

Case opacity and Cliticization: On intervention and the triggers of different agreement patterns

Mihaela Marchis Moreno
mihaela.moreno@gmail.com

Ludovico Franco
franco.ludovico@gmail.com
Universidade Nova de Lisboa (Portugal)
Centro de Linguística da Universidade Nova de Lisboa

ABSTRACT: We will show that there are two types of languages which involve different mechanisms in obviating Minimality Violations/Defective Intervention and Case Opacity: Agreement languages of Punjabi/Icelandic-type with default agreement and Movement languages of Romanian/Spanish-type with phi-feature movement in form of cliticization. On the basis of rich empirical data we show that Case Opacity represents a case of defective intervention in agreement as the features of the phases introducing the oblique arguments block the agreement with the verb. Potential counterexamples can be accounted for by assuming that (oblique) clitics, in some languages, do not always move to T, so that the phi-features of the arguments they introduce still intervene and give rise to default agreement – as in Vafsi and some other Western Iranian varieties. Crucially, our approach has theoretical implications for the theory of case, cliticization and linear order.

KEYWORDS: case, agreement, clitic doubling, applicative head, defective intervention, experiencer.

1. Introduction

The phenomenon of intervention is a core topic of investigation in the recent minimalist literature starting with Chomsky (2000). The basic mechanism of intervention is that a finite T seeks a matching NP to agree, like in languages with subjects *in situ* for instance, or to attract like in languages with a strict SVO word order, but some other NP intervenes either in the agreement or the movement of a DP to a T. Dative/oblique DPs/PPs are interveners blocking subject-to-subject movement (see McGinnis 1998 for French, Torrego 1998 for Spanish, Holmberg & Hróarsdóttir 2003 for Icelandic, Rizzi 1986, Boeckx 2008 for Italian).

- (1) *Jean a semblé à Marie avoir du talent *French*
 Jean has seemed to Mary to.have of talent
 'Jean seemed to Mary to have talent.' (McGinnis 1998: 93)

According to Chomsky (2000) and Preminger (2008), defective intervention in agreement might trigger default agreement in languages such as Icelandic, as shown in (2) (see Holmberg & Hróarsdóttir 2003).

- (2) það finnst/*finnast) [mörgum stúdentum]dat *Icelandic*
 expl find.sg/*find.pl many students.pl.dat
 [sc tölván ljótar].
 the.computer.sg.nom ugly
 'Many students find the computer ugly.' (Holmberg & Hróarsdóttir 2003:1000)

Yet, there are some languages that seem to obviate defective intervention: Romanian and Spanish are interesting with respect to intervention because in these languages clitic experiencers do not seem to intervene, unlike in other Romance languages like Italian or French, as reported in the literature (see (1)) (see Marchis Moreno & Petersen 2014). Indeed, contrary to what was reported in Torrego (2002), most of our informants considered grammatical the raising construction with experiencer clitics in (3).

- (3) a. Ese taxista me parece estar cansado. *Spanish*
 That taxi-driver cl.1sg seems to.be tired
 'That taxi-driver seems to me to be tired.'
- b. Taximetristul acela îmi pare să fie/a fi obosit *Romanian*
 Taxi-driver.the that cl.1sg seems subj be/to be tired
 'That taxi-driver seems to me to be tired.'

Crucially, we assume that defective intervention should occur also in Romanian and Spanish in the absence of clitic doubling. So doubling of experiencers is obligatory in these two languages:

- (4) a. ?Ion *(îi) pare Mariei să nu-l fi citit încă pe Goethe
 John cl.dat seems Mary.dat subj not-cl be read still dom Goethe
 'John seems to Mary not to have read Goethe.' *Romanian*
- b. ?Juan *(le) parece a María no haber leído a Goethe
 John cl.dat seems to María not have read to Goethe
 'John seems to Mary not to have read Goethe.' *Spanish*

Romanian and Spanish informants showed variable judgments with respect to the grammaticality of raising over clitic doubled experiencers.¹ However, no dialectal variation was observed between Peninsular and American Spanish but rather idiolectal preferences. Nonetheless, in this paper, we will show that not only an experiencer oblique DP causes defective intervention and, hence, default agreement like in Icelandic but also the oblique case of the arguments. Specifically, two apparently independent phenomena such as defective intervention and case opacity trigger the same surface results across languages, namely default agreement. This is precisely what happens in many Indo-Iranian languages with ‘exotic’ double oblique patterns and related alignment variants (cf. Malchukov 2008, Haig 2008). Consider the Punjabi examples in (5), adapted from Manzini et al. (2015).

- (5) a. *muŋɖ-e-ne* *rotʈ-i* *khadd-i* *Punjabi*
 boy-obl.m.sg-erg bread-f.sg eat.prf-f.sg
 ‘The boy ate some bread’
- b. *kur-i-ne-ne* *rotʈ-i-nu* *khadd-a*
 girl-f.sg-erg bread-fsg-Obl eat.prf-msg(default)
 ‘The girl ate the bread’
- c. *muŋɖ-e* *darvaddʒ-a* *khol-d-e*
 boy-abs.m.pl door-abs.m.sg open-prog-m.pl
 ‘the boy/the boys is/are opening the/a door’ (Manzini et al. 2015)

Under a Tense/Aspect/Mood (TAM) based ergativity split (cf. Coon 2013), in the Punjabi perfect the external argument of a transitive verb displays the ergative case *-ne*, while the verb, which is a perfect participle, agrees with the (absolutive) internal argument, as in (5a). When in the perfective a specific/definite internal argument bears the DOM case/postposition *-nu*, the DOM object does not agree with the perfect participle, which shows up in the default masculine singular, as illustrated in (5b). Namely, the agreement with the internal argument is blocked when it bears a DOM/dative inflection.² In the

¹ Marchis Moreno & Petersen (2014), that we follow here, assume that although the clitic removes the intervention effect in raising constructions in Romanian/Spanish, the expletive construction is preferred due to information structure/pragmatic reasons.

² In this paper, we follow Manzini & Franco (2016) in assuming that there is a syntactic category Dative coinciding with the morphological one and encompassing both thematic (goal) & DOM Dative in Indo-European languages. In Punjabi, as in many other languages, the same *-nu* inflection lexicalizes both DOM and Goal datives, as shown in (i).

(i) *tu:* *kəmidʒə* *o-nu* *pe:dʒ-d-a-i* *a* *Punjabi*
 you.Abs(m/f) shirt.Abs-fsg he-Obl send-Progr-msg/-fsg be.Pres
 ‘You are sending a shirt to him’

imperfective, as in (5c), Punjabi displays a canonical nominative-accusative alignment.

Interestingly, there are also Indo-Iranian languages which may display a sort of agreement-like pattern in which objects agree with oblique (ergative-like) inflected arguments via (fronted) oblique clitics matching the phi-features of that arguments (e.g. experiencers in all TAM, agents in the perfective), as shown with the Vafsi (Northwest Iranian) examples in (6a,b), taken from Stilo (2009: 707). In these cases the verb shows up with a default inflection. With transitive imperfectives, as in (6c), alignment is nominative-accusative and the verb agrees with the external argument.

- (6) a. $tini_i$ $kelj-i-s_i$ $bæ-girætæ.$ Vafsi
 he.obl girl-dom.f-cl.obl.3sg pfv-took.default
 'He married/took that girl'
- b. $taemen_i$ $ane-m_i$ $æ-r-gó$
 I.obl that.pl-cl.obl.1sg dur-like.default
 'I like that'
- c. az_i $in\ leyle-y$ $æt-æsbir-om_i$ o $esdæ$
 I.dir this boy-dom dur-entrust-cl.dir.1sg to you.obl
 'I am entrusting this boy to you'

Vafsi allows double oblique alignment in perfective sentences, as represented in (6a). In such cases the object bears a DOM oblique inflection. The pattern of agreement displays an oblique clitic doubling the phi-features of the (oblique/ergative) external argument and the verb surfacing with a default/expletive inflection.³

1.1. The Aim of the paper

One of the main questions to answer in this paper is, hence, what triggers default agreement and the doubling strategy. Our research question is to find an answer to why some languages are sensitive to defective intervention and/or oblique cases while others are not.

On the basis of empirical evidence we show that Case Opacity (Rezac 2008, cf. Alexiadou et al. 2014), namely the constraint which bans a DP with theta-related Case to value a ϕ -probe, represents a case of defective

³ Nonetheless, also in Iranian, as in Indo-Aryan (cf. the Punjabi examples in (5)), there are varieties that display double oblique alignment, without the presence of oblique pronominal clitics doubling the features of the external argument (e.g. in some Northern Kurdish varieties, cf. Baker & Atlamaz 2013, Karimi 2013, Haig 2008).

intervention in agreement as the features of the phases introducing the oblique arguments block the agreement with the verb. Typologically, there are two types of languages, which involve different mechanisms in obviating defective intervention/Case Opacity: Agreement languages of Punjabi/Icelandic-type with default agreement and Movement languages of Romanian/Spanish-type with phi-feature movement in form of cliticization.

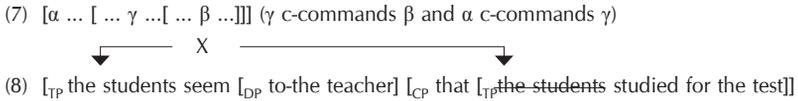
Hence, the default agreement in e.g. Punjabi in (5) is basically due to Case Opacity. We assume that Case Opacity represents a case of defective intervention in agreement as the features introducing the oblique arguments block the agreement with the verb. Crucially, in line with Anagnostopoulou (2003, 2005), Preminger (2008) and Marchis & Alexiadou (2013) we assume that some languages such as Greek, Romanian, Basque, Spanish develop a special mechanism to obviate defective intervention such as phi-features matching by clitic doubling and, hence, they do not display default agreement. Furthermore, we will also try to account for the puzzling behaviour of those Iranian languages (of the type of Vafsi cf. (6)), which display oblique clitic matching and still surface with default agreement.

In a nutshell, we aim at proposing here a novel unified approach of two phenomena, namely Defective Intervention and Case Opacity, based on the idea that both arise as a result of a Phase violation. From this perspective, Case opacity may be reduced to a case of Defective intervention.

The paper is structured as follows. In section 2 we will provide a basic characterization of Defective Intervention and Case Opacity, providing also a set of empirical data from Romance and Indo-Iranian languages. Section 3 illustrates our core analysis, showing that natural languages appear to involve two types of mechanisms in obviating defective intervention/Case Opacity: default agreement and/or clitic doubling. Section 4 addresses some further theoretical implications raised by our analysis. The conclusion follows.

2.1. Defective Intervention

The general explanation for defective intervention follows from a Minimal Link Condition (Chomsky 1995: 311) or a Relativized Minimality (RM) (Rizzi 1990) violation: an element α may enter into a relation with an element β if there is no γ that meets the requirement(s) of α and γ c-commands β (7). The illicit relation is sketched in (8).



In the most typical case, Defective Intervention applies when a head (normally, finite T) acts as a Probe and searches a matching DP goal to establish an agree relation, but some other DP intervenes. In simple intervention, this other DP is itself suitable for agreement. In Defective Intervention, the intervening DP is not a good Goal for agreement, due to the fact that it has already had its features checked by some other element, most typically a preposition, an oblique case or an applicative morpheme. In this case, the lower DP is unable to check its features with the head, because the other (embedded) DP ‘is in the way’ (Bruening 2014). This might lead to ungrammaticality, as we have shown in (1) for French, to default agreement, as in Icelandic (2), or might lead to a repair strategy of sorts (e.g. cliticization in Spanish/Romanian).

If Romance [a DP] experiencers are not PPs but DPs with a considered to be actually a morphological realization of inherent (oblique) Case (cf. Torrego 1998, 2002) experiencers DPs should block A-movement. But, at this point, the question is why do we have then variation within Romance languages? In fact, if we look closer to languages that allow agreement with oblique cases and obviate defective intervention, we realize that those languages that seem to violate Minimal Link Constraint/Relativized Minimality in obviating Defective Intervention have an additional mechanism to save the derivation, namely cliticization. The oblique agreement in Basque has been identified by Preminger (2011) also as a case of clitic doubling that obviates defective intervention just like in Romanian, Greek and Spanish (cf. Anagnostopoulou 2005, Marchis & Petersen 2014). Anagnostopoulou (2003) points out that in Greek, cliticization of indirect objects systematically licenses A-movement of themes, an operation that is blocked in the absence of clitics in (9) due to the Minimal Link Condition (MLC) violation. However, note that the cliticization of the genitive object “Mary” in (9b) is not obligatory in active constructions:

- (9) a. [To vivlio]_i **(tis)* charistike tis Marias t_i apo ton Petro. *Greek*
 The book cl-gen awarded the Mary-gen from the Peter.
 ‘The book was awarded to Mary by Peter.’
- b. O Gianis to edhose tis Marias.
 Gianis cl-acc gave-3sg Mary-gen
 ‘John have introduced her to Mary.’

In (9) when the indirect object clitic is realized in preverbal position, movement of the DP *to vivlio* is allowed as the intervening features of the indirect object have been removed through cliticization. Unlike in Greek (and in Romanian and Spanish, cf. (3) and (4)),⁴ dative/oblique DPs/PPs in other languages block subject-to-subject movement, as shown in (1).⁵

To sum up, we have illustrated so far that defective intervention can trigger either default agreement like in Icelandic, ungrammaticality like in French or clitic doubling like in Greek, Romanian and Spanish. As follows, we regard another type of intervention, e.g. Case Opacity, also triggered by oblique arguments.

2.2. Case Opacity

2.2.1. (Double) obliques and morphological default agreement in Indo-Iranian

In this section (focussing on Indo-Iranian varieties), we show that oblique arguments trigger patterns of default agreement as expected in case of (defective) intervention.

Rezac (2008; cf. also Alexiadou et al. 2014) proposes that oblique DP arguments (like the ones investigated here) are always embedded within a KP/PP shell, unlike structural nominative /accusative DPs which are bare DPs. Being complements of K/P, such DPs are often invisible to an outside probe (e.g. T) for Agree. Under certain conditions, however, oblique DPs

⁴ There is no distinction between restructured and non-restructured constructions with respect to intervention, since according to the Minimal Link Constraint the intervener blocks the A-movement of subjects independently whether it is in a mono-clausal or a bi-clausal structure.

⁵ Analogically, Marchis Moreno & Petersen (2014) show that in Brazilian Portuguese the A-movement of the subject is not possible when there is a full experiencer DP (cf. (ia)). The sentence is fine, however, with clitic experiencers (ib).

- (i) a. *Os alunos parecem ao professor que estudaram para a prova. *Br. Port.*
 the students seem-3pl [to the teacher]_{EXP} that studied.3pl for the exam
 b. Os alunos me parecem que estão cansados.
 the students cl.dat.1sg seem.3pl that are tired
 ‘The students seem to me to be tired.’

become visible for Agree. According to Rezac, this specifically happens whenever K/P has a ϕ -probe that enters an Agree relation with the DP below it, allowing the transmission of the features of the DP outside the PP. According to Rezac KP/PPs are phases (quite a standard view, at least since Abels 2003). This is the reason why the ϕ -features of the embedded DP are normally not visible for Agree to a probe beyond PP (e.g. T). As a result, Opacity obtains. Concerning Transparency effects, however, Rezac (2008) is not explicit on how the transmission of ϕ -features takes place as a result of P-DP Agree. One may postulate that the ϕ -probe on P is valued by the embedded DP and still remains active for further Agree with a higher probe, namely T.

Many Indo-Iranian languages display a double oblique alignment pattern in perfective transitive sentences. We have already seen some examples from Punjabi (5) and Vafsi (6). The term double oblique has been restricted in the typological literature (Malchukov 2008) to those languages displaying the same (oblique) inflection for both the agent and the (highly ranked in animacy/definiteness/specificity) patient/theme. Examples from Indo-Aryan micro-variation include Rajastani varieties, such as Bangru (10) (cf. Stronsky 2009, Manzini & Franco 2016). The doubled *ne* inflection below is indeed the all-purpose oblique inflection in these languages, encompassing ergative and DOM (and ‘proper’ dative morphology).

- (10) babbu-*nē* tʃʰore-*nē* gʰæ̃ɑɑ piʈʈɑ *Bangru*
 father-erg son-dom very much beat.prf.default
 ‘The father beat the son very much.’ (Stronski 2009: 220)

Nevertheless, once we assume that DOM object bears an inherent case (Manzini & Franco 2016, cf. Ormazabal & Romero 2013), also examples from Punjabi (cf. the DOM *-nu* inflection in (5b)) can be reduced to the same pattern of Bangru, with two (differently shaped/context sensitive, see. Manzini & Savoia 2011) oblique cases blocking agreement and the verb which shows up as a default form, normally corresponding to an ‘expletive’ 3rd person singular/a perfect participle (cf. Manzini et al. 2015). In our characterization of the Punjabi ergative morpheme *ne* assigned to the agent in (5), we assume – following a quite standard picture – that, at least in Indo-Iranian languages considered here, it is an inherent/oblique

case (Woolford 2006, Legate 2008, Karimi 2013, cf. Manzini et al. 2015 for evidence specifically concerning Punjabi).

The same double oblique pattern illustrated above for Indo-Aryan is widespread among Iranian languages (Comrie 2013). Indeed, many Iranian languages (though not Persian) are characterized by the same contrast between a nominative alignment in the imperfective and an ergative alignment in the perfect.⁶ In some Iranian languages, however, the internal argument bearing DOM dative/oblique case inflection is not sensitive to the ergative alignment in the perfect (namely it shows up in all TAMs). This precisely leads to a double oblique alignment pattern, where languages are often reported to use a ‘fossilised’ 3rd person singular agreement morpheme (default/expletive) in the perfect. Consider the Masali (North-Western Iranian) examples in (11) that illustrate this pattern:

- (11) a. xərdan-i asb-un vel â-du-a *Māsāli*
child-obl.sg horse-obl.pl loose all-give.pst-default
‘The child let the horses go.’
- b. xərdan-un asb-i vel â-du-a
child-obl.pl horse-obl loose all-give.pst-default
‘The children let the horse go.’ (De Caro 2008: 5)

Hence, default agreement is a widespread device when double oblique patterns arise in Iranian as in Indo-Aryan. Nevertheless, there is another pattern, to our knowledge previously unexplored in formal literature (with possibly the sole exception of Karimi 2013) that deserves to be illustrated in what follows. Some Iranian languages display a system in which default agreement is accompanied by a clitic doubling strategy, namely by obligatorily cross-referencing the oblique subject with an oblique pronominal clitic, usually a floating clitic which may be attached in front of the verb (less frequently) but also to other hosts in the clause (more frequently). We will illustrate here the case of Vafsi, based on the detailed account of Stilo (2004, 2010).

⁶ Consider the Zazaki (North-Western Iranian) examples below, taken from Toosarvandani and Van Urk (2012).

- i. Kutik-i ez guret-a *Zazaki*
dog(m)-obl.m.sg 1sg.dir bite.Pst-1sg
‘The dog bit me.’
- ii. Ez layik-i vinen-a
1sg.dir boy(m)-obl.m.sg see.prs-1sg
‘I see the boy.’

In Zazaki DOM/oblique inflections do not ever surface in the past/perfective, allowing the internal argument to agree with the verb in such contexts.

2.2.2. Focus on Vafsi oblique doubling

Vafsi belongs to the Tatic family of Northwest Iranian and has been extensively documented in Stilo (2004, 2009, 2010). As shown in (25), Vafsi is characterized by a TAM split in case assignment. More precisely, Vafsi alignment is characterized by three factors: (i) a TAM-based split ergativity (12a vs. b,c,d) (and its ‘Double Oblique’ variant), (ii) the presence of a DOM pattern insensitive to the alignment split (again 12a vs. b, c, d) (iii) doubling of core arguments with two different sets of (direct vs. oblique) clitics, with the oblique ones characterized by an accentuated mobility (Stilo 2010). Note that in a ditransitive structure (12d) all the arguments in the past/perfective may turn out to be expressed with oblique inflections.

- (12) a. *tæ* in *xær-i* *næ-ruš-i* *Vafsi*
 you this donkey-obl neg-sell-2sg
 ‘Won’t you sell this donkey?’
- b. in *luti-an* *yey xær-esan* *æ-ruttæ*
 this wise.guy-obl.pl one donkey(dir)-cl.3pl.obl dur-sell.pst.default
 ‘These wise guys were selling a donkey’.
- c. *luas-i* *kærg-e-s* *bæ-værdæ.*
 fox-obl chicken-obl-cl.3sg.obl pfv-take.pst.default
 ‘The fox took the chicken.’
- d. *taemen* *kell-i-m* *hà-da* *hæsaen-i*
 I.obl daughter-obl.f-cl.1sg-obl pvb-gave.default Hassan.obl.m
 ‘I gave my daughter to Hassan.’ (Stilo 2004: 243-244, 2010: 263)

In (12a) the definite internal argument is marked with a DOM/oblique (cf. (12d)), and agreement is with the (unmarked/direct) external argument. (12b) shows an ergative-like construction, involving an indefinite internal argument in the direct case and an external argument in the dative/oblique case. (12c) shows a double oblique pattern in which both external argument and the DOM internal argument are marked with the dative/oblique in the perfect. In both (12b) and (12c) the verb (in its past stem, cf. also Haig 2008) is set to default and an oblique clitic matching the phi-features of the external argument shows up. The triadic structure in (12d) shows the same pattern of (12c). Regarding the clitic doubling of core arguments, note that in Vafsi there are two clitic series represented in Table 1, from Stilo (2010: 244).

TABLE 1.

| Person/ Number | Direct Case | Oblique Case | Set ₁ | | Set ₂ | |
|--------------------|----------------|------------------|-------------------|-------------------|------------------|--------|
| | | | Suffix | Enclitic (Copula) | Enclitic | Prefix |
| 1 st sg | æz | tæ-mén | -om(e) | = im(e) | = om | im- |
| 2 nd sg | tæ | cs-dæ | -i | = i | = i | i- |
| 3 rd sg | an, in | t-an-í, t-in-í | -e (comm. gender) | = e (m) | = es | is- |
| 1 st pl | awán | t-awán | -ám(e) | = ám(e) | = oan | oan- |
| 2 nd pl | soán | soán | -a | = a | = ian | ian- |
| 3 rd pl | án-e, ín-e | t-an-án, t-in-án | -énd(e) | = énd(e) | = esan | isan- |
| 'who' | ke | te-gé | | | | |

Arguments, as we have seen in the discussion that precedes, are normally co-indexed by two sets (labelled Set 1-2, in Table 1) of clitics in the verbal domain. Their rough distribution is illustrated in the examples in (13).

- (13) a. isan-ær-vend-am Vafsi
 3pl.obl-dur-find-1pl.dir
 'We will find them'
 b. isan-ær-venda-yam
 3pl.obl-dur-find.prf-1pl.dir
 'They used to find us'

(13) illustrates an ergative split of sort. As argued in Stilo (2010: 248) "the flip-flop of functions" of direct and oblique clitics between the present and past tenses is a reflection of the TAM split between (fully canonical) Nominative-Accusative alignment in the present tenses vs. Ergative alignment in the past tenses in DP case marking. Oblique clitics (so called Set 2) co-index salient patients/themes in the present and direct clitics (so called Set 1) co-index non-salient (inanimate/unspecific) patients in the past. The mirror pattern is available with the external argument. It is obligatory matched by a direct clitic (agreement marker) in the present and by an oblique clitic in the past. In this latter case the verb invariably shows up as a default form. Experiencers, as already illustrated in (6b) are matched in phi-features by an oblique clitic form in all tenses and the verbal element is again set to default. DOM is available independently of the presence of the oblique subject clitic, as shown with the minimal pairs below illustrating an ergative-like pattern (14a) and a double oblique alignment (14b), respectively. The host noun/pronoun can be in the direct or oblique case forms.

- (14) a. *tæmen æsbæ-m* *bæ-diæ* *Vafsi*
l.obl dog.dir-cl.1sg.obl pfv-saw.default
'I saw a dog.'
- b. *tæmen æsbæ-y-m* *bæ-diæ*
l.obl dog-dom(obl)-cl.1sg.obl pfv-saw.default
'I saw the dog.'

Oblique clitics are fronted and attached to a noun, pronoun, adverb or PP within the VP while direct clitics are invariably suffixed.

- (15) a. *hæzíri* *tani-m* *bæ-diæ* *Vafsi*
yesterday he.obl-cl.obl.1sg pfv-saw.default
- b. *tani* *hæzíri-m* *bæ-diæ*
he.obl yesterday-cl.obl.1sg pfv-saw.default
'I saw him yesterday.'

Unergatives in the perfective present the same doubling effect and the external argument is co-indexed by an oblique clitic, as in (16).

- (16) *Tani* *há-s* *kærd* *Vafsi*
He.obl run-cl.3sg.obl do.pst.default
'He ran away'

In contrast, perfective unaccusatives display direct enclitics (i.e. agreement), as in (17). Interestingly similar contrasts can be observed in other Indo-Iranian languages.⁷

- (17) *bæ-ss-e* *yey xær* *ha-gir-e* *Vafsi*
pfv-went-3sg.dir one donkey(dir) pvb-take-3sg
'He went to buy a donkey.' (Stilo 2004:243)

Finally in *Vafsi* there is also one particular, textually quite rare construction, termed by Stilo the "OSV Ergative"- construction represented below.

- (18) *æz* *æhmæd-i* *yédieym* *Vafsi*
1sg.dir ahmed-obl see.pst.1sg
'Ahmed saw me.'

⁷ A pattern roughly similar to that of *Vafsi* is at work in Sorani Kurdish (Thackston 2006, Karimi 2013, Manzini et al. 2015). In Sorani lexical DPs and pronouns lack case inflections. Nevertheless, an ergativity split of sort is still present in this variety and it is associated with the agreement inflections hosted by the verb and in the clitic system. A further similar pattern is described for Davani, a South-Western Iranian language spoken in Southern Iran by Dabir Moghaddam (2012: 65-68).

In this case, the external argument bears the oblique case, but it is never doubled by an oblique clitic and the verb agrees with the internal argument (showing up as direct enclitic/set1 inflection).

3. A unified analysis of default agreement and clitic doubling

On the basis of our data, languages seem to involve two types of mechanisms in obviating defective intervention/Case Opacity: default agreement and/or clitic doubling. If defective intervention and Case Opacity trigger a similar syntactic behaviour, then they might involve one and the same phenomenon. But how can we provide a unified analysis to Case Opacity and Defective Intervention?

Case Opacity represents a case of defective intervention in agreement as the phases introducing the oblique arguments block the agreement with the verb. Following Abels (2004), Levinson (2011), Toosarvandani and Van Urk (2012), Pesetsky (2013), among others, we assume that prepositions (P) (and their inflectional/templatic counterparts in the verbal domain, namely applicatives (Appl), cf. Pylkkänen 2008) may introduce a phase boundary. Whenever such condition is realized, the DP embedded within the P/K phase is invisible to agreement mechanics. The head of such a phase may be pronounced or not, but in any case it acts as an (oblique) case assigner in its minimal domain (cf. Rezac 2008). Moreover, both defective intervention and Case Opacity involve a uniform pattern to save the derivation within a language and across languages: either default agreement or cliticization. The technicality with respect to head intervention in Case Opacity and DP intervention in Defective Intervention/Minimal Link Constraint can be overcome if we assume a Featural Relativized Minimality in line with Starke (2001), Rizzi (2004) and Franks (2014), who all argue that both movement and intervention are feature-driven phenomena rather than minimality violations due to DP interveners (for more details, see Franks 2014).⁸ Another strategy is drawing upon default agreement just like in cases with double oblique alignment, as in Northern Kurmanji:

⁸ This approach goes hand in hand with Anagnostopoulou (2003, 2005) who shows that intervention is obviated by clitics, which remove intervening features. Cliticization of indirect objects systematically licenses A-movement of themes, an operation that is blocked in the absence of clitics due to the Minimal Link Condition (MLC) violation.

According to Marchis Moreno & Petersen (2014), the derivation in (21) crashes because the embedded subject DP cannot agree and/or move since the features of the dative experiencer intervene (Anagnostopoulou 2003, Preminger 2008),¹¹ while the one in (22) is saved, because:

- i. the experiencer is doubled by a clitic that hosts the ϕ -features of the A-chain, rendering the ϕ -features in the DP inert for derivation (Anagnostopoulou 2003).
- ii. the clitic head CI (Sportiche 1999) moves to T and its features are no longer in the probe domain of T (cf. Anagnostopoulou 2003, Marchis to appear).¹²
- iii. T is allowed to agree with the embedded subject DP and the embedded subject is allowed to move since there are no longer features that intervene.

On the basis of the discussion that precedes, we take that ergative/oblique external arguments in Indo-Iranian are also introduced by an Applicative head which assigns them oblique case. This is in line with Rezac (2008: 106–111) who assumes that Case Opacity results from a PP structure/phase whose features intervene and block phi-agreement between T and the embedded argument. In Indo-Iranian an adposition (normally a postposition) assigns oblique case to its argument, in conjunction with a theta-role. All in all, we go for a unified analysis of oblique arguments in Romanian-type and Punjabi-type languages. However, the distinction between clitic doubling languages of Romanian/Spanish-type and default agreement languages of the Punjabi-type is that the former are *Movement languages* involving phi-feature movement to an applicative head disguised as cliticization (cf. Anagnostopoulou 2003) while the latter are *Agreement languages* just like Icelandic: in the case of Case Opacity and/or defective intervention, they trigger default agreement.

Vafsi complicates the overall picture and that could be apparently problematic for our analysis based on the distinction between Agreement and Movement languages. Recall that like Punjabi, Vafsi verbs also involve default agreement in cases with double oblique arguments, despite that the oblique external argument is cliticized just like in Romanian and Spanish.

¹¹ Note that the experiencer must also obligatorily occur with the dative clitic in order to have its ϕ -feature and Case valued. Hence, “seem” + experiencers seem to be similar to the quirky constructions of the type *gustar* “like” in Romance where the dative clitics are obligatorily and the experiencers have structural quirky case (Rivero 2004).

¹² In contrast to Romanian/Spanish, dative experiencers in Italian and French are also oblique arguments introduced by an applicative head, but since they are not clitic-doubled, their intervening features have not been removed and create minimality effects (cf. Anagnostopoulou 2003, 2007).

The same pattern shows up when the direct object does not display a DOM inflection. The puzzle to solve is why the clitic in Vafsi does not obviate defective intervention like in Romance.

4.1. Towards an analysis of (doubling) oblique arguments in Vafsi

As we have seen in section 3.2, Vafsi alignment may trigger default agreement and oblique clitic doubling. Vafsi experiencers trigger default and clitic doubling irrespectively of TAM.

Cross-linguistically, we may see many instances of ‘doubled experiencers’, where the agreement on the verb targets the DP object. Consider the case of experiencer constructions in Romance. They may display oblique clitic doubling, which still do not disrupt the internal argument agreement with T. Consider for instance the Italian sentence in (23). Here, the dative experiencer is doubled by an oblique clitic. Contra what happens in the aforementioned Iranian varieties, verbal agreement is not set to default but targets the DP object (*i gelati*):¹³

- (23) A Gianni (gli) piacciono i gelati. *Italian*
 to Gianni cl.obl.3sg like.3pl the.pl ice-cream.pl
 ‘Gianni likes ice-creams’

Apart from the different verbal agreement pattern, Vafsi displays the same syntax, as shown in (24) repeating (6b) for ease of reference:

- (24) taemen ane-m ær-gó *Vafsi*
 I.obl that.pl-cl.obl.1sg dur-like.default
 ‘I like those (things)’ (Stilo 2010)

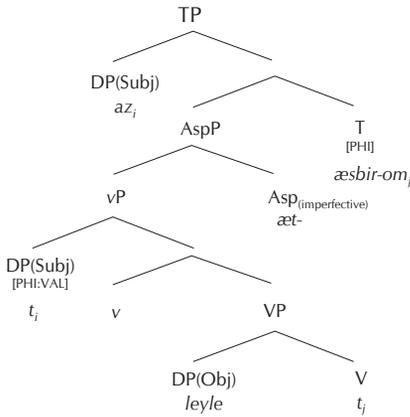
If default agreement in presence of an oblique clitic has to be ascribed to defective intervention, as we argue, it is suspicious to find that languages may choose to agree or not in the presence of an intervener. Namely, if defective intervention is part of UG, it is unwelcome to find that languages may choose to obviate or not intervention in the presence of the very same

¹³ Notice however that in some sub-standard varieties of Italian default agreement may be acceptable in the presence of oblique clitic doubling, as in (i).

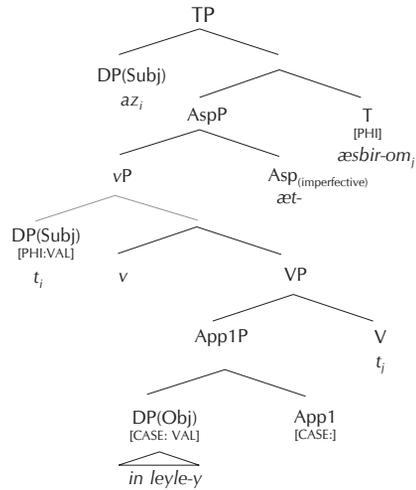
(i) Ai bambini gli piace i gelati
 To.the.pl children cl.obl.3pl like.prs.default the.pl ice-cream.pl
 ‘Children like ice-creams’

syntactic pattern, as we have seen below with the oblique clitic doubling patterns of Vafsi vs. Romance experiencers. In this work we aim at explaining linguistic variation in terms of (a quite conservative) Chomskyan perspective on the (parasitic) relation of case with respect to agreement where the head acting as a probe is searching for a target in its agreement domain. Given this basic picture, we may try to address Vafsi agreement paradigm. We may assume that in the imperfective/present, T probes onto its domain with respect to its φ -set. The imperfective/present external argument is always targeted by the phi-probe on T, being the highest argument and being un-embedded under a phasal node (Appl/P). If an oblique case is attached to the internal argument because of DOM, we assume that this is licensed by a low Appl head, along the lines of Manzini & Franco (2016).¹⁴ The relevant patterns are shown respectively in (25a) (direct object) and (25b) (DOM/oblique).

(25) a. *Vafsi imperfective*
 [direct Subj – direct Obj]



b. *Vafsi imperfective*
 [direct Subj – oblique Obj]

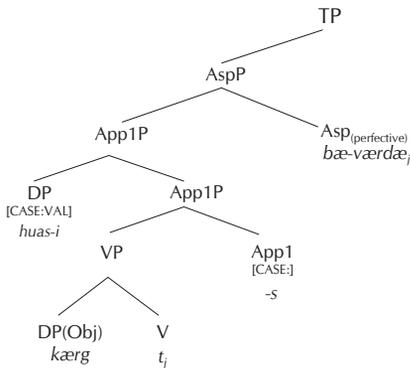


We may assume that in the perfective the external argument is introduced by the same Appl head introducing the salient internal argument, irrespectively

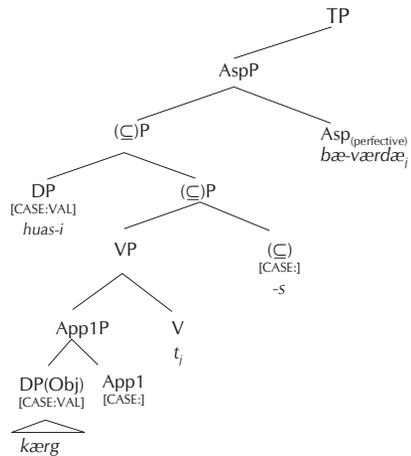
¹⁴ In Vafsi such Appl postposition is phonologically unrealized, but such a device is overtly displayed in many Indo-Iranian languages (e.g. Punjabi, Hindi, etc.).

of TAM specifications. Such head may be assumed to be parallel to a (high) Appl head, following insight by Pyllkannen (2008), Cuervo (2003). The Appl that introduces the perfective external argument not only assigns it oblique case but also causes it to be clitic-doubled, so that the perfective subject is doubled by an oblique-clitic, precisely hosted in Appl head, matching its phi-features. The motivation for this machinery may be ascribed to the fact that the external argument is assigned oblique case and the probe cannot see inside a Appl phase. Hence, the features of the oblique external argument are copied to be accessible for the T probe. In our view, in Vafsi the direct clitics (Set 1) are the realisation of true agreement with the grammatical subject, while oblique clitics (set 2) are the realisation of the Appl head. The rough representations of the alignment taking place in Vafsi perfective are illustrated below in (26a,b)).

(26) a. *Vafsi perfective*
 [oblique Subj-direct Obj]



b. *Vafsi perfective*
 [oblique Subj-oblique Obj]



Our main concern is now why T is impeded to agree when an overt clitic morphologically marked with phi-features realizes the Appl head in Vafsi (contra what happens in Spanish/Romanian subject-to-subject raising constructions). We argue that the oblique clitic does not obviate defective intervention in Vafsi, because the clitic does not move to T so that the features

of the embedded argument are still intervening, blocking agreement (see (24) where the clitic is attached to the closest argument rather than to T). As already pointed out, in subject-to-subject raising constructions in Spanish/Romanian the clitic head Cl (Sportiche 1999) moves to T and its features are no longer in the probe domain of T (cf. Anagnostopoulou 2003, Marchis Moreno 2015). Thus, T is allowed to agree with the embedded DP, whence intervening material has been removed from its domain.¹⁵

We assume here that the different behaviour of Vafsi vs. Romance has to be ascribed to clitic movement. Vafsi oblique clitics do not obviate defective intervention because the Appl head does not move to T, so that the features of the experiencer/oblique inflected agent are still intervening. On the contrary, in Romance the Appl head moves to T (cf. Sportiche 1999) and its features are no longer in the probe domain of T. Thus, T is allowed to target the internal argument of the verb. As a piece of evidence that Vafsi oblique clitic hosted in Appl do not move to T we may consider the fact that they can be attached to other constituents, such as preposition, adverb etc., unlike in Romance where, as well known, it either precedes or follows the verb. Consider the example in (15b), reported in (27) for ease of reference.

- (27) tani hæzíri-m bæ-diæ
 he.obl yesterday-cl.obl.1sg pfv-saw.default
 'I saw him yesterday.

Furthermore, it is interesting to consider the data we have reported in (18) that show that there is a rare construction in Vafsi where there is 'direct' enclitic (i.e. full) agreement on the verb in the presence of a 'non-doubled' oblique external argument. Examples like (18) apparently show that the clitic is responsible for blocking the agreement in Vafsi, contrary to Romance. Here we have a (quite standard) ergative construction, with T picking up the internal argument for agreement purposes. The simplest explanation is to say that in (18), given the absence of the clitic, there is no applicative head to block T to probe, so there are structural differences

¹⁵ Some other recent analyses have been proposed in the literature for the patterns of agreement in Western Iranian Languages. Baker & Atlamaz (2013) specifically address Kurmanji Kurdish varieties. They assume that the perfect is passive-like and differs from the imperfective in that it involves a non-phasal *v* and that the oblique subjects surfacing in the perfect are simply defaults. Specifically, they propose an analysis based not on the category T, but on the category Voice.

between constructions with clitics in Vafsi, which involve an Appl head, and those without clitics that do not have an Appl head and, hence, do not intervene. The latter are similar to English raising-over-experiencers constructions where experiencers never intervene because the experiencer is not introduced by an Appl head in *John seems to Mary to be intelligent*. That we are on the right track is confirmed by the different behaviour of unaccusatives/unergatives in the past/perfective. We have seen that perfective unaccusatives in Vafsi trigger direct agreement and no oblique clitics (i.e. the same pattern as with present/imperfective) while perfective unergatives adopt the clitic doubling strategy (cf. (16) vs. (17)). How to explain this split-intransitivity contrast in agreement? We assume that unaccusatives take as their only argument their sister DP and do not have the need of a further argumental slot between T and V (at least a set of pure unaccusatives behave like that and do not require a *v-like* projection in their derivation, cf. Deal 2009). T finds no intervention in probing onto its domain and triggers ‘direct agreement’ (Vafsi Set 1 enclitics). Following Hale & Keyser’s (1993) original intuition we assume that, on the contrary, unergatives have the shape of hidden/concealed transitives, involving (at least) a two-tiered structure, e.g. *v-V* according to Chomsky (1995). In such case we have an added projection between T and V (just like standard transitives in the perfective). We assume that Vafsi realized this projection as High Appl (and not as *v*), leading to a clitic doubling pattern. Given the constraint on clitic movement illustrated above, T cannot probe and the agreement on the verb is set to default. Hence, data from experiencers and split-intransitivity patterns in West-Iranian languages are particularly useful in showing that in such varieties there are two heads (T and Appl) that do not join “their” forces to obviate defective intervention: due to the defective intervention of the Appl head, T can probe only defectively – so it triggers default/underspecified agreement while Appl probes full phi-features in form of the oblique clitic. In Romance, the Appl and the T head join – so that we have a complex head that jointly probes obviating defective intervention. The oblique clitics in Romance are the manifestation of an agreeing Appl head, then they move to T, allowing it to further probe downwards without encountering intervention.¹⁶

¹⁶ An anonymous reviewer wonders why default agreement is not an universal rescue strategy across natural languages. Here, we assume that it has to do with the nature of the embedded domain and the availability of exple-

4. Theoretical Implications for the proposed analysis

Our analysis has several theoretical implications and it provides evidence or counter-evidence for different approaches of case assignment, the analysis of clitics and of the defective intervention.

4.1. Dependent Case vs. Parasitic Case

Bobaljik (2008) and Preminger (2011) offer accounts for agreement failure. Their idea is in a way the opposite of Chomsky's (2001) – namely that case is primitive with respect to agreement. Which DP agrees with a given head is determined by an accessibility hierarchy of cases, where unmarked cases are maximally accessible, followed by dependent cases and finally, by inherent cases (in a fashion similar to the implicational hierarchy assumed in the typological literature, cf. Moravcsik 1978). When an inflectional head does not find an accessible target – for instance in the double oblique structures exemplified above for Punjabi/Masali perfects, the derivation does not crash; rather the morphology insures that the relevant inflection surfaces in the default form.

Despite these welcome results in accounting for linguistic variation, there does not seem to be any special advantage in the accessibility hierarchy of cases with respect to a naked stipulation of the facts, like the VIVA (Visibility of Inherent-Case to Verbal Agreement) parameter of Anand and Nevins (2006), namely languages will differ as to whether their verbs can agree with an inherently case-marked DP.

Another way to go would be to consider that certain morphemes such as Agreement (AGR) nodes or Case features are added after syntax as they are demanded by language-specific requirements and are never essential to semantic interpretation (see Marchis Moreno 2015). This could explain the mismatch or the split between direct/unmarked and indirect/marked cases in the discussed varieties. In the spirit of Embick & Noyer (2006), we could argue that the direct Case is relevant only at PF while indirect Case, such as the oblique one, bears semantic content ('inclusion/part-whole', Manzini et al. 2015, Manzini & Franco 2016, 'familiarity' in Greek, Anagnostopoulou

tives in a given language. In a nutshell, we assume that languages that allow expletives like Icelandic/Punjabi permit underspecification and Default Agreement, which is prohibited in languages with clitic doubling (e.g. Spanish/Romanian) especially because, as we have shown in some detail, the mechanism of clitic doubling acts as a repair strategy.

2003, ‘possession’ in Romanian, Marchis Moreno & Alexiadou 2013) and, hence, it is introduced by the applicative head in the syntax, conditioning the choice of Vocabulary Items. But how does the mechanism of Vocabulary Insertion know how to make the right choice between the two Vocabulary Items, marked or unmarked cases, full versus default agreement? The Subset Principle (cf. (28)) resolves this case of competition.

- (28) Subset Principle: The phonological exponent of a Vocabulary Item is inserted into a position if the item matches all or a subset of the features specified in that position. Where several Vocabulary Items meet the conditions for insertion, the item matching the greatest number of features specified in the terminal node must be chosen (Halle 1997).

By the virtue of the fact that the phonological exponent of a Vocabulary Item is inserted into a position only if the item matches all or a subset of the features specified in that position, unmarked items cannot be inserted in a position where the applicative head triggers the feature set-inclusion/possession/part-whole. Specifically, oblique cases come as a free rider with the semantic content of the applicative head while unmarked/direct cases are realized post-syntactically since they do not trigger interpretable information at LF. Analogically, default agreement (like in Icelandic and Punjabi) is a case of underspecification due to defective intervention/Case Opacity and it takes place post-syntactically as the result of failed Agree in the syntax (cf. Chomsky 2000, Holmberg and Hróarsdóttir 2003, Preminger 2011).

4.2. A defragmented view on clitics

In the literature there are two divergent perspectives: clitics were either argued to be base generated in their surface position (Rivas 1977, Jaeggli 1982, 1986, Borer 1984, Suñer 1988, Sportiche 1999) or to be generated in an argument position and to undergo movement to their surface position, (e.g. Kayne 1975, Torrego 1988, Uriagereka 1995, Anagnostopoulou 2003).

This paper regards only dative/oblique clitics which are analyzed as *la* Anagnostopoulou as the reflex of phi-feature movement in order to obviate defective intervention. However, we have shown that they realize the applicative head, triggering, hence, a rich(er) semantic content. Thus, we have provided evidence that oblique clitics are not agreement markers like

default verbal agreement and, hence, they are real syntactic objects. The empirical facts from Vafsi clearly point to such an interpretation: direct clitics are agreement markers while oblique clitics are syntactic objects that realize the Appl head interpreted as inclusion/possession at LF.¹⁷

4.3. A linear view on defective intervention: Bruening (2014)

A potential counter-argument for our approach comes from Bruening (2014), who debates the status of defective intervention as a real syntactic phenomenon. Bruening (2014) argues that both experiencers and adverbs do not syntactically intervene but rather disrupt the linear order of the constituents.

- (29) *Jean a semblé [au cours de la réunion] avoir du talent. *French*
John has seemed during the meeting to have talent.
'John seemed during the meeting to have talent.' (Bruening 2014: 714)

Marchis Moreno & Petersen (2014) show that Bruening's (2014) potential counterexamples to the existence of syntactic defective intervention in the case of experiencers are only apparent. Based on Haider's (2001) fine-grained analysis of adverbs/adjuncts, they show that experiencers and adverbs occupy completely different positions in the architecture of the clause and, hence, create different locality effects in A movement. Note that in the examples below, only phrasal adverbs that modify the embedded verb like in (30) intervene and not higher adverbs such as *often* or *soon* like in (31) that are based generated in the matrix clause:

- (30) ?*Maria pare în aceste condiții să nu mai plece în concediu. *Romanian*
Mary seems in these conditions subj not go-3pl on vacation.
'Mary seems in those conditions not to go anymore on vacation.'
- (31) Ion părea adesea să aibă talent.¹⁸
Johns seemed often subj have-3sg talent
'John often seemed to have talent.' NOT: 'John seemed to have talent often'

¹⁷ The idea that clitics realize the Appl head is not new, it has been proven from by several scholars (see Anagnostopoulou 2003, 2007, Diaconescu & Rivero 2005, Marchis & Alexiadou 2013 among others) but these same scholars have also shown that clitics come in different guises. One way to distinguish between clitics and agreement markers would be to show that they occur at different stages in derivation: syntax vs. PF and that they are outcome of two different processes: Move vs. Agree.

¹⁸ We thank Ion Giurgea for this example and for drawing us attention to the different adjunction positions of adverbs in Romanian.

Bruening's claim that linear position could explain the unacceptability of sentences in (29)-(30) predicts that 'adjunct of all types are banned in the same position as experiencer PPs' (Bruening, 2014: 715). Cases such as (31) contradict Bruening's proposal¹⁹ (for a more detailed analysis of these adverbs see Haider 2004 and Marchis & Petersen 2014).

5. Conclusion

There are two types of languages which involve different mechanisms in obviating minimality violations and Case opacity: Agreement languages of Punjabi/Icelandic-type with default agreement and Movement languages of Spanish/Romanian-type with phi-feature movement in form of cliticization (cf. Marchis Moreno, to appear). Rich empirical data clearly show that two apparent distinct phenomena such as Case Opacity and defective intervention are actually one and the same: Case Opacity represents a case of defective intervention in agreement, as the features of the phases introducing the oblique arguments block the agreement with the verb. Across languages there is, however, a mechanism to obviate defective intervention, namely cliticization. Languages like French do not have means to obviate defective intervention when the experiencer is present (e.g. they lack clitic doubling) so that the derivation crashes when the movement of a DP crosses an experiencer that is realized in a higher Spec of an applicative head. However, the clitic alone does not suffice to obviate the defective intervention of the oblique – Vafsi teaches us that defective intervention can be overcome only if the clitic moves to T so that there are no longer phi-features in the probe domain of T that intervene. Clitics repair defective intervention only in languages where the Appl head and T join their forces and build a complex head via the climbing of the clitic to T as in Romanian and Spanish. The assumptions of this paper have crucial implications for Case Theory (dependent vs. marked and syntactic vs. post-syntactic case assignment), for a defragmented analysis of the clitics and for Bruening's proposal against syntactic intervention and in favour of linear intervention (cf. Marchis Moreno & Petersen 2014).

¹⁹ Marchis Moreno & Petersen (2014) assume that the contrast between (30) and (31) is due to several reasons: first, Bruening's adverbial phrases are part of the embedded clause (they can be easily interpreted in the embedded event), while the adverbs in the examples (32) clearly modify the matrix verb. Therefore, the positions of these different adjuncts might play a role in the acceptability of these sentences.

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