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Agreement of Structural Obliques Parameter: Pseudopartitives and DOM.

We consider two empirical domains that have so far been treated separately: optionaly in the agreement of pseudopartitive subjects with the verb, e.g. in English – and optionality of agreement of DOM objects with the perfect participle, e.g. in Indo-Aryan languages with ergative alignment. We argue that they fall together under an Agreement of Structural Obliques Parameter (ASOP). The latter responds to a structural ambiguity/ feature percolation, of the type independently proposed for pseudopartitives, which in current phrase structure theory (Chomsky 2013) may be formalized in terms of labelling.

(English) pseudopartitives. In (spoken) English either the quantifier head (Q) of a pseudopartitive or the genitive/of phrase (N) may govern agreement, as in (1). That two grammars are involved is shown by languages that have only one of the two possibilities (Lorusso & Franco 2017).

(1) A group of protesters has/have tried to attack me

Lorusso & Franco (2017) target the phasal or non-phasal character of the embedded genitive/of phrase). Yet if PP phasehood explains why N-agr may be blocked – lack of PP phasehood does not explain why N-agr becomes obligatory. Danon's (2013) analysis requires distinguishing Agree and Concord, while empirical and simplicity reasons favour one Agree rule (e.g. Baker 2008). Danon's idea is that in psedopartitives Q and N bear different concord features; however what governs agreement with the verb is Index features. Q may bear itself such features or it may copy them from N. This determines two agreement possibilities, as schematized in (2).

(2) a. Q_{index} …. N_{index} =Q-agr
b. $Q_{index??}$ … N_{index} =N-agr

A more widely accepted set of analyses says that the two different agreement configurations in (3) correspond to two different underlying structures. In (3a) c-command holds of head constituents throughout; in this instance Q projects and determines agreement. Otherwise QP is adjoined to KP and it is N that projects and determines agreement (ultimately Pesetsky 1982, cf. also Franks 1994).

(3) a. $[_{QP}$ Q $[_{KP/PP}$ K/P $[_{NP}$ N]]] =Q-agr
b. $[_{KP}$ QP $[_{KP/PP}$ KP/PP…]] =N-agr

(Indo-Aryan) agreement under Differential Object Marking (DOM). It is well-known that in many I-A languages, including Hindi or Punjabi (4), DOM arguments do not agree with the perfect participle in ergative alignments (4b) (contrary to absolutive ones). In other I-A languages, e.g. Gujarati (Patel & Grosz 2014) or Marwari/Rajasthani (5), DOM arguments do nevertheless agree.

(4) a. o-ne kutt-e peddʒ-e Punjabi
s/he-ERG dog-MPL.ABS send.PERF-MPL
'S/he sent the dogs.'
b. mɛ: o-nu/una-nu dekkh-ea
I s/he-DOM/they-DOM see.PERF-MSG
'I saw him/her/them.'

(5) raawaN giitaa-nai maarii hai Rajasthani (Khokhlova 2002)
Rawan.M Gita.F-DOM beat.PERF.F be.PRES.3SG
'Rawan beat Gita'

The parameter in (4)-(5) is recognized in the formal literature, cf. the VIVA of Anand and Nevins (2006), but not explained. We argue it to be the same as the pseudopartitive parameter based on some recent developments in the treatment of Romance DOM. In Romance and I-A DOM, the morphological expression of DOM coincides with that of the datives. Torrego (2010), Pineda (2016), Manzini & Franco (2016) argue that this is not a matter of syncretism, but of deep syntatic embedding of DOM arguments as obliques. Manzini & Franco (2016) further address Chomsky's (1985) distinction between inherent and structural case. In their view, DOM case is structural because it depends from a syntactic configuration being realized independent of argument role. Thus, inherent obliques (goals, etc.) cannot passivize but DOM arguments can. This allows us to formulate the parameter in (6).

(6) **Agreement of Structural Obliques Parameter (ASOP)**

Structural obliques (a) undergo Agree;
(b) do not undergo Agree

As anticipated, our argument is that (6) is also the descriptive parameter involved in pseudopartitives. After discussing a (rough) formalization we return to why inherent obliques are not affected.

Further evidence. In some I-A varieties (e.g. Hindi, Punjabi) ergative subjects never undergo Agree. In Nepali (cf. Deo & Sharma 2006) they do. Taking ergative to be a structural (oblique) case (Bittner & Hale 1996, Rezac et al. 2014), we can assume that ASOP in (6) is at work in DSM contexts as well. Moreover, some Romance languages may be argued to have clitics corresponding both to pseudopartitives and to DOM. Belletti & Rizzi (1996) note that in spoken Italian partitive *ne* 'of them' may agree with the perfect participle. Alternatively, the perfect participle may display no agreement, corresponding to the fact that non clitic objects, in this instance the stranded Q(P), do not agree with it. The same optionality characterizes Participant clitics, which may be argued to undergo DOM.

Analysis: oblique case. The interest of trying a unified account for the phenomena reviewed so far, is that as always when unifications are involved, a number of hypotheses that have been entertained for the single phenomena are automatically eliminated. Thus Agree vs. Concord (Danon 2013) cannot be the key to pseudopartitives because in the DOM verbal domain there is no Corcord. Vice versa, Appl cannot be the analysis for DOM (Torrego 2010) because applicatives are not a nominal projection. In fact, we adopt traditional construals of both oblique case and the agreement parameter, though couched in current minimalist terms.

We consider oblique case first. We take oblique cases/prepositions to be K/P heads embedding DPs which they connect to a set of individuals (partitives) or to an event (DOM) via their elementary content (possibly locative, cf. Freeze 1992, possibly part/whole, cf. Belvin & den Dikken 1997, possibly an abstract Relator content R, cf. den Dikken 2006). Thus in (7a), P says that there is a set of *protesters* of which *a group* is part. In (7b), the referentially highly ranked referent o/una 's/he/they' is not embedded as a bare object but by a case/postposition that relates it to the event as the locator/possessor of the event itself.

(7) a. a group $[_{PP}$ of $[_{\varphi P}$ protesters]] cf. (1)
b. $[_{PP}$ $[_{DP}$ o/una] -nu] dekkh-ea cf. (4b)

Analysis: ASOP. As for agreement, we may recast classical ideas about percolation of features/constituency of K/P elements in terms of labelling. Upon Merge with D/NP, a K/P may either label the resulting constituent, i.e. behave more like a traditional adposition, essentially as indicated in (7). Alternatively the resulting constituent may be labelled by D/N so that K/P behaves more like a traditional inflection. These two alternatives are displayed in (8) for DOM objects. Given the different labels in (8) it is obvious that the DOM in (8b) will under Agree like a bare object, while the object in (8a) will not.

(8) a. $[_{K/PP}$ $[_{DP}$ o/una] -nu] dekkh-ea
b. $[_{DP}$ $[_{DP}$ o/una] $[_{K/P}$-nu]] dekkh-ea

As it turns out (8) is very close to the classical analysis of pseudo-partitives in (3). The P/KP label in (9a) means that the constituent is construed as the complement of whatever further nominal structure it is merged with; the latter labels the pseudopartitive as a whole. The D/NP label in (9b) means that any further nominal material must be adjoined to it, D/NP labelling the whole pseudopartitive.

(9) a. $[_{DP}$ a group $[_{PP}$ of $[_{\varphi P}$ protesters]]]
b. $[_{\varphi P}$ $[_{DP}$ a group] $[_{\varphi P}$ of $[_{\varphi P}$ protesters]]

Why not inherent obliques? One puzzling property of (6) is that it only affects structural oblique cases namely DOM, DSM, (pseudo)partitives, and not the same cases when they are inherent. The formalization in (8)-(9) allows us to clarify this point. We assume that labelling by D as opposed to labelling by P/K is impossible with selected obliques (goals, causers/agents, possessors) because the latter need to project thematic structure – hence the P/K content.