

**UNINTERPRETABLE FEATURES ARE INCOMPATIBLE IN
MORPHOLOGY WITH OTHER MINIMALIST POSTULATES***

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In recent work, Manzini and Savoia (2001, 2002a, 2002b, 2004a, 2004b, in press) argue that accounting for variation across Romance dialects, specifically Italian and Swiss ones, requires a reform of the morphological set {person, number, gender, case}. Comparison with the different data set offered by Albanian dialects (Manzini and Savoia 1999, 2003) confirms this conclusion. In a nutshell, the proposed reform is that syntax and morphology should run on the same categories, namely syntactic categories like N, Q, D etc. to the exclusion of the traditional morphological feature set. Thus linguistic structures are articulated by the merger of lexical items that project such categories both at the phrase (syntactic) level and at the word (morphological) level.

To be more precise, such a reform is needed if basic explanatory adequacy criteria are to be met in morphology; or, to state it otherwise, if we are to preserve basic minimalist postulates such as projection from the lexicon, or the prohibition against comparison of derivations/representations and mechanisms of equivalent power. In this article we shall concentrate on the reform of the feature set, drawing together arguments concerning the phi-set and arguments concerning the case system presented by Manzini and Savoia (2002a, 2002b, 2004a, 2004b) in connection with various specific problems in the analysis of clitics and agreement. We shall briefly indicate what we consider to be the basic inadequacies of the classical model at the end of the article, in comparing it with the model sketched here, thus eventually motivating the title of this article.

1. Plural and dative

As discussed by Manzini and Savoia (2002b), Romance dialects may or may not have a lexicalization for the 3rd person dative belonging to the same *l* (*d*, *f* etc.)

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series as the lexicalization 3rd person accusatives and nominatives. If they do, in some cases the dative has a morphology different from that of the accusative series, as in the Sardinian dialect of *Làconi* from Manzini and Savoia (2002b), where the accusative is lexicalized as in (1a), while the dative corresponds to (1b).

- (1) *Làconi* (Sardinia)
- | | | | | |
|----|-------------|------|---------|--------|
| a. | ɖu, | ɖa, | ɖus, | ɖas |
| | him, | her, | them-m, | them-f |
| b. | ɖi, | | ɖis | |
| | to him/her, | | to them | |

However in many dialects the dative overlaps with one of the forms of the accusative paradigm; in this latter case, represented in (2) by the dialect of *Vagli*, again taken from Manzini and Savoia (2002b), the overlapping is generally between the dative and the plural (masculine accusative), to the exclusion of other possible forms of the 3rd person paradigm.

- (2) *Vagli di Sopra* (Tuscany)
- | | | | | |
|----|-----------------|------|---------|--------|
| a. | l, | la, | ji, | lə |
| | him, | her, | them-m, | them-f |
| b. | ji | | | |
| | to him/her/them | | | |

Describing the phenomenon in (2) in terms of traditional morphological features yields a completely opaque results. In other words, the coincidence between accusative masculine plural and dative appears to be completely accidental, since there is not a single feature overlap between the two forms. It is in principle possible that this is the correct result and that morphology is a domain of purely accidental variation; however, pursuing an explanatory goal in morphology requires a revision of the relevant set of primitives. In particular, Manzini and Savoia (2002b) propose that the lexical entry for a clitic form such as *ji* of *Vagli* in (2a) and (2b) is characterized in terms of a quantificational property. This gives rise to two possible readings, namely plurality, as in (2a), and distributivity, which we take to be the proper characterization of ‘dativity’ as in (2b).

To be more precise, clitic pronouns of the form of (1)-(2) are not elementary lexical entries, but correspond to the merger of two separate morphemes, namely an *l/d/f* allomorph, introducing definite reference, and inflectional endings introducing the properties traditionally described in terms of number, gender and case. This analysis is particularly transparent for series such as (1) where the invariable *ɖ* base combines with *u, a, i* inflections for masculine accusative, feminine accusative and dative respectively and with *s* for plural. In this dialect, the *i* ending is specialized therefore for distributivity (i.e. the dative), while plurality is lexicalized by *s*, and *u, a* lexicalize nominal class (i.e. gender), as schematized in the lexicon in (3).

- (3) *Làconi*
- | | |
|-------|----------------|
| d: | Definiteness |
| a, u: | Nominal class |
| s: | Plurality |
| i: | Distributivity |

Similarly for the *Vagli* dialect, we assume that the *l, f* allomorphs are associated with a definiteness property in their lexical entry. Therefore, the quantificational denotation to which we reduce both plural and dative properties is associated with the *i* inflectional ending, as illustrated in (4). The nominal class (i.e. gender) specifications are *a, ə* in this dialect. What is of immediate relevance here is that lexical entries of the type in (3)-(4) have no recourse to the traditional morphological phi-features and case set; on the contrary, the characterization of the different morphemes is transparently related to syntactic categorization at least in the case of Definiteness, D, and Quantification, Q. The Nominal class property shall be considered in sections 2-3.

- (4) *Vagli di Sopra*
- | | |
|-------|----------------|
| l, j: | Definiteness |
| a, ə: | Nominal class |
| i: | Quantification |

Manzini and Savoia (2002b) argue that the two different readings that the *i* morpheme in (4) gives rise to depend on its different contexts of insertion. In order to understand the plural interpretation it is sufficient to make reference to the morphological level. Thus we assume that the merger of the *f* definiteness base with the *i* can by itself imply plurality; this can also be restricted to the masculine nominal class, as it is in the *Vagli* dialect, where the feminine is lexicalized by the nominal class morpheme *ə*. By contrast, the dative interpretation can be understood only in connection with the syntactic properties of the clitic.

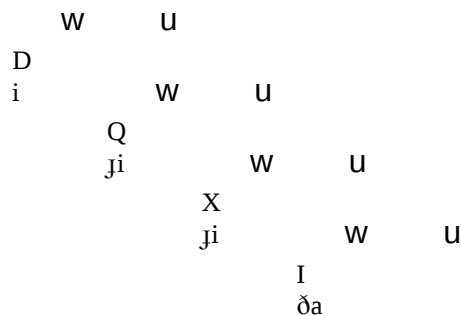
The discussion of the dative surrounding (4) suggests that the syntactic category it projects is Q. For the sake of simplicity we assume that the surface order of clitics results from hierarchical constraints on their merger directly in the inflectional domain; we exclude therefore that it results from the interaction of the order of arguments within the VP-shell and of movement, though nothing hinges on this. Under the assumptions just reviewed, the distributive interpretation of the quantificational property of *fi* (to which we reduce the dative) depends on its projection of the Q property in the syntactic hierarchy.

Concretely, we can consider the simple example in (5) where two *fi* clitics can combine in a dative - accusative cluster. We can see that the dative precedes the accusative from clusters where the accusative is morphologically distinct, i.e. *l, la, lə*.

(5) *Vagli di Sopra*

i ji l/ la/ ji/ lə 'ðə
 he to.him/her/them it-m./it-f./them-m./them-f. gives
 'He gives it/them to him/her/them'

We assign to sentences of the type in (5) structures like (6), where the higher *ji*, corresponding to the so-called dative, projects the Q category in the sentential tree, while this is not the case for the lower *ji*, corresponding to the so-called accusative. What is relevant here is that the dative interpretation of the higher *ji* depends on its projection of the Q property at the sentential level. At the word-level the quantificational denotation of the *i* morpheme simply implies the plurality of the *ji* form. It will be noticed that *Vagli* is a subject clitic language, where the EPP argument is obligatorily lexicalized by a clitic (Brandi and Cordin 1989, Manzini and Savoia 2002a). In the tree in (6) the category projected by the EPP argument is identified with D, sticking in essence with the intuition of Chomsky (1995) according to which it is a D-feature that the subject checks in the inflectional domain of the sentence. We shall return to the category projected by the accusative in section 3.

(6) *Vagli di Sopra*

The tree in (6) bears no indication as to the labelling of the projections dominating the constituents resulting from Merge. Now, the discussion that precedes strictly adheres to the minimalist principle whereby all structure is projected from the lexicon; indeed we have systematically referred to the categorial content being projected by a given lexical item. Thus we have avoided the more traditional, misleading terminology whereby lexical items are inserted under nodes with a given categorial content; in what follows we shall equally say that the lexical item *x* lexicalizes category *y*. The adoption of the relevant minimalist postulate excludes the presence in the tree of empty nodes, not corresponding to the insertion of any lexical material. This assumption effectively excludes a phrase structure theory of the type proposed by Chomsky (1995), and also Kayne (1994), in which (phonologically) empty heads may support a filled Spec. We therefore need a theory where projection from the lexicon entirely abstracts from the Spec-head

mechanism. One such theory, that we adopt in Manzini and Savoia (in press) is Starke's (2000); the blank nodes in (6) and in the trees that follow indicate however that any phrase structure theory which has this crucial property will be acceptable for present purposes.

Finally, many scholars (Cinque 1999, Freidin and Vergnaud 2000, Starke 2000) agree on the assumption that categorial hierarchies are stipulated as part of Universal Grammar, though the exact content of the hierarchies may differ greatly. We follow them, in assuming for instance that the hierarchy (7), implied by (6), is a stipulated constraint on the structures created by Merge. At the same time we expect that at least if the hierarchies we introduce are sufficiently simple, they will eventually be derivable on interpretive grounds. Thus if Q and D are a good guess as to the nature of the subject and the indirect object/dative, their ordering is the one familiar from the internal structure of DP's whereby Definiteness takes wide scope over indefinite Quantification. To be more accurate, in a perspective such as the minimalist one where structures are projected from the lexicon (as opposed to lexical items being inserted into structures), we expect that the relevant interpretive constraints will work by assigning to any structure a rigid interpretation, where for instance two adjacent clitics can instantiate D-Q but cannot viceversa instantiate Q-D within the same string.

(7) [D [Q [X [I

2. Nominal class and Person

In this section we quickly run through the remaining features of the phi-set, in order to return to Case in the second part of the article. Beside Number, the traditional agreement set includes gender and person. Adopting a view independently proposed within generative models (Harris 1991, Di Domenico 1998), we assimilate gender to nominal class. In terms of the reform of morphology sketched above, we predict that nominal class is but the morphological reflex of some independently needed syntactic category. The very term of nominal class, already adopted in the partial lexicons in (3)-(4), suggests that the relevant category is N.

Motivating such a move requires a preliminary discussion of the syntactic category N. One possible view of N, and of the other lexical categories such as V, takes them to be inherent properties of (uninflected) lexical bases. Thus in English the lexical base *cat* would be associated with the N category as a lexical property, while the lexical base *bring* would be associated with V, and so on. An alternative view, recently revived by Marantz (1997), holds however that *cat* or *bring* are just predicative bases and that syntactic specifications such as N or V are a byproduct of the syntactic environment where such predicates appear. The case for such a theory is strongest in case of bases such as *play*, which can appear in both N and V syntactic environments while maintaining exactly the same predicative content. The fact that their phonological and semantic interface properties remain constant provides a compelling argument that we are in presence of a single lexical item.

The N or V categorization will then optimally depend on the context of insertion, if we want to avoid an undesirable disjunction in the lexical entry.

Romance languages also abound in predicates that can either surface as a noun or as a verb; one such example is provided by standard Italian (8). The difference with respect to the well-known case of English is that in Italian the predicate stem will be systematically enriched by inflectional morphology; the choice of a lexical base ending in vowel in (8) makes it clear that it is not syllabic constraints that are at stake. At least in (8b), (8c), it is evident that the relevant morphology is sufficient to disambiguate between nominal and verbal contexts.

- (8) *Italian*
- a. nause -a
 -fpl/3sg
 ‘nausea/he nauseates’
 - b. nause -e
 -fpl
 ‘nauseas’
 - c. nause -o
 -1sg
 ‘I nauseate’

We propose that what is known as a noun, for instance in (8b), is produced by the merger of a predicate with a nominal class morpheme projecting categorial N properties. In structural terms this proposal gives rise to word-internal structures of the type in (9), the position of the predicate inside the word is identified with the ordinary position of predicates inside the sentence, i.e. I. We shall return to the parallelism between phrase-level and word-level structures that this implies throughout the article.

- (9) *Italian*
- | | | |
|-------|---|-----|
| w | o | |
| I | | N |
| nause | | a/e |

Applying the same general principles as in (8), we obtain precise structural representations for the clitic series in (3)-(4) as well, as illustrated in (10) for the case of *Vagli*, discussed in more detail above.

- (10) *Vagli di Sopra*
- a. [I l]
 - b. [I l [N a]
 - c. [I J [N (i)]]
 - d. [I l [N ə]]

It should be acknowledged at this point that the two preliminary assumptions on which our conclusions are based, namely that nominal class is an adequate rendition of gender, and that there is no primitive lexical category N, could them-

selves be objected to. The issue of nominal class vs. gender reduces to the fact that different morphological endings can imply reference to male or female gender in the case of animates, such as in Italian (11). But this kind of fact precisely suggests that gender be treated as part of the meaning of nominal class, in other words as an interpretation of nominal class morphology.

- (11) *Italian*
 a. fidanzato
 fiancé-msg
 b. fidanzata
 fiancé-fsg

Another problem arising in this connection concerns the notion of agreement in gender involving elements of different classes. In (12) for instance a noun belonging to the (masculine or feminine) *-e* class is matched respectively with a masculine adjective in (a) and a feminine adjective in (b). The interpretive perspective taken above suggests that the *-e* inflection of *docent-* and the *-o*, *-a* inflections of *brav-* agree in the sense that they are referentially compatible; in this case in fact it is only the adjectival inflection that fixes reference to gender.

- (12) *Italian*
 a. docente bravo
 teacher-sg good-msg
 b. docente brava
 teacher-sg good-fsg

In general, we would want to conclude that nominal class, i.e. in present terms simply N, subsumes gender in its aspects relevant for the morphosyntax; the notion of gender contains an interpretive residue that concurs to the fixing of denotation at the interface. Other issues concern the treatment of the predicative base as neutral between the V and N categorizations. Though this treatment has been argued for on the basis of predicates that can turn up in both verbal and nominal environments, it may be objected that there are large classes of predicates that can turn up in only one such environment. This can be treated as a straightforward subcategorization problem, certain lexical bases having a denotation compatible only with nominal or verbal properties.

The last remaining feature of the phi-set is person. This is suggested as a candidate for reform by much recent literature, showing that 1st and 2nd person have an altogether different distribution from so-called 3rd person (Davis 1999 on Salish, Dechaine 1999 on Algonquian). The contrast between 1st/2nd person and 3rd person, i.e. between the speaker/hearer and other referents, is in fact crucial for a series of grammatical processes, which include person splits in ergative Case assignment (Nash 1995 on Georgian) but also in Romance auxiliary choice (Kayne 1993, Cocchi 1995, Manzini and Savoia 1998). Leaving aside these more complex issues, it is evident that different distribution counts as a powerful argument in

terms of distributional analysis for assigning separate categorial status to 1st/2nd person on the one hand and 3rd person on the other.

A straightforward example of different distribution is found within the clitic string of Italian. Thus the two examples in (13) involve the same predicate and the same theta-role array, including an animate object and a locative. Since the locative is the same in the two sentences there is no reason to believe that its distribution varies. However the 3rd person clitic appears in what we have already identified as the accusative position in the analysis of *Vagli* in (6), i.e. the position in the string closest to the verb, where it is preceded by the locative as in (13a). By contrast, the 1st and 2nd person clitics appear in a higher position, preceding the locative, as in (13b)-(13c).

(13) *Italian*

- a. Ce lo mando
 there him send-1sg
 'I send him there'
- b. Ti ci mando
 you there send-1sg
 'I send you there'
- c. Mi ci mandi
 me there send-2sg
 'You send me there'

Examples such as (13) provide a strong argument in favor of postulating for 1st/2nd person a category P(erson) whose position in the sentential hierarchy is different from that assigned to the accusative. The locative clitic in turn is taken as the representative of a specialized Loc category. As indicated in (14a), the accusative (on whose categorial nature we return in section 3) is lower than Loc, while as indicated in (14b), the P clitic is higher.

(14) *Italian*

- a.
- w u
- Loc
- ce
- w u
- X
- lo
- w u
- I
- mando
- b.
- w u
- P
- ti
- w u
- Loc
- ci
- w u
- I
- mando

The discussion of P implies that this category is characterized entirely in terms of the denotational properties of speaker/hearer. This characterization is strongly supported by the observation that the distribution of the P clitic is entirely independent of whether its role is that of accusative or dative respectively, since in both cases it simply precedes the locative. As expected, it also precedes the accusative, as shown in (15). The relation of P to the argument structure of the verb is then irrelevant for its morphosyntax and is simply derived by interpretive principles at the interface.

(15) *Italian*

- a. Ti ce lo metto sopra
 you there it put-1sg over
 'I put it over there (for you)'
- b.
- | | | | | | |
|----|---|-----|----|-------|---|
| | w | | u | | |
| P | | | | | |
| ti | | w | | u | |
| | | Loc | | | |
| | | ce | | w | u |
| | | | X | | |
| | | | lo | | |
| | | | | I | |
| | | | | metto | |

Needless to say, a traditional theory holding that there is three-valued feature of person can perfectly well separate 1st/2nd person from 3rd person by stipulation. Similarly, the natural class formed by 1st and 2nd person at the interpretive interface can be used to insure that in cases of split they will normally pattern together against 3rd. The problem with the traditional theory is therefore not a descriptive but an explanatory one. Indeed it is only in syntactic categorization terms that we expect the interpretive split to give rise to different distributional properties. In other words, if P is projected as a categorial property we fully expect it to correspond to an autonomous position in sentence hierarchy, with all of the empirical consequences already noted; these consequences can be stipulated in terms of a 1st and 2nd person feature set but are in no way predicted by it.

3. Accusative

With this background concerning the phi-feature set, we can then proceed to Case. The seminal work of Rouveret and Vergnaud (1980), Vergnaud (1982), in introducing the Case Filter as a principle of Universal Grammar, required that the notion of Case become independent of its morphological instantiation. Indeed a number of languages do not have morphological Case, or only have it in the pronominal system like English; however Case must be present as an abstract feature, i.e. a feature without PF realization, if the Case Filter which imposes a Case on all

Noun Phrases is to be satisfied. In what follows we shall attack Case starting precisely with its visible morphological instantiations. However we take the consequences to hold for Case in general, i.e. abstract Case.

Furthermore according to Chomsky (1986) there are two types of Cases. Inherent Cases are associated with a particular thematic specification. Dative would presumably be such a Case, and locative certainly would be. They are Cases in that they evidently satisfy the Case Filter of Rouveret and Vergnaud (1980), Chomsky (1981); however they can be reduced to more elementary primitives. By contrast structural Cases do not match any particular thematic configuration; in particular nominative can be the Case of both an agent (in the active) and a theme (in the passive). As for accusative, the classical argument in favor of its structural status is Exceptional Case Marking, of which English, as in (16a), is the standard example. Forms of Exceptional Case Marking in which the external argument of an embedded predicate appears as the accusative object of the matrix predicate are however found in most languages, if we take into account causative predicates such as (16b).

(16) a. I believe him to lie

- b. *Italian*
 Lo feci mentire
 him I.made lie
 'I made him lie'

Causative examples such as (16b) are generally assumed to instantiate some form of complex predicate formation; in other words the accusative does not really correspond to the external argument of the embedded verb, superficially raised to matrix object position. Rather the embedded predicate and the matrix verb form a complex predicate whereby the external argument of the embedded predicate is evidently identified with the internal argument of the cause matrix predicate. The exact nature of what is happening is not directly relevant for the present discussion; the point is simply that everybody would accept that the accusative in (16b) is connected to an internal argument specification. Thus causatives are generally avoided as motivation for the structural status of accusative. The next step is to notice that the original idea of Chomsky (1975) is that in a sentence like (16a), the accusative *him* is the object of the complex predicate *believe-to-lie*. This direction of research suggests a view of accusative as inherent Case and we therefore abstract from the distinction between inherent and structural Cases in the complement (i.e. non-subject) set.

Both in section 1 and in section 2 we said nothing as to the nature of the accusative position, involved in such representations as (6) or (15). An interesting handle on the question of what categorial properties are projected by the direct object is nevertheless provided by the way so-called accusative Case shows up in those systems which register it morphologically. In Romance, since morphological

Case is limited to pronouns, the most relevant languages are those that have subject clitics, including French and Northern Italian dialects. One such dialect, on which Manzini and Savoia (2004b) remark in passing, is that of *Andràz*, more correctly relabelled here as *Corte*. In the feminine the nominative and the accusative forms of *Corte* simply overlap as shown in (17).

- (17) *Corte*
- | | | |
|---|-------------|--------|
| la/le | la/le | 'klama |
| she/they-f. | her/them-f. | call-3 |
| 'She calls her/They call her/She calls them/They call them' | | |

However in the masculine it is evident that the nominative and accusative forms are systematically distinguished, as shown in (18). Thus in the singular nominative *el* contrasts with accusative *lo*, while in the plural nominative *i* contrasts with accusative *ie*. Remarkably, the system *el* vs. *lo* is the one familiar from French where nominative accusative pairs take the form *il* vs. *le*, *elle* [ɛl] vs. *la*, etc.

- (18) *Corte*
- | | | |
|---|-------------|--------|
| el/i | lo/ie | 'klama |
| he/they-m. | him/them-m. | call-3 |
| 'He calls him/They call him/He calls them/They call them' | | |

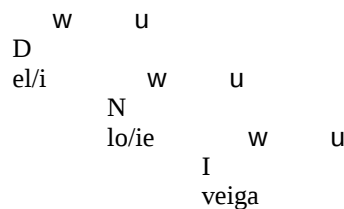
The system of *Corte*, as well as that of French, admit of an interesting description in terms of the theory of the internal structure of nouns in section 2, as applied to clitics for *Vagli* in (10). In the system of *Corte* the feminine clitics consist in all cases of the definiteness base *l* followed by the nominal class morpheme *a/e*, as indicated in (19a)-(19b). Consider then the masculine. The accusative singular has the same structure as its feminine counterparts with the *l* base followed by the nominal class morpheme *o*, as in (19c). By contrast *el* of the nominative clearly lacks nominal class morphology; we take it to correspond to a lexicalization of an allomorph of the pure base of definiteness *l*, i.e. *el*, as in (19d). The plural can be analyzed in the same way. In this case the pure *i* morpheme, to which we impute the same quantificational denotation as in other languages reviewed so far (including *Vagli* above), lexicalizes the plural without attaching to the *l* base. We can attribute this pattern, very frequently found in Romance dialects, once again to the denotational properties of *i*. What interests us here directly is that in the accusative *i* itself acts as the lexical base hosting the nominal class inflection *e*, as in (19e).

- (19) *Corte*
- | | | |
|----|---------------------|----------------------|
| a. | [_I l | [_N a]] |
| b. | [_I l | [_N e]] |
| c. | [_I l | [_N o]] |
| d. | [_I el] | |
| e. | [_I i | [_N (e)]] |

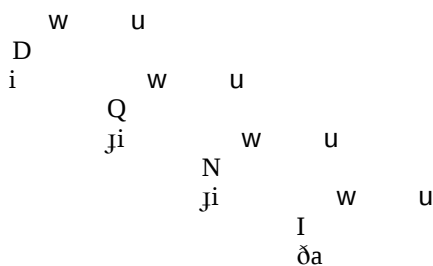
In terms of the analysis in (19) the obvious generalization emerges that accusative Case in the *Corte* language is lexicalized by nominal class morphology. The comparison with French shows that this apparent syncretism is not casual; the same conclusion is supported by the observation that no system among the hundreds examined by Manzini and Savoia (in press) shows the reverse pattern, i.e. the nominative includes a lexicalization of nominal class while the accusative doesn't. A theory which can only register the coincidence of the two different features of nominal class and accusative Case leaves this coincidence entirely unexplained. Thus the same criticisms of traditional theories apply in this case as for the apparent syncretism of dative and plural in section 1.

By contrast, within a theory employing the same kind of categorization in the morphology and in the syntax the hypothesis naturally presents itself that the coincidence of so-called accusative Case with nominal class morphology is due to the fact that accusative projects on the sentential tree the same N categorial properties connected at the morphological level with nominal class. In other words sentences like (18) receive the structure in (20a). Analogously the provisional *Vagli* structure in (6) is completed as in (20b).

(20) a. *Corte*



b. *Vagli di Sopra*



Before we consider the overall plausibility of this proposal, we shall introduce what counts in our view as the most important piece of independent evidence in its favor. In many Romance languages, while the finite verb agrees with the subject in person and number, the perfect participle agrees with the object in number and gender (Burzio 1986, Kayne 1989), as seen in Italian (21a). For the participle em-

bedded under the auxiliary in (21), our treatment of the nominal morphology of Italian, in section 2, obviously suggests the structure in (21b), where the number and gender agreement, ie. in present terms the nominal class morpheme, is the N argument of the predicative base.

(21) *Italian*

a. La hanno riconosciuta
 her have-3pl recognized-sgf
 ‘They have recognized her’

b.

	w	u
I		N
riconosciut		a

Under the sharp separation of the morphological (word-level) and syntactic (phrase-level) component that characterizes traditional theories it can only be accidental that agreement with the accusative in Romance languages characterizes a nominal form of the verb, i.e. the participle. In other words, under current theories we might equally expect the reverse system to exist, i.e. a system in which it is agreement with the nominative that is uniquely associated with a nominal form of the verb. On the contrary, the present system makes a predictive hypothesis as to the relation between nominal morphology and accusative Case, since so-called accusatives project on the sentential tree the same N categorial properties that are instantiated by nominal class morphology within the noun. It follows that we expect systems where the object agrees only with the participle, as in (21), but we do not expect systems where it is the subject that agrees only with the participle.

Notice that we have been careful to phrase the relevant generalizations so as not to exclude agreement of the N morphology with D subjects, which is of course found in a language like Italian with those subjects that are deep objects, i.e. correspond to the internal argument of inaccusative verbs. What is more, among the many dialects studied by Manzini and Savoia (in press) there are some where agreement of the perfect participle with the (surface) subject is found to the exclusion of agreement with the accusative object. But despite the existence of several parametric options, the system described above remains impossible.

To consider a different issue, the fact that in a language like *Corte* the feminine presents identical forms for nominative and accusative clitic, both endowed of nominal class properties, is allowed for by our theory, which does not prohibit a match of nominal properties to nominative. In fact, all lexical nouns in Italian behave exactly in this way, presenting the same nominal class ending independently of the position they are associated with. Other languages, where both nominative and accusative are morphologically marked, are equally compatible with our theory or actually support it. Thus in pairs such as *reg-s* (*rex*), *reg-e-m* ‘king-nom, king-acc’ of Latin it is evident that the nominative, though overtly marked by *s*, implies the absence of the nominal class morpheme *e* present on the accusative. In

turn, the hypothesis as to agreement with the accusative is compatible with languages where perfectivity provokes the shift from nominative-accusative to ergative-absolutive Case system, for instance Hindi within the Indo-European family. Quite simply in such systems agreement with the accusative never arises.

As we have evoked ergativity, it is worth pointing out that though so far, we have presented our hypothesis as bearing on the N nature of the accusative, we could equally well be presenting it as an hypothesis concerning the accusative nature of N. It will have been noted that categorial properties such as Loc, P, Q and even D clearly have interpretive content, i.e. a content interpreted at the LF interface. In terms of the discussion that precedes, the interpretive content of N is that of internal argument of the predicate; in other words the lexicalization of N, both as an inflection and as a sentential argument, means satisfaction of the internal obligatory argument of the predicate itself. In this perspective what we are saying is that given a predicative base, by adding an internal argument to it in the form of an N inflection, we form what is traditionally known as a Noun like (9) or a nominal form of the verb like (20b). In essence then a Noun is simply an ergative inflection of a predicate base. By contrast what we call a verb, at least in Italian and similar languages, is a nominative inflection of a predicative base.

It seems to us that the conclusions we have been suggesting represent a step forward with respect to those of Marantz (1997) with which they share the basic idea that Noun and Verb are the names of morpho-syntactic constructs and not of primitive categories. In fact for Marantz (1997), N or V categorization ultimately depends on the merger of the predicate with an *n* or *v* functional category. To the extent that the contrast between the lexical categories N and V is simply restated as a primitive at the level of functional categories, *n* and *v* respectively, Marantz's (1997) idea weakens the initial hypothesis as to the constructional nature of N and V. What we pursue here is a stronger solution, since N is by no means the dedicated category for deriving Nouns, but rather is an independently needed category, projected in the sentential tree as well, and associated with an independent interface interpretation, i.e. that of internal argument.

Next, we can consider the transformation that the notion of accusative Case and of Case in general undergoes in the present model. In the conception of Rouveret and Vergnaud (1980), Vergnaud (1982), Chomsky (1981), the notion of Case is strictly connected with that of government by a Case assigning head; in other words it is a relational notion. While issues such as the shift from assignment to checking, and the abandonment of government in favor of sisterhood have been treated in detail by the minimalist literature, it seems to us that a deeper issue arises. If the minimalist notion of feature is to have a restrictive enough content, features can only encode *bona fide* lexical properties and not relational ones; it is on these grounds that Chomsky (1995) blocks theta-roles from being encoded as features and theta-role assignment from becoming a matter of feature checking (*contra* Hornstein 1999, Manzini and Roussou 2000). However on the same

grounds the notion of Case cannot be considered a relational notion, because otherwise it could not be encoded featurally, nor enter into checking. However if it is not relational, it is not evident what the content of Case may be. It seems to us that the more often noted anomalies of Case features within the minimalist system, such as their radically uninterpretable nature, are just the way in which the conceptual difficulty hinted at here surfaces. Incidentally a reform of the notion of interpretability as undertaken by Pesetsky and Torrego (2004) would not suffice to repair the problem, which if we are correct goes much deeper.

The reform of Case provided here, though rejecting Case as a feature, paradoxically has the effect of eliminating the problem for the featural theory of Case. Indeed if the discussion that precedes is on the right track, the traditional notion of Case with its relational characterization is reduced to a non-relational notion of the type easily manageable by minimalist theories. To repeat it once again, in the present view accusative corresponds to nominal class properties N being projected on the sentential tree. The only relation they bear to the predicate is the interpretive one of internal argument.

Finally, we are in a position to complete the hierarchy of nominal positions of the sentence, provisionally introduced in (6), as in (22). The relative order of the various positions is in part justified by some of the examples provided above, such as the relative order of P, Loc, N while for other aspects of the ordering (as well as for the R position) we refer the reader to Manzini and Savoia (2002b, 2004b, in press), who also justify two further theoretical moves. The first one is that the same skeleton in (22) can be found not only in sentences, but also in Noun Phrases. In fact Q and D are categories first introduced in the literature to account for nominal structures while others have fairly transparent instantiations (as for instance demonstratives as Loc's). The second step toward unification, and hence simplification, of grammar is that the string in (22), justified in the discussion for the clitic positions in the inflectional domains, characterizes the other domains of the sentence as well. Thus it provides the basic order of arguments in the VP-shell below the inflectional domain as well as in the left periphery above the I domain.

(22) [D [R [Q [P [Loc [N [I

4. Nominative

The same kind of treatment that we have proposed in some detail for accusative has been anticipated for nominative in section 2 above, when we have identified the subject of the sentence with an element projecting a D definiteness property. Again the relational view of nominative is substituted by a view under which the nominative corresponds to the projection of a *bona fide* lexical property on the sentential tree, i.e. Definiteness.

Our primary reason for returning to nominative is to provide an argument in favor of one of the key assumptions of the present model, namely the homogeneity of word-level and phrase-level structure. An argument for such an assumption

could be obtained if we could show that elements can occasionally be raised from the lower to the higher level (under conventional assumptions about rules of grammar we expect promotion rather than its contrary); in this case we predict of course that a given element will occupy within phrase structure the same position that it normally occupies within morphological structure. In more accurate terminology, we predict that it will project the same categorial properties in both cases.

Now, in the preceding section we have proposed that N is projected both at the word-internal level as nominal class inflection and at the phrase level as sentential accusative. Manzini and Savoia (2002a, 2004a, 2004b) analogously propose that D is not only the category projected by the sentential subject but also corresponds to the word-internal category projected by the finite verb inflection, as seen for instance in the representation in (23) for Italian (8c) or the verbal reading of (8a).

- (23) *Italian*
- | | |
|-------|-----|
| w | o |
| I | D |
| nause | a/o |

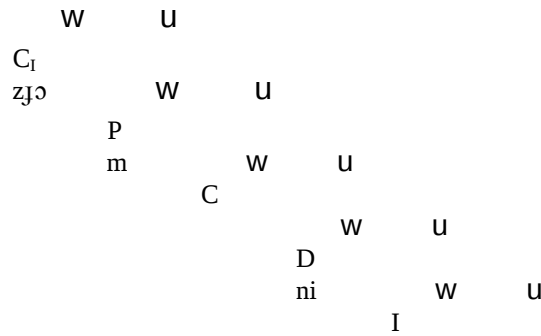
The analysis that Manzini and Savoia (2004a) provide for the phenomenon of mesoclis in the imperative in Southern Italian dialects uses precisely the positioning of the verb inflection in D of the sentential string, rather than in D internal to the verb. The phenomenon, also known from Caribbean Spanish examples in the Distributed Morphology literature (Halle and Marantz 1993, 1994), is exemplified in (24) with an Albanian dialect spoken in Italy (arbëresh), as reported by Manzini and Savoia (1999). Sentence (24a) exemplifies the enclitic position of the accusative clitic, following the verb stem and its inflection, while in (24b) it can be seen that the Person clitic is inserted between the verb stem and its inflection.

- (24) *S. Sofia d'Epiro*
- | | | | |
|----|----------------|-----|------|
| a. | 'zɟɔ | -ni | -ε |
| | wake.up-2pl | | -him |
| | 'Wake him up!' | | |
| b. | 'zɟɔ | -m | -ni |
| | wake.up-me | | -2pl |
| | 'Wake me up!' | | |

Under the analysis proposed by Manzini and Savoia (2004a) for Southern Italian dialects, in (24b) and similar examples the so-called inflection of the imperative is treated as a subject clitic. In other words, it maintains the D categorization that it would have inside the verb, but it projects at the sentential level, as in (25); the empty heads C and I are just mnemonics to help read the representation, since in the absence of lexical material they are not projected in the sentence. The relevant assumptions are that the stem of the verb is hosted by a specialized head in the left periphery of the sentence, namely C_I; the stranded verb inflection occu-

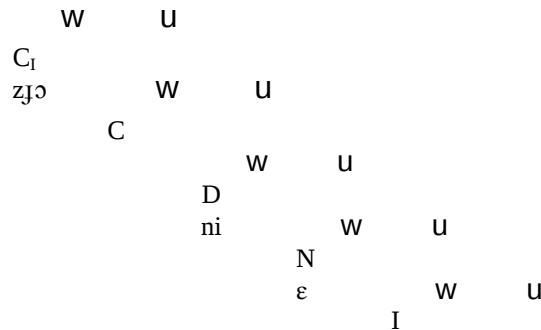
pies the same position above I that we have adopted for the subject clitic of *Vagli* in (6). Manzini and Savoia (2004a) argue that the high position of the imperative leaves the syntactic space necessary for the stranding of the agreement inflection, effectively a subject clitic. The strict hierarchy that characterizes (22) means that the clitic that appears in between must be hosted by a set of nominal positions in the left periphery, between C and C_I; thus the one stipulated feature of the construction is precisely that the P clitic appears in this higher domain rather than in the ordinary inflectional one.

(25) *S. Sofia d'Epiro*



In fact, the sentence in (24a) can be accounted for along the same lines, except for the position of the clitic, which appears in the normal inflectional domain. The split between P clitics as in (25) and accusative clitics, as in (26), can be seen as a reflex of the deeper conceptual split between discourse anchored and event-anchored (pro)nominals that was invoked to assign them separate categories in section 2. Thus what needs to be stipulated about the mesoclitisis phenomenon is that clitics whose reference is directly anchored to the discourse appear in the C domain bound to modal specifications.

(26) *S. Sofia d'Epiro*



If this account of mesocclisis is on the right track, then the present view of the verb inflection and of subject clitics as projecting the same categorial properties D at two different structural levels receives important confirmation.

5. Compatibility with minimalism

In the preceding sections, we have pointed to specific empirical evidence that suggests abandoning traditional morphological features in favor of syntactic categorization. While this evidence forms an important part of our motivation, overall conceptual considerations also play a role in motivating the present proposals. In particular, our assumptions are compatible with crucial postulates of minimalism which are possibly violated by alternative models.

One relevant comparison is with Distributed Morphology, with which the present model shares a certain amount of postulates, such as the structuring of morphological units by the basic operation of Merge; Distributed Morphology furthermore takes minimalism into account and is largely interested in the same empirical phenomena that are at the core of this article. Now, the present grammar is construed so that all structures are projected from lexical material; by contrast Distributed Morphology has recourse to Late Insertion. Similarly the present theory has no recourse to comparison between derivations or representations, while arguably Distributed Morphology has recourse to mechanisms that have equivalent power, such as Impoverishment. Thus in principle the lexical item that best matches certain terminal specifications is inserted under them; however phenomena under which underspecified lexical items are inserted require the application of Impoverishment, pruning feature specifications at the interface between syntax and morphology. A rule like Impoverishment is simply not statable in the non-feature based theory that we put forward. In fact, the elimination of features in favor of absolute categorization means more generally that there can be no underspecification and no default. Thus the present theory turns out to be significantly more restrictive than its competitors.

Manzini and Savoia (2002a, 2002b, 2004b) deal with some of the empirical implications of these restrictions of the theory. For instance if Manzini and Savoia (2002b, 2004b) are correct, absolute categorization of the type proposed here is sufficient to describe a phenomenon such as the Spurious *se* in Spanish for which both Distributed Morphology treatments (Bonet 1995, Harris 1994) and Optimality Theory ones (Grimshaw 1997) crucially use underspecification.

We are aware that the reform of the phi-and Case set has an important fall-out for the syntax as well. In particular, the elimination of features, with the attending notions of feature value and underspecification, leaves us without the formal means for implementing the minimalist rule of Agree as envisaged by Chomsky (1995, 2000, 2001). However generative grammars allow for a different conception of Agree, whereby the agreement between two nominal categories both introduced by Merge allows for their coreference. Following (Manzini and Savoia

2002a, 2004a, in press) we take it that this interpretive construal of Agree, independently needed for anaphora, can simply be extended to verb agreement.

In general, it seems to us that precisely the conclusion anticipated in the title holds. In other words, while the postulates of the minimalist theory of Chomsky (1995, 2000, 2001) are compatible with one another in the narrow syntax, they can not be extended to the morphology without need for one or the other of them to be abandoned. In particular it seems to us that an account of morphological structure consistent with projection from the lexicon and absolute (non ranked) constraints must of necessity abandon the conception of feature on which uninterpretability and checking are based. The reverse path is of course in principle possible, and is in fact taken notably by Distributed Morphology. Of course the empirical phenomena sketched above provide a possible ground of comparison between these two (and other) possibilities. In principled terms however it seems to us that abandoning uninterpretability and checking, as we do here, simply means giving up a particular implementation of the grammar. The alternative implies that syntax and morphology, despite their obvious overlapping, will not be unifiable, giving rise to substantial (non-minimalist) redundancy in the computational component. Furthermore, we cannot underestimate the consequences for the syntax of allowing powerful mechanisms such as ranking of constraints or ad hoc elimination of lexical information (features) to be hosted in the morphology. For, if a grammatical subcomponent can make use of them, the principled bar to using them in the grammar in general obviously disappears.

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Abstract

In this article we argue in favor of the proposal that syntax and morphology should run on the same categories, namely syntactic categories like N, Q, D etc., to the exclusion of the traditional morphological feature set {person, number, gender, case}. Such a reform is needed if basic explanatory adequacy criteria are to be met in morphology. In particular, we shall draw together arguments concerning the phi-set and the case system presented by Manzini and Savoia (2002a, 2002b, 2004a, 2004b) in connection with specific problems in the analysis of clitics and agreement. We shall briefly indicate what we consider to be the basic inadequacies of the classical model at the end of the article, in comparing it with the model sketched here, thus eventually motivating the title of this article.