Romance reflexives, past participle agreement and the PCC[*]

Louise Raynaud

Universität Göttingen

1.   Introduction

French and Italian have parallel past participle agreement systems, where direct object pronominal clitics control agreement and indirect objects don't. An unexpected breakdown in the symmetry occurs with dative reflexive clitics. While in French, past participles expectedly do not agree with indirect object reflexives, in Italian agreement surfaces in those cases. This puzzling difference finds its match in another area of agreement where French and Italian clitics display divergent behaviors, namely the Person Case Constraint (PCC, Bonet (1991)). French obeys the strong version of the PCC (*IO > 1/2.DO) whereas Italian only bans *3.IO > 1/2.DO combinations, known as the weak version of the PCC.

I argue that the asymmetry between French and Italian participle agreement with dative reflexives follows from the same mechanisms at work in the PCC. Based on Anagnostopoulou (2003, 2005), this paper derives the difference between French and Italian via the language-specific (im)possibility of a probe to Agree with multiple goals for the same feature (Multiple Agree). French is shown not to allow such multiple Agreement, while Italian does. Departing from Anagnostopoulou (2005), I further attribute the availability of Multiple Agree to different featural specification of datives.

2.   The dative reflexive puzzle: a French/Italian asymmetry

French and Italian exhibit both subject and object agreement in analytic tenses, such as *passé composé* or pluperfect, where the verbal complex is composed of a tensed auxiliary and a past participle. The tensed auxiliary, *be* or *have*, as any finite verb, always agrees in person and number with the subject. Past participles, on the other hand, agree in num-

ber and gender with direct objects in the accusative, if (and only if) they are preverbal or moved (Kayne 1989, D'Alessandro & Roberts 2008). A prominent configuration in which past participle agreement occurs is with preverbal cliticized objects, which will be our focus here, but derived subjects of passives or unaccusatives are also cases in point. The paradigms for past participle agreement in French and Italian are given in (1).

(1)

French	M	F
SG	décrit-**ø**	décrit-**e**
PL	décrit-**s**	décrit-**es**

Italian	M	F
SG	descritt-**o**	descritt-**a**
PL	descritt-**i**	descritt-**e**

In (2a), the 1st person singular auxiliary *ai* 'have' agrees with the 1SG nominative subject. The direct object DP *Marie* remains in-situ, i.e. post-verbal, and the past participle does not agree with it and surfaces with its default form, corresponding to masculine singular, as is also the case in Italian in (2b).

(2) a. J'   ai   décrit-**ø/*e**   **Marie**.
         1SG.NOM AUX.1SG describe.PTCP-M.SG/*F.SG Marie.ACC.
         'I have described Marie.'   *French*

     b. Ho   mangiat-**o/*a**   **la mela**.
         AUX.1SG eat.PTCP-M.SG/*F.SG the apple(F)
         'I have eaten the apple.' (D'Alessandro & Roberts 2008, 480)   *Italian*

In (3), the accusative object is pronominalized and surfaces as a clitic above the verb, triggering agreement of the past participle in number and gender, Italian and French patterning alike.

(3) a. Les anglais **l'**   ont   détruit-**e**.   (la ville).
         the British it(F) AUX.3PL destroy.PTCP-F.SG the city(F).
         'The British destroyed it (the city).'   *French*

     b. **Le**   abbiamo salutat-**e**.
         them.FPL have.1PL greeted-F.PL
         'We have greeted them (female).'   *Italian*

The same can be observed of accusative reflexive clitics, which in both languages co-occur with past participle agreement.

(4) a. Elle **s'**   est   décrit-**e**   comme timide.
         She REFL.ACC AUX.3SG describe.PTCP-F.SG as   shy
         'She described herself as shy.'   *French*

     b. Le ragazze **si**   sono guardat-**e**   allo   specchio.
         the girls.FPL REFL.ACC are   looked-F.PL in.the mirror
         'The girls have looked at themselves in the mirror.'   *Italian*

Dative pronominal clitics, on the other hand, are not targets for participle agreement. When the indirect object is pronominalized, as in (5) below, the past participle surfaces with masculine singular default agreement.

(5) a. Tu **lui**   as   écrit-**ø/*e**.
         2SG 3SG.DAT have.2SG written.PTCP-M.SG/*F.SG
         'You have written to her.'   *French*

     b. (Tu) **le**   hai   scritt-**o/*a**.
         (2SG) 3SG.DAT have.2SG written.PTCP-M.SG/*F.SG
         'You have written to her.'   *Italian*

However, the parallelism between French and Italian breaks down when it comes to dative reflexives. In French past participles do not agree if the indirect object is reflexivized, as would be expected (illustrated in (6)), while in Italian, agreement surfaces in those cases, shown by (7).

(6) Lucie   **s'**   est   remis-**ø/*e**   le prix.
     Lucie.NOM REFL.DAT be.3SG give.PTCP-M.SG/*F.SG the prize.ACC
     'Lucy gave herself the prize.'

(7) Lucia   **si**   è   dat-**a/*o**   un premio.
     Lucia.NOM REFL.DAT be.3SG give.PTCP-F.SG/*M.SG a   prize.ACC
     'Lucy gave herself the prize.'

This difference between French and Italian past participle agreement in dative reflexive constructions is unexpected. French and Italian are known to exhibit differences in other environments when it comes to past participle agreement, however, the symmetry break-down in unexpected when it comes to clitics. Table (8) sums up the observed patterns.

(8) *Past participle agreement with clitics*

	French	Italian
Accusative pronouns	yes	yes
Accusative reflexives	yes	yes
Dative pronouns	no	no
Dative reflexives	no	yes

This paper will try to account for this puzzling assymmetry. It is structured as follows. Section 3 shows that French and Italian differ in another area involving clitics, known as the Person-Case Constraint: it will illustrate the relevant patterns and introduce previously proposed analyses of this restriction. I will then argue in section 4 that the cross-linguistic agreement asymmetry with dative reflexive clitics is connected to that exhibited in person

restrictions, and proceed to derive them based on Anagnostopoulou (2003, 2005) account of the PCC.

3. The Person-Case Constraint

3.1 Weak vs Strong PCC

French and Italian differ in another aspect pertaining to Case and involving clitics, namely the Person Case Constraint (henceforth PCC). The Person Case Constraint, first generalized by Bonet (1991), describes certain person restrictions on phonologically weak elements such as clitics, weak pronouns or agreement morphemes, that typically apply in ditransitive constructions. Languages differ as to how strict their person restrictions are, and several versions of the PCC have been formulated to capture this variation. This paper will only be concerned with two of them, namely the Strong and Weak versions of the PCC[1]. The Weak version of the PCC makes the following generalization:

(9) *The Weak Version of the PCC: Italian*
In a combination of a weak direct object and a weak indirect object, if there is a third person indirect object, then the direct object should also be third person.

In the presence of a 3rd person indirect object (IO), the direct object (DO) must be 3rd person too; a 1st or 2nd person DO leads to ungrammaticality. If the IO is anything other than a 3rd person, no restrictions on the person value of the DO ensue. This is the pattern found in Italian, as illustrated by the examples below.

(10) a. Glielo   presentano.
3SG.DAT:3SG.ACC introduce.3PL
'They introduce him to him.'   3 IO > 3 DO

b. *Gli   mi   presentano.
3SG.DAT 1SG.ACC introduce.3PL
'They introduce me to him.'   *3 IO > 1/2 DO

c. Me   lo   presentano.
1SG.DAT 3SG.ACC introduce.3PL
'They introduce him to me.'   1/2 IO > 3 DO

d. Mi   ti   presentano.
1SG.DAT 2SG.ACC introduce.3PL
'They introduce me to you.'   1/2 IO > 1/2 DO

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[1]Other variants include the Super-Strong PCC (Haspelmath 2004), the *Me*-First PCC (Nevins 2007) or the Reverse PCC (Stegovec 2015).

French, on the other hand, presents a more restrictive pattern, captured by the Strong Version of the PCC. French disallows the combination of 1st/2nd DO clitics with IOs of any person value (and not only 3rd person). 3rd person DOs are always licit, like in Italian. (13) sums up the restrictions found on clitics in ditransitives in French and Italian.

(11) *The Strong Version of the PCC: French*
      In a combination of a weak direct object and a weak indirect object, the direct object has to be 3rd person.

(12) a. Ils   le   lui   présentent.
          3PL.NOM 3SG.ACC 3SG.DAT introduce.3PL
          'They introduce him to him/her.'   3 IO > 3 DO

      b. *Ils   me   lui   présentent.
          3PL.NOM 1SG.ACC 3SG.DAT introduce.3PL
          'They introduce me to him/her.'   *3 IO > 1/2 DO

      c. Ils   me   le   présentent.
          3PL.NOM 1SG.DAT 3SG.ACC introduce.3PL
          'They introduce him to me.'   1/2 IO > 3 DO

      d. *Ils   me   te   présentent.
          3PL.NOM 1SG.ACC 2SG.DAT introduce.3PL
          'They introduce me to you.'   *1/2 IO > 1/2 DO

(13) *The PCC in French and Italian*

IO	DO	French	Italian
3	1/2	no	no
1/2	1/2	**no**	**yes**
3	3	yes	yes
1/2	3	yes	yes

3.2 Deriving the PCC

In order to account for these restrictions, several syntactic explanations of the PCC have been proposed. Many of them rely on the idea that the Person-Case Constraint arises in configurations where two arguments, the direct object and the indirect object, stand in an Agree relation with one and the same agreeing head (like little *v*), in a one probe-two goals configurations (Béjar & Rezac 2003, Anagnostopoulou 2003, 2005, Adger & Harbour 2007, Nevins 2007, Stegovec to appear). The core claim of this paper is that the asymmetry between French and Italian participle agreement facts with dative reflexives follows from principles similar than those behind the PCC, because it involves a one probe-two goals situation. As such, both asymmetries are to be attributed to a single cause.

In what follows, I will outline the syntactic mechanisms that are taken to be behind the PCC, and in particular will adopt the approach of Anagnostopoulou (2003, 2005), before showing that it can be applied to participle agreement in reflexive predicates. I begin by outlining the few base assumptions that underly this and other accounts.

First of all, accounts of the PCC must capture the fact that 1st and 2nd person pronominal elements seem to be more restricted in their distribution than 3rd person. This behavior is attributed to a special licensing requirement for 1st and 2nd person, formalized by (Béjar & Rezac 2003, 53) as the Person Licensing Condition.

(14)   *Person Licensing Condition (PLC)*: An interpretable 1/2 feature must be licensed by entering into an Agree relation with a functional category.

In other words, [+PERSON] features are required to enter into an Agree relation with a functional head such as *v*, a requirement that does not hold of 3rd person elements, which do not bear [+PERSON] features.

Second, a few assumptions about indirect objects are also needed. Syntactic approaches to the PCC generally take the base position of indirect objects to be higher than direct objects, typically generated in an Applicative phrase. The crucial fact here is that indirect objects are closest to the *v* probe, and Agree first by virtue of locality principles.

Furthermore, several accounts assume an inherent asymmetry between the DO and the IO in terms of their person features (Béjar & Rezac 2003, Anagnostopoulou 2003, 2005, Adger & Harbour 2007). 3rd person accusatives are taken to be underspecified for person features altogether, while 3rd person datives are specified for [−PERSON]. This effectively results in having two types of 3rd persons, an outcome that can capture both cross-linguistic and within-language variation (Benveniste 1966, Bonet 1991, Ritter 1995, Anagnostopoulou 2003, 2005, Adger & Harbour 2007, Sundaresan to appear). I subscribe to this view here, and assume different person specifications for datives and accusative arguments, a difference that might ultimately correlate with different structures (but see Stegovec (to appear) for a different position).

Finally, for Béjar & Rezac (2003), Anagnostopoulou (2003, 2005), datives also differ from accusatives in that they are assumed to lack number and gender features, making them defective targets for agreement. The following featural specifications are thus taken to hold of clitics, an assumption that we will ultimately revise.

(15)   a.   ACC 3rd person = [Ø, NUMBER, GENDER]
         b.   DAT 3rd person = [−PERSON]
         c.   ACC 1st/2nd person = [+PERSON, NUMBER, GENDER]
         d.   DAT 1st/2nd person = [+PERSON]

Against this backdrop, we are ready to understand the mechanisms behind the restrictions imposed on objects clitics in ditransitives. The upshot of the assumptions we just reviewed is that dative clitics, by virtue of their position and their defective feature specifications, act as interveners for agreement with the direct object. Let us first look at what happens in French, as illustrated in (16) below. Remember that both objects target the same

functional head, which we take to be *v*. Being the closest, the dative object agrees first with *v* (Agree relation 1), checks its person feature (datives being [−PERSON]), leaving the accusative object to check remaining number and gender features. Person features cannot be valued multiple times in French, therefore the accusative object cannot subsequently check its own person features against *v*, if it has any, that is if it is 1st or 2nd person ([+PERSON]) (3rd accusatives don't have a person specification). This is represented as the second, crossed-out Agree relation in (16). Dative arguments, being specified for person thus act as interveners by preventing the person-probe to value its features against a second argument.

(16)   *French: No Multiple Agree*
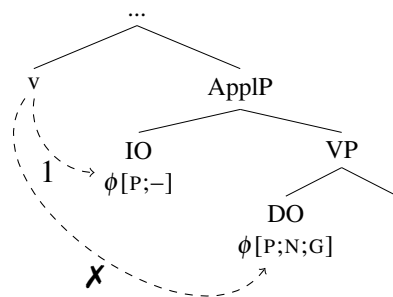
   We observed above that in Italian, unlike French, only 3rd person datives seem to act as interveners for person licensing. Combinations of a 1/2 accusative and a 1/2 dative are allowed. Anagnostopoulou (2005) proposes to derive the difference between French and Italian via the availability of Multiple Agree, i.e. the possibility to check person features multiple times, which is, in her account, merely a matter of parametrization. As demonstrated in (16), French does not allow Multiple Agree: this derives the strong version of the PCC. Italian on the other hand allows Multiple Agree and an accusative object can check its person feature against *v* even after *v* has already Agree with the dative object's person feature, on the condition that there are no conflicting specifications of the person features of the two objects. That effectively bans *3 DAT > 1/2 ACC combinations in Italian, as [+PERSON] conflicts with [−PERSON], but not 1/2 DAT > 1/2 ACC, as both carry [+PERSON], thus deriving the weak version of the PCC.

(17)   *Italian: Multiple Agree*
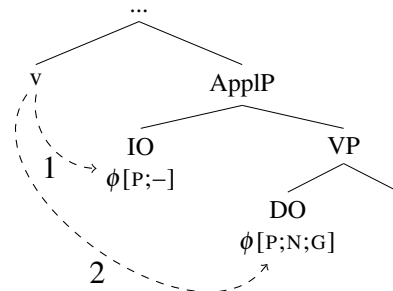
(18)   *Conflicting feature specifications*

DAT	ACC	DAT	ACC	
3	1/2	[−PERSON]	[+PERSON]	✗
1/2	1/2	[+PERSON]	[+PERSON]	✓
3	3	[−PERSON]	[−]	✓
1/2	3	[+PERSON]	[−]	✓

PCC effects thus come about in a configuration where a probe stands in an Agree relation with two arguments, as the result of an intervention effect of a dative clitic and of the language specific (in)ability of a probe to satisfy a given feature multiple times. Before showing how these mechanics can be applied to our dative reflexive puzzle, the last step is to establish the structure of reflexive constructions in French and Italian.

4.   Proposal

4.1   *Se* has Case

In what follows, I will argue that past participle agreement in reflexive constructions results from a one probe-two goals configuration, where the *v* head targets both the reflexive clitic and the subject for agreement, and for which dative clitics are interveners in French but not in Italian. This analysis relies on the empirical observation that *se*, against what might have previously been assumed, bears Case. Indeed, although dative and accusative reflexive clitics have the same form, their syntactic behavior suggests that they bear abstract Case.

First of all, *se* is only compatible with VPs where the missing object would bear structural accusative or dative case. It is illicit in a reflexive clause if the internal complement coreferential with the subject would bear a case different from accusative or dative, say inherent partitive (19) or locative (20) (Labelle 2008).

(19) a. Luc a   peur de son
          Luc has   fear of his
          voisin.
          neighbour
          'Luc is afraid of his neigh-
          bour.'

      b. Luc en   a peur.
          Luc PART has fear
          'Luc is afraid of him.'

      c. *Luc s'   a peur.
          Luc   REFL has fear
          'Luc is afraid of himself.'

(20) a. Luc pense à sa famille.
          Luc thinks of his family
          'Luc thinks about his family.'

      b. Luc y   pense.
          Luc LOC thinks
          'Luc thinks about it.'

      c. *Luc se   pense.
          Luc   REFL thinks
          'Luc thinks about himself.'

(Labelle 2008, p.839)

It has also been observed in the literature that *se* participates in PCC effects. In (21), the dative reflexive acts as an intervener for person licensing in the same way other datives

do. Under accounts of the PCC such as the ones that are outlined above, it is a restriction that only applies to pronominal arguments bearing Case.[2]

(21)   *Elle   se   me   décrit.
         3.F.SG.NOM REFL.DAT 1SG.ACC describes
   Int: 'She describes me to herself.'

Finally, the differential behavior of accusative and dative reflexives with regard to participle agreement in French that is under scrutiny in this paper is a further indication of that accusative *se* and dative *se* are case bearers, as their case is the only thing that distinguishes sentences like (4) (where the reflexive targets the DO and triggers participle agreement) and (6) and (7) (where it targets the IO and does not trigger agreement in French).

There is a priori no reason to assume number or gender features on *se*: it may be anteceded by both singular and plural DPs, and is not marked for gender. For the present purposes, I provisionally take the features of reflexive clitics to be as follows.

(22)   a.   ACC *se* = [Ø]
        b.   DAT *se* = [−PERSON]

4.2   The structure of reflexive predicates

An adequate structural representation of *se* reflexives needs to capture the fact that *se* has Case and is a goal for agreement. In what follows, I adopt the analysis proposed by Labelle (2008) (see also Sportiche (1996, 1998), Ahn (2015)). Under this analysis, *se* is hosted in the head of VoiceP. It introduces the external argument in its specifier position and bears Case.

(23)

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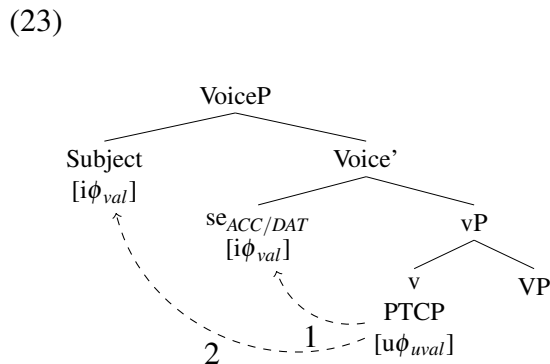
[2]It should be mentioned here that in PCC contexts accusative *se* patterns with 1st and 2nd person, suggesting that it might be specified for PERSON (see e.g. Anagnostopoulou (2005), Adger & Harbour (2007), Sundaresan (to appear)). This has no bearing on the present proposal and I therefore leave this issue to further research.

Note that under an account of this type, the observation that *se* has Case is fully compatible with the well-known fact that reflexive constructions don't straightforwardly pattern like transitive predicates (Kayne 1975, Embick 2004, Reinhart & Siloni 2004).

Given this, my central claim here is that in reflexive constructions, participles stand in a one probe-two goals configuration with the reflexive clitic and the subject. *v* probes upward, targeting first the reflexive clitic *se*, and the subject second. This follows from the fact that *se* and the subject are generated within the same projection and stand in a binding chain with one another, rendering the subject accessible for agreement with the participle. As will become clear in the following sections, it is the subject that is responsible for past participle agreement when the reflexive is accusative, i.e. featureless.

### 4.3 Applying the Multiple Agree analysis to reflexives

Having established the structural configuration that underlies reflexives, we can now derive the presence or absence of past participle agreement with reflexives in French in Italian, using the same mechanisms that we saw hold of the PCC. The prediction that past participles agree, both in French and Italian, when *se* is accusative is built in Anagnostopoulou's analysis: since it is a 3rd person accusative, it has no person features. We also established that there are no reasons to posit number or gender features on accusative *se*. It therefore does not value any feature of *v*, which can agree with the subject's number and gender features, always resulting in covarying participle agreement.

(24)   *Agreement with accusative reflexives*
       Elle **s'**   est   décrit-**e**   comme timide.
       She REFL.ACC AUX.3SG describe.PTCP-F.SG as   shy
       'She described herself as shy.'   *French*

(25)   *French and Italian*
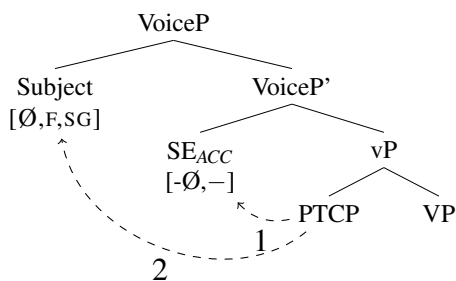
The asymmetry between French and Italian participle agreement in dative reflexives follows from dative intervention, along the lines of what is proposed by Anagnostopoulou (2003, 2005) for the PCC. In Italian, the past participle agrees even though the reflexive is a dative.

(26)   *Participle agreement: Italian*
Lucia   **si**   è   dat-**a/*o**   un premio.
Lucia.NOM SE.DAT be.3SG give.PTCP-F.SG/*M.SG a   prize.ACC
'Lucy gave herself the prize.'

Dative *si* agrees first, as it is the closest (Agree relation 1). If datives are underspecified for number and gender, as proposed by Anagnostopoulou (2003, 2005), they leave these features unvalued on the participle. A second Agree relation is established with the subject. Since Italian allows Multiple Agree, i.e. the dative is not an intervener when there is no feature conflict, the participle can further Agree with the subject in Spec,TP for remaining gender and number features (Agree relation 2), deriving (26). There are no conflicting person specifications as the nominative subject and dative *si* have the same person (in virtue of being coreferent).

(27)   *Italian*
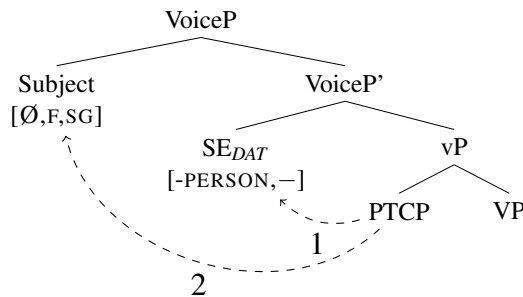
In French, the past participle does not agree when the reflexive is a dative. French does not have the possibility of Multiple Agree. This means that the participle in *v* shouldn't be able to further Agree with the subject, and the participle should surface with default agreement. So in the tree below, 2 should be an Agree relation in Italian that is not allowed in French, while Agree relation 1 is fine in both.

(28)   *No participle agreement: French*
Lucie   **s'**   est   remis-**ø/*e**   le prix.
Lucie.NOM SE.DAT be.3SG give.PTCP-M.SG/*F.SG the prize.ACC
'Lucy gave herself the prize.'

(29)   *French*

VoiceP

Subject
[Ø,F,SG]

VoiceP'
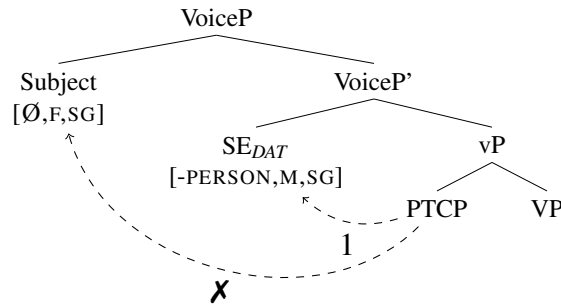
SE$_{DAT}$
[-PERSON,−]

vP

PTCP   VP

1

✗
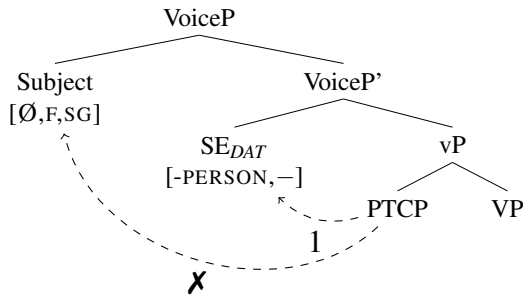
However, this does not quite give us the right result. Why should dative *se* intervene at all here, if the reason behind it is that multiple agreement *with the same feature* is banned in French, given that here the dative only has person, and the subject only number and gender (bearing in mind that we take 3rd person accusatives and nominatives to be person-less)? An answer can be provided if we reexamine the parametric status of Multiple Agree in favor of differing feature specifications of datives cross-linguistically.

4.4   Parametrized Multiple Agree

As mentioned briefly above, the availability of Multiple Agree is a matter of parametrization for Anagnostopoulou (2005). However, an alternative to mere parametrization emerges from the present account: in French, datives seem to be systematic interveners, for person licensing and for participle agreement. I suggest here that the (non-)availability of Multiple Agree can be encoded featurally and reduced to the lexical specifications of datives. In other words, datives in French and Italian would have different feature specifications. In French, datives would have a full ϕ-specification, namely [−PERSON;M;SG], while in Italian datives are indeed defective and only have a person specification, but no gender and number: [−PERSON;−]. This proposal follows naturally if with Rezac (2008), we consider datives to be defective targets for agreement because they are embedded in a PP or KP shell with its own set of features (e.g. only 3rd person), which prevent the features of the complement DP to be visible for agreement, while still being interpretable (see also Bjorkman & Zeijlstra (to appear)). Similarly to the idea that 3rd person can be encoded by a Ø-feature or a [−PERSON] in different languages (but also within a single one), default agreement with datives could be the result either of underspecification or of a [−PERSON;M;SG] specification. Such a proposal allows us to do away with the parametrization of Multiple Agree, thus pushing variation in the featural specification of lexical items, in line with the Borer-Chomsky conjecture. The empirical upshot is that French datives entirely value their probes' uninterpretable features, leaving no further features for subsequent goals and in effect disallowing agreement with multiple goals.

(30)   *French*

$$
\begin{array}{c}
\text{VoiceP} \\
\diagup \qquad \diagdown \\
\underset{[\text{Ø},\text{F},\text{SG}]}{\text{Subject}} \qquad \text{VoiceP'} \\
\diagup \qquad \diagdown \\
\underset{[-\text{PERSON},\text{M},\text{SG}]}{\text{SE}_{DAT}} \qquad \text{vP} \\
\diagup \quad \diagdown \\
\text{PTCP} \qquad \text{VP}
\end{array}
$$

1

✗

   Italian datives, on the other hand only incompletely value their probe, which remains available for further Agree relations. This has equally correct results for past participle agreement, which then always surfaces as 3rd, masculine, singular default agreement in French (ø-morpheme), the dative controlling agreement in disguise. In Italian, *v* probes further up for the nominative, valuing gender and number. The feature specifications of French and Italian datives are finally concluded to be as follows.

(31)   a.   *French* DAT 1st/2nd/3rd person = [−PERSON,M,SG]
         b.   *Italian* DAT 1st/2nd person = [+PERSON]
         c.   *Italian* DAT 3rd person = [−PERSON]

The participle agreement facts thus find an explanation when we apply an analysis in terms of Multiple Agree such as the one proposed by Anagnostopoulou (2003, 2005) for PCC effects, provided we reevaluate its parametric status in favor of a featural/lexical one.

5.   Conclusion

Unexpectedly different past participle agreement patterns with French and Italian dative reflexives can be accounted for based on a new parallel with PCC effects. The past participle agreement puzzle can be derived by simply applying the principles that underly weak vs strong PCC effects along the lines of Anagnostopoulou (2003, 2005), namely the availability of Multiple Agree. This analysis proposes that the parametrization of Multiple Agree is be due to different featural specifications of the datives cross-linguistically.

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Louise Raynaud
louise.raynaud@stud.uni-goettingen.de