

## DIFFERENTIAL OBJECT MARKING, CASE AND AGREEMENT\*

Javier Ormazabal &amp; Juan Romero

*University of the Basque Country (UPV/EHU) & University of Extremadura (UNEX)  
Basque Group of Theoretical Linguistics (HiTT)*

**ABSTRACT.** In this paper, we present empirical evidence showing that Differential Object Marking (DOM) in Spanish is determined by structural conditions related to Case and agreement. We also argue that semantic concepts such as specificity, definiteness, animacy, or topicality, tightly connected to the presence or absence of *A*, must be parasitic on the syntactic configurations where DOM is licensed. We also present some consequences of our analysis for the general theory of agreement. We argue that the same structural relation is involved in all cases of DOM, as well as in Dative Clitic Constructions, where the presence of the particle *A* preceding clitic-doubled datives is syntactically unified with DOM phenomena. The accusative/dative distinction traditionally attributed to the Spanish pronominal system does not correspond, in synchronic terms, to different case relations, but distinguishes between agreeing and non-agreeing arguments. Similarly, the distribution of DOM corresponds to a Case-checked/Caseless difference. We extend the analysis to account for well-known restrictions on the co-appearance of two DOM arguments, which are analyzed as the consequence of a competition between two arguments for a single target. To finish, the analysis of some additional DOM phenomena in Spanish also leads us to conclude that Case and agreement must be independently maintained as two separated checking relations.

**Keywords.** agreement, case, prepositional accusative, Differential Object Marking (DOM), *se*-constructions, Exceptional Case Marking (ECM), dative constructions

**RESUMEN.** En este artículo presentamos argumentos empíricos que muestran que el Marcado Diferencial de Objeto (MDO) en español viene determinado por condiciones estructurales relacionadas con Caso y concordancia. Igualmente argumentamos que conceptos semánticos como la especificidad, definitud, animacidad o topicalidad, estrechamente relacionados con la presencia o ausencia de la *A*, tienen que ser subsidiarios de las configuraciones sintácticas en las que se licencia el MDO y analizamos algunas consecuencias de estos resultados para la teoría del Caso y la concordancia. Sostenemos que se da exactamente la misma relación estructural en todos los casos de MDO, así como en la construcción de clítico de dativo, en la que analizamos la presencia de la partícula *A* precediendo el dativo doblado por el clítico como un caso más de MDO. La distinción acusativo/dativo que se atribuye tradicionalmente al sistema pronominal del español no se corresponde, en términos sincrónicos, con relaciones estructurales de caso

---

\* The two authors, listed in alphabetical order, are equally responsible for the entire content of the paper. A previous version of this paper was presented at the Conference on Differential Object Marking at Tromsø. We are very thankful to the organizers and audience, and specially to Mark Baker, Antonio Fábregas, Ljudmila Geist, Peter Svenonius, and Pablo Zrodjewski for interesting comments and criticism. This work was financially funded in part by the institutions supporting the research activities of the Basque Group of Theoretical Linguistics (HiTT): the Basque Government grant number **IT769-13** (*Euskal Unibertsitate Sistemako Ikerketa-taldeak*), the Spanish Government's Ministry of Economy and Innovation grant number **FFI2011-29218**, and the University of the Basque Country's (UPV/EHU) **UFI-11/14**, as well as the Euro-region Aquitania-Euskadi (*La phrase dans la langue basque et les langues voisines : approche comparative*, 2012).

diferentes, sino que más bien refleja una distinción entre argumentos que concuerdan con el verbo y aquellos que no concuerdan. Igualmente, la distribución del MDO corresponde a una diferencia entre objetos que han cotejado sus rasgos de Caso y aquellos que no lo han hecho. Extendemos nuestro análisis para dar cuenta de conocidas restricciones en la coaparición de dos argumentos marcados con MDO, las cuales analizamos como el resultado de una competición para alcanzar la única posición de cotejo. Para terminar, el análisis de ciertos fenómenos relacionados con el MDO en español nos lleva a la conclusión de que el Caso y la concordancia han de mantenerse como dos relaciones de cotejo independientes.

**Palabras clave.** concordancia, caso, acusativos preposicionales, Marcado Diferencial de Objeto (MDO), construcciones de *se*, Marcado Excepcional de Caso (MEC), construcciones de dativo

## 1. Introduction

The vast majority of the papers in the literature on the Differential Object Marking (DOM) in Spanish focus on the semantic properties that determine the presence or absence of the marker (see Fábregas 2013, this volume, for an overview, and references therein). Concerning Peninsular Spanish, it is generally accepted that *A* uniformly appears with animate specific objects (1a), minimally contrasting in that respect with regular inanimate DOs (1b) and generic animate objects like (1c), and that there are other contexts that show a certain degree of optionality and dialectal variability.

- (1) a. He encontrado **\*(a)** la niña  
*Have.1sg found DOM the child-fem*  
 ‘I found the girl’
- b. He encontrado **(\*a)** el libro  
*Have.1sg found DOM the book*  
 ‘I found the book’
- c. He encontrado **(\*a)** niñas  
*Have.1sg found DOM children.fem*  
 ‘I have found girls’

In this paper, we modify a syntactic analysis originally proposed in Ormazabal & Romero (2013a). We present new empirical evidence showing that the set of objects that are subject to DOM is semantically heterogeneous enough not to attempt an approach based strictly on semantic primitives. Moreover, we show that DOM in Spanish is determined by structural conditions related to Case and agreement. We also reanalyze old but not very well known and mostly ignored arguments in the literature that point in the same direction. We do not deny that semantic concepts such as specificity, definiteness, animacy, or topicality are tightly connected to the presence or absence of *A*, but we argue that they must be parasitic on the syntactic configurations where DOM is licensed. We also present some consequences of our analysis for the general theory of agreement. We argue that the same structural position is involved in all cases of DOM, as well as in Dative Clitic Constructions. Agreement restrictions are thus the consequence of a competition between two arguments for a single target. The analysis of some DOM phenomena in Spanish also BRINGS us to the conclusion that Case and agreement must be independently maintained as two separated syntactic relations.

Since our analysis will be partially based on the behavior of DOM in ditransitive contexts, a preliminary note is in order concerning our assumptions on dative alternations in Spanish. Following much previous work in the literature (Uriagereka 1988, Demonte 1995, Romero 1997, Rappaport-Hovav & Levin 2008, Ormazabal & Romero 2010, 2013a,c, among others; see also sections 3. and 4. below) we consider the distinction between Spanish clitic-less and clitic doubled dative constructions as just a particular case of other well known cases of dative alternations in many languages of the world (e.g. *to*-construction/DOC, applicative constructions, etc.). Thus, we assume that the goal *A la doctora* in (2a) is a PP headed by the preposition *a* ('to'), while the one in (2b) is a DP introduced by a marker that, for the time being, we leave untranslated and note as *A*.

- (2) a. Enviaron el libro **a** la doctora  
*sent.3pl the book to the doctor*  
 'They sent the book to the doctor'
- b. **Le** enviaron el libro **a** la doctora  
*3sg sent.3pl the book A the doctor*  
 'They sent the doctor the book'

Recently, some authors have proposed that both (2a) and (2b) behave like DOCs, and that in both cases the marker *A* is the same morphological marker (see Pineda 2013 and references there). But note that although in (2a-b) the marker preceding the DP coincides, Spanish shows a broad range of dative alternations--much broader than English--. In these cases, the element preceding the non-doubled phrase varies depending on the main predicate, as we would expect if they are prepositional elements, but the marker in the dative construction remains invariably the same [see Ormazabal & Romero 2010, 2013c for discussion].

- (3) a. Sacaron agua **de**l pozo  
*extracted.3pl water from.the well*  
 'They got water out from the well'
- b. Le sacaron agua **a**l pozo  
*3sg extracted.3pl water A.the well*  
 Lit.: 'They extracted the well water' (= 'They got water out from the well')
- (4) a. Echaron agua **en** el vino  
*Poure.3pl water in the wine*  
 'They poured water in the wine'
- b. Le echaron agua **al** vino  
*3sg poured.3pl water A.the plant*  
 Lit.: 'They poured the wine water' (= 'They poured water in the wine'; also idiom: 'they compromised')

There are, in addition, many arguments in the literature supporting the distinction in (2), to which we will readily present evidence showing that the particle *A* preceding clitic-doubled datives is in fact the same marking as the DOM *A* preceding direct objects. Our conclusion will be that the accusative/dative distinction in Spanish does not correspond to two different Case-structural relations in the functional layer. Rather, the morphological distinctions traditionally associated to dative and

accusative in the pronominal system of Spanish distinguish between objects that have entered into an agreement relation and elements that have not.

## 2. Animate that do not show DOM: agreement, PCC and Repair Strategies.

As observed in the literature, the only context where the differential object marker *A* cannot precede animate specific DOs is when combined with an IO doubled by a clitic (Laca 1995, Zdrojewski 2008, López 2012, Ormazabal & Romero 2013a, Ordóñez & Treviño 2013). In (5a), the IO is not doubled by the clitic and the DO is DOMed; when the clitic doubles the IO, as in (5b), the presence of the *A* marker is banned.

- (5) a. Enviaron **\*(a)** todos los enfermos a la doctora Aranzabal  
*sent.3pl DOM all the sick.people to the doctor Aranzabal*  
 ‘They sent all the sick people to doctor Aranzabal’
- b. **Le** enviaron **(\*a)** todos los enfermos a la doctora Aranzabal  
*3s sent.3pl DOM all the sick.people A the doctor Aranzabal*  
 ‘They sent doctor Aranzabal all the sick people’

The option in (5b) is extremely restricted. The interpretation of these sentences conveys some de-animation of the NP. For that reason, sentences like (5b) are only grammatical with nouns referring to sick people, soldiers, slaves, kids, etc., most felicitous, collectively; that is, animate individuals that may be contextually subject to such a de-animation process. In fact, this is more or less the same range of restricted animate nouns that allow incorporation in polysynthetic languages (see Mithun 1984; Evans 1996; Baker 1996, and references there). In contrast, regular animate definite DPs do not allow *A*-deletion and, consequently, combining them with clitic-doubled IOs always yields an ungrammatical result:

- (6) a. Enviaron **\*(a)** Mateo/tu hijo a los doctores  
*sent.3pl DOM Mateo/your son to the doctors*  
 ‘They sent Peter/your son to the doctors’
- b. **\*Les** enviaron **(a)** Mateo/tu hijo a los doctores  
*3pl sent.3pl DOM Mateo/your son A the doctors*  
 ‘They sent the doctors Peter/your son’

Although this paradigm does not show overt verbal agreement with the animate DO, the restriction is reminiscent of the Person Case Constraint (PCC). In particular, its behavior is similar to the one observed in Spanish dialects that allow animate DO doubling (Northern Peninsular *leista* dialects (NPLD), Rioplatense dialect, among others) with respect to the constraint and its "repair strategies" (Ormazabal & Romero 2007, 2013a, Zdrojewski 2008, Rezac 2010). In NPLD, for instance, animate DO objects--masculine and feminine—are doubled by the clitic *le* (7a), which shows *me-lui* (PCC) effects when a dative clitic is present (7b), just as first and second person DO clitics do (7c). To avoid the PCC, these dialects make use of the clitic *lo* referring to the animate DO (8), a repair strategy somehow similar to the one in (5b) for double DOM contexts.

- (7) a. **Le** llevé (a tu hijo) a casa  
*3sg.a brought.Is A your son to home*  
 ‘I brought your son home’

- b. \***Te le** llevé (a tu hijo) a casa  
 2sg 3sg.a brought.1s DOM your son to home  
 ‘I brought you your son home’
- c. \***Te me** llevó (a mí) a casa  
 2s 1sDO brought.he DOM me to home  
 ‘He/she brought you me home’
- (8) **Te lo** llevé (a casa)  
 2s 3msDO brought.1s to home  
 ‘I brought you **it/him** (home)’

In both cases, the ban on the presence of the marker *A* in the DO argument or the ungrammaticality of the clitic *le* in the verbal complex are triggered by the agreement relation of the dative argument with the verb, and a repair strategy is available that demotes the animate object and treats it as an agreementless inanimate object: the DOM marker disappears in all dialects and, in addition, the third person animate clitic *le* is substituted by *lo(s)/la(s)* in NPLD.

The behavior of animate objects in so-called impersonal *se*-constructions independently shows that the DOM strategy is linked to an agreement relation. In general contexts, *se*-constructions share with regular passives the property that the external argument is dropped and the internal argument raises to subject position triggering agreement with the verb (Mendikoetxea 1999): thus, the verb in (9a) shows agreement with 3rd person plural object *los regalos*. However, when the object receives DOM, no agreement appears, the verb shows up in a default form (3rd singular), and the object retains its *A*-marking (9b).<sup>1</sup>

- (9) a. **Se llevaron/\*llevó** (los) regalos a la doctora  
*SE<sub>arb</sub> took.3pl/ \*.def the presents to the doctor*  
 ‘(The) presents were sent to the doctor’
- b. **Se llevó /\*llevaron** a los enfermos a la doctora  
*SE<sub>arb</sub> took.def/\*.3pl A the sick.people to the doctor*  
 ‘The sick people were sent to the doctor’

A natural explanation is that the animate DO, unlike the inanimate one, is already Case-marked and cannot further move to subject position. Strong confirmation that we are dealing with a Case-checking relation comes from the fact that when a dative clitic blocks object marking and the repair strategy that “de-animizes” it applies, animate DOs are again free to raise to the subject position. As a result, default agreement is not available anymore and full subject agreement becomes obligatory.

<sup>1</sup> Note that analyzing DOM as a dative-marked object would not explain this asymmetry (Rodríguez Mondoñedo 2007, Glushan 2010, and references). Passives minimally contrast with *se*-constructions in that animate objects—even first and second person ones—do raise to subject position and, consequently, show agreement in the verbal complex (ia). In contrast, the case of IOs is not lost in passive sentences in Spanish (ib). See Ormazabal & Romero (2014) for details.

- (i) a. Los enfermos le fueron llevados a la doctora  
 The sick people 3s were taken A the doctor  
 ‘Sick people were taken to the doctor’
- b. \*La doctora fue llevada los enfermos  
 the doctor was taken the sick-people

- (10) Se le **llevaron**/\***llevó** los enfermos a la doctora  
*SE<sub>arb</sub> 3sg took.3pl/\*df the sick.people A the doctora*  
 ‘The sick people were sent to the doctor’

Summarizing, the behavior of DOM DPs suggests that this marker is a morphological indication that the argument has checked Case. Marked DPs are not active and, consequently, they are inert to further agreement and Case checking. In addition, we have shown that in the context of clitic doubled datives, which are in turn *A*-marked, animate specific objects cannot be DOM-ed. Consequently, in most cases the result is an ungrammatical sentence, suggesting a PCC-type effect. In a restricted set of cases, a repair strategy is available that allows certain animate specific DPs not to be DOM-ed. These DPs behave like other non-DOM-ed DPs in all respects. In particular, they are active for further agreement relations in a higher projection, again supporting the one-to-one relation between DOM and Case.

### 3. Inanimates that show DOM: Raising-to-O and agreement

In the previous section we showed that, under certain circumstances, specific animate objects may show up without DOM when they co-appear with clitic-doubled IOs. In this section we show that the reverse situation, inanimate DOs that are marked with *A*, also exists [Laca 1995; Campos 1999, Zdrojewski 2008, Ormazabal & Romero 2013a]. We will argue that these elements, when DOMed, show the same syntactic properties as regular animate specific DOM with respect to agreement restrictions and *se*-agreement. In addition, we argue that across-the-board coordination also supports a unified treatment of inanimate and animate DOM DOs as well as clitic-doubled IOs.

#### 3.1. Raising-to-O contexts and DOM

In regular transitive contexts, inanimate nouns such as *el avión* (‘the plane’) or *las sillas* (‘the chairs’) cannot be *A*-marked. However, in the context of perception verbs (*ver*, ‘see’; *escuchar*, ‘listen’, etc.) or causative predicates (*hacer*, ‘make’; *dejar*, ‘let’) with an infinitival complement, the inanimate DO shows up marked with DOM (11a).<sup>2</sup>

- (11) a. Emergiendo sobre una ola, veo **al** *avión* caer envuelto en  
*Emerging over a wave, see. Is DOM-the plane fall.down enveloped in*  
*llamas*  
*flames*  
 ‘Emerging over a wave, I see the plane fall down ablaze’  
 [Laca 1995, ex. (8b); translation and glosses ours]
- b. El mago hizo levitar a las sillas  
*The magician made levitate DOM-the chairs*

That the *A*-marking in (11) is not on the entire infinitival clause, but on the inanimate DP, is shown in clitic left dislocation structures such as (12), where the left dislocated DP keeps the *A* and the infinitival complement is in clause-internal position.

<sup>2</sup>Theories of DOM sometimes extend also to verb splits, in which specific verb classes take differently marked objects, a significant factor in Spanish; see Fábregas (this volume) and references. We will not consider those issues here.

- (12) Al avión le/lo vimos estrellarse contra la montaña  
*DOM-the plane 3s/3sDO saw.1pl crash against the mountain*  
 ‘The plane, we saw it crash against the mountain’

As far as we can see, what all the cases of DOM inanimate DPs discussed in the literature have in common is that they all suit the conditions to be analyzed as cases of raising-to-Object, where the *A*-marked argument comes from an embedded subject position or a small clause. The order of the constituents also suggests the same conclusion. Unlike in regular sentences, the embedded subject appears most naturally in a position between the perception verb and the embedded infinitive, and must receive DOM (13a)-(13b). Postverbal subjects with DOM are somehow marginal (13c), and in those contexts non DOM subjects are preferred (13d).

- (13) a. Vimos al avión estrellarse contra la montaña  
*saw.1pl A-the plane crash.down against the mountain*  
 ‘We saw the plane crash into the mountain’  
 b. \*Vimos el avión estrellarse contra la montaña  
*saw.1pl the plane crash against the mountain*  
 ‘We saw the plane crash into the mountain’  
 c. ? Vimos estrellarse al avión contra la montaña  
*saw.1pl crash A-the plane against the mountain*  
 ‘We saw the plane crash into the mountain’  
 d. Vimos estrellarse el avión contra la montaña  
*saw.1pl crash the plane against the mountain*  
 ‘We saw the plane crash into the mountain’

In Northern Peninsular *leísta* dialects, where 3<sup>rd</sup> person animates are doubled by the agreement clitic *le* (see section 2 above and references), Raising-to-Object DOM is accompanied by doubling with the agreement-clitic *le*, minimally contrasting with the impossibility of clitic doubling when the DP is not marked with DOM, as expected: (also see Zdrojewsky 2008, Ormazabal & Romero 2013a for Rioplatense dialect).

- (14) a. Le vimos al avión estrellarse contra la montaña  
*3s saw.1pl A-the plane crash against the mountain*  
 ‘We saw the plane crash into the mountain’  
 b. (\*Le) vimos estrellarse el avión contra la montaña  
*3s saw.1pl crash the plane against the mountain*  
 ‘We saw the plane crash into the mountain’

To finish, in a pattern similar to perception and causative verbs with infinitival complements, in certain cases, subjects of a predication internal to V can also show DOM (examples modified from Laca 1985):

- (15) a. En un periquete, Luis Mariano dejó a ese árbol sin una aceituna  
*In a tick, Luis Mariano left A that tree without an olive*  
 ‘In a second, Luis Mariano emptied that tree of olives’

- b. Veía distante a la ciudad  
*Saw. Is distant A the city*  
 ‘I was watching the city far away’
- c. Quise imaginarme a un grano de trigo aislado de los demás  
*Wanted. Is imagine-1sgReflCl A a grain of wheat isolated from the rest*  
 ‘I wanted to imagine a grain of wheat isolated from the others’

If our proposal is on the right track, this supports a raising analysis of small clauses.

### 3.2. Raising-to-O and Se-constructions

As the contrast in (8), repeated in (16), shows, while in regular *se*-constructions the internal argument shows number agreement with the matrix predicate, agreement is blocked with DOM objects, as the agreement-less defective verbal form in (16b) illustrates:

- (16) a. Se **llevaron**/\***llevó** (los) regalos a la doctora  
*SE<sub>arb</sub> took.3pl/ \*.df the presents to the doctor*  
 ‘(The) presents were sent to the doctor’
- b. Se **llevó** /\***llevaron** a los enfermos a la doctora  
*SE<sub>arb</sub> took.df/\*.3pl A the sick.people to the doctora*  
 ‘The sick people were sent to the doctor’

If our analysis of Raising-to-object constructions is correct, we expect the *A*-marked inanimate subject to behave like the DOM-ed animate object in (16b), and not like the agreeing inanimate DP in (16a). Since the infinitival subject must have raised first to the position where DOM is assigned—by hypothesis, a Case position—it will be inert for further raising to the matrix subject position, and no subject agreement could be possible. This prediction is born out: (17) shows that the infinitival subject cannot appear DOM-less in *se*-constructions, no matter its position; the only option is DOM, and only in non-agreeing impersonal contexts, as the contrast in (18) illustrates:

- (17) a. \* Los aviones se vieron estrellarse contra la montaña  
*The planes SE<sub>arb</sub> saw.3pl crash against the mountain*
- b. \* Se vieron los aviones estrellarse contra la montaña  
*SE<sub>arb</sub> saw.3pl the planes crash against the mountain*
- c. \* Se vieron estrellarse los aviones contra la montaña  
*SE<sub>arb</sub> saw.3pl crash the planes against the mountain*
- (18) a. \* Se vieron a los aviones estrellarse contra la montaña  
*SE<sub>arb</sub> saw.3pl A the planes crash against the mountain*
- b. Se vio a los aviones estrellarse contra la montaña  
*SE<sub>arb</sub> saw.3pl A the planes crash against the mountain*  
 ‘The planes were seen crash against the mountain’

Moreover, as we expect, Northern *leísta* dialects in addition double the raised object with the clitic *le*:



- (19) Se les vio a los aviones estrellarse contra la montaña  
*SE<sub>arb</sub> 3s saw.3pl A the planes crash against the mountain*  
 ‘The planes were seen crash against the mountain’

### 3.3. DOM and Across-the-board Extraction.

Although the argument is somehow more indirect, coordination facts also suggest that DOM objects—specific animate as well as Raising-to-O type ones—and indirect objects share some property that distinguish them from non-DOM objects. First, consider the following examples, from García (1975:93):

- (20) No tenían ningún respeto por las mujeres, muchísimo menos por las jovencitas, *a las que* levantaban las polleras y maltrataban con las injurias más ofensivas.  
 ‘They had no respect for women, even less for the young ones, to whom they raised their skirts and whom they abused with most offensive insults’

García observes that a DO and an IO with DOM may be extracted or relativized across-the-board:<sup>3</sup> What is interesting is that the observation extends to all DOM,

---

<sup>3</sup>The absence of clitic doubling in the original example (16) might suggest that clitic-less datives are also DOM, as proposed recently (see Pinidea 2013 and references). However, in this case the absence of a clitic seems to be a morpho-phonological process that allows the clitic not to be realized in relative clauses when the relative marker is close enough. Evidence in favor of this comes from different sources. On the one hand, the clitic disappears even in contexts, such as inalienable possession, where it is otherwise obligatory:

- (i) a. \* (les) revisaste el corazón a los pacientes  
 3p checked.2sg the heart A the patients  
 ‘You checked the patients’s heart’  
 b. Los pacientes a los que revisaste el corazón...  
 The patients A the that checked.2sg the heart...  
 ‘The patients to whom you checked their heart...’

Moreover, in similar structural conditions the need for the clitic in the coordination becomes necessary as the distance between the relative marker and the verb increases:

- (ii) No tenían respeto por las jovencitas a las que...  
 ‘They did not respect the young girls to whom...’  
 a. ... (les) levantaban las faldas y maltrataban con injurias  
 3p raised.3pl the skirts and abused.3pl with insults  
 ... they raised their skirts and whom they abused with insults’  
 b. ... cada vez que las veían, \*(les) levantaban las faldas y maltrataban con injurias  
 each time that 3fpDO saw.3pl, 3p raised.3pl the skirts and abused.3pl with insults  
 ... each time they saw them, they would raise their skirts and whom they would abuse them’  
 c. ... maltrataban con injurias y \*(les) levantaban las faldas  
 abused.3pl with insults and 3p raised.3pl the skirts  
 ... they abused with insults and to whom they raised their skirts’

Finally, across-the-board relativization becomes impossible if the coordinated IO is accompanied with a DOM-ed animate in the same conjoin. Consider the contrast between (iiia) and (iiib):

- (iii) a. Aquella profesora a la que enviabas a los estudiantes más difíciles es hoy una Nobel  
 That female.professor to the that sent.2sg A the students most difficult is today a Nobel  
 ‘That female professor to whom you used to send the most difficult students is a Nobel prize winner nowadays’

distinguishing them from regular DPs. Thus, in (21), any combination of (a), (b), or (c) is possible, but combining any of them with (d) yields a result that varies from somehow odd to impossible:

- (21) Recuerda aquel avión francés al que \_\_\_ y \_\_\_  
*Remember that plane French A-the that \_\_\_ and \_\_\_*  
 ‘Remember that French plane that \_\_\_ and \_\_\_’
- a. vimos volar con dificultad  
*saw.1pl flight with difficulty*  
 We saw flight with difficulty
- b. le tuvimos que desmontar el motor  
*3 had.1pl that the engine*  
 We had to its engine
- c. hicimos volver a tierra  
*made.1pl come.back to land*  
 ‘we force to come back to land’
- d. ?? arreglamos en el hangar  
*fixed.1pl in the hangar*  
 ‘we fixed in the hangar’

### 3.4. Conclusion

In sum, not only these cases show that the marker *A* is something more than a morphological manifestation of animacy, etc., but they provide direct evidence that a structural relation is established between the matrix verb and the embedded argument that is not maintained with regular DOs and clausal complements (see Lasnik & Saito 1991, Lasnik 1995, 1999; Bošković 1997, 2002; Ormazabal & Romero 2007, 2013a; Boeckx & Hornstein 2003; also see Pineda 2013, Zdrojewski 2008, 2013, among others, for arguments in the same direction). Our more general conclusion is that *A*-marking in Spanish is the consequence of a syntactic relation triggered by the features of certain objects but not others. The former include not only the standardly assumed specific animate DOs, but also IOs in dative clitic constructions and Raising-to-O

- 
- b. \* Aquella profesora a la que enviabas a los estudiantes más difíciles y  
 menospreciabas públicamente es hoy una premio Nobel  
 That female.professor A/to the that sent.2sg A the students most difficult and  
 despised.2sg publicly is nowadays an award Nobel  
 ‘That female profesor to whom you used to send the most difficult students and whom  
 you used to despise publicly is a Nobel prize winner nowadays’

As (iiia) shows, simple relativization is possible in these contexts if the relativized element is a *to*-phrase and no clitic doubling takes place; given the presence of a DOM object, that is what we expect (see section 1 above). But the sentence becomes ungrammatical when we try to relativize across-the-board with a second conjoint where the antecedent of the relative is a DOM object. This ungrammaticality is unexpected unless (iiib) involves a concealed agreement with the IO which is incompatible with the DOM object. The “repaired” grammaticality of (iv), which minimally contrasts with (iiib) in that the object of the first conjoin is not DOMed, supports our conclusion:

- (iv) Aquella profesora a la que enviabas los estudiantes más difíciles y menospreciabas  
 públicamente es hoy una premio Nobel  
 That female.professor A/to the that sent.you the students most difficult and despised.you  
 publicly is nowadays an award Nobel  
 ‘That female profesor to whom you used to send the most difficult students and whom you  
 used to despise publicly is a Nobel prize winner nowadays’

from embedded infinitivals and secondary predicates. A battery of properties and interaction-effects that treat DOM DPs together and differentiate them from other objects supports this distinction.

If indeed this proposal is on the right track, a number of questions arise concerning the status of DPs that do not receive DOM: in particular, if DOM is the morphological manifestation of a Case-licensing condition on certain DPs, how are arguments that do not or cannot show DOM with respect to Case licensing (the Case filter or any equivalent condition); have all these objects the same syntactic behavior? In the next section we sketch a syntactic analysis of agreement and Case applied to Spanish DOM. We claim that those objects that do not show DOM are not licensed via Case/agreement relation with V, resting “unlicensed”.

#### 4. The properties of Agreement and Case

##### 4.1. A single AgrO position

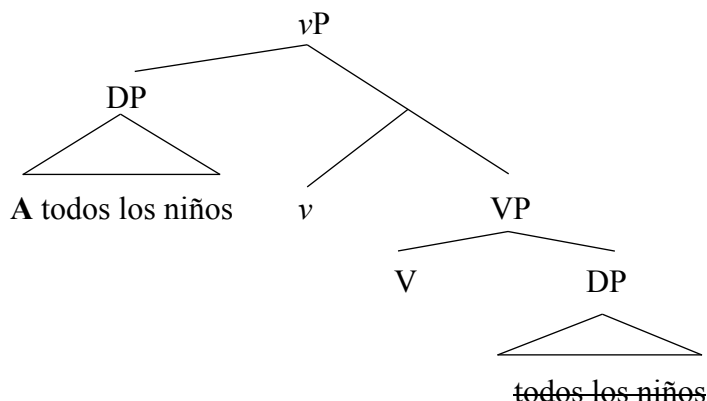
Given what we have argued so far, we propose a single unified object-checking mechanism. Thus, in (22a-b) the 2<sup>nd</sup> person singular clitic *te* would be the morphological realization of exactly the same object agreement relation, independently of whether it is the direct object or the indirect object—or any other agreement candidate for that matter—that enters into the a relation with *v*. Similarly, the differential marker *A* in both (23a) and (23b) is the morphological reflex of the same Case-checking relation with *v*.<sup>4</sup>

- (22) a. Te mandaré el libro a casa  
           2sg send.will.1s the book to home  
           ‘I will send you the book home’  
       b. Te mandaré a casa  
           2sg send.will.1s to home  
           ‘I will send you home’
- (23) a. Les mandaré el libro a los niños a casa  
           3pl send.will.1s the book **DOM** the children to home  
           ‘I will send the children home’  
       b. [Les] mandaré a los niños a casa  
           [3pl] send.will.1s **DOM** the children to home

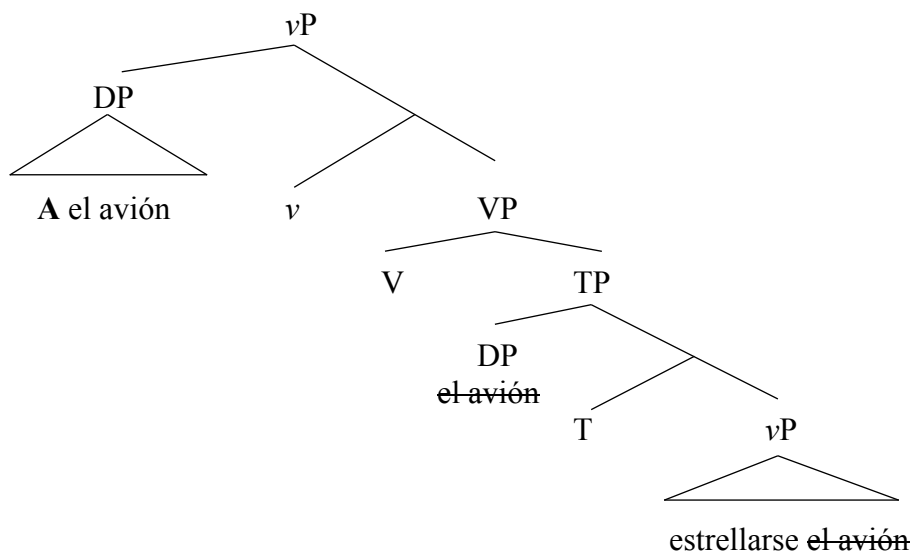
This is not a surprising result. It is standardly assumed that raising subjects in ECM-contexts check Case in the matrix clause by means of the same mechanism as matrix objects do (Postal 1975, Lasnik & Saito 1991, and much subsequent work in various linguistic frameworks). Assuming the standard derivation for objective Case to be as in (24), the derivation of Raising-to-O DOM with causative and perception verbs in Spanish would be just an extension of regular ECM mechanisms in other languages, as sketched in (25).

<sup>4</sup> As observed, agreement with 3<sup>rd</sup> person animates and Raising-to-Object DPs is realized only in some dialectal varieties of Spanish. We will briefly come back to this issue in the last section.

(24) Movement of the Direct Object to the Object-Agreement position:



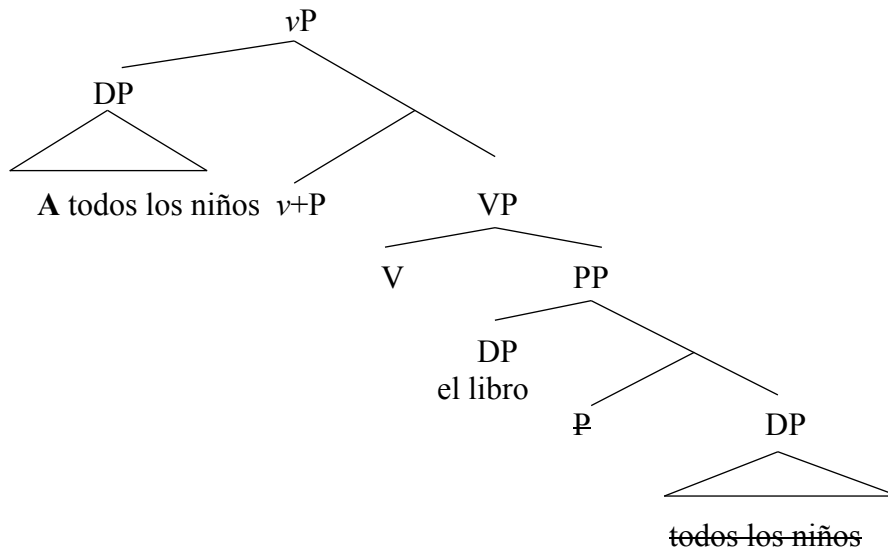
(25) Movement of the embedded subject to the Object-Agreement position:



The empirical arguments presented in sections 2 and 3 support a unified analysis of objective Case checking that extends the same mechanism to dative constructions as well. *De facto*, the goal argument in Double Object Constructions in languages like English has very often been treated as an accusative-checking argument, and there is no strong argument that would prevent us from extending the same line of reasoning to “dative” languages like Spanish (see Levin 2008 for discussion). Given the discussion above, our proposal is that this unification is not restricted to the casual morphology, but it extends to the checking mechanism in the syntax. For the sake of concreteness we formalize the relevant phrase structure in ditransitive constructions as in (26)—a simplification of a previous proposal of ours—, but the discussion in this paper is independent from the specifics of that analysis.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> With respect to the landing site of the movement (the specifier of  $vP$ ), the only important detail for us is that there must be a unique ‘object’ agreement position, as will be argued next. Concerning the structure of ditransitives, in general theoretical terms, we have extensively argued for such a derivations analysis of dative constructions elsewhere (Ormazabal & Romero 2010, 2012, 2013c). But most alternative ways of representing dative alternations in the literature are compatible with our analysis of Case and agreement relations in this paper, as long as they do not postulate a dedicated

(26) Movement of the Indirect Object to the Object-Agreement position:



It is worth stressing that from our perspective the issue of whether DOM reflects dative or accusative Case disappears, because they end up being the same relation: all DOM arguments establish the same structural relation with the verbal agreement head. In this hypothesis, the real division is then between objects that enter into a Case-checking relation in the specifier of  $vP$  and those that do not. According to our analysis, DOM-less objects—in particular inanimate DOs such as *el libro* ('the book') in (26)—do not trigger object agreement or receive Case. As we discuss in the next section, the immediate consequence is that they do not interfere with the IO's case checking relation, hence they do not trigger PCC effects. On the other hand, in *se*-constructions these objects are still free to raise to subject position, showing number agreement.

The main issue with this hypothesis is that substantive uniformity in Case and agreement relations is lost. However, both language-internal and crosslinguistic empirical evidence strengthens the idea that only a subset of objects is formally Case-licensed, and any detailed analysis concerning the empirical scope of the Case-Filter, on any of its versions, yields a rather non-uniform and, at least partially incoherent set of objects (see especially Lasnik's 2008 concluding remarks on this respect). In this paper we have shown that there are additional strong empirical reasons to remove this condition from the theory, and recent research on the topic (e. g. Duguine 2013) follow the same trend.

#### 4.2. Back to Spanish competing DOMs

In a series of articles Ormazabal & Romero (see especially Ormazabal & Romero 2014 and references there) have argued that general agreement restrictions like the Person Case Constraint (PCC)—the impossibility of certain agreement or clitic cluster

---

Applicative Phrase where the IO checks Case and agreement. In particular, the theory is neutral with respect to the issue of whether the IO or the DO is generated higher, and the same results obtain if the base structure from where the IO and the DO are generated is the opposite order (see e.g. Larson 1988; Pesetsky 1996; Hale & Keyser 1993; Baker 1997; Harley 2002, and references for discussion). The reason is that our analysis of agreement and Case restrictions is not based on intervention, but on competition.

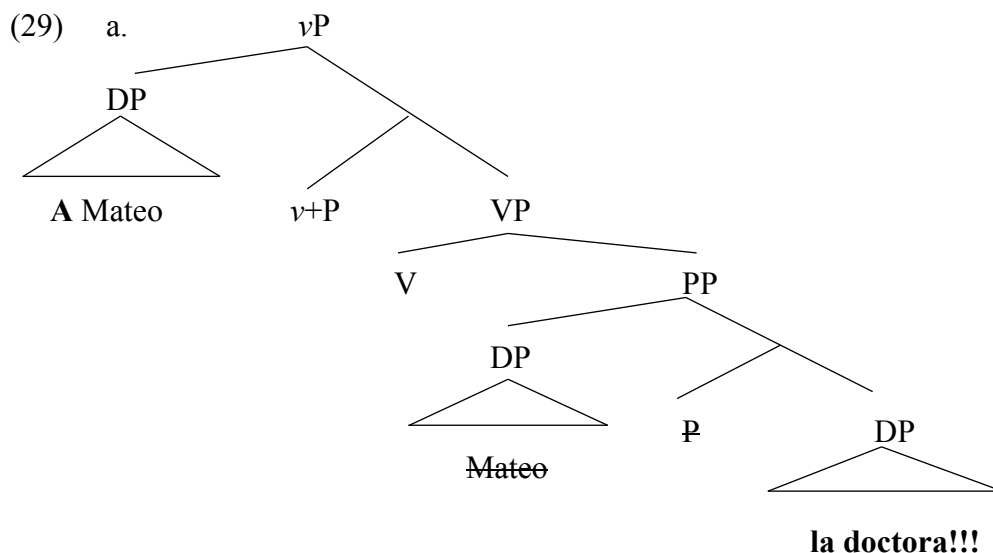
such as (27) in Spanish—, the Agent-Focus Person Restriction observed in the Quechua family among others, or the incompatibility of animate objects and applied arguments in the Northern Iroquoian family and other languages, derive from a conflict of interests when two competing arguments have agreement requirements that must be checked in the verbal functional layer and only one position is available to satisfy these relations.

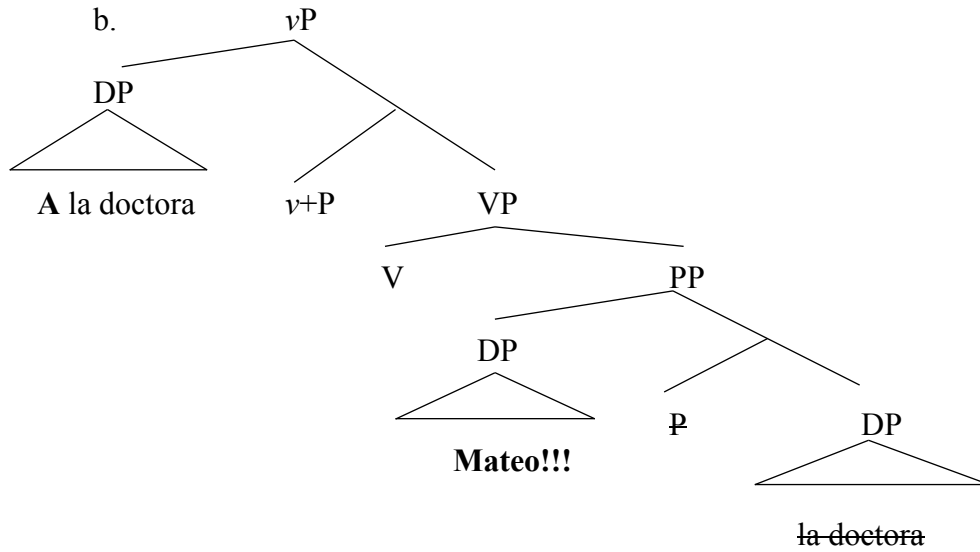
- (27) \* Te les enviaron a los médicos  
*2sg 3pl sent.3pl A the doctors*  
 ‘They sent the doctors you’

Given the structural analysis proposed in the previous section, our proposal extends naturally to account for the contrast in (28) and, in particular, for the ungrammaticality of cases like (28b), where the combination of two DOM arguments in the same sentence yields an impossible result:

- (28) a. Enviaron **\*(a)** Mateo/tu hijo a las doctoras  
*sent.3pl DOM Mateo/your son to the doctors*  
 ‘They sent Peter/your son to the doctors’  
 b. \***Les** enviaron **(a)** Mateo/tu hijo **a** los doctores  
*3pl sent.3pl DOM Mateo/your son A the doctors*  
 ‘They sent the doctors Peter/your son’

Given that the presence of DOM in direct objects and clitic-doubled indirect objects indicates that they have entered into a Case-checking relation and, by hypothesis, only one such a relation is possible with *v*, as argued in the previous section, the impossibility of two DOM arguments directly follows from the impossibility of both having checked Case with the same verbal head:





If the direct object has raised to (Spec, vP), as in (29a), the indirect object could not have done so, in which case it would not appear DOMed. If, on the contrary, the derivation is as in (29b) and it is the indirect object that has raised to the Case-checking position, there is no room for the object to raise, and no DOM will show up. Given that, if the direct object belongs to the type that may be repaired, as in (30), then there is a convergent derivation—similar to (26), above—, but the object, which has not checked Case, shows up without DOM:

- (30) Enviaron **\*(a)** todos los enfermos a la doctora Aranzabal  
 sent.3pl DOM all the sick.people to the doctor Aranzabal  
 ‘They sent all the sick people to doctor Aranzabal’

If, on the contrary, the definite animate DP must check Case, as in (33b) above, no repair strategy is available and the result is ungrammatical.

### 5. Severing Case from Agreement

Up to this point, we have been dealing with agreement and Case in a parallel fashion. The main reason this has been a constant for many years is that the empirical scope of both mechanism overlaps in a way that a unification is worth pursuing. However, this is not necessarily the case. A possible scenario, compatible with the hypothesis in this paper, would be one where all object agreement relations are the same and all objective Case-relations constitute a single one, but Case and agreement are different relations. If that is the case, we will expect there to be areas where the two theories do not overlap, and we could find a Case relation to be established without entering into an agreement relation or vice versa. Next we argue that this is precisely what happens in some contexts: in particular, we show that non-doubling DOM direct objects such as (31) in Standard Spanish, check Case but do not establish an agreement relation with *v*:

- (31) He encontrado **\*(a)** la niña  
 Have.1sg found A the child.fem  
 ‘I found the girl’

In Ormazabal & Romero (2013a), we extensively argue that the main difference between Standard Spanish and the Northern *leísta* dialect stays precisely in that the second one has a third person agreement for animate NPs that is absent in the Standard dialect. Among other arguments presented in that paper, we observe that the two dialects differ with respect to the types of direct objects that the clitics may crossrefer to. Consider the following pair in Standard Spanish:

- (32) a. \* Ningún libro lo han vendido  
*No book 3msDO have.3pl sold*  
 b. A ninguna estudiante le han dado el título  
*A no student 3s have.3pl given the degree*  
 'To no student they gave the degree'

(32a-b) corresponds to the so-called Clitic Left-Dislocated (CLLD) construction in Spanish. As it is well known, when the object is in a left-dislocated position, preceding the verb, it must be doubled by a clitic. In that situation, there is a clear contrast between the object and the indirect object. In (32a) the clitic cannot double a negative quantifier, but in (32b), this relation is completely grammatical. This asymmetry can be readily explained if the dative clitic is an agreement marker, but accusative clitic is a determiner attached to the verb, a conclusion that is totally coherent with Roca's (1996) proposal that the semantic range of the clitic *lo(s)/la(s)* coincides with the one found with the definite determiner. Assuming that, consider now the following contrast between Standard Spanish (33a) and the Northern *Leísta* dialect (33b):

- (33) a. \* A ningún estudiante lo han visto en la universidad [Standard Sp.]  
*DOM none student 3smDO have.3pl seen in the university*  
 b. A ningún estudiante le han visto en la universidad [NLD]  
*A none student 3s have-they seen in the university*  
 "None of the students they saw at the university"

While in Standard Spanish CLLD is barred when the clitic co-refers with a negative quantifier (33a), the sentence is perfectly grammatical in the Northern *Leísta* dialect. The contrast is clear, and Ormazabal & Romero (2013a) present similar contrasts in other syntactic contexts, all of them supporting an agreement/pronominal dichotomy. But if that is correct, in order to account for the dialectal distinction we must conclude that, unlike in the Northern *leísta* dialect, in Standard Spanish there is no object agreement with DOs, except for 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> person pronouns.

Now, remember that in (A), repeated in (34), we showed that the DO cannot receive DOM when there is an IO doubled by a clitic.

- (34) a. Enviaron \*(a) Mateo/tu hijo a los doctores  
*sent.3pl DOM Mateo/your son to the doctors*  
 'They sent Peter/your son to the doctors'  
 b. \*Les enviaron (a) Mateo/tu hijo a los doctores  
*3pl sent.3pl DOM Mateo/your son A the doctors*  
 'They sent the doctors Peter/your son'



However, Ormazabal & Romero (2007) note that these sentences become grammatical if the IO is represented only by the clitic, with no doubling DP, and this is true even with 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> person agreement clitics, as in (35b).

- (35) a. Les enviaron \*(a) Mateo /tu hijo  
           **3sg sent.3pl DOM Mateo/your son**  
           'They sent them Mateo/your son'  
       b. Nos enviaron \*(a) Mateo /tu hijo  
           **1pl sent.3pl DOM Mateo/your son**  
           'They sent us Mateo/your son'

As expected, the DO must appear with DOM. Thus, we must assume that it has checked Case. This relation being univocal, there is no checking relation available for the IO, as indeed the ungrammaticality of (33b) shows. Given that, in order to explain the contrast between (34) and (35), very tentatively, two options come to mind. On the one hand, we could recover some version of the original Case Filter characterized in terms of overt vs. silent DPs (see Lasnik 2008 for a recent revival of such an approach). On the other hand, since the agreement clitic is by no means restricted to animate NPs, it could be argued that there is a repair strategy that is somehow the mirror image of the one in (7) in Northern *leísta* dialects, where we see that in PCC contexts, the determiner-type clitic *lo*, which in this case stands for a third person animate object, does not violate the PCC because it does not intervene in the agreement-checking process. In the same vein, the indirect object *pro* in (35a-b) would not meet the criteria for receiving DOM, in which case it leaves room for Case checking of the DO appearing with DOM. In any event, both the difference between Standard and the Northern *leísta* dialect, on the one hand, and the contrast in (33)-(35) clearly point to a theoretical distinction between Case and agreement, as two different checking operations.

### Javier Ormazabal

Department of Linguistics & Basque Studies  
 University of the Basque Country (UPV/EHU)  
 Unibertsitateen Ibilbidea 5  
 01006 Vitoria-Gasteiz, Spain  
[javier.ormazabal@ehu.es](mailto:javier.ormazabal@ehu.es)

### Juan Romero

Department of Hispanic Philology  
 University of Extremadura (UNEX)  
 Avenida de la Universidad s/n  
 10071 Cáceres, Spain  
[juantxoromero@gmail.com](mailto:juantxoromero@gmail.com)

### References

- Baker, M. (1996). *The Polysynthesis Parameter*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.  
 Baker, M. (1997). Thematic Roles and Syntactic Structure, in L. Haegeman (ed.), *The Elements of Grammar*. Dordrecht, Kluwer, pp. 73-137.  
[http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/978-94-011-5420-8\\_2](http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/978-94-011-5420-8_2)  
 Boeckx, C. & N. Hornstein. (2005). A Gap in the ECM Paradigm. *Linguistic Inquiry* 36, pp. 437-441. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1162/0024389054396926>

- Bošković, Ž. (1997). *The Syntax of Nonfinite Complementation: an Economy approach*. Cambridge (Mass.), MIT Press. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/1467-9612.00051>
- Bošković, Ž. (2002). A-movement and the EPP. *Syntax* 5, pp. 167-218.
- Campos, H. (1999). Transitivity e intransitivity, in I. Bosque & V. Demonte (dirs.), pp. 1519-1574.
- Demonte, V. (1995). Dative alternation in Spanish. *Probus* 7, pp. 5-30. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1515/prbs.1995.7.1.5>
- Duguine, M. 2013. *Null Arguments And Linguistic Variation: A Minimalist Analysis Of Pro-Drop*. PhD. University of the Basque Country (UPV/EHU)
- Evans, N. (1996). The syntax and semantics of body part incorporation in Mayali, in Chapell, Hilary & McGregor, William (eds.), *The grammar of inalienability*. Berlin, Mouton de Gruyter, pp. 65–109. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1515/9783110822137.65>
- Fábregas, A. (2013). Differential object marking in Spanish: state of the art. *Borealis* 2 (this volume), pp. 1-80.
- Glushan, Z. (2010). *Deriving Case syncretism in Differential Object marking systems*. University of Connecticut, unpublished manuscript.
- Hale, K. & S.J. Keyser. (1993). On Argument Structure and the Lexical Expression of Syntactic Relations. In K. Hale & S.J. Keyser, eds., *The view from building 20. Essays in linguistics in honor of Synvain Bromberger*, Cambridge (MA): MIT Press, 53-109.
- Harley, H. (2002). Possession and the DOC. *Linguistic Variation Yearbook* 2, pp. 31-70. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1075/livy.2.04har>
- Laca, B. (1995). Sobre el uso del acusativo personal en español, in C. Pensado (ed.), *El acusativo Personal*, Madrid: Visor.
- Larson, R. (1988). On the Double Object Construction. *Linguistic Inquiry* 19, pp. 335-391.
- Lasnik, H. (1995). Last Resort. [reprinted in Lasnik 1999, *Minimalist Analysis*, Blackwell, pp. 120-145].
- Lasnik, H. (1999). Chains of Arguments, in S. Epstein & N. Hornstein (eds.), *Working Minimalism*. Cambridge (Mass.), MIT Press, pp. 189-215.
- Lasnik, H. (2008). On the Development of Case Theory: triumphs and challenges, in M. Friedin (ed.), *Foundational Issues in Linguistic Theory. Essays in honor of Jean-Roger Vergnaud*. Cambridge (Mass.), MIT Press., pp. 17-41. <http://dx.doi.org/10.7551/mitpress/9780262062787.003.0003>
- Lasnik H. & M. Saito. (1991). On the Subject of Infinitives, in L. Dobrin *et al* (eds.), *Papers from the 27th Regional Meeting of the Chicago Linguistic Society*, pp. 324-343 [reprinted in Lasnik 1999, *Minimalist Analysis*, Blackwell, pp. 7-24].
- Levin, B. (2008). *First Objects and Datives: two of a kind?* Ms. Stanford University
- López, L. (2012). *Indefinite Objects. Scrambling, Choice Functions and Differential Marking*. Cambridge (Mass.), MIT Press.
- Mendikoetxea, A. (1999). Construcciones con *se*: Medias, pasivas e impersonales, in I. Bosque & Violeta Demonte (dirs.), *Gramática Descriptiva de la Lengua Española*, vol. II. Madrid, Espasa, pp. 1631-1722.
- Mithun, M (1984). The evolution of noun incorporation. *Language* 60, pp. 847-893.
- Ormazabal, J. & J. Romero. (2007). The Object Agreement Constraint, *Natural Language and Linguistic Theory* 25, pp. 315-347. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s11049-006-9010-9>

- Ormazabal, J. & J. Romero (2010). The Derivation of Dative Alternations, in M. Duguine *et al.* (eds.), *Argument Structure and Syntactic Relations from a Crosslinguistic Perspective*. Amsterdam, John Benjamins, pp. 203-232.
- Ormazabal, J. & J. Romero (2012). PPs without disguises: reply to Bruening. *Linguistic Inquiry* 43, pp. 455-474. [http://dx.doi.org/10.1162/LING\\_a\\_00097](http://dx.doi.org/10.1162/LING_a_00097)
- Ormazabal, J. & J. Romero (2013a). Object Clitics, Agreement and Dialectal Variation. *Probus. International Journal of Latin and Romance Linguistics* 25, pp. 301-344.
- Ormazabal, J. & J. Romero. (2013b). Non Accusative Objects. *Catalan Journal of Linguistics* 12, pp. 1-19.
- Ormazabal, J. & J. Romero. (2013c). *Why P*. Ms. University of the Basque Country (UPV/EHU)-Basque Group of Theoretical Linguistics (HiTT) & University of Extremadura (UNEX)-HiTT.
- Ormazabal, J. & J. Romero. (2014). *Agreement Restrictions Revisited: too many beggars, to few hosts*. Ms. University of the Basque Country (UPV/EHU)-Basque Group of Theoretical Linguistics (HiTT) & University of Extremadura (UNEX)-HiTT.
- Pensado, C., ed. (1995). *El complemento directo preposicional*. Madrid: Visor.
- Pesetsky, D. (1995). *Zero Syntax. Experiencers and Cascades*. Cambridge (MA): MIT Press.
- Postal, P. (1975). *On Raising*. Cambridge (MA): MIT Press.
- Pineda, A. (2013b). Double object constructions in Spanish (and Catalan) revisited, in F. A. C. Drijkoningen (ed.), *Romance Languages and Linguistic Theory 2011*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Rezac, M. (2010). *Phi-features and the Modular Architecture of Language*, Dordrecht, Springer.
- Roca, F. (1996). Morfemals objetivos y determinantes: los clíticos del español. *Verba* 23, pp. 83-119.
- Rodriguez-Mondoñedo, M. (2007). *The Syntax of Objects: Agree and Differential Object Marking*. PhD. Dissertation, University of Connecticut.
- Romero, J. (1997). *Construcciones de doble objeto y gramática universal*. Doctoral dissertation, Universidad Autónoma de Madrid.
- Uriagereka, J. (1988). *On Government*. PhD Dissertation, University of Connecticut.
- Zdrojewski, P. (2008). *Por quién doblan los clíticos*. Univ. Nacional Comahue Master Thesis.