

The Spurious vs. Dative Problem.

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In this paper I bring new arguments against the morphological analysis of the Spurious Se Rule in Spanish (Bonet 1991, Nevins 2007, 2012, a.o). I show that both the dative clitic *le* and the spurious clitic *se* differ syntactically. These facts strongly argue against the existence of a morphological rule (i.e. *impoverishment*) mapping the dative clitic into the spurious one, leaving its syntax unaffected.

1. Introduction.

Since Bonet's (1991) ground-breaking work on opaque clitic combinations in Romance, the fact that the syntactically motivated dative clitic *le* (1a) is systematically replaced by the reflexive clitic *se* in clusters of two 3rd person clitics in Spanish (1b) has been taken as evidence for the existence of *impoverishment* operations after syntax (Halle&Marantz 1993).

- (1)a. Juan *le* compró un libro. b. Juan *se* lo compró.
Juan 3sIO bought a book Juan 3refl 3smO bought
'Juan bought him/her a book.' 'Juan bought him/her it.'
- (2) * Juan *le* lo compró.
Juan 3sIO 3smO bought
'Juan bought him/her it.'

That the *Spurious Se* (SpuSe) Rule giving rise to the opaque cluster in (1b) is a morphological operation has been taken for granted since the very beginnings of Distributed Morphology (Bonet 1991, Halle & Marantz 1993). However, as already noticed by Embick & Noyer (2007), this assumption is far from being the null hypothesis even in this framework:

- (3) *Nevertheless, there are special cases in which [...] the relationship between syntactic and morphological structure is more complex than the picture outlined above predicts [...]. One possibility is that the syntactic structure that predicts the non-occurring morphological form has been misanalysed. Because it maintains the simplest interaction between syntax and morphology, this option represents the null hypothesis.* Embick&Noyer [2007:304]

Under this perspective, rules like the SpuSe in Spanish –that blurs the mapping from Syntax to Morphology- should not fall under the purview of Morphology, everything being equal. In this paper I will show that the dative clitic *le* and the spurious clitic *se* differ in syntactic terms. This strongly argues against the analysis of the SpuSe Rule as a post-syntactic operation—in support of the null hypothesis.

The paper is structured as follows. In section 2 I will outline the basic properties of the morphological analysis of the SpuSe Rule. I will focus on the dissimilation-based account laid out by Nevins (2007, 2012), but the arguments I put forward to show that Nevins' analysis is

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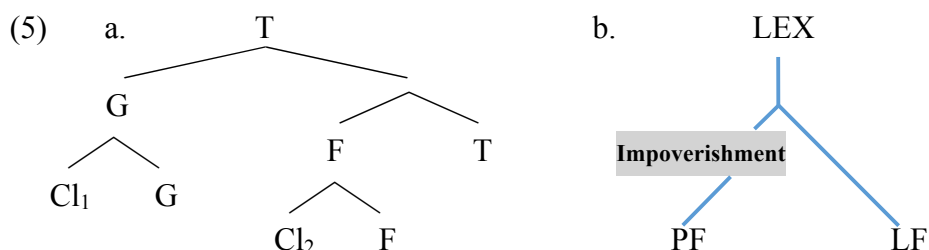
untenable can be straightforwardly extended to alternative morphological accounts². In Section 3, I will claim that the SpuSe Rule cannot be analyzed as a property of a particular clitic cluster or as the product of a post-syntactic operation. In Section 4, I show that the spurious clitic *se* and the (properly) reflexive clitic *se* are interchangeable in ellipsis contexts –contrary to what happens with the dative clitic *le* and the (properly) reflexive clitic *se*. Finally, section 5 explores two speculative proposals to get rid of *impoverishment* operations in Morphology, still accounting for the SpuSe Rule in a principled way.

2. Morphological SpuSe Rule (Nevins 2007, 2012).

Morphological accounts for the SpuSe Rule in Spanish revolves around two main assumptions:

- (4) a. *The Cluster Assumption.*
The SpuSe Rule is triggered in a particular clitic cluster. In particular, clusters where two 3rd person clitics co-occur.
- b. *The Post-Syntactic Assumption.*
The SpuSe Rule is a morphological operation without syntactic consequences.

Nevins' (2007, 2012) analysis of SpuSe Rule fully embraces the assumptions in (4), but he aims to answer why SpuSe Rules must exist at all in Morphology. Nevins claims that feature identity within the M(orphological)-Word leads to morphological markedness, which triggers feature/morpheme deletion (*impoverishment*). M-Word (Embick & Noyer 2001) is defined as the highest terminal projection not dominated by any other terminal projection (5a). M-Word becomes relevant at the PF branch of the grammar (5b).



The SpuSe Rule reduces to the following morphological instruction:

- (6) a. *Haplology-triggered SpuSe Rule*
Delete/Alter the features corresponding to 3rd person when it precedes another 3rd person.
[Nevins 2007: (33)]
- b. Juan [_{M-W} le_[3] lo_[3]] compró → Juan [_{M-W} se_[3] lo_[3]] compró.

The Rule in (6a) for SpuSe in Spanish is intended to be the language-particular instantiation of a more general scheme for feature-triggered dissimilation operations inside the M-Word. Nevins (2012) observes that in Romanian the number feature of the dative clitic is neutralized in clusters of two third person clitics (7). In Tavullia, a third person subject clitic is neutralized in the context of a third person object clitic (8).

² I focus on Nevins's (2007) analysis because I consider this analysis to be the best attempt to reduce Spanish Spurious Se in Morphology. He carefully shows that his analysis based on person dissimilation is descriptively superior to other alternative analysis.

(7) { *li/i } le dai
 3pIO/3sIO 3fsO give.2sS
 ‘You give them (fem.) to them/it/him/her.’ [Nevins 2012: (44)]

(8) (*ɛl) la ‘cɛma
 3sS 3sO calls
 ‘He calls her.’ [Nevins 2012: (45)]

According to Nevins (2012), neutralization of features or entire terminal nodes in Spanish, Romanian and Tavullia obey the general schema in (9):

- (9) 3/3-Impoverishment: Given two [-participant] morphemes M1 and M2 within a single M-World.
 a. Delete person feature in M1 (Spanish)
 b. Delete the entire terminal M1 (Tavullia)
 c. Delete number feature in M1 (Romanian)

Romanian is particularly interesting in terms of explanatory adequacy (Chomsky 1965). In Romanian the repair (i.e. Delete number feature in M1) is completely orthogonal to what actually triggers it (i.e. the co-occurrence of two third person features in the same M-Word). Crucially, Nevins (2012) is committed to adopt the following two assumptions: (i) the crosslinguistic variation regarding which element is the target of deletion turns out to be unpredictable and (ii) the deleted feature is potentially orthogonal to the feature triggering the dissimilation process. The question is how it is possible to acquire a rule of this type at all.

The problem - given these assumptions- is to explain how Romanian children are able to deduce that deletion of the plural feature in the dative clitic in (7) is a consequence of the co-occurrence of two third person features within the same M-Word. This sort of opacity between what the rules causes and what causes the rule certainly makes its acquisition a tricky task.

3. The Spurious vs. Dative Problem.

In both section 3.1 and 3.2 I show that the Cluster assumption in (4a) cannot be maintained. Additionally, I show in 3.3 that the dative clitic *le* can give rise to new binding possibilities, but the spurious clitic *se* cannot. It implies that the spurious clitic *se* cannot be analyzed as the output of a post-syntactic operation like *impoverishment*, leaving its syntax unaffected. This strongly argues against the Post-Syntactic Assumption in (4b).

3.1 Bare Plurals.

In this section, I'll show that *dissimilation*-based accounts under-generate. Generic bare plural Indirect Objects (IOs) –as pointed out by Fernández Soriano (1989), Jaeggli (1982) and Ordóñez (2000)- cannot be doubled by the dative clitic *le* (10a). However, the spurious dative clitic *se* can double bare generic IOs, as shown in (10b).

- (10) a. No (*les) des tus llaves a personas desconocidas.
 Don't 3pIO give your keys to strangers.
 ‘Don't give your keys to strangers’ [Ordóñez 2000: (81a)]
 b. No se las des a personas desconocidas.
 Don't refl 3pIO give to strangers
 ‘Don't give them to strangers’

The question is how it is even possible to impoverish the feature-structure of the dative clitic *le* into that of the reflexive clitic *se* to produce (10b), if the dative clitic *le* is independently ruled out to begin with, as shown in (10a).

3.2 The non-existence of ethical spurious *se* clitics.

An ethical 3rd person dative cannot be substituted by the spurious clitic *se* in a cluster of two 3rd person clitics –as shown in (11a). The sentence in (11b) shows that the 3rd person dative clitic *le* can be an ethical dative in isolation.

- (11) a. Al niño, no {me/te/*se} le hablan
To.the boy, don't 1/2/spurious.eth 3IO talked.to
'They didn't talk to my/your/*his boy'
- b. Este niño no le bebe nada.
This boy don't 3IO.eth drinks nothing
'His boy is not drinking anything'

It turns out that the sequence of two 3rd person clitics in Spanish is simply *ineffable*. There is no possible repair when two 3rd person clitics co-occur in the same cluster (12), and one of them is a 3rd person ethical dative.

- (12) *Al niño, no le le hablo.
To.the boy, don't 3.eth 3sIO speak.1sS
'I don't talk to his boy.'

Given the fact that ethical dative clitics can independently enter in clusters with other clitics (13a), the *Haplogly-triggered SpuSe Rule* in (6) over-generates. It predicts that the SpuSe Rule should apply to (12), contrary to fact. The sentences in (11a) and (12) shows that clusters of 3rd person clitics cannot be construed in Syntax. But that is precisely the point: if one needs to recur independently to Syntax in order to avoid combinations of two 3rd person clitics, why does one need to stipulate an idiosyncratic morphological rule to do exactly the same?

3.2.1 The Double Object Construction Hypothesis

If the source of the SpuSe Rule is not just the type of clitic cluster in which it occurs, where does the spurious *se* come from? In order to provide a non-stipulative answer to this question, let's back to ethical dative clitics. It is well-known that ethical datives clitics –unless argumental dative clitics- does not give rise to Person Case Constraint *PCC* effects (Perlmutter 1968, Bonet 1991).

- (13) a. no me le hablan a este niño. Ethical Dative
not 1sO.eth 3sIO talk.3pS to this boy
'They don't talk to my boy.'
- b. *no me le enviaron a este niño. Argumental Dative
not 1sO 3sIO send.3pS to this boy
'They didn't send me to this boy.'

This different behavior regarding PCC effects between ethical and argumental datives derives from the fact that argumental dative clitics –but not ethical dative ones- enter in the Double Object Construction (DOC) in Spanish (Demonte 1995, Ormazabal & Romero 2012). If the domain of application of the SpuSe Rule reduces to DOCs in Spanish, it explains automatically why the SpuSe Rule does not apply to ethical datives. It does not apply for the same reason ethical datives does not generate PCC effects: they do not enter in DOCs.

(14) **The DOC hypothesis.**

The SpuSe Rule is a consequence of the way two third person internal arguments are licensed in syntax.

Notice that the DOC hypothesis in (14) is more restrictive than the Cluster Assumption in (4a). As a matter of fact, (4a) predicts that the SpuSe Rule applies to any combination of two third person

clitics. It does not matter how the cluster has been built in Syntax. However, I have shown that the Cluster Assumption in (4a) under- and over-generates in Spanish.

Furthermore, the DOC hypothesis allows to ‘free’ the application of the SpuSe Rule from the domain of clitic clusters. In the Calabrian Dialect spoken in *Arena*, a third person Indirect Object can be construed as a locative or as an argumental clitic in the context of ditransitive verbs like ‘give’. It is obvious that the spurious *se* in *Arena* is not a property of the clitic cluster, but represents an alternative way to construct third person IOs in syntax: as a prepositional phrase (employing a locative clitic) or as a ‘bare’ DP (employing a reflexive clitic).

- (15) a. ‘ijju si ‘ðuna ‘kistu [DOC]
 he SI gives this
 ‘He gives him(self)/her/them this’ / ‘He gives himself this’
- b. ‘ijju nci ‘ðuna ‘kistu [Oblique]
 he Loc gives this
 ‘He gives this to him/her/them’ *Arena* [Manzini&Savoia 2005]

Under the DOC hypothesis in (14), the clitic system of *Arena* shows the same variability in the morphosyntactic realization of the IO as English does in the so-called Dative Alternation (Larson 1988, Baker 1988, a.o): either as a ‘bare’ DP or as a prepositional phrase.

- (16) a. I give Mary a book [DOC]
 b. I give a book to Mary [Oblique]

3.3 Spurious ≠ Dative.

In this section, I’ll review several arguments showing that spurious *se* cannot be syntactically equated with dative *le*.

3.3.1 Weak Cross-Over Repairs.

The dative clitic *le* can repair WCO effects –as shown in (17a), but the spurious clitic *se* cannot – as in (17b). Even if (17b) is not completely ungrammatical, the contrast between (17a) and (17b) is clear enough and entirely unexpected under any morphological account for the SpuSe Rule.

- (17) a. ¿a quién coño_i le_i ha traído un ordenador su_i jefe?. Hazme una lista.
 a who pussy 3IO.sg has brought a computer his boss. Give-me a list
 ‘who the hell has his boss brought a computer? Give me a list!’
- b. ?? ¿a quién coño_i se_i lo ha traído su_i jefe?. Hazme una lista.
 a who pussy refl 3sO has brought his boss. Give-me a list.
 ‘who the hell has his boss brought it? Give me a list!’

A clearer contrast is obtained with strong pronouns instead of ‘weak’ possessives.

- (18) a. A quién coñoⁱ leⁱ dio un tortazo la chica que estuvo bailando con élⁱ?
 a who pussy 3IO gave a punch the girl that was dancing with him.
 ‘*Who the hellⁱ did the girl dancing with himⁱ give tⁱ a kick?’
- b.*? A quién coñoⁱ seⁱ lo dio la chica que estuvo bailando con élⁱ?
 a who pussy refl 3msO gave the girl that was dancing with him
 ‘*Who the hellⁱ did the girl dancing with himⁱ give tⁱ it?’

3.3.2 Principle C effects with post-verbal subjects.

The dative clitic *le* gives rise to Condition C effects with post-verbal Subjects in Spanish (cf Panagiotidis&Tsiplakou 2006) –as shown in (19B). Yet the spurious clitic *se* do not give rise to Condition C effects under identical conditions–as in (19B’).

- (19) A: ¿Quién le entregará el premio a Messi?
 Who 3sIO will.deliver.3Ssg the award to Messi
 ‘Who will deliver Messi the award?’
- B: *Le_i entregará el premio el padre de Messi_i en persona.
 3IO.sg will.deliver.3sS the award the father of M. personally
 ‘Messi’s father will deliver him the award in the flesh’
- B’: ^(?)Se_i lo entregará el padre de Messi_i en persona.
 refl 3Osg will.deliver.3sS the father of M. personally
 ‘Messi’s father will deliver him it in the flesh’

The sentence in (19B’) sounds more natural if the proper noun *Messi* is replaced by the epithet *el astro argentino* ‘the argentinian star’, as in (20a). This replacement has no effect when a cross-referential dative clitic *le* is employed (20b).

- (20) a. Se_i lo entregará el padre del astro argentino_i en persona.
 refl 3sO will.deliver.3Ssg the father of star argentinian personally
 ‘The father of the Argentinian Star will deliver him it in the flesh’
- b. *Le_i entregará el premio el padre del astro argentino_i en persona.
 3sIO will.deliver.3S.sg the award the father of star argentinian personally
 ‘The father of the Argentinian Star will deliver him the award in the flesh’

3.4 Binominal *sendos* in Spanish (Bosque 1992).

The distributive quantifier *sendos* in Spanish must be bound by a plural antecedent (Bosque 1992). The sentence in (21) is ungrammatical because the antecedent of binominal *sendos* -the null 1st person singular Subject- is not plural. In (22) the distributive quantifier *sendos* is licensed because its antecedent is the plural subject *dos amigos* ‘two friends’.

- (21) *Leí sendos libros.
 read.1sS each books
 (Lit.) ‘I have read one book each.’ [Bosque 1992: (4)]

- (22) Dos amigos_i han ganado sendos_i libros.
 two friends have.3plS gained each books
 ‘Two friends have gained one book each.’ [Bosque 1992: (5c)]

The antecedent of binominal *sendos* must be local.

- (23) *Los tres chicos_i dijeron que sus dos amigas_j habían escrito sendas_i novelas.
 The tree guys said that their two friends have written each novels
 ‘Three guys said that two friends have written one novel each.’ [Bosque 1992: (8d)]

Crucially, plural clitics can act as antecedents of binominal *sendos* in Spanish.

- (24) Les_i cayeron encima sendos_i sacos de tierra.
 3plIO fell.3plS over each sacks of dirt.
 (Lit.) ‘Sacks of dirt fell over them.’ [Bosque 1992: (28)]

Summarizing so far, binominal *sendos* needs a clause-mate c-commanding antecedent. The antecedent must be plural, but not necessarily a full DP. Plural clitics can act as antecedents of binominal *sendos* in Spanish.

Crucially, the 3rd person Dative clitic *le* can be the antecedent of the distributive quantifier *sendos* in Spanish (24'a), but the spurious clitic *se* cannot (24'b).

- (24')a. Rita y Esperanza_i me pidieron que les_i entregara la mordida en sendos_i coches oficiales.
 R & E 1sg asked that 3IOpl delivered the bribery in each official cars
 b. *Rita y Esperanza_i me pidieron que se_i la entregara en sendos_i coches oficiales.
 R & E 1sg asked that 3refl 3sO delivered in each official cars
 'Rita and Esperanza asked me to deliver them the bribery in each official car.'

Table 1. summarizes the syntactic differences between Dative-*le* and Spurious-*se*. It is clear –by inspecting Table 1.- that the 3rd person Dative clitic *le* is able to give rise to new binding possibilities: (1) repairing of WCO effects, (2) violation of Principle C with post-verbal Subjects and (3) licensing of the distributed quantifier *sendos*. On the contrary, the spurious clitic *se* is not able to give rise to new binding possibilities.

Table 1.

	❶ WCO repairs	❷ Principle C effects	❸ Binominal <i>sendos</i>
Dative- <i>le</i>	✓	✓	✓
Spurious- <i>se</i>	✗	✗	✗

The syntactic differences I found out between the dative clitic *le* and the spurious clitic *se* cannot be traced back to the fact that the dative clitic *le* surfaces in isolation, but the spurious clitic *se* surfaces in a clitic cluster. In other words, even if the spurious clitic *se* forms a M-Word, this does not explain why the clitic *le* gives rise to new binding possibilities, but the clitic *se* does not.

Crucially, φ -agreement in English is not able to give rise to new binding possibilities (25a-b), as shown by Lasnik (1999) and Dikken (1995). Only A-movement (but not agreement by itself) is able to produce new binding possibilities (25a'-b'). This difference between φ -agreement and A-movement in English corresponds to the difference I have observed between spurious *se* and dative *le* in Spanish.

- (25) a. *There seems to his_i lawyer to have been some defendant_i at the scene.
 a'. Some defendant_i seems to his_i lawyer to have been at the scene.
 b. *There seem to each other_i to have been some linguists_i given good job offers.
 b. Some linguists_i seem to each other_i to have been given good job offers.

If spurious *se* is the product of φ -agreement -but dative *le* requires A-movement-, then spurious *se* and dative *le* are the result of two different syntactic operations. Do we still need a morphological operation to account for spurious *se* in Spanish?

4. Spurious-*se* is just Reflexive-*se*.

The 3rd person Dative clitic *le* cannot be bound by its clause-mate Subject in Spanish, as shown in (26). This clitic is subject to Principle B (27).

- (26) * Juan_i le_i compró un libro.
 Juan 3sIO bought a book
 (intended) 'Juan bought himself a book.'

- (27) Principle B.
 A pronoun must be free (not bound) in its governing category.

Whenever a 3rd person dative clitic is bound by its clause-mate Subject in Spanish, it must surface as the reflexive clitic *se*.

- (28) Juan_i *se*_i compró el coche.
 Juan 3_{refl} bought the car
 ‘Juan bought himself a car.’

It would be really strange to stipulate that the clitic *se* in (28) is the product of a morphological operation mapping *le* into *se* when it is locally bound. In this regard, it is important to notice that the spurious clitic *se* can be locally bound (29).

- (29) Juan_i *se*_{i/j} lo compró.
 Juan refl 3_{smO} bought
 ‘Juan bought him(self)/her it.’

However, it could be argued that (29) is simply an artifact: the reflexive- and the spurious-*se* turn out to be homophonous, but they are syntactically different. In (30a) the clitic *se* is doubling a complex anaphor and must be locally bound, but in (30b) it is doubling a full DP and must be free.

- (30) a. Juan *se* lo compró a sí mismo.
 Juan refl 3_{smO} bought to himself
 ‘Juan bought it to himself.’
 b. Juan *se* lo compró a María.
 Juan refl 3_{smO} bought to Maria
 ‘Juan bought it to Mary.’

Is there a way to show that both the reflexive and the spurious clitic *se* are the same clitic in syntax, and not just homophonous? Interestingly enough, there is a way to confirm this claim: Ellipsis.

4.1 Vehicle Change (Fiengo & May 1994).

Vehicle Change is a mismatch between the syntactic form that express a given argument and the syntactic form of its correlate among the tokens of the non-pronounced material. In cases of ellipsis resolution with Vehicle Change, “a nominal can take any syntactic form so long as its indexical structure (type and value) is unchanged (modulo for β -occurrences)” (F&M 1994: 218). In either (31a) or (31b) Vehicle Change effects cannot be observed because both (31a) and (31b) are ungrammatical independently of Vehicle Change. If Vehicle Change does not apply –as in (31a)–, a violation of Principle C arises. If Vehicle Changes applies, then this particular indexation gives rise to a violation of Principle B.

- (31) a. *Mary admires John₁, and he₁ does ~~admires John~~ ^{α} ₁ too
 b. *Mary admires John₁, and he₁ does ~~admires him~~ ^{α} ₁ too

However, in (32b) reconstruction with Vehicle Change gives raise to no Principle B violation because the binder of the (reconstructed) pronoun is far enough from it.

- (32) a. *Mary admires John₁, and he₁ does think Sally does ~~admire John~~ ^{α} ₁ too
 b. Mary admires John₁, and he₁ does think Sally does ~~admire him~~ ^{α} ₁ too

Let's see how Vehicle Change works when the dative clitic *le* is doubling a full DP. As happens with (31) in English, Vehicle Change has no effect in (33): either a violation of Principle C (33a) without Vehicle Change or a violation of Principle B (33b) with Vehicle Change under reconstruction are obtained in the ellipsis site.

- (33) *Pedro le echó la culpa a María₁, y (la tonta de) ella₁ también.

P. 3IO gave the blame to Mary, and (the stupid of) she too

‘*Peter blamed Mary₁, and she₁ (stupid as she is) did too.’

- a. *Reconstruction without vehicle change = Violation of Principle C.*

*Pedro le echó la culpa a María₁, y ella₁ **le echo la culpa a María₁** también.

- b. *Reconstruction with vehicle change = Violation of Principle B.*

*Pedro le echó la culpa a María₁, y ella₁ **le echo la culpa pro₁/a ella₁^α** también.

However, the effects of Vehicle Change can be observed in (34). In this case, there is no violation of Principle B under reconstruction with Vehicle Change, because the binder of the (reconstructed) pronoun is not locally bound in the ellipsis site, as shown in (34b).

- (34) El policía cree que Pedro le echó la culpa a María₁, y ella₁ también.

The police believes that P. 3IO gave the blame to Mary, and she too

‘That police believes that Peter blamed Mary₁, and she₁ does too.’

- a. *Reconstruction without vehicle change = Violation of Principle C.*

*El policía cree que Pedro le echó la culpa a María₁, y ella₁ **cree que Pedro le echó la culpa a María₁** también.

- b. *Reconstruction with vehicle change = No Violation of any Binding Principle.*

✓El policía cree que Pedro le echó la culpa a María₁, y ella₁ **cree que Pedro le echó la culpa pro₁/a ella₁** también.

Given the fact that the clitic *le* can be doubled by almost any DP (except Bare Plurals), I have tested how the chain <le₁, DP₁> formed by the clitic and its associate is interpreted in ellipsis contexts. Boring as expected, the chain <le₁, DP₁> in (33) and (34) provides us with no surprise when reconstructed with or without Vehicle Change.

Crucially, spurious clitic *se* allows to be reconstructed as the reflexive *se* in contexts where the dative clitic *le* cannot (cf. 33).

- (35) Juan se la echo a María₁, y (la tonta de) ella₁ también.

J. SE 3fsO blame to M. and (the stupid of) she too.

‘*Peter blamed Mary₁, and she₁ (stupid as she is) did too.’

- a. *Reconstruction without vehicle change = Violation of Principle C.*

*Pedro le echó la culpa a María₁, y (la tonta de) ella₁ también **se la echó a María₁**.

- b. *Reconstruction with vehicle change = Absence of Principle B.*

Pedro le echó la culpa a María₁, y (la tonta de) ella₁ también **se la echó pro₁/a ella₁**.

As pointed out by Torrego (1995), strong pronouns in argument position do not violate Principle B in Spanish if they are cross-referenced by the reflexive clitic *se*. This explains why the spurious clitic *se* does not violate Principle B with Vehicle Change. The spurious clitic *se* just behaves as the reflexive *se* in Ellipsis.

- (36) a. María se criticó a ella/a sí misma.
M. SE criticized to her/to herself
‘María criticized herself’ [Torrego 1995: (14b)]
b. Juan se regaló un libro a él/a sí mismo.
J. SE gave a book to him/to himself
‘Juan gave himself a book’ [Torrego 1995: (18a)]

Summarizing so far, to the extent it is unnecessary to stipulate a morphological rule to account for the binding possibilities of the reflexive clitic *se* in (29), why should we stipulate that the spurious clitic *se* is the product of a morphological operation? In fact, I have shown in section 3.3 that the dative clitic *le* and the spurious clitic *se* differs in terms of binding possibilities³. The goal of this section was to show that the silent category construed with the spurious-*se* is not subject to Condition B, but the silent nominal construed with the dative-*le* is.

- (37) a. Juan_i se lo compró todo Δ_{ij}
Juan SE 3smO bought all
‘Juan bought him(self)/her everything.’
b. * Juan_i le_i compró todo Δ_i
Juan 3sIO bought all
(intended) ‘Juan bought himself a book.’

5. Conclusions.

In this paper I have claimed that the dative *le* and the spurious *se* cannot be syntactically equated, because the 3rd person Dative clitic *le* is able to give rise to new binding possibilities: (1) repairing of WCO effects, (2) violation of Principle C with post-verbal Subjects and (3) licensing of the distributed quantifier *sendos*. But, crucially, the spurious clitic *se* is not able to give rise to new binding possibilities. I have additionally shown that the spurious *se* and the dative *le* differ syntactically in a way in which the spurious *se* and the (properly) reflexive *se* do not. Consequently, if the (properly) reflexive *se* is not the product of any morphological operation, why should the spurious *se*?

This conclusion paves the way to resolve the tension between descriptive and explanatory adequacy that *impoverishment*-based operations like the SpuSe Rule in Spanish raise. As far I known, the first scholar warning that *impoverishment* operations do not comply with explanatory adequacy was Rolf Noyer (2001):

- (38) *Since child is presented only with positive evidence and has the morphological means to express non-neutralized forms, what is to prevent the child from acquiring an adult grammar with non-neutralized (i.e. overregularized) forms? In other words, how could such neutralizations be learned?*
Rolf Noyer [2001: 777]

There are -in principle- two ways to resolve this conflict: (a) *impoverishment* operations takes place in syntax and signal the failure of an independent syntactic operation like Agree (Béjar 2003, Preminger 2014) or (b) *impoverishment* operations are barred from grammar altogether. The later hypothesis –being the strongest one- will lead to an overall simplification of grammar. The former hypothesis is aimed to resolve a redundancy of the system. If –as Béjar (2003) and Preminger (2014) have claimed- φ -agreement fails under well defined circumstances, such a failure in φ -agreement must involve a feature deletion mechanism dealing with the unvalued φ -

³ It should be noticed that a consequence of this section is that the reflexive clitic *se* in Spanish is not inherently reflexive. In Alcaraz (2016) I analyze the third person reflexive clitic *se* as the product of person agreement and ‘reflexivity’ comes as a side effect.

features of the Probe⁴. The problem here is more general and –as a matter of fact– is not necessarily linked to a contingent failure of the syntactic operation Agree (Béjar 2003, Preminger 2014). If non-interpretable features are deleted after being checked (Chomsky 1995), it means that deletion takes place twice. Once in Syntax (i.e. *checking*) and then again in Morphology (i.e. *impoverishment*). In any case, we are dealing with a similar deletion operation taking place twice. It is worth wondering whether one of these deletion operations can subsume the other. I have claimed that the SpuSe Rule in Spanish cannot be analyzed as a post-syntactic rule because the dative clitic *le* and the spurious clitic *se* in Spanish are not syntactically equivalent. In light of this conclusion, it turns out more natural to subsume morphological impoverishment into a syntactic-based impoverishment. Unfortunately, space limitations prevent me from developing an alternative syntactic analysis based on this hypothesis.

6. References.

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⁴ This feature-deletion mechanism is explicit in Béjar (2003), where unmatched φ -features in the φ -Probe are deleted under Match (Chomsky 2000). In Preminger (2009), a failure of φ -agreement leads to the φ -features of the φ -Probe to be spelt out as a default. In a nutshell, this feature-deletion mechanism will be an *impoverishment* operation in Béjar (2003), but a Rule of Referral in Preminger (2009). In any case, these two mechanisms overlap with morphological impoverishment and have the potential to subsume it.

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