

## NULL EXPLETIVES AND CASE THE VIEW FROM ROMANCE \*

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This chapter focuses on lexical subjects in non-finite domains and, following Chomsky (2006, to appear), provides an account of structural Case reliant on the phase head. I argue that agreement, understood as uninterpretable phi-features (i.e.,  $u\phi$ ), is not compulsory for either Case licensing or for obtaining a Case value. Nonetheless, I show that the presence of  $u\phi$  on the probing domain will ensure a Nominative value, while its absence will constrain the DP to an Accusative value. I propose that a null expletive checking the EPP feature will trigger Nominative subjects whenever (C)-T lacks  $u\phi$ , specifically, in non-finite domains, such as infinitives and gerunds. I offer evidence for expletive *pro* as a UG primitive from Romanian binding facts and provide an analysis of Case valuation in this language. Lastly, I discuss micro-parametric variation in subject lexicalization within null expletive languages.

### 1. *Introduction*

Following recent work by Chomsky (2006, to appear), A-related features such as Case, agreement and the EPP are not intrinsic properties of T (or  $v$ ), but of the phase head, specifically, C (or  $v^*$ ). Consequently, T operates as a probe derivatively, by virtue of its relationship to C. I adopt these assumptions but depart from the standard generative approach whereby structural Case and agreement are inherently linked (e.g., Cardinaletti 1997, Chomsky 1981 et seq., George & Kornfilt 1981, Landau 2004, Schütze 1997). Chomsky (2006, to appear) maintains this traditional correlation but renounces Case as an independent probing feature (i.e., there is no  $uCase$ ) and suggests instead that  $u\phi$  acts as a Case probe.

While I show evidence that the phase head is crucial for structural Case, I argue that agreement, understood as  $\phi$ -features, is not compulsory for either Case licensing or for obtaining a Case value. Nonetheless,  $\phi$ -specifications are shown to be an important ingredient of Case realization. In particular, I propose that the

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split between Nominative (henceforth NOM) versus Accusative (henceforth ACC) subject lexicalization is strictly dependent on the presence of a phi-Probe, such that if the probing domain contains a phi-feature deficiency, the value is NOM and if it does not, the value is ACC. Furthermore, this phi-Probe ( $u\phi$ ) may be encoded on either a verbal head (such as, for example, T or Aspect), or may be a property of a nominal head (specifically, the null expletive *pro*). This entails the following two crucial facts, both of which are empirically supported: (i) T lacks an intrinsic NOM value, and (ii) null expletive *pro* is a parametrized UG primitive.

The chapter is organized as follows. Following the Introduction, Section 2 explores the limitations of equating Case with agreement. Section 3 discusses the status of A-related features in non-finite domains and refutes the idea of Tense as a Case licenser. Section 4 introduces null expletives as Probes and proposes a dissociation between NOM and ACC Case values and specific heads, such as T or *v*, respectively. In Section 5, I argue the presence of expletive *pro* in the lexical array and provide an analysis of subject Case values in Romanian infinitives and gerunds. Section 6 focuses on micro-parametric variation in null expletive languages, while Section 7 is a conclusion.

## 2. *Phi-features (agreement) as a Case prerequisite*

From a current Minimalist standpoint,  $\phi$ -complete T Probes are synonymous to lexical subjects with NOM Case, while  $\phi$ -complete *v* Probes are synonymous to DP objects valued ACC. Theoretically speaking, it is unclear what properties of T and *v* would license this split. Besides, Chomsky proposes that a defective,  $\phi$ -incomplete Probe cannot license Case. However, given the lack of agreement between *v* and the argument it Case-marks, there really is no evidence that *v* comes equipped with  $u\phi$  (see also Baker et al. 2005).

From an empirical perspective, it turns out that lexical subjects are permitted in some non-finite (uninflected) domains, with variation for NOM or ACC values, at both a macro- and a micro-parametric level, as follows.<sup>1</sup>

At least infinitives and gerunds in most Ibero-Romance, Greek gerunds (Sitaridou 2002), West Flemish infinitives (Haegeman 1985), absolute participial constructions in Hungarian (Liptak, p.c.), Albanian (Kallulli, p.c.), and Italian

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<sup>1</sup> Traditionally, the distinction between inflected and uninflected clausal domains mirrors the distinction between finiteness and non-finiteness, respectively (e.g. Ledgeway 1998 and references therein). Thus, indicatives, subjunctives, optatives and imperatives - which manifest agreement - are all finite forms, while infinitives, gerunds and participles - which lack inflectional morphology - are non-finite forms. I adopt this distinction and use the non-finite label for the uninflected infinitives, gerunds and participles that I investigate below in relationship to Case. Note that under this division of labour, inflected infinitives in European Portuguese of the type in (i) would qualify as 'finite'. The example in (i) is from Raposo (1987:86).

(i) *Será difícil [eles aprovarem a proposta].*  
 'It will be difficult they to-approve-AGR the proposal.'

Raposo (1987) argues that these inflected infinitives are CP phasal domains, which is why I do not discuss this particular construction here. Terminology aside, the NOM subject in (i), *a proposta* 'the proposal', could be licensed by either agreement, the phase head, or both.

Aux-to-Comp (Rizzi 1982, Belletti 1990), all show NOM subjects, as selectively seen in (1).<sup>2</sup>

- (1) a. *Îi punea la calculator [CP pentru a avea (RO)*  
 CL.3PL.M.ACC put.3SG at computer [CP for INF have  
*tu / \*tine liniște].*  
 2.SG.NOM-\*ACC quiet]  
 “She would leave them at the computer for you to have peace and quiet.”
- b. [*CP Fiind noi gata cu toții*], *am pornit la drum.*  
 [being.GER we.NOM ready with all] 1PL started on way  
 “Given that we were all ready, we started on our way.” (RO)
- c. [*CP Odată (fata / ea) deșteptată (fata / ea)*],  
 [CP once girl-the.NOM / she awoken.3FSG, girl-the.NOM / she ]  
*mama puse de mâncare.* (RO)  
 mother-the put.PAST.3SG of food  
 “The girl having awoken, mother started preparing some food.”
- d. *Lo supimos [CP después de llegar él].* (SP)  
 we found out [CP after of arrive.INF he.NOM]  
 “We found out after he had arrived.” (Ledgeway 1998:5)
- e. [*CP Avendo Gianni / (lei) chiuso il dibattito*], (IT)  
 [CP having Gianni / (3SGF.NOM) closed the debate]  
*la riunione è finita prima.* (Belletti 1990:98)  
 the meeting is finished before  
 “Gianni having closed the debate, the meeting ended early.”

However, other languages show ACC subjects in non-finite contexts (whether lexicalized or null), as illustrated by the English and AG data in (2) or allow for either NOM or ACC lexical subjects in infinitives, as shown in (3) for Old Italian.

- (2) a. [*CP For him to listen to that talk*] was awkward.  
 b. [*CP Him baking the pie*] pleased everyone.  
 c. [*PRO filantropon einai*] dei.<sup>3</sup> (AG)  
 PRO.ACC friendly-ACC-3SG to-be must-3SG  
 “One needs to love people.” (Isokrates, II:15., Sevdali 2005:137)

<sup>2</sup> I use the following abbreviations in this paper: Agr: agreement, AUX: auxiliary, SBJ: subjunctive, INF: infinitive, GER: gerund, PRES: present, PRF: perfect, PRTC: participle, CL: object pronominal clitic, SCL: subject pronominal clitic, SU: subject, OBJ: object, SG: singular, PL: plural, NOM: Nominative Case, ACC: Accusative Case, DAT: Dative Case, REFL: reflexive, M: masculine, F: feminine, and PE: a preposition associated with Romanian direct objects. For languages other than English, AG: Ancient Greek, IT: Italian, OIT: Old Italian, RO: Romanian, SP: Spanish.

<sup>3</sup> I assume that PRO bears structural or quirky Case (cf. Cecchetto & Oniga 2004, Schütze 1997, Sigurðsson 1991, inter alia, but contra Chomsky 1982, Chomsky & Lasnik 1995).

- d. *Fe:mi [se                    men egno:kenai                    peri    touto:n]*                    (AG)  
 say-I    you-ACC                    to know-PRF                    about these-GEN]  
*[eme                    de suneire:kenai    tais sais epithumiais]*  
 [me-ACC                    to go along-PRF    the your wishes-DAT]  
 “I say that since you knew about these things, I went along with your wishes.” (Isokrates, *Ad Philippum III*, 3:3-4, Sevdali 2005:134)
- (3) a. *Tu    non    ti    rallegrì [aver                    io incontrata una morte]*  
 you    not    CL    delight [to-have                    I    found                    a death]  
 “You are not glad that I have found death.”                    (OIT)  
 (D’Azeglio, ch. 18, p222, cf. Schwendener 1923:72)
- b. *Negar    non    voglio                    esser possibile,                    [lui    essere beato ..*  
 to-deny not    (I) want                    to-be possible                    him    to-be blessed  
 “I do not want to deny that it is possible that he is blessed.”                    (OIT)  
 (Boccaccio, Dec., I, 1; cf. Schwendener 1923:82)

Note that the Old Italian subject micro-variation is sensitive to word order, with postverbal subjects being strictly NOM (Mensching 2000:20), as in (3a).<sup>4</sup>

The crucial observation with respect to the data in (1)-(3) is that all non-finite instances are either adjuncts or subject clauses, so constitute phasal domains by definition. Given that agreement on T is absent in all these situations yet lexical subjects are licensed, the correlation seems to be between *Case* and *phases*, not *Case* and agreement (cf. also Alboiu 2006, Sitaridou 2002, a.o.).

### 3. *Phasal features and Case*

In this section, I discuss the status of A-related features in non-finite domains and entertain the idea of Tense as a Case licenser. I show that agreement (i.e.,  $u\phi$ ) is only available to finite CPs and that the Tense feature, while a property of the phase, is epiphenomenal to Case.

#### 3.1 *Agreement (phi-features) as a phasal property*

Chomsky (2006) argues for obligatory transmittal of uninterpretable features from the phase head to its proxy head. Consequently, if  $\phi$ -features are present on C, these will be inherited by T (or the relevant proxy head). Given that infinitives and gerunds lack agreement morphology, in languages with otherwise inflected T paradigms, C is arguably  $\phi$ -featureless in non-finite domains. This observation is supported by the behaviour of clitics in various Romance languages.

Poletto (2000) mentions that in Friulian, a Northern Italian dialect, subject clitic doubling is extremely common. Paoli (p.c.) confirms that they occur in

<sup>4</sup> To avoid any confusion given that in Old Italian *lui* was also sometimes used for the NOM (e.g. in Dante’s work), Mensching (2000:208) points out in Footnote 6 that Boccaccio strictly distinguishes between *lui/lei* (ACC) and *egli/ella* (NOM) in the Decameron.

finite clauses with both pre- and post-verbal subjects regardless of predicate type. However, subject clitics are ruled out in non-finite clauses, which, interestingly, otherwise permit a NOM lexical subject postverbally. Consider the data in (4).

- (4) a. *E rive l pustin.* (Friulian)  
 SCL arrives the postman.  
 “The postman is coming.”
- b. *Ue e cusine Marie*  
 today SCL cook Mary  
 “Mary is cooking today.”
- c. (\*E) *Vint Marie / je ciacaraat cun ti, e ha*  
 SCL having Mary / she spoken with you, SCL have  
*diciduu di cumprà el livri.*  
 decided of buy.INF the book  
 “Having spoken with you, Mary decided to buy the book.”

While subject clitics occur with both unaccusative (4a) and unergative (4b) finite predicates in Friulian, they are ruled out in non-finite contexts as illustrated by the gerund Aux-to-Comp construction in (4c).<sup>5</sup> Following Rizzi's (1986) claim that clitics are agreement markers, nominal substitutes for verbal inflection, Roberts (2006), construes them as  $u\phi$  on T. Under this view, (4) provides empirical evidence against  $u\phi$  on uninflected T heads.

Summing up, given the above empirical observations, as well as work in Alboiu (2006) and Landau (2004), I conclude that in languages with overt agreement morphology,  $u\phi$  is absent on *uninflected* T heads.

### 3.2 *Tense and Case values*

Under the feature-inheritance model, C transfers to T both its temporal interpretation and all A-related features. Recently, Pesetsky & Torrego (2001, 2004) have explored the link between Tense and Case, construing Case as  $uT$ . However, Case as  $uT$  runs into empirical trouble as there are contexts where structural Case occurs in the absence of Tense.

Hungarian possessives discussed in Kenesei (1986) allow for NOM possessors in the presence of agreement on the head noun. Kenesei, however, argues convincingly that the category Tense is excluded in these constructions. Crucially, a phase head (i.e., D) and agreement ( $u\phi$ ) are both present.

<sup>5</sup> An anonymous reviewer points out that Aux-to-Comp is somewhat doubtful in Northern Italian dialects. Even so, note that the above conclusion is independently supported by empirical data from Romanian. Romanian clitic ordering is sensitive to Person ranking ( $\pi_1 > \pi_2$ ) and Case ranking (DAT > ACC), but (Săvescu-Ciucivara 2007) shows that  $\pi$  ranking disappears in non-finite contexts. This follows straightforwardly if C lacks  $u\phi$ .

In addition, there are CP phases which seemingly do not project a TP. Specifically, Romanian gerunds (see Avram 2003) and Ancient Greek infinitives (see Sevdali 2005) have independent aspectual but not independent tense properties. According to Avram (2003), Romanian gerunds denote events and are verbal in nature but cannot combine with either a Neg head (i.e., the negative free morpheme *nu*) or a T head (i.e., auxiliaries), and to the extent that they license temporal adverbs, these adverbs denote time of event rather than time of reference. However, while Avram treats Romanian gerunds simply as AspP, I suggest they are CP domains lacking a TP given the fact that they, (i) can combine with speaker-oriented adverbs such as *probably*, which according to Cinque (1999) associate with epistemic modality, so are higher than Aspect, (ii) allow for topicalized subjects, which target the left-periphery of the clause (i.e., the CP domain, following Rizzi's 1997, 2004 cartographic approach), and (iii) precede clitics, which are part of the inflectional domain in Romance, as argued by Kayne (1991). (5) illustrates the first two properties -- availability of a topicalized subject and an epistemic adverb.

- (5) *Ea fiind încă supărată, am decis să plecăm singuri.* (RO)  
 3SGF.NOM be-GER yet upset.3SGF, AUX.1PL  
 decided SBJ leave.1PL alone.1PL  
 “What with her still being upset, we decided to leave by ourselves.”

In sum, temporal deixis is not what licenses structural Case and neither is agreement, though both of these are features of the phase head. I next outline the proposal for structural Case-licensing and parametrization of Case valuation.

#### 4. *Null expletives and Case*

Lexical subjects are DPs that have checked structural Case and instantiate a Case value. Following Alboiu (2007), I propose that T and v lack intrinsic Case values, NOM and ACC, respectively. Rather, Case values are determined by the specifics of the probing domain, as follows:

- (6) Case spell-out:  
 a. NOMINATIVE, *iff* the probing domain is specified as [*uD*, *uφ*]  
 b. ACCUSATIVE, *iff* the probing domain is specified as [*uD*]

(6) dissociates between Case licensing and Case values (in the spirit of Marantz 2000, Schütze 1997) and assumes that Case valuation is dependent on the operation Agree, specifically, the formation of an A-chain, triggered by either *uφ* or the EPP (i.e., *uD*). In NOM-ACC systems any active DP entering an A-chain will be guaranteed a Case value. Choice of NOM versus ACC rests solely with availability or lack thereof of  $\phi$ -features. However, while paramount in

determining type of Case (i.e., DP spell-out),  $\phi$ -features are not crucial for syntactic Case licensing.

Recall that our discussion focuses on non-finite phasal domains, as this is where languages show disparity in spell-out of DP subjects as NOM, ACC or, if not lexicalized, PRO. Given that C lacks an uninterpretable  $\phi$ -feature in these domains, the unique A-related feature transferred to the proxy head is a nominal deficiency (i.e., uD). What then ensures the  $\phi$ -specification assumed necessary in languages with NOM subjects in gerunds and infinitives? Ledgeway (1998) and Sitaridou (2002) have remarked that only null subject languages permit NOM subjects in these constructions. Nonetheless, West Flemish is not, technically speaking, a null subject (i.e., *pro*-drop) language, as it only permits for null expletives (Haegeman, p.c.). So it would appear that the crucial property is whether or not a language is a null expletive language (henceforth NEL). Support for this view comes from various dialects of English, such as Newfoundland English in Canada shown in (6), and working-class Somerset English in the UK, where null expletives are still current, and where uninflected infinitives with NOM subjects are also permitted.<sup>6</sup>

(7) *For he to listen to that talk was awkward.* (Ruth King, p.c.)

I suggest that the null expletive, merged in Spec,TP to satisfy the EPP, itself acts as a Probe thus ensuring that the thematic subject enters an A-chain and is thereby Case-licensed. Furthermore, the featural specifications of this Probe will guarantee a NOM Case value, as discussed below.

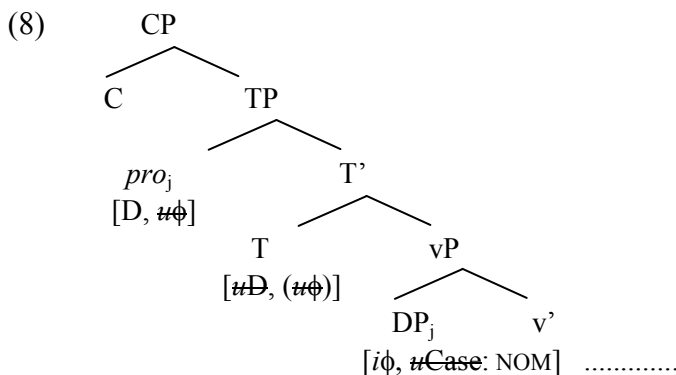
#### 4.1 *Expletives as Probes*

Chomsky (1981) introduces *pro*, an empty category that does not always bear the same array of featural specifications. On the one hand, there is the null subject of *pro*-drop languages, a nominal element that is referential and  $\phi$ -complete and enters the derivation in theta-assigning domains, on the other hand, there is the null expletive, which is non-referential, lacks intrinsic  $\phi$ -values and cannot be merged in theta-related positions. In this chapter, *pro* refers to the null expletive. I take expletive *pro* to be featurally specified as  $[D, u\phi]$ .<sup>7</sup> Consequently, it can be merged in Spec,TP, see (8), and thereby check off T's nominal deficiency.

<sup>6</sup> In his analysis of null subjects with working-class Somerset English, Ihalainen (1991) points out that the subject is omissible in the West Country variety about 20% of the time (by comparison to 1% in the standard). Data in (i) is from Ihalainen (1991:205).

(i) a.  $\emptyset$  *Was old chaps called Toutes use to do it.*  
 b. *You could hardly see 'cause  $\emptyset$  was so much dust around.*

<sup>7</sup> As a D category, null expletives are potentially also specified for an uCase feature. Nothing crucial hinges on whether this feature is present (or not), so I leave it out for ease of exposition.



(8) illustrates a derivation for either finite or non-finite CPs (hence the brackets around  $u\phi$  on T). Focusing on non-finite C, T only inherits the EPP/uD feature, which is checked off by *pro*. Merge of *pro* in Spec,TP cancels T's status as a D-related Probe. Given that *pro* has a  $\phi$ -deficiency, it will itself probe for a Goal with interpretable  $\phi$ -features, will check against the highest contender (i.e., the subject DP) and will copy its  $\phi$ -values, thereby getting a 'j' index. The expletive is both a minimal and maximal syntactic object, so c-commands the subject DP. At Spell-Out, this DP is part of an A-chain where the probing domain has both nominal and  $\phi$ -feature deficiencies so, according to (6), it will be valued NOM. In effect, *pro* acts as a Probe and guarantees a NOM as opposed to an ACC value.

#### 4.2 Two notes on expletives

Two questions arise here: (i) what guarantees *pro* in the lexical array, and (ii) whether the 'null' status of this expletive has any bearing on the issues at hand.

With respect to the first question, the minimum premise is that the respective language have a lexeme with the specification  $[D, u\phi]$  as part of its mental lexicon. The expletive, lacking semantic content, will participate in the checking of features otherwise devoid of any semantico-pragmatic flavour, hence checking of purely nominal features. This would in turn ensure that contentful DPs are free to occupy structural positions with various semantic and pragmatic relevance with the effect of what is often referred to as a 'free word order' language. For example, Alboiu (2002) argues that Romanian exploits syntactic structure to encode sentence pragmatics. Specifically, DP phrases never dislocate to check A-related features (i.e., Case, agreement, or the EPP), but do so only for novel interpretive effects related to the encoding of the Theme-Rheme partitioning. The presence of a  $[D, u\phi]$  lexeme in the lexical array would explain what enables Romanian to encode information structure in any derivation.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> See also Rizzi & Shlonski (2005:13) who view expletives as formal devices required by "discourse conditions" or "communicative intentions" and Tomić (2006) who argues for null expletives as a property of languages that are structurally pragmatically oriented.



Nonetheless, since availability in the mental lexicon does not immediately guarantee insertion in the lexical array, variation in lexical instantiation is expected even among NELs. Empirically speaking, there are languages like Romanian (and possibly Spanish and Catalan) where NOM subjects are the norm, regardless of finiteness. At the other extreme, there are languages like Serbian and Bulgarian which exclude NOM values in non-finite domains (Olga Tomić, p.c.) and Ancient Greek which shows only ACC lexical subjects in infinitives (Sevdali 2005). In addition, there are languages like Old Italian, for which a NOM-ACC lexicalization is dependent on DP linearization. I return to these issues in Section 6.

With regards to the second question, the ‘null’ status of the expletive must be taken to be irrelevant syntactically. Phonetic features are not accessible to the computational system, and perhaps not even available prior to Spell-Out (as in Distributed Morphology). However, if these expletives satisfy a purely formal principle, there is no need for overtness.<sup>9</sup> To conclude, expletive *pro* is a parametrized UG primitive with a role in Case valuation and pragmatic encoding.

## 5. *Analysis: a case study on Romanian*

Given the contentious nature of expletive *pro* in Minimalism (Alexiadou & Anagnostopoulou 1998, Manzini & Savoia 1997, versus Cardinaletti 2004, Rizzi & Shlonski 2005, a.o.), some empirical evidence for its presence in the lexical array would be welcome. By focusing on Romanian, this section provides a case study of the role of expletive *pro* in Case valuation and discusses some evidence for its presence in the lexical array.

### 5.1 *Compulsory pro in the lexical array*

Cardinaletti (2004) argues convincingly on both theoretical and empirical grounds for *pro* and discusses some interesting evidence with respect to the existence of (at least) two IP-related preverbal subject positions in natural languages: SpecSubjP, hosting the subject of predication (i.e., the ‘notional’ subject), and SpecAgrSP (or SpecTP), hosting the grammatical subject. The latter position is constrained to weak pronouns and *pro*.<sup>10</sup> Unless contrastively focused, Romanian preverbal subjects are subject to a specificity effect and precede wh-phrases (see Alboiu 2002, Cornilescu 2000, Dobrovie-Sorin 1994, a.o.). The general consensus is that these subjects move into the CP, as opposed to the IP

<sup>9</sup> Note that most overt expletives have various degrees of  $\phi$ -specifications (perhaps crucially, a  $\pi$  feature) and possibly deixis (Kayne 2006 on *there*), properties pointing to a different syntax; see (i):

(i)	[D, $u\phi$ ]	[D, $\pi:3$ , #:SG, g:N]	[D, $\pi:3$ ]	[D, $\pi:3$ , $u\#$ , $ug$ ]
	<i>pro</i>	<i>il, it, það, es</i>	<i>there</i>	<i>von</i>

<sup>10</sup> It is not unreasonable to assume that in languages without null expletives, these two IP-related subject positions form a merged, syncretic category, so that the DP satisfying the EPP must also be the subject of predication.

domain in Romanian.<sup>11</sup> Whether the 'notional' subject is CP or IP-related is less relevant since the focus here is on *pro* which is of necessity ruled out from either such position. However, what seems clear is that the SpecAgrS/TP grammatical subject is exclusively realized as the null expletive in Romanian (i.e., *pro* satisfies the EPP in all derivations with a C phase head). This, of course, will entail that ACC lexical subjects are never an option in such a language.

Conceptual issues aside, Binding phenomena provide good empirical testing ground for the presence of *pro* in Romanian. (9) illustrates a passivized double object construction in which the indirect object contains a possessive pronoun bound by a quantified direct object.

- (9) *După expoziție (i)-a fost înapoiat*  
 after exhibition (DAT.CL.3SG) -AUX.3SG been returned.3SG  
*[pictorului său]<sub>k</sub> [fiecare tablou]<sub>j</sub> (RO)*  
 [painter-DAT his]<sub>k</sub> [each painting]<sub>j</sub>-NOM  
 “After the exhibit, each painting was returned to its own artist.”

In (9), the direct object, which does not dislocate to a preverbal position in the absence of relevant semantico-pragmatic interpretations, enters an Agree relationship with T and has its Case valued as NOM. The indirect object appears to the left of this direct object, so is structurally higher than the latter.<sup>12</sup> But (9) is well-formed. Conspicuously, the binding relations (in bold) between the quantified direct object DP<sub>j</sub> and the possessive pronoun can only be accounted for by positing a null expletive in Spec,TP as in (10).

- (10) [<sub>TP</sub> ***pro*<sub>j</sub> T [DP-DAT **POSS**<sub>j</sub> ]<sub>k</sub> DP<sub>j</sub> ...]  
 [D,  $\#$ φ] [*i*T,  $\#$ D,  $\#$ φ] [D, *i*φ,  $\#$ Case:NOM]**

Expletive *pro*, merged in Spec,TP to check off *u*D on T, as discussed, bears the same index with the direct object which indirectly (i.e., via T) values its features. Crucially, it c-commands the indirect object DP<sub>k</sub>, a seemingly sufficient condition for felicitous binding of the possessive at LF.<sup>13</sup> The exact implementation of this well-formedness could be perceived as falling out from either LF-movement and

<sup>11</sup> Note that ‘specificity’ refers to definite DPs or indefinite DPs with a referential, partitive, or a generic collective reading.

<sup>12</sup> For arguments that linear order reflects hierarchy in this language see Alboiu (2002). Note that Datives do not passivize in Romanian, so are opaque to A-chain formation.

<sup>13</sup> Note that if the indirect object were to topicalize and move into the left-periphery of the clause, above TP, (9) would be ungrammatical, as expected given that *pro* in Spec,TP is no longer in a position to c-command the possessive pronoun. See (i).

- (i) *\*[Pictorului său]<sub>k</sub> după expoziție i-a fost*  
 [painter-DAT his]<sub>k</sub> after exhibition DAT.CL.3SG -AUX.3SG been  
*înapoiat <[pictorului său]<sub>k</sub>> [fiecare tablou]<sub>j</sub> (RO)*  
 returned.3SG <[painter-DAT his]<sub>k</sub>> [each painting]<sub>j</sub>-NOM  
 “After the exhibit, each painting was returned to its own artist.”

replacement of the expletive by its associate, as assumed in early Minimalism (Chomsky 1995) or, from a failure to delete the expletive’s  $\phi$ -features. I will not try to sort out these issues here but rather point out the crucial fact that  $\phi$ -features on *pro* behave differently from  $\phi$ -features on verbal functors, which cannot Bind.

5.2 *Case valuation of infinitives and gerunds*

For a concrete illustration of Case checking and valuation, let us consider the Romanian infinitives and gerunds in (11a,b) and (11c), respectively.

- (11) a. [<sub>CP</sub> \*(*Pentru*) *a*      *avea*   *tu*                      *liniște*],      *plecă.* (RO)  
 [<sub>CP</sub> \*(For)    INF    have   2.SG.NOM    quiet]      leave.PST.3SG  
 “S/he left so that you can have peace of mind.”
- b. [<sub>CP</sub> *A*              *fi*      *numai*   *tu*                      *prezent*      *la adunare*]  
 [<sub>CP</sub> INF          be      only   2.SG.NOM    present      at meeting]  
*e*                      *de*      *neconceput.*  
 be.PRES.3SG    of      inconceivable  
 “It’s inconceivable that you be the only one present at the meeting.”
- c. [<sub>CP</sub> (*tu*)              *fiind*              (*tu*)              *gata*], *am*      *și pornit.*  
 [<sub>CP</sub> 2.SG.NOM   be-GER              2.SG.NOM    ready] AUX.1PL   also started  
 “Once you were ready, we started on our way.”

With infinitives, the NOM lexical subject must occur postverbally, in a position distinct from the grammatical subject position, in the sense of Cardinaletti (2004).<sup>14</sup> The preposition-type complementizer is obligatory with adjunct CPs (presumably for semantic clause-typing). Furthermore, the lexical verb raises to T but not beyond as the infinitive particle ‘a’, blocks subsequent T to C movement of the verb. Schematically, these infinitives can be represented as in (12), where C transfers its sole A-related feature to T and *pro* is externally merged to satisfy this feature. The unvalued features of the expletive establish a syntactic chain with the thematic subject, which at Spell-Out is valued NOM. Overt items are bolded.

(12) Romanian phasal infinitives:

[ <sub>CP</sub> C	<i>pro</i> <sub>j</sub>	<i>a</i> -T	DP <sub>j</sub>	<v> ....]
(P)	[D, # $\phi$ ]	[INF, v, #D]	[#Case: NOM, i $\phi$ ]	

Conversely, with gerunds, there is never any preposition and the subject may occur preverbally. The verb undergoes movement beyond the Inflectional domain and into C. That this movement is possible follows from the verbal nature of the gerund affix and that it actually occurs is evidenced by its interaction with

<sup>14</sup> Given that lexical verbs always raise to the highest Inflectional head in Romanian (e.g. Dobrovie-Sorin 1994), “postverbal” refers to material below the respective available head. The exact locus of the inverted subject is less important here.

clitics, as previously discussed in Section 3.2. The schematic representations in (13) show the EPP feature being transferred to Asp given the absence of T (cf. Section 3.2). Unvalued  $\phi$ -features and Case check as for infinitives.

- (13) a. Romanian gerund adjuncts with VS linearization:  
 $[_{CP} C$        $pro_j$                   Asp                   $DP_j$                    $\langle v \rangle$  ...]  
**v-GER**       $[D, \# \phi]$        $[\langle v-GER \rangle, \# \bar{D}]$        $[\#Case: NOM, i\phi]$
- b. Romanian gerund adjuncts with SV linearization:  
 $[_{CP} C_{High}$   $DP_j-Top$        $C_{Low}$        $pro_j$       Asp       $\langle DP_j \rangle$        $\langle v \rangle$  ..]  
 $[\#Case: NOM, i\phi]$        $[v-GER]$        $[D, \# \phi]$        $[\langle v-GER \rangle, \# \bar{D}]$        $[\#Case: NOM, i\phi]$

In addition, (13b) differs from (13a) in that it projects an expanded CP domain, with a Topic position sandwiched in-between a high C head (i.e., “Force”) and a low C head (i.e., “Finite”) to accommodate the topicalized preverbal subject (in the spirit of Rizzi 1997, 2004). While in (13b) the gerund only raises to a low C head, I assume a high C head must be present to guarantee the phasal status of this CP.<sup>15</sup>

This section has discussed the presence of expletive *pro* in the Romanian lexical array and has provided an analysis of subject NOM values in Romanian infinitives and gerunds. I next address instances of ACC subjects in non-finite CPs.

## 6. *NOM-ACC variation within NELs: Ancient Greek and Old Italian*

At the macro-parametric level, languages show a typological split between NELs (e.g. Romanian) and non-NELs (e.g. English). Given the construal of Case proposed in this chapter, NOM subjects for non-NELs are not expected in uninflected domains. Hence, ACC lexicalization in English infinitives and gerunds is unsurprising. The seemingly surprising, hence potentially more interesting cases, are those of Ancient Greek and Old Italian, two NELs for which ACC subjects are often required. Crucially, the micro-parametric variation within NELs can be accounted for if we keep in mind that availability of expletive *pro* in the mental lexicon does not automatically guarantee its insertion in every derivation.

Let us consider the data discussed in Sevdali (2005) and illustrated in Section 2 as (2c,d) above. In (2c), the adjectival predicate is marked ACC, in

<sup>15</sup> Note in passing that absolute participial constructions can readily be construed as a sub-type of the gerund construction, where a *be-GER* is replaced by a null Aspectual head. The CP adjunct in (1c), repeated as (ia), is semantically equivalent to (ib).

- (i)a.  $[_{CP} Odat\bar{a}$       (*fata / ea*)       $\emptyset$       *deșteptată*      (*fata / ea*), ...  
 $_{CP}$  once      (girl-the.NOM/she)      ASP      awoke.PRTC.FSG (girl-the.NOM/she)
- b.  $[_{CP} Fiind$       (*fata / ea*)       $\langle fiind \rangle$       *deșteptată*      (*fata / ea*), ...  
 $_{CP}$  *be-GER*      (girl-the.NOM/she)      ASP      awoke.PRTC.FSG (girl-the.NOM/she)

I therefore do not provide a distinct analysis, but simply assume that the unaccusative vP in (ia) is selected by a null Asp head which lacks the GER specification. Consequently, no head movement to C can ensue and a stative adverb is inserted for clause-typing, as seen for adjunct infinitives. Case-licensing is not affected.

agreement with its PRO subject, while in (2d), the overt subject *se* ‘you’ is also ACC. Now, while expletive *pro* is available to AG, given its pragmatic role it is only expected in the derivation in the presence of lexical subjects. If the subject is null, the DP cannot be relevant for discourse properties, so *pro* would be futile, hence not selected from the lexicon.<sup>16</sup> The schematic representation for (2c) is shown in (14a). Following Sevdali (2005), the subject in (2d) is contrastively focused. This time *pro* is absent because its lack of semantic content would prevent it from satisfying the uD feature on the Focus head.<sup>17</sup> Consequently, the lexical DP in Spec,FocP is valued ACC as there is no u $\phi$  associated with the Probe (see 14b).

- (14) a. infinitives with PRO  
 [<sub>CP</sub> C PRO Asp <PRO> v AP ...]  
 [D, #Case: ACC, u $\phi$ ] [INF, # $\bar{D}$ ] [ACC]
- b. infinitives with focused subjects  
 [<sub>CP</sub> C [<sub>FocusP</sub> DP<sub>i</sub> Focus Asp [<sub>VP</sub> <DP<sub>i</sub>> v ...]]  
 [#Case: ACC, i $\phi$ , FOC] [# $\bar{D}$ ]

Moving on to Old Italian infinitives, lexical ACC and NOM subjects are both available but postverbal subjects are strictly NOM (Mensching 2000).<sup>18</sup> Assuming that discourse conditions determined whether uD was checked via expletive *pro* or subject DP dislocation, I propose the representations in (15).

- (15) a. infinitives with *pro*  
 [<sub>CP</sub> C *pro*<sub>j</sub> X DP<sub>j</sub> <v> ...]  
 [D, u $\phi$ ] [INF, v, # $\bar{D}$ ] [#Case: NOM, i $\phi$ ]
- b. infinitives without *pro*  
 [<sub>CP</sub> C DP<sub>i</sub> X <DP<sub>i</sub>> <v> ...]  
 [#Case: ACC, i $\phi$ ] [INF, v, # $\bar{D}$ ]

In (15a), the uD feature transmitted from C to its proxy head, say X, is satisfied by external Merge of the expletive, with NOM consequences for the subject, while in (15b), this feature is satisfied by the subject itself, with ACC consequences. The fact that both pre- and post-verbal lexical subjects are licensed in the absence of any overt C marker suggests that the clause typing relationship was satisfied by head movement to a position below C. Presumably X is some C<sub>LOW</sub> domain, akin to what we saw for Romanian gerunds, fact strengthened by the observation that

<sup>16</sup> Alternatively, PRO cannot remain in a postverbal position, as evidenced by the data in (i), so competes with the null expletive for insertion in Spec,TP.

(i) *John promised his psychologist [PRO to seem to himself/\*herself [t to be competent] before leaving therapy].* (example offered by LI reviewer)

<sup>17</sup> Recall that C transmits its EPP/uD feature to its proxy head (i.e., Asp in 14a, Focus in 14b).

<sup>18</sup> Recall data in (3a,b) which I do not repeat here for lack of space.

preverbal NOM subjects were attested in Old Italian without Aux-to-Comp in these constructions. Consider (16a) represented in (16b):

- (16) a. *perchè io disso [io aver trovato iscritto ...]*  
 because I said [I to-have found written  
 “because I said that I had found that it was written ...” (OIT)  
 (Mensching 2000:133, Malispini, ch. 42, 13th c; cf. Diez 1882:946)
- b. infinitives with *pro* and subject fronting  
 $[_{CP} C \quad DP_j \quad \quad \quad pro_j \quad X \quad \quad < DP_j > \quad < v > \dots]$   
 $[\#Case: NOM, i\phi] \quad \quad \quad [D, \#\phi] \quad [INF, v, \#D]$

The representation in (16b) indicates subsequent movement of the thematic subject into the CP, left-peripheral domain. I leave open the question of locus of movement given that we do not have the tools to determine interpretative differences.<sup>19</sup>

To sum up then, *pro*-availability does not automatically guarantee insertion in the lexical array and various language specific phenomena might either prevent or require the presence of the expletive in the Numeration. The main empirical claim here is that uninflected phasal domains permit NOM subjects only in languages with null expletives.

## 7. *Conclusions*

This chapter has argued for a dissociation between Case checking, understood as syntactic licensing of DP arguments, and Case valuation, by assuming that the phase head guarantees Case licensing but not a specific Case value. Rather choice of NOM versus ACC DP lexicalization is incumbent on the presence versus absence of  $\phi$ -features, respectively. Therefore, while paramount in determining type of Case (i.e., DP spell-out),  $\phi$ -features are not crucial for syntactic Case licensing. The assumption is that  $\phi$ -feature deficiencies are properties of C in finite phases and properties of null expletive *pro* but not properties of phasal v or non-finite C. In order to capture the empirical variation of lexical subjects in non-finite CPs, I have argued for expletive *pro* as a parametrized UG primitive with a role in Case valuation and pragmatic encoding. Specifically, in NELs, when *pro* is present in the derivation, it acts as a Probe and guarantees a NOM as opposed to an ACC value. Consequently, Case values are not primitives of T and v, but a dynamic property of the domain that probes.

<sup>19</sup> Note that in standard modern Italian lexical subjects in uninflected CPs are restricted to Aux-to-Comp constructions (Belletti 1990, Rizzi 1982), with preverbal subjects ruled out. This suggests very different infinitive structures diachronically speaking. Specifically, the left peripheral field in modern Italian non-finite CPs must be more limited, with presumably less available XP positions than in OIT and a single C head. Consequently, clause-typing and feature transmission for C presuppose Aux-to-Comp.

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