Phase-level Minimality in Romance VOS

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Abstract

This paper discusses the morphological and syntactic properties in VOS sentences in Iberian Romance languages. In particular, it explores the possibility that VOS structures are derived through movement of the object to a specifier that c-commands the subject, which predicts a minimality configuration between C-T (the nominative Case Probe), the subject (the Goal), and the raised object (the intervener). After considering different alternatives to account for the scenario just described, some pieces of evidence are put forward to argue that the minimality configuration is circumvented if the relevant portion of the subject (a null φ-clitic or a little pro; see Torrego 1998 and Belletti 2004) ends up in a position higher than that of the shifted object – namely, T –, a process that is related to Chomsky’s (2008) φ-inheritance. To the extent that it is tenable, the analysis not only offers a solution to a long-standing problem without resorting to ad hoc locality-modifying devices (e.g. equidistance), but also reinforces Chomsky’s (2001, 2007, 2008) recent conception of the cycle, whereby operations wait until a dedicated stage of the derivation (the phase level) is reached to take place.

1. Phase Level Evaluation

Chomsky (2001) argues that intervention effects are computed at the phase level, after previous (and possibly counter-cyclic) operations occur.

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Consequently, an illicit configuration like (1), where X tries to establish a long-distance dependency with Y across a would-be intervener (Z), can be circumvented if Y ends up occupying a position above Z by the end of the relevant cycle, as depicted in (2) (so-called ‘leapfrogging’; see Boeckx 2007, Jeong 2007, and McGinnis 2004 for discussion), therefore becoming accessible to X.

\[
(1) \left[ \text{XP} X \quad [ZP \ Z \ [YP \ Y \ ] ] \right]
\]

\[
(2) \text{a. } \left[ \text{XP} X \quad [ZP \ Y \ [ZP \ Z \ [YP \ t \ Y \ ] ] \right]
\]

\[
\text{b. } \left[ \text{XP} X \quad [ZP \ Y \ [ZP \ Z \ [YP \ t \ Y \ ] ] \right]
\]

Once Y occupies its derived position in (2), Agree (X, Y) can readily take place, ignoring Z. Importantly, Z can no longer be matched by X either, for Chomsky (2001) takes Agree to operate under strict c-command, equidistance (see Chomsky 1993, 1995) being dispensed with: in Chomsky’s phase-cycle framework, the only way for X to interact with Z in (2b) is referred to as Multiple Agree (see Hiraiwa 2005), a complex dependency that relates a single Probe (X) to a cluster of Goals (here, Y and Z):

\[
(3) \left[ \text{XP} X \left( \text{Probe} \right) \quad [ZP \ Y \left( \text{Goal}_{1} \right) \quad [ZP \ Z \left( \text{Goal}_{2} \right) \quad [YP \ t \ Y \ ] ] \right]
\]

Chomsky (2001) capitalizes on the scenario in (4) to support this phase-based approach to minimality:

\[
(4) \left[ \text{CP} \quad \text{What, C did} \quad [TP \ John] \quad T \left[ v_{P} \ t \left[ v_{P} \ t \left[ v_{P} \ say \ t \right] \right] \right] \right]
\]

As Chomsky observes, at the point when T is merged, John cannot be its Goal, since what (which has been raised to SPEC-v*) is a closer candidate. Crucially, if minimality is evaluated after C is merged (at the phase level), the problem goes away, since what has already moved to SPEC-C at that derivational stage.\(^1\)

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\(^1\) Boeckx (2007) proposes an alternative account whereby what does not count as an intervener, since, when in SPEC-v*, it has already checked its Case, becoming
The just outlined locality theory predicts that, in situations like the one in (5) below, where an object has moved to an outer-SPEC-\(v^*\), the C-T complex will fail to assign nominative Case to the in situ subject, unless: a) the object, like in (4), further raises above T (avoiding intervention at the phase level) or else b) the object is somehow bypassed by C-T’s \(\varphi\)-Probe.2

\[
\text{(5) } \begin{array}{c}
\text{CP} \\
\text{C} \\
\text{TP} \\
\text{T} \\
\text{Object } [_{v^*P} \text{Subject } [_{v^*P} \text{VP } [V t_{\text{Object}} ]]]]
\end{array}
\]

In this paper I argue that VOS sentences in some Iberian Romance languages, if analyzed as in Ordóñez (1998), raise such a problematic scenario, thus suggesting — it would appear — that (an) equidistance-like device plays a key role in long-distance nominative Case assignment. Here I will argue against that possibility, proposing a phase-based account whereby VOS structures of the Spanish type resort to a doubling strategy involving a null \(\varphi\)-bundle clitic that moves to T in order to handle nominative Case assignment, as argued by Torrego (1998) (see Alexiadou & Anagnostopoulou 1998, 2001, and Taraldsen 1992 for similar ideas).3 Hence, the relevant configuration to consider is not (5), but (6), where the agreeing part of the subject has raised to T.

\[
\text{(6) } \begin{array}{c}
\text{CP} \\
\text{C} \\
\text{TP} \text{[T\(\varphi\)_i} \\
\text{Object } [_{v^*P} \text{Subject } [_{v^*P} \text{VP } [V t_{\text{Object}} ]]]]
\end{array}
\]

To the extent that it is correct, this analysis accounts for the lack of intervention in Romance VOS and supports Chomsky’s (2001) hypothesis that only the phase level counts as an evaluation check-point.

2. Object Shift Strategies in Romance

The recent literature on Romance VOS discusses two main strategies to derive the correct word order: VP fronting and Object Shift.4

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2 Chomsky (2001) makes this latter suggestion in the case of Icelandic Object Shift, taking the object to undergo an extra phonological operation (dubbed Thematization/Extraction by Chomsky) that removes it from narrow syntax. More radical accounts whereby inactive objects become invisible for minimality purposes are pursued by Broekhuis (2007) and Richards (2004).

3 In some accounts, this \(\varphi\)-bundle is treated either as a null \(\text{pro}\) (see Belletti 2005) or as mere person feature (see Uriagereka 1999), which is then taken to be a full-fledged argument. See Ordóñez & Treviño (1999) for more discussion.

4 In (7) and (8) I am recasting Belletti’s (2004) and Ordóñez’s (1998) analyses in Chomsky’s (2001) terms. In particular, I am assuming that both the VP and the
As the binding data in (9) and (10) indicate, there are grounds to believe that both derivations are factually allowed, but appropriately parametrized:

(9) Ayer visitó a cada chico, su mentor. (Spanish)
yesterday visited.3SG to each boy his mentor ‘His mentor visited each boy yesterday’.

(10) *Hanno salutato Gianni, i propri genitori. (Italian)
have.3PL greeted Gianni the own parents ‘His own parents have greeted Gianni.’

In Gallego (2007), it is argued that Romance languages split into two groups, depending on which strategy they adopt to generate VOS: European Portuguese, Galician, and Spanish invoke Object Shift (see Cardinaletti 2001, Costa 2000, 2002 and Ordóñez 1997; 1998), whereas Catalan and Italian do VP fronting (see Belletti 2004). For the sake of clarity, I will refer to these groups as Romance type A and Romance type B, respectively.\(^5\)\(^6\)

Let us suppose, as just said, that both strategies are available. This means that only VOS sentences of the A type pose a problem for Chomsky’s (2001) theory (and, in fact, for any locality theory assuming strict c-command metrics), since the relevant dependents stand in a c-command relation – in the

\(^5\) In the case of Italian, there is some variation with respect to judgments. See Cardinaletti (2001), where variable binding is argued to be possible, as predicted by Ordóñez’s (1998) analysis. Judgments are robust in Spanish and Galician (where variable binding is possible) and European Portuguese and Catalan (where it is not).

\(^6\) This would be consistent with Costa’s (2000) analysis. However, as this author notes, object movement does not feed variable binding in European Portuguese, which he takes to indicate the A-bar nature of this step:

(i) *Viu todos os filmes, o seu realizador. (E. Portuguese)
saw.3SG all the movies the his producer ‘Their producer saw all the movies.’ [from Costa 2000:102]

Investigating why Spanish and Galician differ from European Portuguese is beyond the scope of this paper. In any event, what is relevant for the purposes of my discussion paper is that European Portuguese VOS qualifies as A type.
VP fronting case, the object does not c-command the *in situ* subject. Therefore, sentences like (9) should be out due to intervention. The prediction, however, is not borne out.

Chomsky’s system provides different technical ways to solve this puzzle. One could, for instance, assume that both object and subject move to T so that the former is ‘moved out of the way.’ This would require C-to-T φ-feature inheritance (see Chomsky 2008): otherwise, φ-features would remain in C, bringing the unwanted minimality configuration (i.e. (11)) back to the fore:

(11) [CP Cφ [TP Object [TP Subject T [vP tObject [vP tSubject vφ tObject ]]]]]

(12) [CP C [TP Object [TP Subject Tφ [vP tObject [vP tSubject vφ tObject ]]]]]

In other words, if object and subject raise to T by the end of the CP phase, and C-T’s φ-Probe operates from T (after φ-inheritance, as in (12)), the lack of intervention could be accounted for.

Ura (2000) reports some data from Lango that fits with the scenario just described. In particular, Lango has a passive-like construction where the object gains subject-like properties without actual subject demotion. Ura (2000) dubs this construction *Anti-Impersonal Passive* (AIP), and refers to object movement across the subject as *Long Object Shift* (LOS):

(13) a. Dako o – jwat – o loca. [Active] (Lango)
   woman.3SG – hit – PERF man
   ‘The woman hit the man.’

b. Loca, dako o – jwat – o t₁ [AIP] (Lango)
   man woman.3SG – hit – PERF
   ‘The woman hit the man.’

[from Ura 2000: 72]

Ura (2000) shows that, like in type A VOS, Lango AIP features A-movement, and argues that object and subject move to T, yielding a multiple SPEC configuration. As Ura (2000) points out, only the subject agrees with the verb in AIPs – again, like in type A VOS. Notice that subject-verb agreement in (14b) is not a problem even if the object occupies the same ‘checking area’: Chomsky’s (2001, 2008) phase level evaluation, coupled with φ-feature inheritance, gives us the licit scenario in (12). 7

7 Ura (2000:79 and ff.) analyzes these facts by claiming that the φ-feature bundle of Infl is [+multiple], demanding double checking for its deletion. This
With this much as background, let us now return to type A VOS in Iberian Romance, taking Spanish as the representative language. Examples like (15), where the VP adverb rápidamente ‘quickly’ occupies the rightmost position, could in principle be taken to indicate that subject and object have vacated the v*P (see Chomsky 1995 and Cinque 1999), as entertained in (11)-(12) above:

(15) ?Repartía las cartas Juan rápidamente.

Juan quickly dealt the cards.

Whatever its plausibility, it is highly unlikely for this analysis to be the correct one for type A VOS, as it would require making highly ad hoc assumptions: first, V should move to C in simple declarative clauses,\(^8\) and, second, objects should (optionally) undergo A-movement to T. The second condition is hard to capture if A-movement is triggered by φ-features (see Chomsky 2008), but the first one becomes virtually impossible in the light of data like (16):

(16) Dicen [CP que repartía las cartas Juan rápidamente]

They say that Juan dealt the cards quickly.

implementation cannot be recast in current terms: if the φ-features of T did agree with object and subject, then it is not obvious how to account for the fact that only the latter triggers agreement. See Ura (2000:83 and ff.) for similar facts in Imbaburua Quechua, with object and subject receiving Nominative Case, but only the former triggering verb agreement.

\(^8\) At least, it must move beyond T (or the relevant nominative Case assigning head). Plausibly, such position could be Uriagereka’s (1995a, 1995b) F, but that would require postulating an additional head, thus departing from the simplest scenario.
If que "that" occupies the C head, then the verb repartía ‘dealt’ cannot be above T.\textsuperscript{9} From this I conclude that, in Iberian Romance type A VOS, object and subject cannot be SPECs of T.

A second way to overcome intervention in type A VOS is Hiraiwa’s (2005) \textit{Multiple Agree}. Under that option, shifted object and \textit{in situ} subject would have to share the same Φ-specification (for them to be collapsed as a unique Goal). Let us test such a possibility in (17), where subject and object have different number values.

\begin{enumerate}
\item \textbf{(17) a. \quad ??Ayer llamaron a cada alumno, sus, profesores.} (Spanish)
\quad yesterday called.PL to each student his teachers
\quad ‘His teachers called every student yesterday’
\item \textbf{b. \quad ??Ayer llamó a todos los alumnos, su, profesor.} (Spanish)
\quad yesterday called.SG to all the students his teacher
\quad ‘Their teacher called all the students yesterday.’
\end{enumerate}

\begin{flushright}
\textit{Deviance in (17a) and (17b) would certainly be consistent with a \textit{Multiple Agree} analysis for type A VOS, as it would follow from C-T’s Φ-Probe failing to match the object and subject cluster. Nevertheless, it is not immediately obvious that this analysis be tenable either: an \textit{Agree} failure would yield not deviance, but ungrammaticality, as in \textit{Person Case Constraint} (PCC) cases (see Boeckx 2000, 2008).}\textsuperscript{10}
\end{flushright}

\noindent Summarizing, none of the two hypotheses considered in this section (object and subject raising and \textit{Multiple Agree}) seem enough to account for the acceptable status of type A VOS. In the next section I explore a more satisfactory analysis for this structure. Specifically, I claim that type A VOS sentences exploit a well-known strategy of the Case/agreement systems of Romance that circumvents minimality: clitic doubling.

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{9} I am putting aside recomplementation patterns, which presumably involve more than one C head (see Uriagereka 1995a for discussion).
\end{flushright}

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{10} The Italian facts pointed out by Belletti (2004) are as expected under a \textit{Multiple Agree} analysis of Nominative Case assignment in VOS:
\begin{enumerate}
\item \textit{Hanno salutato ogni ragazzo i suoi genitori.} (Italian)
\quad ‘His own parents have greeted every boy.’
\end{enumerate}
\end{flushright}

\begin{flushright}
[from Belletti 2004:48]
\end{flushright}

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{9} I interpret the effect in (i) as follows: variable binding forces an (otherwise illicit) Object Shift-based derivation, where the object blocks nominative Case assignment.
\end{flushright}
3. A Doubling Analysis

The analysis I want to put forward for VOS builds on the observation that, much like objects, subjects can resort to a doubling strategy whereby a complex DP splits into two parts, as shown in (18):

(18) Juan cuidará a las niñas él. (Spanish)
Juan take-care-FUT.3SG to the children he
‘Juan will look after the children himself.’

Building on the ample literature on doubling (see Torrego 1995, Uriagereka 1995b, 2005, and references therein), Belletti (2005) discusses cases like this at length, arguing that *Juan* and *él* start off within the same DP, just like a clitic and its double do. According to Belletti, the moving element (in (18), *Juan*) checks nominative Case. I will essentially assume the gist of this analysis here, and, crucially, I will additionally follow Belletti (2005:17-18) in that postverbal subjects more generally resort to the doubling strategy too:

(19) [CP [TP pro, T parlerò [vP [DP t [D io] v* ]] ] ] (Italian)
‘I myself will speak.’

Belletti’s (2005) analysis of postverbal subjects can be seen as an implementation of Torrego’s (1998) claim that, in clitic doubling languages, a subject φ-bundle (a D element, according to Torrego) moves to T so that this head is provided with the features necessary to assign nominative Case at a distance.11

Ignacio Bosque suggests a secondary predication analysis for (18) through personal communication. As he notes, this example is similar to *I’ll do it myself* cases, where *myself* would be a predicate. Bosque’s suggestion is favored by two facts: first, English lacks clitic doubling, but features secondary predication; and second, the postverbal pronoun can be reinforced by *solo* ‘alone’ and *mismo* ‘self’, which are clearly predicative:

(i) Juan cuidará a las niñas él solo / mismo. (Spanish)
Juan take-care-FUT.3SG to the children he alone same
‘Juan will look after the children alone / himself.’

Tempting as this possibility may be, I will not pursue it (see Sánchez López 1996 for a more comprehensive study), since, as Ignacio Bosque further observes, a predication analysis would not be able to explain the asymmetry in (ii):

(ii) Todos llegaron {cansados / *ellos} (Spanish)
all-MASC-PL arrived.3PL tired-MASC-PL / they-MASC-PL
‘They arrived tired / all.’

To be precise, Torrego (1998: 217) proposes “that the agreement features of the D of the [subject] doubling structure, in combination with T, license the nominative Case of the subject.” Torrego’s (1998) idea is that this null D (represented here as
Let us go back, once more, to type A VOS. As advanced, I want to argue that this structure involves doubling of the in situ subject. Hence, sentences like (9) above ought to be analyzed as in (20), with a null subject $\varphi$-bundle moving to $T$: \footnote{13} \footnote{14}

(20) \[ [CP Ayer [TP \varphi] \text{ visitó }] [\text{ a cada chico }] [\text{ su mentor }] [ D t_j ]] v^* \]
\[
\text{ yesterday visited.3SG to each boy his mentor [ D t_j ]] [ \text{(Spanish)}]}
\]
\`
His mentor visited each boy yesterday.'

Under this analysis, it is the $\varphi$-bundle that checks nominative Case (in current terms, it is the Goal). Therefore, it is the $\varphi$-bundle that controls for subject-verb agreement. Evidence in favor of this prediction can be drawn from partial agreement effects: in (21), the in situ subject agrees with the verb in number, not person: \footnote{15}

(21) Ayer visitamos a cada chico los profesores. \text{(Spanish)}
\`
We the teachers visited each boy yesterday.'

Subject-verb person mismatch in (21) indicates that the in situ subject does not participate in Agree with C-T – the hypothesized $\varphi$-bundle does instead.

$\varphi$ is needed to assign Case in the same way object clitics are needed to assign accusative and dative. \footnote{13} \footnote{14}

The same analysis (details aside) is put forward by Alexiadou & Anagnostopoulou (2001) to account for VSO (not VOS) sentences. \footnote{15}

As a reviewer observes, the same (person) agreement pattern is found in VSO and SVO. This must indicate that the doubling process is generally available, and not restricted to VOS contexts. Interestingly enough, such a possibility fits with the fact that, at least in Italian, partial agreement is ruled out:

(i) I professori {*lavoriamo/*lavorate/lavorano} molto. \text{(Italian)}
\`
We/You/They the teachers work.a-lot.'

Somewhat unexpectedly, Catalan aligns with Spanish in this respect, so sentences like (i) are fine. At this point I fail to see what this asymmetry tells us, or whether it has more important consequences. I leave this issue for future research.
To capture this fact, I assume that C-T attracts a partial φ-bundle (containing just person) up to T, plausibly as a part of the φ-inheritance process proposed by Chomsky (2008).

It is not easy to run additional tests that could help us confirm the validity of (20), for doubling is generally available in the Romance languages that give rise to type A VOS. We need to find contexts where doubling is barred; under the reasonable assumption that only DPs and pronouns can trigger doubling, this means we have to find evidence where D-less elements play the subject role. Take bare singulars,\textsuperscript{16} which, although governed by different kinds of restrictions (see Bosque 1996 for ample discussion), can be subjects in some well-defined (in Romance, necessarily postverbal) environments, as the following examples indicate:

(22) a. Entra gente. (Spanish)
    come-in.3SG people
    ‘People are coming in.’

b. Falta café. (Spanish)
    lack.3SG coffee
    ‘There is no coffee.’

c. Cae agua. (Spanish)
    fall.3SG water
    ‘Water is falling.’

[from Bosque 1996:29,59]

The key thing to note about the data in (22) is that the verbs are all unaccusative. No transitive structure seems to be able to display a bare singular subject. Bosque (1996:29), in fact, notes that unergatives (hidden transitives, according to Hale & Kayser 2002) are ruled out in these cases:

(23) a. *Molesta gente. (Spanish)
    bother.3SG people
    ‘People bother.’

b. *Perjudica humo. (Spanish)
    damage.3SG smoke
    ‘Smoke damages.’

[from Bosque 1996:29]

I know of no comprehensive account for the data in (23) – apart from approaches that capitalize on the semantic nature of the verbs (see Bosque 1996 for references). Now, notice that the same effect is found in the unreported data in (24), which display overt object taking transitive predicates.

\textsuperscript{16} The same could hold for bare plurals, which I put aside, as I want to focus on elements that can hardly involve inflectional (i.e., φ-related) layers.
(24) a. Ha llenado el auditorio *(la) gente.  
    (Spanish) 
    have.3SG filled the auditorium the people 
    ‘People have filled in the auditorium.’ 
    b. Inundó el pabellón *(el) agua.  
    (Spanish) 
    flooded.3SG the pavilion the water 
    ‘Water flooded the pavilion.’ 

I take the data in (23) and (24) to instantiate the illegitimate scenario of VOS predicted by the analysis outlined here: defective intervention emerges the minute the doubling strategy is unavailable. In the specific cases of (24), the objects el auditorio ‘the auditorium’ and el pabellón ‘the pavilion’ block nominative Case assignment to the bare singular subjects gente ‘people’ and agua ‘water’.17

4. Two Predictions

In this section I want to address a couple of predictions made by the doubling analysis in (20). The first one concerns negative quantifiers, which can be subjects in VOS sentences (see (25)), but fail to be doubled by a(n overt) clitic in object position (see (26)):

17 Ignacio Bosque (p.c.) makes me note that bare singulars have been claimed to require an extra licensing condition, based on linear adjacency, even in the case of unaccusative predicates. This is shown in the data in (i), provided by Bosque:

(i) Entraba agua en el salón por el tejado.  
    (Spanish) 
    came-in.3SG water in the leaving room through the ceiling 
    ‘Water was getting into the leaving room through the ceiling.’

(ii) *Entraba en el salón agua por el tejado.  
    (Spanish) 
    came-in.3SG in the leaving-room water through the ceiling 
    ‘Water was getting into the leaving room through the ceiling.’

The problem posed by the contrast in (i)-(ii) is that the PP en el salón ‘in the leaving room’ should not block Agree between C-T and the D-less agua ‘water’ – differently put, the preposition en should preclude Match. Moreover, (iii) is perfectly fine to my ear:

(iii) Nos faltó ayer café (para estudiar).  
    (Spanish) 
    CL-to.us lacked.3SG yesterday coffee to study-INF 
    ‘We didn’t find coffee yesterday to study.’

To make things even worse, the absence of asymmetry in (iv) and (v) indicates that, if adjacency plays any role, it does not apply in the case of bare plurals:

(iv) Entraron estudiantes en el bar.  
    (Spanish) 
    came-in.3PL students in the bar 
    ‘Students came into the bar.’

(v) Entraron en el bar estudiantes.  
    (Spanish) 
    came-in.3PL in the bar students 
    ‘Students came into the bar.’

Providing an account of these contrasts is beyond the scope of this paper.
Though problematic at first glance, it must be noted that the comparison between (25) and (26) presupposes a complete parallelism between subject and object doubling. However, there is ample evidence that subject doubling aligns with indirect object (or applicative) doubling, not direct object doubling, in that both types of clitics are typically regarded as mere agreement markers (see Ormazabal & Romero 2007 and references therein). If this is so, it is expected that negative indirect objects, like the subject in (25), can be doubled; (27) confirms this prediction:

(27) No le di tanto dinero a ningún chico. (Spanish)
    not CL-him gave.1SG so-much money to any child  
    ‘I didn’t give so much money to any child.’

Additional evidence for this parallelism between subjects and indirect objects comes from Italian dialects displaying overt subject clitics. As noted by Rizzi (1986:396), Fiorentino provides the key example: in (28), the subject Nessuno ‘nobody’ is doubled by a clitic.

(28) Nessuno l’ha detto nulla. (Fiorentino)
    nobody CL-he have.3SG said anything  
    ‘Nobody (he) said anything.’

Consequently, these data indicate that the pair in (25) and (26) is not a real problem for the present account.

The second issue I want to comment on concerns the possibility that D-less elements are licensed in VSO sentences: since there is no potential intervener, there should be no problem for such structures to be generated. Examples like (29) indicate that this prediction is wrong:

(29) Inundó *(el) agua el pabellón. (Spanish)
    flooded.3SG the water the pavilion 
    ‘Water flooded the pavilion.’

Why is (29) ruled out? In order to answer this question, I will crucially adopt Ordóñez’s (2005) analysis of VSO, according to which the subject has
undergone movement from its first-merge position. Under that assumption, *agua* ‘water’ in (29) must have moved, and – I would like to claim – it cannot; more specifically, I would like to propose that (29) is instantiating a bigger phenomenon that blocks displacement of D-less elements (or weak clitics, in Cardinaletti & Starke’s 1999 sense). 18

This section has considered two potential problems for the doubling account of Romance type A VOS put forward in the previous pages. As has been shown, the data in (26) and (29) are ruled by independent factors (object vs. subject/applicative agreement, and isolability of D-less elements), so they do not really threaten the analysis defended here.

5. Conclusions

In the previous pages I have proposed to analyze VOS structures derived through Object Shift as involving not the simple configuration in (30), but a more complex one featuring subject clitic doubling, as depicted in (31):

(30) \[ CP \ C \ [ TP \ T \ [ vP \ Object \ [ vP \ Subject \ [ \*vP \ VP \ Object \ ] \ ] \] \ ] \] \]

(31) \[ CP \ C \ [ TP \ T \[ \psi \[ vP \ Object \ [ vP \[ DP \ Subject \[ \psi \[ \*vP \ VP \ Object \ ] \ ] \] \] \] \]

If the analysis in (31) is correct, no *equidistance*-like mechanism is needed in order to account for long-distance nominative Case assignment: in VOS, the \( \psi \)-clitic is raised by C-T up to T (as a side effect of \( \psi \)-feature inheritance, if I am right), which suffices to circumvent intervention at the phase level, the only locus of minimality evaluation.

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18 Data like (i) below are not a counterexample, since *agua* ‘water’ arguably participates in a doubling structure of the partitive type. The Catalan translation of (i), in (ii), makes the partitive clitic (i.e. *en*) visible:

(i) Agua, no me queda.
‘Water, I do not have any more.’

(ii) D’aigua, no me’n queda (pas).
‘Water, I do not have any more.’
References


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