Syntactic variation in Romance *v*

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1. GOAL: This paper puts forward a unitary account for a series of object agreement asymmetries in Romance by parametrizing the vP field. Adopting a microparametric perspective (Belletti & Rizzi 1996, Biberauer 2008, Fukui 1986, Kayne 2000, 2005, Roberts 2010, a.o.), and following numerous precedents on this topic (Koizumi 1993, Johnson 1991, Lasnik 2003, Torrego 1995, 1999, Lopez 2012), we claim that the vP can vary with respect to the feature-specification of an additional functional projection sandwiched between v and V, as shown in (1).

(1) $[_{vP}$ DP v $[_{\alpha P}$ α $[_{VP}$ V DP $]$ $]$ $]$

First, we argue that the presence/absence of α captures a microparameter covering v-related phenomena in Romance (DOM, participial agreement, object shift). Second, we suggest that the φ-feature composition of this head accounts for more fine-grained interlinguistic distinctions in Romance (OD clitic doubling, leismo, laismo, and auxiliary selection).

2. OBJECT ASYMMETRIES: Romance languages manifest various asymmetries with respect to well-known object-agreement phenomena. We focus on four of them here. The following:

2.1. Differential Object Marking: Only some Western-Eastern languages (Spanish and Romanian) display a Case marker (*pe*, *a*) preceding DOs (in so-called DOM; Torrego 1998, Leonetti 2004, Lopez 2012, Richards 2004, a.o.); Central Romance rejects this Case marker. See (2) for examples.

(2) a. Il caut **pe** un student   (Romanian)   b. *He   vist **a** l'Anna   (Catalan)
      CL seek PE a student   have seen A the-Anna
      I'm looking for a student   I have seen Anna

2.2. VOS sentences: Central Romance (Catalan, Italian) generates VOS sentences via VP fronting, whereas Western-Eastern Romance (Spanish, Portuguese, Romanian) resort to object shift, as binding data reveal (Belletti 2004, Lopez 2012, Ordonez 1998, Zubizarreta 1998). See (3).

(3) a. Recogio cada coche$_i$ su$_i$ dueno (Spanish) b. *Hanno salutato Gianni$_i$ i propri$_i$ genitori (Italian)
      picked-up each car   its owner   have   greeted Gianni the own parents
      Its owner picked each car up   His own parents have greeted Gianni

2.3. VSO sentences: Only Western-Eastern languages (Spanish, Portuguese and Romanian) display VSO sentences, a fact that has sometimes been associated to an additional projection in the vP domain (Belletti 2004, Ordonez 2007, a.o.). See (4) for examples.

(4) a. O invita   cam de   Ion pe fata acesta (Romanian) b. *Aime mon frere Marie (French)
      CL invite-3.sg quite often Ion PE girl the-that   love-3.sg my brother Marie
      Ion invites that girl quite often   My brother loves Marie

2.4. Participal agreement: Participles can agree with (displaced) objects in Central Romance (Catalan, French, Italian), but not in Western-Eastern Romance (Spanish, Portuguese, Romanian) (Kayne 1989, Paoli 2006, a.o.). See relevant examples in (5).

(5) a. Combien de tables as-tu   repeintes? (French) b. *Cuantas promesas has rotas? (Spanish)
      how-may of tables have-you repainted-fem.pl   how-may promises have broken-fem.pl
      How many tables did you repaint?   How many promises did you break?

3. A MICROPARAMETER FOR v IN ROMANCE. Considered together, the asymmetries above plausibly have the category "v" (or some object-agreement related projection) as its locus. Capitalizing on the first asymmetry (availability of DOM), we formalize this as in (6) below, taking v to be associated with a functional category (labeled α here in order to be neutral as for its specific content) that is responsible for DOM, object shift (in VOS sentences), and VSO. Once α is postulated, we need to adjust it so that we can distinguish Western-Eastern-Romance type

languages (Spanish, Romanian, Portuguese) from Central-Romance type languages (Catalan, Italian, French). We argue that α can have an agreement (φ) or prepositional (p) nature, as in (6).

(6) $[_{vP} \text{ DP v } [_{\alpha P} \boldsymbol{\alpha} [_{VP} \text{ V DP }]]]$ MICROPARAMETER $\rightarrow \boldsymbol{\alpha} = \{\varphi / p\}$

For our modest purposes, we leave open the precise connection between α and v in the lexicon. All that matters is that α stands for a source of φ-features or not (being thus 'prepositional'). The presence of φ-features on $\boldsymbol{\alpha}$ accounts for DOM and object shift (both being A-related phenomena; Ordonez 1998, Torrego 1998, Lopez 2012). Moreover, α is also the position that hosts subjects in VSO sentences, under the fairly standard assumption that α can manifest itself in isolation (as an independent projection below v) or incorporate into v, giving rise to extra specifiers. Interestingly, languages where α is prepositional not only lack DOM, object shift, and VSO, but also display: (i) participial agreement (see 5a) and (ii) oblique clitics (see 7).

(7) a. **J'en** ai bu   (French)
       I-CL have drunk
       I drank some

b. **Hi** he viscut molt de temps (Catalan)
       CL have lived a-lot of time
       I lived there for a long time

The correlation between oblique clitics and prepositional α is straightforward if oblique Case has adpositions as its source. The same holds for participial agreement if participles involve an adjectival layer, and adjectives contain a preposition in their lexical structure (as argued for by Amritavalli & Jayaseelan 2003, Mateu 2002, and Kayne 2008).

4. PARAMETRIZING $\boldsymbol{\alpha}$. Given that α is an agreement element, its status should be subject to further cuts. We show that this is indeed the case. In particular, we argue that the φ-feature make-up of α can be complete of defective (Chomsky 2000, 2001), a factor that determines domino-effect (a cluster of) microparameters. In brief, we argue for (8).

(8)

$\boldsymbol{\alpha} = \varphi$	φ-complete	DO doubling/no leismo		RIO DE LA PLATA SPANISH
	φ-defective	no DO doubling/leismo	laismo	CENTRAL PENINSULAR SPANISH
			no laismo	NON-CENTRAL PENINSULAR SPANISH
$\boldsymbol{\alpha} = p$	*p*-complete	no AUX selection no possessive *have*		CATALAN
	p-defective	AUX selection possessive *have*	EPP/overt expletives	FRENCH
			no EPP/no overt expletives	ITALIAN

The facts in (8) are well-known (Jaeggli 1982, Kayne 1993, Torrego 1995, Romero 1997, Fernandez-Ordonez 1999, Ordonez & Trevino 1999, 2008, a.o.), but have not been connected in a unitary fashion. We suggest that they follow from the feature specification of α. If $\boldsymbol{\alpha} = \varphi$, then it can be φ-complete (giving rise to clitic doubling) or φ-defective (showing or not gender distinctions); If $\boldsymbol{\alpha} = p$, then it can be defective (feeding incorporation in the context of *be*), or complete (bleeding it).

5. CONCLUSIONS. This paper aims at capturing different object-agreement-based asymmetries in Romance by focusing on the nature and feature composition of a functional projection (labelled α here, although it could correspond to Chomsky's Agr$_O$, Zubizarreta/Sportiche's 1999 Cl, Pylkännen/Marantz's Appl, etc.). The proposal offers a way to handle a series of object-agreement-based facts in a unitary fashion, establishing interesting connections that are consistent with well-known observations about Romance languages.

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