-insertion (see references in footnote 7, and Leonetti 2004 for a proper semantic characterization):

- (53) a. Me entregaron *(a) los sospechosos
IDAT hand-over-3plSUBJ A the suspects
 They handed the suspects over to me
- b. Me entregaron (*a) la silla
IDAT hand-over-3plSUBJ A the chair
 They handed the chair over to me

This state of affairs leads to an apparent paradox: animate object NPs have to be formally specified as [+animate] for A-insertion purposes (53a), but they do not trigger OAC effects (52b) and their relation with the verb is not formally specified as [+animate] for agreement purposes. Consequently, whatever rule or principle is involved in A-insertion it has to be independent of object agreement.

I killed this kangaroo yesterday

³¹ It is well known that agreement systems are riddled with 'incomplete' relations; see, among others, Rezac (2003, 2004) for an explicit analysis of agreement-default forms within the minimalist framework.

In sum, as far as the role of animacy in agreement relations is concerned, we are not dealing with a logical or semantic feature, but with a formal relation. Furthermore, although restricted by Silverstein's hierarchy of animacy grammaticalization or by some more general mechanism that subsumes this hierarchy, different languages may make different choices.

3.1.2. Inanimate applicative objects

An important property encoded in the generalization in (46) is the fact that only object-agreement specifications are relevant for the constraint. If correct, this observation is especially interesting because it goes against some recent accounts of Bonet's PCC based on the idea that there is a competition between the object and the applied object (Ormazabal & Romero 1998b; Anagnostopoulou 2002). Essentially, competition accounts argue that there is only one position where 1st/2nd person or animate arguments can be licensed. According to these analyses, when both arguments are animate they cannot be licensed in the same sentence and PCC effects arise. Ormazabal & Romero (2002) have shown that competition analyses suffer from important theoretical flaws. Here we will show that there are also empirical reasons to think that these approaches are misleading. Let us recall from section 2.1 that in Spanish there are inanimate applied objects and the corresponding clitic is the one also used for animate applied objects, namely *le*:

- (54) Le pongo la pata a la mesa
 3DAT put-1sgSUBJ the leg to the table
 I will assemble the leg to the table

According to the competition analyses, we would expect these pronominal elements not to trigger the OAC, since they are unspecified for person or animacy. However, this prediction is not borne out; there is a clear contrast between (55a) which, being figurative speech, is pragmatically awkward but perfectly grammatical, and (55b) which is completely ungrammatical:

- (55) CONTEXT: I'm fed up; if you mention that the table is missing a leg once again and do nothing to fix it...
- a. ... te pongo a tí (de pata) en la mesa
 ... 2ACC put--1sgSUBJ A you (as leg) in the table
 I assemble you as a leg in the table
- b. * ... te le pongo a tí (de pata) a la mesa
 ...2acc 3dat put A you (as leg) to the table
 I assemble you as a leg in the table

The contrast in (55) clearly shows that the OAC goes beyond identity of animacy or person features: animate object agreement on the verb (*te*) blocks dative clitic insertion (*le*), independently of the animacy or person value in the latter. Consequently, contra competition analyses, it cannot be the case that an applied object is blocked by the presence of another argument that shares the same set of phi-features, nor the reverse.³²

3.2. Object agreement: not always, not all

3.2.1. A Case for the OAC

Dissociating the OAC in (50) from the properties of object agreement (49) seems to be the right move for various reasons. The more conservative formulation of the constraint in (48) is based on the idea that when animacy is encoded as part of the object agreement feature set, it triggers an extra licensing requirement, and no other NP can be licensed through the same head. However, this kind of condition does not seem natural on several grounds. To begin with, it encodes in the condition an otherwise unexpected difference between object agreement, on the one hand, and subject/applicative agreement, on the other, since the latter do not make any distinction concerning [\pm animate] agreement. Furthermore, from a theoretical perspective, it is not clear why the presence of animacy in object agreement would block agreement with the applicative object, and not the reverse, especially given the structural properties discussed in Barss & Lasnik (1986). The generalization is then simplified if we define it just in terms of presence vs. absence of agreement as in (50), while keeping animacy as an independent property of object agreement, as in (49). While (49) does not explain the different nature of direct object and applicative object agreement with regard to animacy, it separates the problem from the constraint itself and puts it in a more adequate dimension. In fact, this distinction is clearly illustrated by the behavior of object agreement not only in KiRimi and Mohawk, as discussed in section 2, but in many other languages where inanimate objects never agree with the verb, a property completely independent of the OAC. In addition, separating the OAC in (46) from general conditions on object agreement allows us to extend the OAC empirically to other potential cases where animacy is not involved. For instance, according to Woolford (2000), in KiRimi, in addition to animate definite

³² This is especially clear in *laísta* dialects, where the dative clitic *le* is substituted by *la* when the applied object is feminine and animate, as the contrast in (ia-b) illustrates:

- (i) a. la puse la mochila (a la niña)
 3DAT_{fem} put-1sgSUBJ the bag (to the girl)
 I put the bag on the girl
- b. le puse la pata (a la mesa)
 3DAT put-1sgSUBJ the leg (to the table)
 I assembled the leg to the table

direct objects discussed in section 2.1, there is a second natural group of objects that show agreement with the verb: pronominal elements, including *pro*. Woolford argues that although largely overlapping, the two agreement contexts must be separated in this language. Interestingly, KiRimi pronoun agreement also shows OAC effects, even in contexts where animacy or 1st/2nd person is not involved, as predicted by our analysis. Thus, when the verb shows agreement with the applicative argument, the inanimate pronoun in object position cannot agree with the verb:

- (56) * n -a- U -va -rUgh-I-aa (*with either order of OMs; Hualde 1989)
Isg-TNS-OM-OM-cook -APPL
 I cooked them it

Summarizing our discussion so far, the generalization in (46) covers all cases originally discussed by Bonet, and naturally extends to the other configurations we have introduced throughout the paper.

More generally, the OAC will prevent all contexts where two internal arguments agree with the verb. Indeed, this is precisely what we overtly see in many languages. For instance in Bantu asymmetric object agreement languages either the object or the applied object, but not both, agrees with the verb (see Bresnan & Moshi 1990 and references there). However, we have seen that languages that show PCC/OAC effects disallow some combinations of object-applicative object but most often they allow some others. At a first glance, it would seem that these cases constitute clear counterexamples to the OAC in (50) and that the constraint, in its most general formulation, is too strong.

As a general strategy, we must show that in cases where these combinations are possible, either the object or the applicative object does not maintain agreement with the verb. This amounts to saying that object agreement is not necessarily represented in a uniform way in all transitive sentences. With respect to languages like Japanese, Chinese or Turkish, the absolute lack of OAC effects could be attributed to their lack of object agreement relations altogether, a property that can be directly related to Huang's Null Topic Parameter (see Romero 1999). Among the languages discussed by Bonet (1991) and Albizu (1997) that distinguish 1st/2nd person vs. 3rd person agreement with regard to the PCC, we can distinguish two types. Many such languages –in fact more languages than we would expect by chance alone-- show the situation illustrated in the Basque examples of section 1, where 3rd person object agreement is null, and there are strong reasons to assume that in fact 3rd person objects in these languages do not trigger agreement with the verbal complex.³³ But in a few languages, the morphological and syntactic cut between 1st/2nd and 3rd person is not so evident at a first glance. One such language is Spanish. In the next subsection we discuss the nature of Spanish 3rd person object

³³ See Ormazabal & Romero 2002, 2003, for details and discussion. Interestingly, in Basque this possibility does not extend to 3rd person applicative object agreement, which does have an overt morpheme.

clitics *lo(s)/la(s)*, which can co appear with dative clitics not showing OAC effects, and we argue that they can best be analyzed as instances of determiner cliticization.

3.2.2. Object agreement in Spanish: *lo* as a non-agreement clitic

Consider the Spanish paradigm discussed at the beginning of section 1 and repeated in (57):

- (57) a. Pedro te lo envía [Spanish]
Peter 2DAT 3ACC send-3SUBJ
 Peter sends it to you
- b. * Pedro te me envía
Peter 2DAT 1ACC send-3SUBJ
 Peter sends me to you

If the OAC in (50) is correct, a prediction is that *me* in (57b) must be encoding an object agreement relation in the verb, but *lo* in (57a) must not.

In previous work,³⁴ we have extensively argued that first and second person accusative clitics (*me, te, nos, os*) in Spanish pattern together with indirect object clitics, as agreement markers, while third person clitic *lo* is a genuine case of Determiner cliticization. Thus, (i) third person (masc. *lo*, fem. *la*) cannot be doubled except for very restricted contexts, while first and second person ones may double in the same contexts dative clitics do, and do not show any further restriction; (58) illustrate the ungrammaticality of clitic doubling with third person *lo/la*, (59) shows that doubling of first and second person clitics is possible in the same context and (60) illustrates a similar case with a dative clitic:

- (58) a. * La vimos la casa
3femACC saw-1plSUBJ the house
 We saw the house
- b. * Los vimos a algunos/muchos
3masc-plACC saw-1plSUBJ A some/ many
 We saw some/many
- (59) a. Os veré a los que vayáis pronto
2plACC see-FUT-1sgSUBJ A the that go- SUBJUNCTIVE-2plSUBJ early
 I will see those of you who arrive early
- b. Os veré a algunos/muchos en el examen
2plACC see-FUT-1sg SUBJ A some/ many in the exam
 I will see all /some/many of you at the exam

³⁴ For detailed discussion, see Ormazabal & Romero (2004; 2006, sect.1), who extend work by Uriagereka (1988, 1995), Roca (1992, 1996), Torrego (1998), Ormazabal & Romero (1998b, 2002), and Bleam (2000).

- (60) a. Les compré un libro a los primos
3pl DAT bought-1SUBJ a book to the-PL cousins
 I bought my cousins a book
- b. Les pagamos las deudas a algunos/muchos acreedores
3pl DAT paid-1plSUBJ the debts to some/ many creditors
 We paid our debts to some/many creditors

(ii) Moreover, even in the few contexts where *lo* can cliticize it is semantically very restricted. Suñer (1988) observes that it is restricted to [+specific] arguments. Roca (1996) extends this observation and shows that although in some contexts non-specific interpretations are also possible, their range of interpretations corresponds exactly to the semantic interpretation of direct object DPs headed by the definite determiner in the same contexts (compare (61a) with (61b)) thus confirming the determiner nature of the third person direct object clitic.

- (61) a. Los vimos a todos
3masc-plACC saw-1plSUBJ A all
 We saw them all
- b. * Los vimos a algunos/muchos
3masc-plACC saw-1plSUBJ A some/ many
 We saw some/many

None of these restrictions apply to first and second person direct objects (62a) or to indirect object clitics (62b).

- (62) a. Os veré a todos/algunos/muchos en el examen
2plACC see-FUT-1sgSUBJ A all/ some/ many in the exam
 I will see all /some/many of you at the exam
- b. Les pagamos las deudas a todos/algunos/muchos acreedores
3pl DAT paid-1plSUBJ the debts to all/ some/ many creditors
 We paid our debts to all/some/many creditors

(iii) In the opposite direction, third person clitic *lo/la* may appear in some contexts where dative or first and second person accusative clitics never can; in particular, in context where, for independent reasons, it is not possible to have an agreement marker, *lo* is still possible; two such cases are existential (63a) and secondary predication (63b) contexts:

- (63) a. Brujos, haber-los los hay
Witches-MASC, be -3ACC 3ACC are
 Witches, they exist (lit. Witches, to be them (clitic) there are them (clitic))
- b. Yo no soy bonita ni lo quiero ser
I not am pretty-fem.sg nor 3ACC want to be
 I am not pretty nor do I want to be so (lit. ... nor do I want to be it (clitic))

For obvious reasons independent of the issues discussed here, first and second person clitics can never show up in these constructions, but the analysis of *leísta* dialects shows that direct object third person animate clitic *le* is not possible in these contexts either:

- (64) * Brujos, haber-les les hay
Witches-MASC, be- 3Animate-ACC 3Animate-ACC are
 Witches, they exist (lit. Witches, to be them (clitic) there are them (clitic))

Based on these and other systematic differences discussed in detail in Ormazabal & Romero (2004, sect. 1), we conclude that 3rd person DO clitics and Determiners belong to the same category; cliticization in this case amounts to Determiner movement. All other object clitics, including first and second DO clitics and the entire IO series, are agreement markers base-generated in the verbal or inflectional head.³⁵ Combined with the generalization in (50), the paradigm in (57a-b) is thus totally coherent with the particular choice standard Spanish makes with respect to the grammaticalization of animacy in object agreement.

4. Final remarks

In this paper we have argued that Bonet's Person Case Constraint can be subsumed within an empirically and theoretically much broader constraint: the Object Agreement Constraint (OAC). In this way, many languages and constructions that did not fit in the PCC may be grouped together and receive a unified account. In particular, the descriptive power of the OAC extends to languages where applied objects receive accusative case instead of dative, a situation that has been very well described in many Bantu languages but has often received a language-particular treatment. Furthermore, the OAC also extends its coverage to constructions where no overt morphology is involved, which suggests that a syntactic approach is needed.

The OAC crucially relies on the idea that under restricted circumstances the verb does not trigger agreement with its complement. Odd as it may seem, in perspective this is not a striking conclusion at all; a similar situation has been found in languages with Noun Incorporation, a process that in many respects parallels the agreement relation. It is a well-described fact in these languages that an object cannot incorporate and agree with the verb at the same time. Crucially, as we have seen for Mohawk, when the object incorporates, the verb may enter into an agreement relation with another NP, which clearly shows that Incorporation cannot be paired together with absorption of case/agreement. Indeed, Baker (1988) takes incorporation as an alternative to case in order to license the NP.

³⁵ See Ormazabal & Romero (2006) for discussion of the general picture deriving from this conclusion.

The fact that verb-object agreement is not always established has been obscured by the assumption underlying formal theories of agreement that agreement is uniformly and universally specified: in such theories, the object cannot help but agree with the verb. However, this assumption does not look that natural when we compare object agreement with the much more studied case of subject agreement. As is well known, subject agreement is not linked to any argument and, in fact, it happens even when the verb does not have any argument at all, as in the case of weather verbs. Furthermore, it is an almost uncontroversial fact that subject agreement is linked to tense, and that in the general case it disappears when the sentence is tenseless. In the same way, we have shown that there are conditions on the presence of object agreement that depend directly on the properties of the verb-object relation. Moreover, if we are right, there is at least one condition that restricts object agreement: NPs headed by [-animate] nouns, precisely those that freely incorporate in Noun-incorporation languages, can never establish an object-agreement relation with the verb.

Due to the complexity and variety of the data, in this paper we have restricted ourselves to presenting the appropriate descriptive generalization of the phenomenon. Yet, we think that the effects of the OAC go far beyond the examples treated here and that it may also be extended to other constructions where object agreement is involved. Conditions like the OAC acquire special relevance in contexts where agreement relations become particularly complex; among others, quirky case environments, ECM constructions in DOC environments, unaccusatives with two internal arguments, causative embedded subjects, etc.³⁶

Finally, we have also argued that the OAC is a purely syntactic restriction: it is not only independent of the morphological properties of specific languages, but it shows up in languages that lack the relevant morphology at all. As a consequence, whatever the correct explanations for the ditransitive alternations (dative shift, dative alternation, double object constructions, applicatives, and other taxonomic labels used in the literature) are, the OAC must be built into these explanations as part of the construction's structural specifications. Furthermore, the OAC is a privileged observatory for the study and understanding of the structural nature of agreement relations. The very fact that two agreement paradigms (accusative and dative) can collapse in a single agreement system (as happens not only in English and non-dative languages, but also in some languages, like Spanish, that retain to some extent the dative/accusative distinction) must be at the core of the explanation for a typology and properties of A-relations.

³⁶ Some have in fact been studied in the light of this constraint. In previous work we have analyzed certain restrictions on unaccusative verbs and on the subject of ECM infinitives inserted in "Raising-to-Object" environments; similarly, Boeckx (2000) and Anagnostopoulou (2002), based on Ormazabal & Romero (1998b), have made some proposals for quirky case.

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