DIFFERENTIAL OBJECT MARKING IN INANIMATE OBJECTS IN SPANISH[1]

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ABSTRACT. The aim of this paper is to explain the differential object marking (DOM) of inanimate objects in Spanish. Generally, animate objects in Spanish are marked with an A morpheme; however, it is possible for the A-marker to appear also with inanimate objects in specific circumstances. In this article, I defend the idea that the marking of inanimate objects in Spanish responds to the interaction of the feature of existence presupposition of the verb with the feature that dominates the object's specificity. The analysis will be done using mainly two theoretical tools: the feature geometry of Harley & Ritter (2002) and Chomsky's (2013, 2015) labeling theory.

Keywords: object, feature geometry, labeling theory, Phi label, presupposition of existence.

RESUMEN. El objetivo de este artículo es explicar el marcado diferencial de objeto (DOM en sus siglas en inglés) de objetos inanimados en español. Generalmente, los objetos directos animados del español son marcados con un morfema A; sin embargo, es posible que la marca A aparezca también con objetos inanimados en circunstancias específicas. En este artículo, defiendo la idea de que la marcación de objetos inanimados en español responde a la interacción del rasgo de presuposición de existencia del verbo con el rasgo que domina la especificidad del objeto. El análisis será hecho usando principalmente dos herramientas teóricas: la geometría de rasgos de Harley y Ritter (2002) y la teoría de rotulación de Chomsky (2013, 2015).

Palabras clave: objeto, geometría de rasgos, teoría de rotulación, rótulo Phi, presuposición de existencia.

1. Introduction

Direct objects in Spanish can appear marked with an A morpheme under certain circumstances. Although it would not be the only feature associated with differential object marking (DOM), the role of animacy in Spanish marking is central and generally assumed in the literature; direct objects are marked when they are animate (Torrego (1998); Aissen (2003); Rodríguez-Mondoñedo (2007); López (2012); Bleam (2005); Von Heusinger & Kaiser (2011); Brugè & Brugger (1996), Ormazabal & Romero (2019), Ordóñez & Roca (2019), among others). However, it is frequently mentioned in the literature that in some cases, inanimate objects in Spanish can also be marked with A (Laca (1995), Torrego (1998, 1999), García García (2007), Rodríguez-Mondoñedo (2007), Primus (2012), Hoff & Diaz-Campos (2015) Zdrojewsky (2020)).

In Camacho Ramírez (2022), the Spanish DOM was analyzed using primarily two tools: the feature geometry of Harley & Ritter (2002) and the labeling operation (Chomsky 2013, 2015). The hypothesis regarding the DOM of Spanish is that the mark appears when in the Phi label that dominates the VP are the lexical feature affectedness and the organizing node class dominating the feature [animate]. In this paper, I will assume the framework of Camacho Ramírez (2022) to explain DOM in inanimate objects. A stative verb such as, for example, *seguir* (to follow) will

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mark its inanimate object when the verb expresses a contiguity relation between subject and object (*La cocina sigue al cuarto* 'The kitchen follows the room'). The lexical feature of the verb necessary to instantiate that relation must be presupposition of existence, which must be licensed by an organizing node of D, rpg (*rasgos pragmáticos gramaticalizados* 'grammaticalized pragmatic features'). In addition to the case of stative verbs marking their inanimate object, some cases of animization of the inanimate object and cases with the lexical feature [quantize] will be discussed. The developed analysis will be applied to data from Buenos Aires Spanish.

The article is organized as follows. Section 2 succinctly presents the central analysis of Camacho Ramírez (2022) applied to animate objects. Section 3 develops the hypothesis on DOM in inanimate objects. In 3.1 some proposals in the literature are discussed. In 3.2 the hypotheses on verbs expressing placement are presented and developed; the data on naming verbs are discussed in 3.3. In 3.4 the sentences with the feature [quantize] are analyzed; the data from the dialect of the city of Buenos Aires are discussed in 3.5. Finally, the conclusions.

2. Theoretical tools

In Camacho Ramírez (2022), I defended the following hypothesis about DOM in animate objects:

(1) The Spanish DOM depends on the licensing of the affectedness feature of the verb by the organizing node class. If class dominates the feature [anim(ate)], the object must be marked with A.

The features that participate in the DOM in Spanish (affectedness, class, [anim]) appear in the Phi label that dominates the VP. The A-marker is the materialization of these features.

In relation to Spanish DOM, Torrego (1998) includes affectedness as one of the factors triggering marking in the direct object (see also Von Heusinger and Kaiser 2011). The involvement of affectedness as the main triggering feature of DOM in different languages has been highlighted by Næss (2003). Observe the following cases:[2]

(2) a. El vecino   escondió   al   fugitivo.
     The neighbor hide-PAST ACC+the fugitive.
     'The neighbor hid the fugitive'
   b. El vecino   escondió   (a medias) al   fugitivo.
     The neighbor hide-PAST (halfway) ACC+the fugitive.
     'The neighbor hid (halfway) the fugitive'

According to Tenny (1987, 1992, 1994), adverbs such as *every day* ('cada día'), *halfway* ('a medias'), and *a little bit* ('un poco'), indicate that the verb affects its object.[3] The compatibility of the adjunct in parentheses in (2b) indicates that there is affectedness in the sentence. The organizing node class licenses affectedness. If class dominates the feature [anim], the direct object of the verb will be marked with A.

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[2] The following abbreviations are used in the glosses: ACC: accusative; PTE: present; PAST: past; GER: gerund; CL: clitic.

[3] According to Tenny, affectedness can be defined in terms of measure out. The progress of affectedness on the object serves to measure the progress of the event. In the following cases, the progress on half of the object corresponds to half of the progress of the event. Thus, for example, if a piece of music was performed only halfway, the verbal event advances only halfway as well:

(i)   a.   perform a play halfway
            b.   perform half a play

In this article, I will assume the notion of affectedness from Tenny (1987, 1992).

Before moving on to the geometries of the sentences in (2), I will briefly discuss the geometry of Harley & Ritter (2002) and my adaptations.[4]

(3) Geometry of Harley & Ritter (2002).
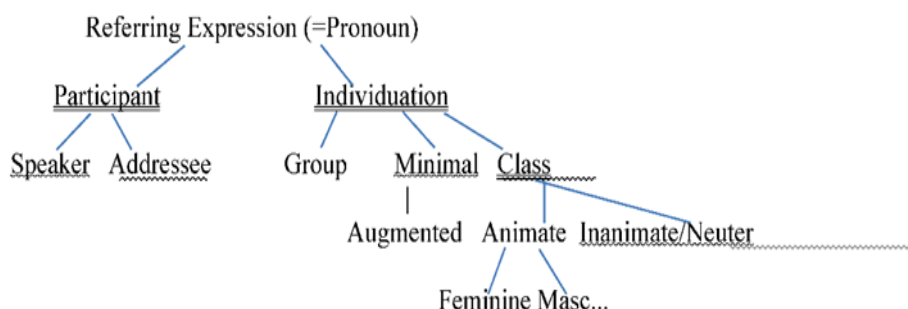
The authors point out that the geometry has two formal characteristics: monovalence, and structural dependence. The first refers to the fact that a feature only appears in the structure if it is active; there is no feature with a negative value. The second characteristic expresses the fact that if a feature A dominates a feature B, then B will only appear if A is present. It is an implication relationship.

In (3), the Phi features are separated into three groups or categories: The first group is participant, which includes the [speaker] and [addressee] features. The second group is individuation, which includes the features [group], [minimal], and [augmented]. The third group is class, which includes [animate], [inanimate/neutral], gender, and other types of information (shape, size, function). The underlined features (X̲) are called "organizing nodes" (ON). Speaker, minimal and inanimate/neuter are the default features (X̲). The default features may not be present in the geometry, a crucial point.

The geometry I propose in (4) below is based on the geometry of Harley & Ritter. The geometry of a pronoun can also be used for a determiner, and so the D node of (4) is equivalent to the Referring Expression node of (3). On the other hand, the geometry of (4) does not include the ON participant, because the 3 person is represented in the geometry of Harley & Ritter with the absence of the ON participant. The objects that will be analyzed in this text correspond to the 3 person.

(4)
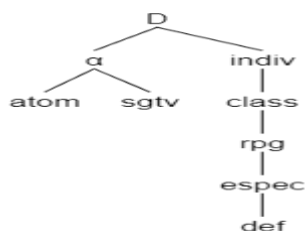
In (4) the organizing nodes (ON) α and rpg are included. Based on the work of Fassi Fehri (2004), I propose that α is the organizing node (ON) that dominates the [atom(ic)] and [singulative] features describing the type of DP. The atomicity feature refers to the integrity of the whole; the singulative feature refers to the integrity of the possible parts of the whole. For example, a DP type Individual (*una manzana* 'an apple') will be [atom] because it can be

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[4] In Camacho Ramírez (2019, 2022) the analysis is developed in detail.

enumerated, and [singulative] because its parts can be named as the whole; however, if the parts are divided, those subparts can no longer be named as the whole.[5]

The ON rpg (*rasgos pragmáticos gramaticalizados* 'grammaticalized pragmatic features') of (4) dominates the pragmatic features of specificity and definiteness. The geometry of the ON rpg that I propose is based on the geometry of Cowper & Hall (2003), in which the specificity feature dominates the definiteness feature. This geometry coincides with Enç's (1991) analysis of specificity, which proposes that every definite object is necessarily specific. As indicated, the ON rpg is important because it must license the lexical feature of presupposition of existence. With these features it is possible to generate a mark on inanimate objects.[6]

Let us now turn to the geometries of the verb. Consider first the geometry of v.

One way to interpret Chomsky's Agree operation (Chomsky 2000, 2001) in the context of feature geometry is to assume that the copy of values from D to v is a copy in v of the features that are dominated by the organizing nodes (ONs) of D. Thus, in the system I assume, Agree is a copy of features and not of values.[7] It can be said that the ONs of v act as the probes that match the goal and, as a consequence, the features that are dominated by the ONs of D are copied into v. I am going to assume that v dominates the same features as D, that is, the same ONs and the same features dominated by those ONs. (5) below is the geometry of v that I propose.

(5) Geometry of v

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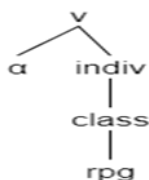
[5] The complete classification of Fassi Fehri is as follows. The names in parentheses correspond to Arabic, French and Spanish, respectively.

(i) a. Kind: [Øatom, + sing]   (tamr-na, dates, les dates, los dátiles)
   b. Individual: [+ atom, + sing]   (tamr-at-na, a date, une date, un dátil)
   c. Group: [+ atom, Øsing]   (fariiq-a-n, a team, uma équipe, un equipo)
   d. Mass: [Øatom, Øsing]   (zayt-a-n, oil, l'huile, el aceite)

According to the monovalence criterion of Harley & Ritter's geometry, the feature can only appear when it is active; there is no other value. Thus, I am going to interpret the Ø value that Fassi Fehri uses as an attribute in a manner that is similar to how the [animate] and [inanimate] features' exist in the geometry. Thus, atomicity is divided into two features: [atom] and [Øatom], just as animacy is divided into the features [animate] and [inanimate]. On the other hand, the + value will not be assumed; the presence of the feature is sufficient.
In the following discussion, I will deal exclusively with individual DPs.

[6] In (4) class dominates rpg. Why should it be like this? In principle it seems reasonable to join these two ONs, because in some languages (for example, Romanian) the DOM responds to the interaction of the feature [anim] with the feature [spec]. On the other hand, if we observe (i), we notice that it is possible to have an object with a D with class (dominating [anim]), but without [spec], without rpg. According to Enç, an object is specific when it can be included in a set; the object of (i) cannot be included in the set in parentheses. So, it must be the case that class dominates rpg and not the opposite.

(i) (*De aquel grupo)   Juan vio   una chica.   non-specific
   (Out of that group) Juan see-PAST a girl
   '(Out of that group) John saw a girl'

[7] Preminger (2004) assumes a similar Agree analysis.

The DOM hypothesis on animate objects that I defend includes a verbal lexical feature, affectedness. So, it is necessary to include lexical features in the analysis. The lexical feature geometry I propose is as follows:

(6) Geometry of V

There are three lexical features included: lexical aspect (α-V), presupposition of existence (δ), and affectedness. Following ideas from Fashi Fehri (2005), I propose that the lexical feature α-V dominates the same features that α-D dominates: [atom(icity)] and [singulative]. This time, [atom] describes the integrity of a predicate as a whole; and [singulative] describes the integrity of the possible parts of a predicate.[8] The lexical feature α-V dominates δ which in turn dominates affectedness. These relations imply that for there to be affectedness there must be δ.[9] For there to be δ there must be α-V.

The following analysis will be done by observing the general geometry of (7), which joins the geometries presented above, the geometry of D, the geometry of v and the geometry of V. The geometry of (7) does not correspond to the VP of any specific sentence.[10] In the geometry of (7) every ON dominates a non-default feature.

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[8] The classification of Fassi Fehri is as follows:

(i) a. Activity: [Øatom, + singulative]
   b. Achievement: [+atom, + singulative]
   c. Accomplishment: [+atom, Øsingulative]
   d. State: [Øatom, Øsingulative]

An accomplishment (*comer una manzana* 'to eat an apple') is composed of several events that are not discrete (it is not [singulative]), although they can be grouped together to form a single event (it is [atom]). An activity has discrete events (subevents), so it is [singulative], although it cannot form a single event, and then it is not [atom]. For example, in the sentence *El niño corre* ('The kid runs'), the event is not bounded (it does not have an endpoint), so it is not possible to form an integral whole; it is not [atom]. On the other hand, an achievement has a single discrete event, so it is [atom] and [singulative]. For example, in *Juan encontró la solución* ('John found the solution'), there is a delimited event (with an endpoint), which is unique and discrete. Finally, a state (*conocer la respuesta* 'to know the answer') is a homogeneous event that is neither atomic nor discrete. As mentioned, the + value will not be assumed; the presence of the feature is sufficient.

[9] Why must δ dominate affectedness (implying that without presupposition of existence (δ) there can be no affectedness)? The evidence comes from DOM with animate objects. The A-marker is obligatory when the object is animate and when the verb presupposes the existence of the object, as with the verb *pintar* (to paint) in (i). Interestingly, the mark becomes optional before an intensional verb (which as such may or may not presuppose the existence of the object), as in (ii). When there is δ in the verb *buscar*, there may be affectedness, and there is marking. If there is no δ, there can be no affectedness, and there is no mark. For a development of these ideas see Camacho Ramírez (2022).

(i) Juan pinto *(a) la chica.   (ii) María buscaba (a)l chico adecuado.
   'John painted the girl'   'Maria was looking for the right guy'

On the other hand, Beavers (2011) notes that affectedness works best when the existence of the affected element is presupposed. In my proposal, the presupposition of existence (δ) of the object is necessary in order to insert affectedness, that is, δ dominates affectedness.

[10] The label Phi will be added to the geometry of 7 (see (9c)).

(7)

I present in the following the ideas in relation to DOM and the labeling operation.

In Camacho Ramírez (2022), it is argued that the A-marker of the DOM of Spanish is the materialization of the features contained in the Phi label that dominates the VP. Let us see how.

According to Chomsky (2013, 2015), labels are necessary for sentence interpretation. The steps for labeling the VP are as follows:

(8)
STEP 1: Merge of V with the DP.
STEP 2: IM (internal merge) of the DP.
STEP 3: Insertion of v*.
STEP 4: V inherits phi features from v*.
STEP 5: Agree between v* and the moved DP. The DP receives case.
STEP 6: VP and Phi labels appear.

Steps 1 and 2 are depicted in figure (9a), below. In figure (9b), v* (the v of a transitive verb) has been inserted. This v* must inherit its (yet unvalued) features for V.[11] Agree occurs, and the features of v* are valued (i.e., the features that the D ONs dominate are copied in the v* ONs); the features inherited by V are also valued. The DP receives a case. With that inheritance of features, it is possible for V to label VP. The VP label with the DP label must share their prominent features in order to create the Phi label. In this way, the missing labels in tree (9b) are completed in (9c).

(9)
a. Merge of V with the DP, and movement (IM) of the DP.
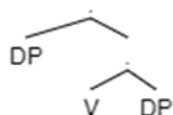
b. Insertion of v*
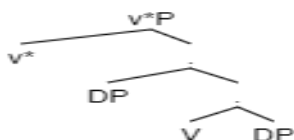
c. Labeling

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[11] According to Chomsky (2013), inheritance is the copying of features.
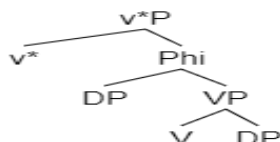
I would like to emphasize the following point. If inheritance occurs before Agree, v should inherit only its ONs. What are the ONs that will be inherited by V? All its ONs: α, individuation, class and rpg. After this inheritance, v is valued with the ONs of D. The ONs that V inherited from v also end up valued, i.e., the valuation occurred in v occurs also in V, as said.

Note that α of v* (α -v) will also be inherited for V (then, it will become α-V). α-V will be the ON expressing the lexical aspect, as assumed. However, although α-V was inherited, the features [ATOM] and [SINGULATIVE] that it dominates would not be. In principle, α-V cannot dominate the same features as α-v, because when v inherits its ONs for V, α-v does not yet dominate any features, i.e., α-v was not yet valued with the features of α-D; α-v could not inherit features that it does not yet dominate. There is also another reason. An intransitive verb will have a v without probes (it will not have α-v or any other probe (ON)), because there will be no object functioning as a goal; however, that verb will have a lexical aspect, i.e., it will have an α-V dominating [ATOM] and [SINGULATIVE] features describing the type of verbal event. Therefore, α-V cannot have inherited features from α-v, because the α-v of an intransitive will have no dominated features to inherit.

The features [ATOM] and [SINGULATIVE] are capitalized in (7) to indicate that they are not the same features that α-v dominates (As was said, the features that α-v dominates were valued/copied from α-D.[12]). These lexical features [ATOM] and [SINGULATIVE] must be inserted in V together with δ and affectedness, I assume. All these features must come directly from the lexicon.[13]

Regarding the timing of insertion of the lexical features of V ([ATOM], [SINGULATIVE], δ and affectedness), the proposal I advocate is that insertion should occur after inheritance and before Agree. Observe (10).

(10)
STEP 1: Merge of V with the DP.
STEP 2: IM (internal merge) of the DP.
STEP 3: Insertion of v* (dominating the same ONs that D dominates).
STEP 4: V inherits those ONs from v*.
STEP 5: Insertion of lexical features in V ([ATOM], [SINGULATIVE], δ, and affectedness).
STEP 6: Agree between v* and the moved DP. The DP receives case.
STEP 7: VP and Phi labels appear.

Lexical feature insertion in V must occur after V inherited its ONs from v* and before the Agree operation takes place. If the insertion of lexical features were to occur after Agree, α-V would end up dominating the features that α-v dominates, because the features that the ONs (the probes) of v copy from D will be the same features that the ONs of V will end up dominating. However, the features that α-v dominates are not the same features that α-V dominates, as seen. Thus, lexical feature insertion cannot occur after Agree. Can the insertion of lexical features occur before inheritance? This does not seem to be the case, because δ (which dominates affectedness)

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[12] As was established, the valuation of the probe features with the goal features can be understood in the context of feature geometry as a feature copy, the probe copies the goal features. In what follows, I will use the notion of feature copying instead of feature valuation.

[13] According to the analysis, the lexical features of V would be subject to late insertion. Hence, V would not have these features from the beginning of the derivation. In Harley (2014), the idea that the verbal root would have no semantic information during part of the derivation is developed.

is dominated by α-V. Therefore, for δ and affectedness to be inserted it is necessary that there be α-V, i.e., it is necessary that V has already inherited α from v.

We can conclude that the insertion of lexical features in V ([ATOM] and [SINGULATIVE] δ and affectedness) must occur after inheritance and before Agree.

In Chomsky (2013, 2015) it is argued that the inheritance of features of v* for V is to strengthen the root (V), and thus V can label as VP. That strengthening would consist of licensing the lexical features of V with the inherited ONs (Camacho Ramírez 2022). The licensing would occur as follows:

(i) α-V, the lexical aspect, is licensed with the ON individuation inherited by V. On the basis of Verkuyl (1972, 1989, 1993), Link (1983, 1987), Bach (1986), and Krifka (1989, 1992), Borer (2005) argues that a telic event involves quantification. According to the author, telicity is achieved when an aspectual node enters into a relation with a quantified DP. This is the spirit of my proposal. The ON individuation-v must be inherited by V to license the lexical feature α-V (the lexical aspect). This ON individuation-v will then copy the features that individuation-D dominates. If there were no individuation-D, it would not be possible to have individuation-v, because the latter copies the features of the former. Without individuation-v it would not be possible to license α-V.

(ii) δ, the existence presupposition, is licensed with the inherited ON rpg. In the literature (Rivero (1977); Enç (1991); Leonetti (2004)), the notion of existence has often been associated with specificity. My version of this relationship is between the presupposition of existence (δ) and rpg (the ON that dominates the [spec] feature). The ON rpg-v must be inherited by V to license the lexical feature δ. Then, rpg-v will copy the features of rpg-D. The rpg that V inherited (rpg-V) will also dominate the same features as rpg-v.

(iii) Affectedness is licensed with the inherited ON class. V must inherit the ON class from v* to license affectedness. This is the approach I advocate to explain the DOM of animate objects in Spanish (Camacho Ramírez 2022).

Once those lexical features of V (α-V, δ, affectedness) have been licensed, it will be possible for V to label VP. On the other hand, I assume that this VP must contain the same features as V (see (11b) below). Afterwards, the formed VP and the moved DP must share its prominent feature and form the Phi label. Phi label of a VP with animate object marked must contain the prominent lexical feature affectedness and its prominent ON licenser class, dominating the feature [anim]. Observe the geometries of the VP heads of the sentences in (2).

(11) *El vecino escondió al fugitivo* (The neighbor hid ACC+the fugitive).

(a) before insertion of v*, inheritance, Agree, and labeling
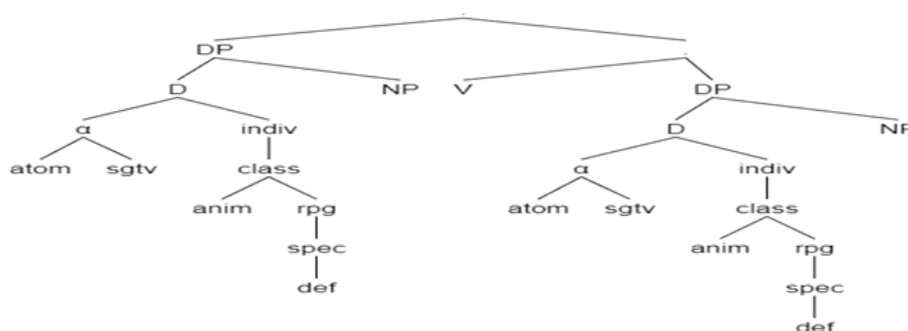
In the geometry of (11a), the NP has not been developed; the analysis of D is the primordial. The marked object is singular; therefore, the feature dominating individuation must be [minimal], which does not appear because it is default. The object is animate; therefore, class dominates [anim]. It is also definite [def] and specific [spec], then rpg must dominate these features. On the other hand, the object is an I(ndividual), therefore, it is [atom] and [singulative]. That DP must move to the V-specifier position as part of the VP labeling process. There are no labels yet.

(b) after insertion of v*, inheritance, Agree, and labeling
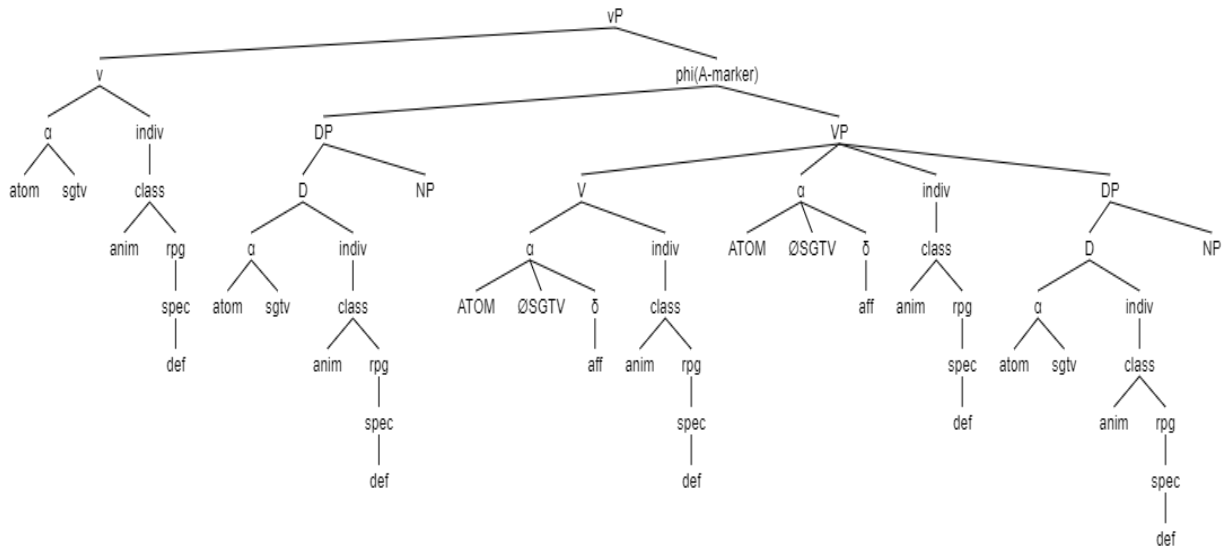
(c) Geometry of the Phi label.

According to Chomsky (2015), after the object was moved, v* is inserted. That v* inherits its ONs for V. According to the proposal I defend (Camacho Ramírez 2022), after inheritance, the lexical features α-V (which this time dominates [ØATOM], [SINGULATIVE]), δ and affectedness are inserted.[14] These lexical features are licensed with the ONs inherited by V. Then, there is Agree between v* and D; the ONs of v* end up dominating the same features that the ONs of D dominate. The ONs that V inherited will dominate the same features as the ONs of v. VP labeling occurs; this VP must dominate the same features as the V head, as shown in (11b). The labeled VP and DP must share their prominent features to give content to the Phi label that dominates them, as shown (11c). For diagramming reasons, the Phi label was separated from the geometry of (11b). With the prominent lexical feature affectedness and class dominating [anim], an A-marker is generated.

If the object of (2) were indefinite (*El vecino escondió a un fugitivo* 'The neighbor hid the fugitive'), the feature [def] would have to be removed from the geometries of (11) because I

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[14] The hypothesis is that a given lexical feature will be inserted into V if there is a licenser present in V for that lexical feature. That licenser is one of the ONs that V inherited from v*.

assume that the indefinite feature is default, therefore, it does not appear in the geometry. All other features remain the same. [15]

3. DOM in inanimate objects

3.1 The problem and some proposals in the literature

In Spanish, the A-marker can also appear with inanimate objects (see Laca (1995), Torrego (1998, 1999), García García (2007), Rodríguez-Mondoñedo (2007), Primus (2012), Hoff & Diaz-Campos (2015), Zdrojewsky (2020), Martin (1999), Delbecque (2002)).

Let's look at the following Torrego cases (1999).[16]

(12) a. Un adjetivo califica a un sustantivo.
b. Los días siguen a las noches.
c. El uno precede al dos.
d. En esta receta, la leche puede sustituir al huevo.
e. Esta cuesta supera a aquella.
f. Estos verbos asignan *a* a su complemento.

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[15] In Miyagawa, S. & Wu, D. & Koizumi, M., (2019), it is argued that case (the DOM mark for the authors) is used in the labeling mechanism. The authors assume that certain Turkish DPs must come out of the VP. Those DPs must merge with an XP. A projection problem of type {YP(DP), XP} is generated. Caso is used to solve the problem. According to the authors, case is a head that is adjunct to the DP. In this context, case, a head, should label; however, it will not be able to do so because it is an adjunct. The other element, the XP, will be the one to label. Thus, case avoids a situation in which a projection problem could be generated, namely, when two maximal projections merge {YP, XP}. According to the hypothesis defended in this text (see also Camacho Ramírez (2022)), the DOM mark is the expression of the Phi label, which is the result of the merge of the DP with the formed VP. The Phi label contains the prominent features that were shared between the DP and the VP. This sharing of features is a way to solve a potential projection problem, according to Chomsky (2013, 2015). DOM would be the expression of that solution.

The proposals, although similar, present important differences. Crucially, the authors make an equivalence between accusative case and DOM; however, they would not be the same. The case feature is an uninterpretable feature. Lexical (hence, interpretable) features such as affectedness would intervene in DOM (Torrego (1998), Næss (2003), Von Heusinger & Kaiser (2011), Von Heusinger (2018), Camacho Ramírez (2018, 2019, 2022), among others). If DOM is indeed the expression of the Phi label (containing lexical features such as affectedness), it could not be the same as case. Case is prior to the formation of such a label, according to Chomsky (2013, 2015). On the other hand, assuming that case is the same as DOM, it is not evident that the function of case is to avoid a projection problem.

[16] I add the translations:

(12) a. Un adjetivo califica a un sustantivo.
An adjective qualify-PTE ACC a noun
'An adjective qualifies a noun'
b. Los días siguen a las noches.
The days follow-PTE ACC the nights
'Days follow nights'
c. El uno precede al dos.
The one precede-PTE ACC+the two
'One precedes two'
d. En esta receta, la leche puede sustituir al huevo.
In this recipe, the milk can-PTE replace ACC+the egg
'In this recipe, milk can replace the egg'
e. Esta cuesta supera a aquella.
This slope outrank-PTE ACC that
'This slope outranks that one'
f. Estos verbos asignan *a* a su complemento.
These verbs assign-PTE ACC their complement
'These verbs assign *a* to their complement'

[Torrego 1999: 1788]

According to Torrego (1999), the A-marker in inanimate objects that appears with these verbs does not respond to the same conditions as the A-marker with animate objects.[17] The author adds that it is a semantic class that assigns A to the complement by virtue of its sense. Torrego points out that semantically these verbs seem to imply a sense of linear or scalar contiguity and equiparation between subject and object. I will assume that the verbs in question belong to the semantic class described by the author. Those semantic features will be part of the mechanism I will propose to explain DOM in inanimate objects.

Morimoto & de Swart (2006), based on Optimality Theory, propose the following restriction regarding the DOM of Spanish:

(13) Distinguishability
 Mark objects that are not outranked by the subject in prominence (animacy, specificity).

The idea is that if the object has the same degree of definiteness/specificity and animacy as the subject, then the object should be marked. However, as Rodriguez-Mondoñedo (2007) points out, marking is not possible before inanimate objects even when both subject and object have the same degree of definiteness and specificity. Note the following case of the author:

(14) El huracán causó (*a) las tormentas.
  The hurricane caused (*A) the storms

[Rodríguez-Mondoñedo 2007: 141]

In (14) the object and subject have the same degree of definiteness and animacy; however, the object cannot be marked.

García García (2007) and Primus (2012) defend a hypothesis of thematic distinctness. The A-marker in inanimate objects is required when the direct object is equally or more agentive than the subject. Let us observe García García's explanation of the case of the verb *calificar* (to qualify) or *acompañar* (to accompany).

(15) a. Un adjetivo acompaña/califica **a**   un sustantivo.
   'An adjective accompanies/qualifies a noun.'
  b. [NEXT-TO(x,y)]

[García García 2007: 78]

According to García García, sentence (15a) basically expresses the metalinguistic meaning of 'to serve as an adjunct'. The sentence expresses a spatial relation without a specific order. It is a reversible or symmetrical relation; the adjective is close to the noun and the noun is close to the adjective. Thus, since both arguments can be taken as Proto-Agents (Dowty 1991), it is necessary to distinguish them with the A-marker.

The symmetrical or reversible relation between arguments appears in several verbs that mark their inanimate object; however, there are verbs that exhibit such symmetry, but do not allow marking. In (16a) the object can also trigger the event; however, marking is not possible. On the other hand, there are cases in which it is possible to mark the inanimate object, even though the

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[17] For Torrego, the conditioning factors of DOM in Spanish are telicity, affectedness, animacy, agentivity and specificity.

verb does not establish a symmetrical relation. In (16b), it is not obvious that the object *las mesas* can be a Proto-Agent; however, marking is possible.[18]

(16)   a. El huracán   desencadenó (*a)   algunos cambios climáticos.
          The hurricane trigger-PAST (ACC) some   changes weather
          'The hurricane triggered some weather changes'
       b. Pedro rodeó   a   las mesas.
          Pedro surround-PAST ACC the tables
          'Peter surrounded the tables'

The author's hypothesis is based on a distinction made by the mark at the thematic level (both arguments are Proto-Agents). It is not clear, however, how to apply that hypothesis in the DOM of animacy objects. Many of the verbs that mark their animacy objects (*ver* (to see), *pintar* (to paint), *esconder* (to hide), etc.) do not establish a symmetrical relation between subject and object. The hypothesis I defend about DOM in inanimate objects appeals to the same mechanism described for DOM in animate objects, the labeling operation, as we shall see.

3.2 Analysis and hypothesis

In Spanish the following verbs can mark their direct inanimate objects with A: *seguir* (to follow), *preceder* (to precede), *obedecer* (to obey), *sustituir* (to replace), *colocar* (to place), *poner* (to put), *situar* (to locate), *implicar* (to imply), etc. Laca (1995) characterizes these verbs as follows: "… verbos de "transitividad atípica" que expresan una relación y no la acción de un agente sobre un paciente." (p. 74) ("... verbs of "atypical transitivity" that express a relation and not the action of an agent on a patient."). As noted, Torrego (1999) points out that semantically these verbs seem to imply a sense of linear or scalar contiguity and equiparation between subject and object. In turn, Fábregas (2013) underlies the fact that these verbs are stative that denote order relationships between entities. García García (2007) describes those verbs as position or placement verbs. The author adds to this first set the group of verbs he calls naming and singling out: *llamar* (to call), *considerar* (to consider), *caracterizar* (to characterize), etc.

Following García García's classification, in what follows, I will call the verbs of the first group as group-P; the second ones, group-N. In this first part of the analysis, I will concentrate on the group-P verbs.

The verbs of the group-P generally present two versions, stative and non-stative. Let us look at the following cases of the stative version with inanimate object:

(17) Esta cuesta supera   a   aquella.
     This slope outrank-PTE ACC that
     'This slope outranks that one'

[Torrego 1999: 1788]

(18) Su voluntad obedece   a   la razón.
     His will   obey-PTE ACC the reason
     'His will obeys the reason'
(19) El verbo sigue   al   sujeto.
     The verb follow-PTE ACC+the subject
     'The verb follows the subject'
(20) El sujeto   precede al   verbo.
     The subject precedes ACC+the verb
     'Subjects precede verbs'

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[18] I return to case (16a) in 3.2, and to case (16b) in 3.4. See also Rodriguez-Mondoñedo (2007) on cases like (16b).

I add the following cases of the stative version with animate objects:

(21) En el escalafón militar, el sargento precede   al   cabo.
     In the ranks military,   the sergeant precede-PTE ACC+the corporal
     'In the military ranks, the sergeant precedes the corporal'

(22) En el ranking, ese atleta   supera   a   aquel otro.
     In the ranking, that athlete outrank-PTE ACC that other
     'In the ranking, that athlete outranks the other one'

(23) En la jerarquía de la Marina, el capitán sigue   al   almirante.
     In the hierarchy of the Navy, the captain follow-PTE ACC+the admiral
     'In the Navy hierarchy, the captain follows the admiral'

The verb *obedecer* does not allow animate objects in its stative version.

(24) *Su depresión   obedece   a   su nueva pareja.
     Her depression obey-PTE ACC her new partner
     'Her depression obeys to her new partner'

The data show that direct inanimate or animate objects in the stative version are always marked with A.

Fábregas (2013) notes that the non-stative version does not mark its inanimate objects:

(25) Juan siguió   la vía   del   tren.
     Juan follow-PAST the road of-the train
     'John followed the railroad'

These non-stative versions do mark their objects when they are animate. I add the following case:

(26) Pedrito siguió   *(a)   su hermano en la calle.
     Pedrito follow-PAST (ACC) his brother in the street.
     'Pedrito followed his brother in the street'

The data indicate that the stative versions of the verbs in question always mark their objects regardless of their animacy. In contrast, the non-stative versions mark their objects only when they are animate.

The following analysis concentrates on the inanimate objects of the stative version, although the analysis also applies to the animate objects of that version. In parallel, the two objects of the non-stative version, inanimate and animate, will also be analyzed. I begin with the verb *obedecer* (to obey).

The verb *obedecer* has more than one meaning. It can mean "to fulfill/to do the will of the one who commands" or "to have its origin in something else/it follows from" [from REAL ACADEMIA ESPAÑOLA: Diccionario de la lengua española, 23.ª ed., [versión 23.5 en línea]. <https://dle.rae.es> [05/06/2018]]. In the second case there is always A, and the verb is stative. As is known, a stative verb is not compatible with a progressive structure; a non-stative verb is. Note the following cases:

(27) a.*Su voluntad está   obedeciendo a   la razón.   stative
      His will   be-PTE obey-GER   ACC the reason
      'His will is obeying reason'
   b. Los congresistas están   obedeciendo al   dictador.   non-stative
      The congressmen be-PTE obey-GER   ACC+the dictator
      'The congressmen are obeying the dictator'

The contrast in (27) proves that we are indeed dealing with two versions of the same verb, one stative and the other non-stative.

As it was said, the A-marker cannot be absent in the stative version. In the non-stative version, the A appears only before animate objects. Observe the following comparisons:

(28) Su depresión obedece *(a)   la falta de estímulos.   stative
  His depression obey-PTE (ACC) the lack of stimuli
  'His depression is due to the lack of stimuli'
(29) Los congresistas obedecieron*(a)l   dictador.   non-stative
  The congressmen obey-PAST (ACC)+the dictator
  'The congressmen obeyed the dictator'
(30) Juan obedeció   (*a) la orden.   non-stative
  Juan obey-PAST ACC the order
  'John obeyed the order'

The verb *seguir* (to follow) has several meanings as well. It can mean "to be after", a stative meaning. It can also mean "to go in search of someone or something; to go, walk toward him or it"; a non-stative meaning. Only the second meaning is compatible with a progressive (31b); indicating that it is indeed a non-stative version. The stative version is not compatible (31a).

(31) a. ??En este hotel, el baño   está   siguiendo   al   cuarto.   stative
   In this hotel, the bathroom be-PTE follow-GER ACC+the room.
   'In this hotel, the bathroom follows the room'
  b. Juan está   siguiendo   al   guía.   non-stative
  Juan be-PTE follow-ING ACC+the guide.
  'John is following the guide'

Let us now compare the behavior of the two versions in relation to the A-marker. The stative version must always mark the object.

(32) El baño   sigue   *(a)l   cuarto.   stative
  The bathroom follow-PTE (ACC)+the bedroom
  'The bathroom follows the bedroom'

In its non-stative meaning (to go in search of someone or something; to go, walk towards him or it), there is only A when the object is animate, as shown in (33) and (34):

(33) Juan siguió   *(a)l   guía.   non-stative
  Juan follow-PAST (ACC)+the guide
  'John followed the guide'
(34) Juan siguió   (*a)l   camino.   non-stative
  Juan follow-PAST (ACC)+the road
  'John followed the road'

Let us now look at the case of the verb *preceder* (to precede). According to the DRAE, the verb can mean "to go before in time, order or place" or "said of a person or thing: to have preference, primacy or superiority over another" [REAL ACADEMIA ESPAÑOLA: Diccionario de la lengua española, 23.ª ed., [versión 23.5 en línea]. <https://dle.rae.es> [05/06/2018]]. Delbecque (2002) and García García (2007), argue that the verb can also mean "orientate",

"influence". This last meaning can be related to the meaning of "to have preference, primacy or superiority over another".

The meaning of "to go before in time, order or place" is relational, therefore, not agentive and stative. The meaning of "orientate", "influence" is dynamic, not stative. The following contrast indeed shows that the first meaning is not compatible with a progressive; indicating that it is a stative version. The second meaning is compatible; therefore, the version is non-stative.

(35) a.*En español, el sujeto está   precediendo al   verbo.   stative
     In Spanish, the subject be-PTE precede-ING ACC+the   verb
     'In Spanish, the subject is preceding the verb'
    b. El visionario autor está (siempre)   precediendo a   sus colegas.   non stative
     The visionary author be-PTE (always) precede-ING ACC his colleagues
     'The visionary author is (always) preceding his colleagues'

Let's now look at the contrasts in relation to A-marker:

(36) El sujeto   precede   ??(a)l   verbo.   stative
    The subject precede-PTE ACC+the verb
    'The subject precedes the verb'
(37) El día   precede   *(a)   la noche.   stative
    The day precede-PTE (ACC) the night
    'The day precedes the night'

The stative version must always mark the object as shown by the impossibility of (36) and (37) unmarked. On the other hand, as the impossibility of (38) and (39b) shows, the marking appears only when the object is animate if the verb is non-stative. We can say that the verb *preceder* behaves like the other verbs analyzed.

(38) Ese autor precede   *(a)   sus colegas.   non-stative
    This author precede-PTE (ACC) his colleagues
    'This author precedes his colleagues'
(39) a. La hipótesis de trabajo precede/orienta   la verificación empírica.   non-stative
     The hypothesis of work precedes/orientates the verification empirical
     'The working hypothesis precedes/orientates the empirical verification'
                                  (Delbecque 2002: 92)
b. La hipótesis de trabajo precede/orienta   (??a) la verificación empírica.   non-stative
     The hypothesis of work precedes/orientates (ACC) the verification empirical
     'The working hypothesis precedes/orientates the empirical verification'

The verb *superar* (to outrank) also shows similar behavior to the other verbs. It presents a stative meaning (to be superior to someone or something) and a non-stative meaning (to overcome obstacles or difficulties). Only the stative version does not allow the progressive:

(40) a. ?? Esta cuesta está   superando   a   aquella otra.   stative
     This slope be-PTE outrank-GER ACC that   one
     'This slope is outranking that one'
    b. Elena está   superando   a   los otros atletas.   non-stative
     Elena be-PTE outperforming ACC the other athletes
     'Elena is outperforming the other athletes'

In relation to A-marker, the stative version cannot omit to mark its object. I repeat the case with Torrego's stative version (41a); I add (41b).

(41) a. Esta cuesta supera   a   aquella.   stative
        This slope   outrank-PTE ACC that
        'This slope outranks that one'
    b. *Esta cuesta supera   aquella.   stative
        This slope outrank-PTE that
        'This slope outranks that one'

In the non-stative version, the A-marker appears only when the object is animate.

(42) Elena superó   *(a)l   atleta en la carrera.   non-stative
    Elena outperform-PAST ACC+the athlete in the race
    'Elena outperformed the athlete in the race'
(43) Juan superó   (*a) la adicción.   non-stative
    Juan overcome-PAST ACC the addiction.
    'John overcame addiction'

We have seen so far that group-P verbs typically present a stative and a non-stative version. The stative version always marks its objects regardless of their animacy. The non-stative version marks its objects only when they are animate.

The hypothesis I defend concerning the A-marking on inanimate objects of group-P verbs is as follows:

(44) The prominent features responsible for DOM in inanimate objects of group-P verbs are the lexical feature δ (the presupposition of existence) and the ON rpg, the licenser of δ.[19]

According to Torrego (1999), the verbs that mark their inanimate objects express linear or scalar contiguity and equiparation between the subject and the object. The linear or scalar contiguity feature would be the one underlying the group-P verbs, stative version, (*seguir* (to follow), *preceder* (to precede), *superar* (to outrank), *obedecer* (to obey), etc.).[20] In the contiguity relation, one element must precede the other, i.e., one element must necessarily already be present in the relation. If one of the elements were not present, the other element could not be located, because it would have no point of reference. How to mark this 'preexistence'? The candidate must be the feature expressing the presupposition of existence, δ. I will also assume that if the presupposition of existence of the object is licensed before the corresponding presupposition of the subject, the object must 'exist before' (to preexist) the subject. That is, the presupposition of existence of the object will be interpreted before the corresponding one of the subject. Therefore, it will be the object, and not the subject, that will be marked with A.

In the proposed analysis, the prominent lexical feature δ interacts with the meaning of the verb (contiguity). Broadly speaking, we can say that it is not enough for a lexical feature to be present for it to be prominent. The prominent lexical feature must contribute to the establishment of the ultimate meaning of the verb. Thus, δ must contribute to the establishment of the relation of

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[19] I would like to emphasize that the verbs seen so far that mark inanimate objects (verbs in their stative version) also mark animate objects (see cases (21)-(23)). In the latter case, the prominent participating features of the DOM must also be δ and rpg. Thus, the hypothesis of (44) explains also the marking in the cases (21)-(23). As it was mentioned, the DOM with δ is not sensitive to the animacy of the object, therefore, animate, and inanimate objects are marked.

[20] The equiparation feature would be the one underlying the naming verbs (*llamar* (to call), *calificar* (to qualify), etc.). These verbs will be analyzed later.

contiguity expressed by the verb, which implies an interaction with the meaning of the verb. In a sentence like (45) below, δ could not be prominent because it does not interact with the verb meaning; the verb does not establish a contiguity relation between subject and object. In (45), δ is necessary only to indicate the presupposition of object existence, and allow the insertion of affectedness, which does interact with the verb meaning. Affectedness is the prominent lexical feature in (45). The mark in (45) responds to the presence of affectedness and its class licenser dominating [anim].

(45) Robin escondió   al   fugitivo.
     Robin hide-PAST ACC+the fugitive
     'Robin hid the fugitive'

It is noteworthy that δ may be prominent when there is no affectedness. If affectedness is present, it will be the prominent lexical feature.

According to García García (2007), the predicate that marks its inanimate object establishes, thematically, a reversible or symmetrical relation between the subject and the object. For example, in a sentence with the verb *sustituir* (to substitute), X could substitute Y, but also Y could substitute X. Thus, the A-marker is necessary to distinguish those arguments. Another type of case that the author discusses is with effected object (46a). No marking is necessary in (46a) because the subject outranks the object in agentivity; there is no symmetrical relation. However, in the following similar case, the object of (46b) can be the subject of (46c), i.e., a symmetrical relation between subject and object is established; nevertheless, marking is not possible.

(46) a. El/*al dolor de cabeza lo   provocan   las preocupaciones
        the   headache$_i$ pron.3.SG-acc.-masc.$_i$ trigger-3.PL the worries
        'The headache is caused by worries.'

                                                        [García García 2007; 79]
     b. El huracán desencadenó   (*a)   algunos cambios climáticos.
        The hurricane trigger-PAST (ACC) some   changes weather
        'The hurricane triggered some weather changes'
     c. Algunos cambios climáticos desencadenaron (*a)l huracán.
         Some   changes weather   trigger-PAST (ACC)+the hurricane
        'Some weather changes triggered the hurricane.

My hypothesis about (46) is that there is never δ in V; there is no presupposition of existence of the object. The object does not preexist the event. Thus, even if the idiosyncratic meaning of the verb can establish a symmetric relation between inanimate arguments, such a meaning is not compatible with the presence of δ, hence, there can be no DOM.

García García uses the mechanism of thematic role assignment to instantiate his proposal on inanimate objects. I defend a mechanism of labeling, in which lexical features of the verb (δ, for example) and morphosyntactic features of the object (rpg, for example) are involved. As stated, it is not obvious how role assignment could be the mechanism to explain DOM in animate objects. With the labeling operation, DOM in animate and inanimate objects can be explained.

We saw earlier that the organizing node (ON) that licenses the prominent lexical feature becomes the prominent ON. The licenser of δ is the ON rpg, which as such becomes the prominent ON. This prominent ON rpg must, minimally, dominate the feature [spec].[21] As discussed, according to Enç (1991), an element is specific when it can be included in a set. The objects in the following sentences can be included in the set in parentheses, therefore, such objects must be

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[21] There could not be an ON that does not dominate any feature. The first feature that the ON rpg dominates is [spec], therefore, if there is rpg, there must be minimally [spec].

specific. As I did before, I will concentrate on the stative versions with inanimate objects, although the test works for animate objects as well.

(47) (Del grupo de predicados oracionales),   el sujeto precede   al   verbo.
     (From the group of predicates sentence), the subject precede-PTE ACC+the verb
     '(From the group of sentence predicates), the subject precedes the verb'

(48) (De los diferentes tipos de construcciones humanas), ese monte supera fácilmente a un rascacielos.
     (Of the different types of constructions humans), that mountain outrank-PTE easily ACC a skyscraper
     '(Of the different types of human constructions), that mountain easily outranks a skyscraper'

(49) (De las posibles motivaciones de su conducta), la reacción del senador obedece   a un interés económico.
     (Of the possible motivations for his conduct), the reaction of+the senator obey-PTE ACC an interest economic
     '(Of the possible motivations for his conduct), the senator's reaction obeys an economic interest'

 (50) (Del grupo de categorías sintácticas presentes en ese texto), el verbo siempre sigue a un sujeto.
     (From the group of categories syntactic present in this text), the verb always follow-PTE ACC a subject.
     '(From the group of syntactic categories present in this text), the verb always follows a subject'

With rpg-D it is possible to have rpg-v because the latter will copy the features of the former. That ON rpg-v will be inherited for V to license the lexical feature δ.

So far, we have seen the data and hypotheses regarding DOM in inanimate objects of the stative version of group-P verbs. In relation to the non-stative version of the group-P verbs, the hypothesis I defend is the same as with animate objects (I repeat here (1) with another numeration).

(51) The Spanish DOM depends on the licensing of the affectedness feature of the verb by the organizing node class. If class dominates the feature [anim(ate)], the object must be marked with A.

According to (51), in the stative version of the group-P, the prominent ON cannot be class, because it would not be possible to have DOM with inanimate. On the other hand, if affectedness expresses the progress of the event over the object, there must not be affectedness in a state, because a state does not progress over its object. Let us observe the following contrasts where only the non-stative version is compatible with adverbs indicating affectedness.

(52) a. Juan siguió   a medias al   guía.   non-stative
        Juan follow-PAST halfway ACC+the guide
        'John followed the guide halfway'
     b. El verbo sigue   (*a medias) al   sujeto.   stative
        The verb follow-PTE halfway   ACC+the subject
        'The verb follows the subject halfway'

(53) a. Juan obedece   a medias a   su novia.   non-stative
        Juan obey-PTE halfway ACC his girlfriend
        'John obeys his girlfriend halfway'
   b. Su voluntad obedece   (?? a medias) a   la razón.   stative
        His will   obey-PTE halfway   ACC the reason

'His will obeys the reason halfway'

(54) a. En cada vuelta, Lewis precede (cada vez más)   a   su rival más próximo. non-stative
        On every lap, Lewis precede-PTE (more and more) ACC his rival nearest
         'On every lap, Lewis precedes (more and more) his nearest rival'
    b. El sujeto   precede   (*cada vez más) al   verbo.   stative
       The subject precede-PTE (more and more) ACC+the verb
        'The subject precedes (more and more) the verb'

(55) a. En las competencias, Iván supera   (cada día más) a   su competidor. non-stative
        In the competitions, Ivan outperform-PTE (every day more) ACC his competitor.
         'In the competitions, Ivan outperforms (more every day) his competitor'
    b. Esta cuesta supera   (*cada día más) a   aquella.   stative
       This slope outrank-PTE (every day more) ACC that
        'This slope outranks (more every day) that one'

The contrasts in (52)-(55) show that there is no affectedness in the stative versions of the verbs; the non-stative versions do show compatibility with adverbs that indicate affectedness.[22]

According to the analysis done so far, we can infer some interactions between the lexical features of the verb (V). I repeat here the lexical feature geometry of (6).

(6) Geometry of V
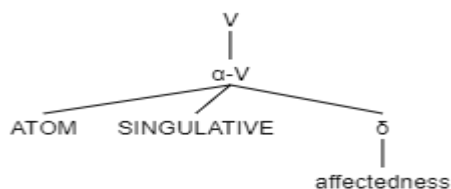
We have seen that δ is prominent when the verb is stative. The verb is stative when there is no affectedness, therefore, δ may be prominent only when there is no affectedness. On the other hand, if affectedness is the prominent one, the verb will be non-stative, and there should be δ (because δ dominates affectedness); although δ may not be prominent, because affectedness is the typical prominent lexical feature in Spanish.

δ may be prominent lexical feature if α-V (the lexical aspect) dominates the features of a stative event: [ØATOM], [ØSINGULATIVE]. Affectedness may be the prominent lexical feature if α-V dominates at least one feature that does not have the Ø attribute, i.e., affectedness will be the prominent feature if α-V dominates any of the following combinations: [ØATOM],

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[22] Note that compatibility does not necessarily indicate that the non-stative version should have affectedness. Let's look at the following cases.
(i) Laura escondió un prisionero durante dos años.
    Laura hid   a   prisoner for two years
    'Laura hid a prisioner during two years'

                                                    [Torrego 1998: 21]
(ii) (??Del grupo de personas que llegaron), Laura escondió un prisionero.
     (From the group of people who arrive-PAST), Laura hide-PAST a prisoner.
      (From the group of people who arrived), Laura hid a prisoner.

The object of (i) is a property, therefore, incompatible with adjuncts indicating specificity (ii). A property has no rpg-D, therefore, there may be no rpg-v. Without a rpg that v can inherit for V, δ cannot be licensed. Without δ it is not possible to have affectedness. Interestingly, the verb is non-stative; it is an activity in (i) according to Torrego. Thus, a non-stative verb must not necessarily have affectedness. On the other hand, for there to be affectedness, the verb cannot be stative. See also notes 25 and 26.
Is it possible for a non-stative verb to have δ as a prominent lexical feature? The answer is affirmative. Observe the cases of (73) with the verb *considerar* (to consider).

[SINGULATIVE] (activity); [ATOM], [ØSINGULATIVE] (realization); [ATOM], [SINGULATIVE] (achievement). Affectedness requires α-V to dominate a feature other than ØX in order to make progress on the object. Arguably, one of the conditions for either affectedness or δ to be prominent depends on which features α-V dominates. In the geometry I propose (6), the dominance of α-V over the other features expresses that dependence.

Group-P verbs exhibit prominent lexical feature alternation (can be either affectedness or δ), because the semantics of those verbs allow it. Other verbs that seem to imply a contiguity relationship such as *arrimar* (to put [sth] against) do not allow marking with inanimate objects. (56a) shows the incompatibility of marking and (56b) shows the compatibility of the adverb expressing affectedness.

(56) a. Pedro arrimó   (*a)   la mesa   a la pared.
          Pedro put-PAST (ACC) the table closer to the wall
          'Peter put the table closer to the wall'
      b. Pedro arrimó   (un poco) la mesa   a la pared.
          Pedro put-PAST (a little)   the table closer to the wall
          'Peter put the table (a little) closer to the wall'

The verb *arrimar*, unlike the group-P verbs, has only affectedness as a prominent lexical feature; δ can never be prominent. In fact, there is no stative version of the verb.

The question also arises as to why not all stative verbs mark their inanimate objects. Note the following cases:

(57) a. Juan tiene   (*a)   un reloj en su bolsillo.
          Juan have-PTE (ACC) a watch in his pocket
          'John has a watch in his pocket'
      b. Hay   (*a)   un libro sobre la mesa.
          There be-PTE (ACC) a book   on the table
           'There is a book on the table'
      c. Juan sabe   (*a) la lección.
          Juan know-PTE ACC the lesson
          'John knows the lesson'

One possible answer is that in the meaning of the verbs *tener* (to have), *haber* (to there be), and *saber* (to know), there is no linear or scalar contiguity and equiparation between the subject and the object. As was seen, for δ to be prominent, it must interact with the meaning of the verb.

(58) is the geometry of the heads of the VP of sentence (51b) *El verbo sigue al sujeto* (The verb follows the subject).

(58)
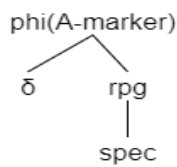(a) Before insertion of v*, inheritance, Agree, and labeling.
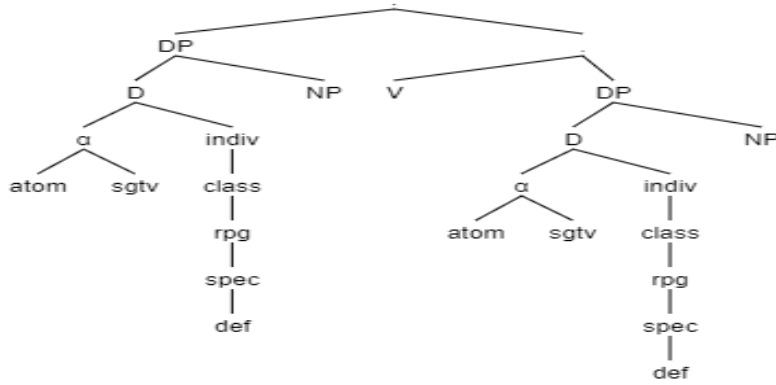
The ON class of D (class-D) does not dominate any feature, because the feature [inanim] is default, therefore, it may not appear in the geometry. The DP was moved so that V can label.

(b) After insertion of v*, inheritance, Agree, and labeling.
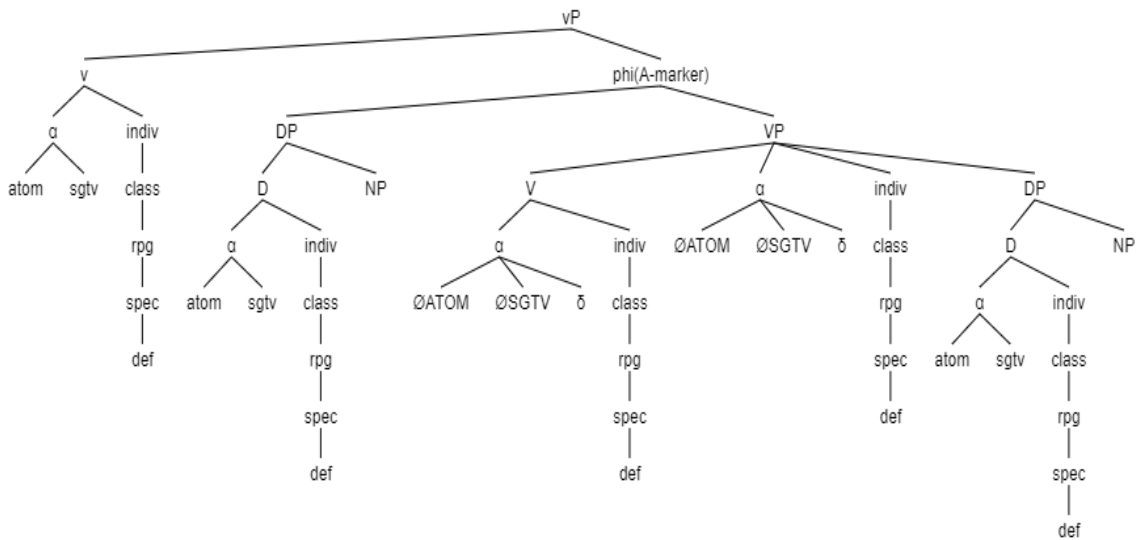
(c)

After the movement of the object DP (a), v* enters and V inherits its ONs. Then, the lexical features that α-V dominates and δ will be inserted. α-V dominates the features describing a state: [ØATOM], [ØSINGULATIVE]. α-V and δ will be licensed with the ONs that V received. The Agree operation occurs, v* copies the features that D's ONs dominate; the DP receives a case. V's ONs end up dominating the same features that v* copied from D. Finally, the labels appear (VP, Phi). The Phi label in c contains the prominent lexical feature δ, the prominent ON rpg licensing δ, and the feature [spec].

Let us now look at the behavior of group-P verbs and a property-type object.

When the prominent lexical feature of the verb is affectedness, this feature is not present with a property-type object. Note the following case:

(59) Juan saludó   una chica.
      Juan greet-PAST a girl

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'John greeted a girl'

According to Bleam (2005), objects without a determiner and indefinite, animate, unmarked objects (as in (59)) are <e,t> properties that can appear in an argument position. I am going to assume that hypothesis. According to Enç (1991), that type of DP is always non-specific. Without the feature [spec], it would not be possible to have rpg-D. Without rpg-D it will not be possible to have rpg-v, because the latter must copy rpg-D features. Thus, no rpg-v can be inherited for V; which leaves δ with no licenser. If there is no licenser for a lexical feature, that lexical feature will not be able to be inserted; thus, δ will not be able to be inserted. On the other hand, it will not be possible to insert affectedness if there is no δ, because δ dominates affectedness. Without affectedness it is not possible to mark the object of a verb whose typical prominent lexical feature is affectedness (59).

A situation like the one in (59) occurs also with group-P verbs in their non-stative version (when affectedness is the prominent lexical feature). In the following cases, the object is a property and the adjunct expressing affectedness is not possible.

(60) a. El policía   siguió   (*a medias) un delincuente hasta el parque.
        The policeman follow-PAST (halfway)   an offender   into the park
         'The policeman followed (halfway) an offender into the park'
    b. Ayer,   durante la marcha, el cabo   obedeció   (??a medias) un sargento.
        Yesterday, during the march, the corporal obey-PAST (halfway)   a sergeant
         'Yesterday, during the march, the corporal obeyed (halfway) a sergeant'
    c. Durante la carrera, Lewis nunca estuvo último; siempre precedió (??a medias) un competidor.
        During the race, Lewis never be-PAST last; he always precede-PAST (halfway) a competitor.
        'During the race, Lewis was never last; he always preceded (halfway) a competitor'
    d. El boxeador superó   (*a medias) un karateca   en la competencia.
        The boxer   overcome-PAST (halfway)   a karate fighter in the competition
         'The boxer overcame (halfway) a karate fighter in the competition'

It is expected that when δ is the prominent feature (stative version) and the object is a property, this object will not be marked, because δ is licensed with rpg, and a property does not have that ON. The prediction holds. Let us observe the following cases:

(61) a. En esa lengua,   el verbo siempre sigue   un complemento.
        In this language, the verb always follow-PTE   a complement
         'In this language, the verb always follows a complement'
    b. "Todos sabemos que en el Perú tenemos un sistema de militarismo corporativo, que obedece un plan que es el Plan Verde…"
        We all know-PTE that in the Peru we have-PTE a system of militarism corporate, which obey-PTE a plan that be-PTE the Plan Green...
         'We all know that in Peru we have a system of corporate militarism, which obeys a plan that is the Green Plan...'
    [from REAL ACADEMIA ESPAÑOLA: Banco de datos (CREA) [en línea]. Corpus de referencia del español actual. <http://www.rae.es> [10/05/2022]]
    c. Aquel número   precede   una cantidad indeterminada.
        That number precede-PTE an amount undetermined
        'That number precedes an undetermined amount'
    d. Esa cuesta supera   fácilmente un rascacielos.
        That slope outrank-PTE easily   a skyscraper.
         'That slope easily outranks a skyscraper'

The question arises as to what would be the prominent lexical feature in the sentences of (60) and (61). There are at least two options. There is no prominent lexical feature because there would be no Phi label. Which would imply that the object did not move (because it is a property). Another option is that α-V is the prominent feature. For now, I leave this point pending future investigation.

Let us now look at other verbs in the group-P. With the verb *suceder* (to follow), the only possible version is the stative. As expected, the object is always marked with A.

(62) a. El dos sucede *(a)l uno.
       the two follow A the one.   [Fábregas 2013: 16]

Let us look at the case of the verb *reemplazar* (to replace). According to Weissenreider (1991) and García García (2007), there is a subtle difference of meaning in the data of (63). In (63a) the teacher replaces the book with another book or something else; in (63b) the teacher is the one who takes the place of the book.

(63) a. El profesor   reemplaza   el libro.
     The professor replace-PTE the book
     'The professor replaces the book'
   b. El profesor   reemplaza   al   libro.
     The professor replace-PTE ACC+the book
     'The professor replaces the book'

In both versions one object is replaced by another, although in the version without A (63a), what replaces the object does not appear. The complete version would be something like (64).

(64) El profesor   reemplazó   el libro   con la computadora.
    The professor replace-PAST the book with the computer
    'The professor replaced the book with the computer'

One way to explain the contrast in the hypothesis I propose is to think that in (63a) the prominent lexical feature is affectedness, which fits the meaning attributed to that version. If there is affectedness, the prominent ON must be class; there will be DOM only if the object is animate. Therefore, the inanimate object in (63a) will not be marked, as it happens.

In (63b) the prominent lexical feature cannot be affectedness. What is interpreted in (63b) is a change of place, a substitution, crucially, between subject and object. The marked object of (63b) must preexist its replacement, the subject; otherwise, there would be nothing to replace. Therefore, the prominent lexical feature must be δ.

We have seen that the non-stative version (60) and the stative version (61) allow for property-type objects. In that case, there will be neither affectedness nor δ because there will be no licenser for those features. It is expected that the two versions of the verb *reemplazar* (to replace) will also allow property-type objects. The prediction holds:

(65) a. El profesor reemplazó   un libro (con una computadora).
     The professor replace-PAST a book (with a computer)
     'The professor replaced a book (with a computer)'
   b. Un buen profesor reemplaza   un libro.
     A good professor replace-PTE a book
     'A good professor replaces a book'

In the two sentences of (65), the indefinite object is not specific; it could have been one or the other book. This indicates that we are dealing with properties.

García García notes that (63a) would also be compatible with the reading of (63b), 'take the place of'. The author attributes this possibility to the definiteness of the article which allows for a generic reading. It is not clear, however, how genericity could account for such a change in meaning. Another option is that speakers who allow the reading of (63b) in (63a) are considering the following structure:

(66) a. El profesor   reemplazó   el libro   consigo mismo.
     The professor replace-PAST the book with himself
     'The professor replaced the book with himself'

    b. El profesor$_i$ reemplazó   el libro cv$_i$.
     The professor replace-PAST the book
     'The professor replaced the book'

The phrase headed with the preposition *con* (with) in (66a) would have been elided, leaving an empty category (66b) that has the subject as antecedent. Thus, the subject appears as taking the place of the book.

On the other hand, the author mentions that (63a) could not have the reading of (63b) ('taking the place of') if the article is indefinite. However, as (65b) shows, the interpretation of (63b) is possible in (63a) even if the object is indefinite.

Another case like that of the verb *reemplazar* is that of the verb *sustituir* (to substitute).

(67) a. El profesor   sustituye   el libro   (con el computador).
     The professor substitute-PTE the book (with the computer)
     'The professor substitutes the book (with the computer)'
    b. El profesor   sustituye   al   libro.
     The professor substitute-PTE ACC+the book
     'The professor substitutes the book'

In (67a) the subject replaces the object with another object. Affectedness is the prominent feature; there is no A in the object because it is inanimate. In (67b) the subject replaces the object. The prominent feature is δ, because in that relation, the object must come before the subject. δ is licensed with the ON rpg-V.

3.3. Group-N(aming) verbs

I will now analyze the verbs of the naming or singling out group, which I called group-N verbs. These verbs would have in common the establishment of an equiparation.[23] Let us first look at the case of the verb *llamar* (to call).

(68) a. Llaman   cláusula *(a)   una construcción con gerundio.
     Call-PTE clause   (ACC) a   construction with gerund
     'They call clause a gerund construction'
    b. Llamaron   crítico de arte *(a)   un artista.
     Call-PAST critic of art   (ACC) an artist
     'They called art critic an artist'

---

[23] As discussed, Torrego (1999) claims that verbs marking their inanimate objects express a relation of linear or scalar contiguity and equiparation between arguments. I used the feature contiguity for group-P verbs; the feature equiparation would apply to group-N verbs.

(69) a. Llamaron   inconsecuente   *(a)   un ministro.
     Call-PAST inconsequential (ACC) a minister
      'They called a minister inconsequential'
  b. Llamaron   subliminal *(a)   un comercial   de televisión.
     Call-PAST subliminal (ACC) a   commercial of television
     'They called a television commercial subliminal'

In (68) both objects of each sentence are nominal; in (69), the first object is an adjective and the other is a nominal. In either case, the verb *llamar* always marks its objects independently of animacy. According to the analysis I defend, one option is to consider that the prominent lexical feature is always δ. If it were affectedness, the inanimate objects in (68b) and (69b) should not be be marked. The following data show the incompatibility of affectedness adjuncts in sentences with the verb *llamar*:

(70) a. Llaman   (*un poco más) cláusula a   una construcción con gerundio.
     Call-PTE (a little more)   clause (ACC) a   construction with gerund
     'They call (a little more) clause a gerund construction'
  b. (??A medias) llamaron   crítico de arte a   un artista.
    (Halfway)   call-PAST critic of art (ACC) an artist
    '(Halfway) they called art critic an artist'
(71) a. Llamaron (*a medias) inconsecuente   a   un ministro.
     Call-PAST (halfway) inconsequential (ACC) a minister
     'They (halfway) called a minister inconsequential'
  b. (??Cada vez más) llamaron   subliminal a   un comercial de televisión.
    (More and more) call-PAST subliminal (ACC) a commercial of television
    '(More and more) they called a television commercial subliminal'

The data show that the verb *llamar* has no affectedness. This verb implies an equiparation relationship between two objects. Logically, the object to which the noun or the qualifier is attributed must precede the designation. The preexistence of one of the objects must be established by the lexical feature δ, which must be licensed with the ON rpg-v that is inherited for V. Thus, we have that the lexical feature δ must interact with the equiparation feature, which is also part of the meaning of the verb.

Note that the data in (68) and (69) show that it would not be possible for the verb *llamar* to combine with a property-type object (a property is not marked with A, as was seen). We saw earlier that group-P verbs (see (61)) allowed such an object type. It seems to be a lexical idiosyncrasy that some verbs allow eliding their prominent lexical feature and others do not. This could be due to the dependence of the meaning of the verb on the prominent lexical feature. On the other hand, it also seems to be a lexical idiosyncrasy that a verb (such as *llamar*), which always has δ, cannot have affectedness. The verb *considerar* (to consider) shows that it is compatible to always have δ and be able to have affectedness. Note the following data:

(72) a. Juan considera   inteligente *(a)   un alumno.
     Juan consider-PTE intelligent (ACC) a student
     'John considers a student intelligent'
  b. Juan considera   muy útil   (*a)   un manual.
    Juan consider-PTE very useful (ACC) a manual.
    'John considers a manual very useful'
(73) a. No consideran oración a/*Ø la secuencia con verbo.
     'They do not consider the sequence with a verb a sentence'

<div align="right">[García García 2007: 82]</div>

b. María considera   un crítico de música *(a)   su colega.
María consider-PTE a critic   of music   (ACC) her colleague
'Maria considers her colleague a music critic'

In the sentences of (72), only the animate object must be marked (72a); the inanimate object in (72b) cannot be marked. In the sentences in (73), marking is mandatory regardless of the animacy of the object.

The behavior of the data in (72) can be explained if the prominent lexical feature is affectedness. If so, the prominent ON must be class. There is DOM because class dominates the feature [anim]. I have assumed that affectedness is incompatible with stative verbs, but not with dynamic verbs (activity, accomplishment, achievement). The verb *considerar* is non-stative, so it is an option that may be compatible with affectedness.

In the sentences of (73), the prominent feature cannot be affectedness, because it would not be possible to mark the inanimate object (73a). An alternative is for δ to be the prominent lexical feature. The object to which the noun or qualifier is attributed must preexist this designation. That object is marked with A, because its preexistence is established with the prominent feature δ. On the other hand, as was the case with the verb *llamar* (to call), the A-marker cannot be missing in the verb *considerar* when its prominent lexical feature is δ (73), i.e., the verb *considerar* is not compatible with property-type objects when its prominent feature is δ.

The question arises as to why δ is not the prominent lexical feature in (72). It seems reasonable to assume that the equiparation between objects must be carried out with elements of the same grammatical category. In (72), one object is an adjective and the other, a noun. Thus, if there is no equiparation in the verb, δ cannot be the prominent lexical feature. As stated, affectedness must be the prominent lexical feature in (72).

δ must always be present in the verb *considerar*, both to dominate the prominent feature affectedness (72) and to be itself the prominent lexical feature (73). There would be evidence that the verb *considerar* must always have δ. In Irimia (2013), the fact that verbs like *consider* in English do not allow non-specific objects (weak reading), an observation made by Williams (1983), is discussed. The judgments in (74) can also be applied to the Spanish version (75).

(74) The professor considers a student intelligent.
= The professor considers a specific student intelligent.
The professor considers some student or other intelligent.

[Irimia 2013: 5]

(75) El profesor considera   a   un estudiante inteligente.
The professor consider-PTE (ACC) a student intelligent
'The professor considers a student intelligent'

If the verb *considerar* must always have δ (the presupposition of existence), it will be necessary that there is always a licenser of that lexical feature, the ON rpg-V (which must dominate, minimally, the feature [spec], as was said).[24]

The verb *considerar* shows that it is compatible to always have δ and to be able to have affectedness as well. If there is affectedness (72), this will be the prominent lexical feature (affectedness is the prominent lexical feature typical of Spanish, as was assumed). If there is no affectedness, δ will become the prominent lexical feature (73).

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[24] Note that the impossibility of the Irimia sentence (*#The professor considers some student or other intelligent)* includes the modifier *'some...or other'*. This modifier would indicate that there is no rpg in the noun, i.e., that modifier would indicate that one is dealing with a property. What the author calls non-specific would be the lack of rpg-D (which characterizes a property).

The analysis just done shows that the verb *considerar* must always have δ (just like the verb *llamar*), although it can have affectedness or not (unlike the verb *llamar*, which never presents affectedness). On the other hand, aspectually, the verb *considerar* is always non-stative; the verb *llamar* as well.[25]

I continue with the case of the verb *caracterizar* (to characterize). This verb presents a behavior like those of the group-P, although I assume that semantically it should be grouped to those of the group-N. For example, in a sentence like *La prensa caracterizó al diputado como delincuente*, (The press characterized the congressman as a criminal). The deputy is referred to as a delinquent. As mentioned, the designating verbs (group-N verbs) are based on an equiparation relation.

Similar to the group-P verbs, the verb *caracterizar* has two versions, a stative and a non-stative version. The stative version always marks its objects regardless of the animacy of the object, and the non-stative version marks its objects only when they are animate. Let's look at the data:

(76) El género   caracteriza   a   los sustantivos.   stative
    The gender characterize-PTE ACC the nouns
    'The gender characterizes the nouns'

                                                      [Fábregas 2013: 15]

(77) La pereza   caracteriza   a   muchos congresistas.   stative
    The laziness characterize-PTE ACC many congressmen
    'Laziness characterizes many congressmen'

The stative version marks its object whether it is inanimate (76) or animate (77).

Let us compare the stative version with the non-stative version in relation to the presence of A and the animacy of the object.

(78) La dilatación caracteriza   *(a)   la madera.   stative
    The expansion characterize-PTE ACC the wood'
    'The expansion characterizes the wood'

(79) ??Juan caracterizó   (??a) la situación como preocupante.   non-stative
    Juan characterize-PAST ACC the situation as worrisome'
    'John characterized the situation as worrisome'

(80) Juan caracterizó   *(a)   su hermano como leal.   non-stative
    Juan characterize-PAST ACC his brother as loyal
    'John characterized his brother as loyal'

The data show that, unlike the stative version with inanimate object ((76), (78)), the non-stative version (with an agentive subject) does not mark its inanimate object (79). This non-stative version must mark its animate object (80). If the verb marks its object according to its animacy, the prominent lexical feature must be affectedness. Note the compatibility of an adjunct of affectedness in the non-stative version of the verb. In the stative version, the adjunct (*cada día/vez más* 'more and more') is incompatible.

(81) a. Juan caracterizó   cada día más   a   su primo como un héroe.   non-stative
    Juan characterize-PAST more and more ACC his cousin as a hero
    'John more and more characterized his cousin as a hero every day'
  b. ??El género caracteriza   cada vez más   al   sustantivo.   stative

---

[25] There is no problem in a non-stative verb having δ and not affectedness as a prominent feature, because lexical aspect (α-V) does not require affectedness to be constituted; it is affectedness that requires a certain configuration of α-V to appear (see notes 22 and 26).

The gender characterize-PTE more and more ACC+the noun
'Gender more and more characterizes the noun'

As discussed, the lexical feature affectedness may be missing in the verb even being prominent, because the δ feature dominating it may not be present. If there is no δ, the verb may combine with a property, which does not have rpg-D. Let us observe the following case:

(82) Hoy en día, la prensa gobiernista   caracteriza   un exministro como desleal.   non-stative
      Today,   the press pro-government characterize-PTE a former minister as disloyal.
      'Today, the pro-government press characterizes a former minister as disloyal'

(82) shows that the property-type object is possible in the non-stative version of the verb *caracterizar*. This is because the prominent affectedness feature of that version may not be present due to the lack of δ. If the object is a property, then it will not have rpg, an ON necessary to license δ, as was said.[26]

Regarding the stative version, we saw earlier in (61) that group-P verbs with δ as prominent feature allowed a property-type object, which implies losing that prominent lexical feature. We saw later that two group-N verbs, *llamar* (to call) and *considerar* (to consider) with δ as prominent, do not allow such a loss; they do not combine with properties. The following case shows that the verb *caracterizar* does allow property-type objects.

(83) En esta lengua,   el género caracteriza   un sustantivo.   stative
      In this language, the gender characterize-PTE a noun.
      'In this language, gender characterizes a noun'

We can say that the verb *caracterizar* presents a meaning that places it in the group-N, although it behaves as a group-P verb.

Up to this point, we have seen cases in which the A-marker in inanimate objects cannot be missing or can be missing if the object is a property. Let us now look at the case of the verb *vencer* (to conquer), in which the A-marker is optional even before an object that is not a property. The verb *vencer* does not belong to either the group-P or the group-N.

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[26] I would like to emphasize the following point here. The lack of affectedness does not make the verb *caracterizar* a state (even if every state does not present affectedness, as was said). Note the following cases showing the compatibility of (82) with a progressive construction (a) and a pseudo-cleft construction (b), both structures not compatible with states.
(i) a. En este gobierno, la prensa (siempre) está   caracterizando   un exministro   como desleal.
       In this government, the press (always) be-PTE characterize-ING a former minister as disloyal
       'In this government, the press is (always) characterizing a former minister as disloyal'
     b. Lo que hace la prensa gobiernista   es caracterizar   un exministro   como desleal.
       What does the press pro-government is to characterize a former minister as   disloyal
       'What the pro-government press does is to characterize a former minister as disloyal'

α-V (the lexical aspect) does not depend on the presence or absence of affectedness to configure some combination of [ATOM] and [SINGULATIVE] features to generate a stative or non-stative event (activity, accomplishment, achievement). As mentioned, affectedness does require some combination of [ATOM] and [SINGULATIVE] to appear. Affectedness does not appear with states (which are [ØATOM] [ØSINGULATIVE]). Affectedness requires that, minimally, one of the features is not Ø in order to advance on the object (See also notes 22 and 25). The geometry of lexical features that I defend expresses the dependence of affectedness on the features that α-V dominates; α-V dominates δ and affectedness.

As (84) shows, the inanimate object of the verb *vencer* can be marked (84b) or not (84a) (de Swart 2003).

(84) a. El entusiasmo   vence   la dificultad.
         The enthusiasm conquer-PTE the difficulty
          'Enthusiasm conquers difficulty'
      b. El entusiasmo vence   a   la dificultad.
         The enthusiasm conquers (to) the difficulty
          'Enthusiasm conquers difficulties'

The case (84a) does not allow progressive (85a); this suggests that we are dealing with a state. The version with A (84b) does allow the construction (85b); we are dealing with a non-stative version. I add similar cases in (86).

(85) a. ??El entusiasmo   está   venciendo   la dificultad.   stative
          The enthusiasm be-PTE conquer-GER the difficulty
           'Enthusiasm is conquering the difficulty'
      b. El entusiasmo está   venciendo   a   la dificultad.   non-stative
         The enthusiasm be-PTE conquer-GER ACC the difficulty
          'Enthusiasm is conquering the difficulty'
(86) a. ??Aquí la gula   está   venciendo   la vanidad.   stative
          Here the gluttony be-PTE conquer-GER the vanity
           'Here gluttony is conquering vanity'
      b. Aquí la gula   está   venciendo   a   la vanidad.   non-stative
          Here the gluttony be-PTE conquer-GER ACC the vanity
           'Here gluttony is conquering vanity'

The following contrast shows that only the version with A is compatible with adverbs expressing affectedness. This is to be expected if the stative version is incompatible with affectedness, as was assumed.

(87) a. La gula   vence   (*cada día más) la vanidad.   stative
          The gluttony conquer-PTE (every day more) the vanity
           'Gluttony conquers (every day more) vanity'
      b. La gula   vence   (cada día más)   a   la vanidad.   non-stative
          The gluttony conquer-PTE (every day more) ACC the vanity
           'Gluttony conquers (every day more) vanity'

If there is affectedness in (84b), (87b), the inanimate object should not be able to be marked (against the data), because for there to be DOM with affectedness, class must dominate the [anim] feature.

An interesting fact to highlight is that the animate object of the verb *vencer* should be marked, as shown in (88). This confirms that affectedness is present in the verb, and it is the prominent lexical feature.

(88) Homero venció   *(a)   su rival.
      Homer conquer-PAST (ACC) his rival
      'Homer conquered his rival'

My hypothesis regarding the unexpected mark on the inanimate object in (84b) and (87b) is that that object was animated. The presence of affectedness in the verb *vencer* (to conquer) must

facilitate the animacy of their arguments. In (84b) and (87b), the subject must render the object, which requires a degree of animacy. In turn, the object must offer opposition; the object must also be animated.[27]

The data in (89) show that when the subject is animate, it is possible for the object to become animated (89b). This is an expected result, because in (89) there is always affectedness, as shown by the compatibility of the adverbs in parentheses.

(89) a. Homero venció   (a medias) su depresión.
       Homer conquer-PAST (halfway) his depression
       'Homer conquered (halfway) his depression'
    b. Homero venció   (a medias) a   su depresión.
       Homer conquer-PAST (halfway) ACC his depression
       'Homer conquered (halfway) his depression'

If affectedness is the prominent lexical feature, class must be the prominent ON. Therefore, there will only be DOM if class dominates the feature [anim]. This would explain the absence of mark in (89a). However, it is possible for the object to become animated, and thus mark it (89b).

As has often been observed, the optionality of the A-marker disappears when the object is topicalized. In that case, the mark becomes obligatory. Let us observe the following cases with the verb *vencer*.

(90) *(A)   la dificultad   la vence   el entusiasmo.
     (ACC) the difficulty CL conquer-PTE the enthusiasm.
      'The difficulty is conquered by enthusiasm'
(91) *(A)l   mal lo vence   el bien.
     (ACC)+the evil CL conquer-PTE the good.
      'Evil is conquered by good'

There are a number of aspects related to DOM and object topicalization. For reasons of length, that issue will not be developed here. Perhaps, a way to follow is to consider that in cases (90)-(91) the object is moved after being marked.

3.4 [Quantize] feature

There are other cases in which the A-marker appears with inanimate objects. Based on Martín (2005), Rodríguez-Mondoñedo (2007) argues that some verbs (such as *abrazar* (to hug), *rodear* (to surround)) can optionally have a functional projection that has an interpretable [quantize] feature with a positive valuation, which will be checked with an unvalued, interpretable, [quantize] feature of the DP. The result of this checking is the DOM mark. The author argues that:

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[27] In (i) there are some cases of objects considered cases of animization. Interestingly, in all cases there is affectedness in the verb.
(i) a. La sartén atacó   a   la olla.
      The pan attack-PAST ACC the pot
      'The pan attacked the pot'

                                                    [Rodríguez-Mondoñedo 2007: 129]

   b. Los ácidos atacan (a) los metales.
      The acids attack   the metals
      Acids corrode metals

                                                    [Molho 1958: 215]

   c. …atravesando el Pont Neuf, vi al barquito en cuestión
        crossing the Pont Neuf,   saw the little+ship in question
        crossing the Pont Neuf, I saw the little ship in question

                                                    [Laca 1995: 83]

"A nominal is quantized when is possible to determine its quantity, and event is quantized when bounded" (p. 136).

The following are the author's examples:

(92) a. El chico abrazó   a   las columnas.
        The kid hug-PAST ACC the columns
         'The kid hugged the columns'
     b. El chico abrazó   las columnas.
        The kid hug-PAST the columns
        'The kid hugged the columns'

[Rodríguez-Mondoñedo 2007:125]

In (92a) the only possible reading is with several hugging events, therefore, the objects are separated and were hugged one by one. This reading is possible because of the presence of the feature [quantize], which is expressed with the A-marker. In (92b) there is a single event of hugging, therefore, with the object together; although the reading of (92a) is also possible. On the other hand, the author notes that the object must be plural for the feature [quantize] to operate.

(93) Juan abrazó   (*a)   la columna.
      Juan hug-PAST (ACC) the column'
      'John hugged the column'

I will assume Rodríguez-Mondoñedo's proposal that DOM of cases like (92a) responds to the presence of the feature [quantize] in the verb; although it would not be necessary to postulate a feature [quantize] in the object DP. According to the data, the object must be plural for [quantize] to operate; therefore, one option is for individuation dominating [group] to be the licenser of [quantize] feature in the verb. There seems to be a natural relationship between a lexical feature that quantifies, [quantize], and a morphosyntactic feature of number, individuation; so, an interaction between these features is to be expected.

This analysis of A-marker of (92a) as a case of DOM is similar to the DOM analysis seen with animate and inanimate objects. In (92a), there is a lexical feature ([quantize]) in the verb that is licensed with an ON (individuation) that dominates a non-default feature ([group]). All these features will be part of the Phi label. In the case of animate objects, the lexical feature in the verb is affectedness licensed by an ON class that dominates the non-default feature [anim]. Also, all those features will be part of the Phi label. A similar situation is observed in the case of inanimate objects. The Phi label must contain the prominent lexical feature δ, which must be licensed by an ON rpg that dominates a non-default feature, [spec].

The possible readings in (92b), several events of hugging or a single one, is also possible with other types of verbs.

(94) a. Juan vio   (*a)   las columnas.
        Juan see-PAST ACC the columns
        'John saw the columns'
     b. Juan vio   las columnas (al mismo tiempo/una por una).
         Juan see-PAST the columns (at the same time/one by one)'
   'John saw the columns (at the same time/one by one)'

A verb like *ver* (to see) does not allow marking inanimate objects (94a); this suggests that there is no [quantize] in V. However, even with a verb without [quantize], it is possible to have both readings (as (94b) shows), that of separate events and that of a single event; the plural must allow both readings. Looking at the sentences in (92), it seems reasonable to suppose that there is no [quantize] in (92b) (*El chico abrazó las columnas*); the two readings of (92b) would be possible

because of the plural of the object. On the other hand, in sentence (92a), marked version, there would be [quantize]. Thus, we can say that the feature [quantize] in the verb eliminates one of the possible readings with the plural, that of a single event. The option to have only the reading of several events is instantiated with a DOM expressing [quantize], i.e., it is instantiated by making the lexical feature [quantize] prominent in Phi, together with individuation and [group].

We saw that [quantize] is possible in V in a plural, inanimate object context. Consider the following case with an animate object:

(95) Juan abrazó   a   las chicas (al mismo tiempo/una por una).
     Juan hug-PAST ACC the girls   (at the same time/one by one)
     'John hugged the girls (at the same time/one by one)'

Both readings are possible; suggesting that there is no [quantize] in the verb. The feature [quantize] could be inserted only when the object is plural and crucially, inanimate. In this context, there must be the option for [quantize] to be prominent, in order to generate the A-marker. In an affectedness context, with class dominating [anim] (such as (95)), it would not be possible to insert [quantize]; probably because it is not possible to create a DOM mark expressing [quantize] in that case. If there is affectedness with class dominating [anim], the DOM mark should express those features, i.e., those features (and not others) should form the Phi label. Apparently, there is a kind of hierarchy guiding the choice of the prominent features in Spanish. The subject seems to be related to the criterion that decides which will be the prominent feature in a language. For now, the exploration of these issues is left for future research.

We have just seen that it is not possible to have [quantize] with affectedness in an animate object (95); however, it is possible to have [quantize] with affectedness in an inanimate object. Note sentence (92a), which is compatible with adverbs indicating affectedness:

(96) El chico abrazó   (a medias/un poco más) a   las columnas.
     The boy hug-PAST (halfway/slightly more) ACC the columns
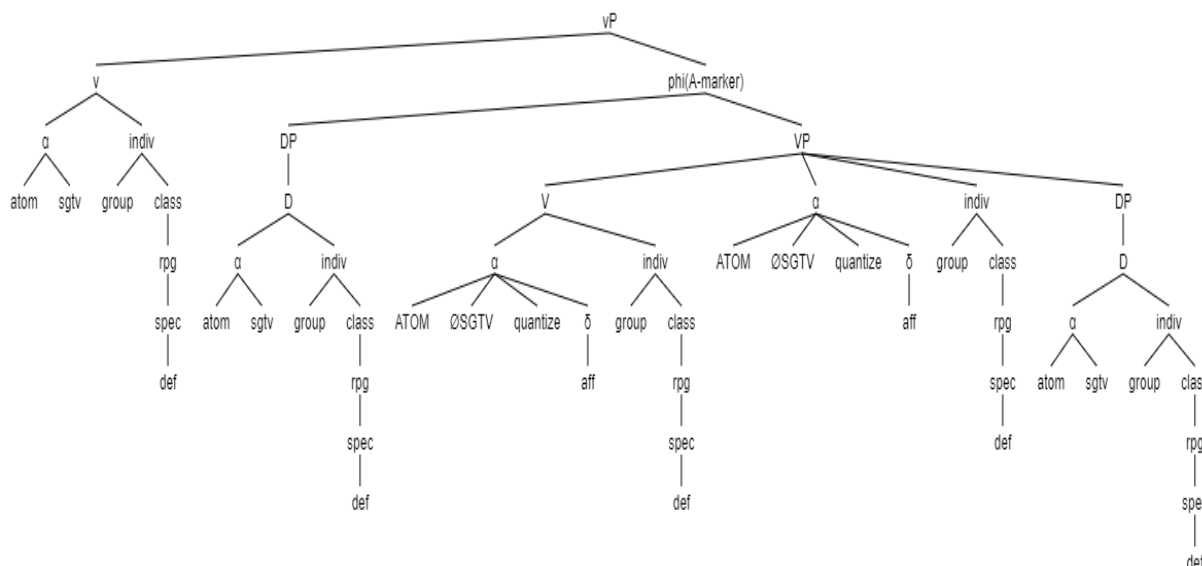   'The boy hugged the columns (halfway/slightly more)'

The geometry of the sentence (92a) is as follows:

(97) *El chico abrazó a las columnas* (The kid hugged the columns)
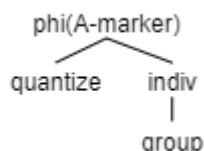(a) Before insertion of v*, inheritance, Agree, and labeling.
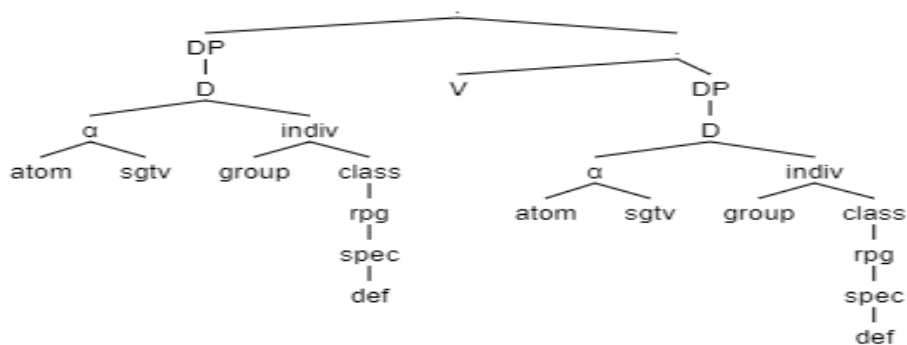
The feature [inanim] does not appear in geometry because it is default.

(b) After insertion of v*, inheritance, Agree, and labeling.

(c) Phi label

The label Phi (c) contains the lexical feature [quantize], its licenser individuation and [group]. The A-marker materializes these features.

Let us now analyze the cases with the verb *calificar* (to qualify) which, in a way, synthesizes what we have seen so far. According to Martin (2005) and Rodríguez-Mondoñedo (2007), the A-marker on the inanimate object of the verb *calificar* would also express the presence of the feature [quantize]. I am going to assume that proposal. Note the following case:

(98) a. *El adjetivo   califica   los sustantivos.
       The adjective qualify-PTE the nouns
       'The adjective qualifies nouns'
     b. El adjetivo   califica   a   los sustantivos.
       The adjective qualify-PTE ACC the nouns
       'The adjective qualifies nouns'

Unlike the verb *abrazar* (to hug), the verb *calificar* does not allow the version without A (98a). It is not possible to think of an adjective, in a single event, qualifying several nouns; there must necessarily be several qualifying events. This suggests that [quantize] is not optional in the verb *calificar*. This being so, the singular object must also be marked, as shown in (99).

(99) El adjetivo califica   *(a)l   sustantivo.
     The adjective qualify-PTE (ACC)+the noun
     'The adjective qualifies the noun'

Let us now observe another use of the verb *calificar*. The verb presents a version with two objects; one of them qualifies the other. In this version, the A-marker appears only when the qualified object is animate. In (100a) the mark is obligatory; in (100b) it is not possible.

(100) a. Pedro calificó   *(a)   un ministro de incapaz.
        Pedro qualify-PAST (ACC) a minister as incapable
        'Peter qualified a minister as incapable'
    b. Pedro calificó   (*a)   la situación de extremadamente difícil.
        Pedro describe-PAST (ACC) the situation as extremely difficult
        'Peter described the situation as extremely difficult'

One way to account for the cases in (100) is to assume that the prominent lexical feature in the two-object version of the verb *calificar* is affectedness. If so, class will be the prominent ON; there will be A-marker only when the object is animate (100a).

The mark may appear before an inanimate object (101) in a context similar to that of (100b).

(101) "Pocos años después el arqueólogo J. Dechelette calificó a la cueva como "capilla Sixtina del arte cuaternario"."
        "A few years later archaeologist J. Dechelette qualify-PAST ACC the cave a "Sistine Chapel of Quaternary art"."
        "A few years later archaeologist J. Dechelette called the cave a "Sistine Chapel of Quaternary art"."
        [from REAL ACADEMIA ESPAÑOLA: Diccionario de la lengua española, 23.ª ed., [versión 23.5 en línea]. <https://dle.rae.es> [03/07/2022]].

There is a difference between (100b) and (101). The two objects in (101) are noun phrases. In (100b) the first object (*la situación* 'the situation') is a noun phrase; the other object is an adjectival phrase. Suppose the adjective is part of the affectedness of the verb on the other object; that is, both predicates, combined, affect the other object. This process could not be carried out with a verb and a noun; a noun could not be part of the affectedness to another noun. Thus, in (101) it is not possible to have affectedness. What is the prominent lexical feature in (101)? It cannot be affectedness, as was said; neither could it be [quantize] (among other reasons, because the object is in singular). Note the following case:

(102) Pedro calificó   a   esas construcciones como los palacios del siglo XXI.
        Pedro qualify-PAST ACC these buildings   as   the palaces of the century 21st
          'Peter qualified these buildings as the palaces of the 21st century'

In (102) it is possible to interpret a single qualifying event, therefore, there can be no [quantize] in that verb. My proposal is that the prominent lexical feature in (101) and (102) is δ, the feature expressing the presupposition of existence. In the context of (101) and (102), the verb *calificar* expresses a sense of equiparation in which X is like Y. Logically, X, the object being qualified, must precede Y, the attribution. X, the marked object, must preexist the other object. In cases like (100), it is not possible to establish an equating relation between an adjective phrase and a noun phrase, therefore, the prominent lexical feature could not be δ. As said, the prominent feature in (100) must be affectedness.

Rodríguez-Mondoñedo argues that in the following case with the verb *seguir* (to follow), there is a [quantize] feature, i.e., only several events can be interpreted.

(103) Los días siguen   a   las noches.
        The days follow-PTE ACC the nights
          'The days follow the nights'

[Torrego 1999:1788]

In the following sentence, however, it is possible to interpret several events (each bathroom is after each room) or a single event (all bathrooms are after all rooms).

(104) En este hotel, los baños   siguen   a   los cuartos.
      In this hotel, the bathrooms follow-PTE ACC the bedrooms
      'In this hotel, the bathrooms follow the bedrooms'

If the [quantize] feature eliminates the option of interpreting a single event, the verb *seguir* should not have that feature when it marks its inanimate object with A. As advocated, the prominent lexical feature of the verb *seguir* (group-P verb) should be δ.

3.5 The dialect of Buenos Aires

The Buenos Aires dialect massively marks inanimate objects (Zdrojewsky 2013, 2020; Hoff & Díaz-Campos 2015). Zdrojewsky (2020) argues that the A-marker with inanimate objects is evidence of a grammaticalization process that converts the animacy mark into a case mark. According to the author, topicalization is one of the essential factors in marking inanimate objects. Note the following cases of the author:

(105) a. (A)l libro de gramática, lo leí ayer.
     b. Ayer leí (??a)l libro de gramática.
     c. Lo leí ayer, (a)l libro de gramática.[28]
               (Adaptado de Di Tullio & Zdrojewski 2008)
(106) a. A los fideos con manteca, siempre los comí con guarnición.
              (@gfer66, 21/02/2019,7pm - Tuit)
     b. Siempre comí (*a) los fideos con manteca con guarnición.
     c. Siempre los comí con guarnición, a los fideos con manteca.[29]

In sentences (105a), (105c), (106a), (106c), inanimate objects have been moved, and it is possible to mark them with A. Versions (105b), (106b) do not allow marking; the objects have not been moved. However, based on Montrul (2013), the author observes that there would be an expansion in the use of the A-marker with non-moved definite, inanimate objects. The following author's case exemplifies the point.

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[28] I add the translation of the author's examples:
a. (A)l   libro de gramática, lo   leí   ayer.
  ACC+the book of grammar, CL-ACC read-PAST yesterday.
  'The grammar book, I read it yesterday'
b. Ayer   leí   (??a)l   libro de gramática.
  Yesterday read-PAST ACC+the book of grammar
  'Yesterday I read the grammar book'
c. Lo   leí   ayer,   (a)l   libro de gramática.
  CL-ACC read-PAST yesterday, ACC+the book of grammar
  'I read it yesterday, the grammar book'
[29] I add the translation of the author's examples:
a. A   los fideos con manteca, siempre los   comí   con guarnición.
  ACC the noodles with butter,   always CL-ACC eat-PAST with a side dish
  'I always ate the noodles with butter with a side dish'
b. Siempre comí   (*a) los fideos   con manteca con guarnición.
  Always eat-PAST ACC the noodles with butter   with a side dish
  'I always ate the noodles with butter with a side dish'
c. Siempre los   comí   con guarnición, a   los fideos con manteca.
  Always CL-ACC eat-PAST with garnish,   ACC the noodles with butter
  'I always ate them with garnish, the noodles with butter'

(107) Los casos graves ya están saturando a los hospitales y a las terapias intensivas.[30]

(Programa de TV)

Zdrojewski also cites the following cases with indefinite objects:

(108) a. El gobierno devastó a una importante región del país.
    b. el costo de esa transformación que destruyó a una parte de la vieja planta industrial …
       (http://www.hechohistorico.com.ar/Trabajos/Valores_Socioculturales/lecvmx119.html)
    c. Unas semanas atrás, uno de los jurados me decía que este premio era importante porque se premia a un libro editado.[31]

(https://www.eternacadencia.com.ar/)

One way to interpret these data in the context of the ideas developed so far is to assume that the Buenos Aires dialect could be using rpg as prominent ON and δ as a prominent lexical feature. Note that in the observed cases the existence of the object is presupposed. This must be because of the presence of the lexical feature δ. The animacy of the object does not matter for licensing δ; what matters is that rpg dominates, minimally, the feature [spec]. This is the case in the data presented by Zdrojewsky.

The following author's case shows that it is possible to have A even without affectedness. This supports the idea that δ could be the prominent lexical feature in the Buenos Aires dialect.

(109) Una cueva bajo la tierra invernal de las Islas Malvinas esconde a una comunidad de soldados desertores que huyeron del campo de batalla y se atrincheraron a esperar el fin de la guerra.[32]

The sentence is not compatible with the progressive version of the verb (110); this suggests that we are indeed dealing with a state-type event, therefore a version without affectedness.

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[30] I add the translation of the author's example:
Los casos graves ya   están   saturando   a   los hospitales y   a   las terapias intensivas.
The cases severes already be-PTE saturate-GER ACC the hospitals and ACC the therapies intensive
'Severe cases are already saturating hospitals and intensive care units'

[31] I add the translation of the author's examples:
a. El gobierno   devastó   a   una importante región del   país.
  The government devastate-PAST ACC an important   region of+the country
  'The government devastated an important region of the country'
b. el costo de esa transformación que   destruyó   a   una parte de la vieja planta industrial …
   the cost of this transformation which destroy-PAST ACC a   part   of the old plant industrial…
   'The cost of this transformation which destroyed a part of the old industrial plant'
c. Unas semanas atrás, uno de los jurados me decía   que este premio era   importante porque
   A few weeks ago,   one of the jurors   me tell-PAST that this award be-PAST important because it
   se premia   a   un libro editado.
   reward-PTE ACC an book edited
   'A few weeks ago, one of the jurors told me that this award was important because it rewards an edited book'

[32] I add the translation:
Una cueva bajo   la tierra invernal de las Islas Malvinas esconde   a   una comunidad de soldados
A   cave   beneath the earth wintry of the Falkland Islands hide-PTE ACC a   community of soldiers
desertores que huyeron del campo de batalla   y   se atrincheraron   a esperar el fin
deserting who flee-PAST of+the battlefield   and barricade-PAST themselves in to wait for the end
de la guerra
of the war
'A cave beneath the wintry earth of the Falkland Islands hides a community of deserting soldiers who fled the battlefield and barricaded themselves in to wait for the end of the war'

(110) ??Una cueva bajo la tierra invernal… está escondiendo a una comunidad de soldados desertores.

   A cave under the ground winter...   be-PTE hide-GER ACC a community of soldiers deserting

   'A cave under the winter ground...is hiding a community of deserting soldiers'

If the sentence is stative, it will not be possible to have affectedness; however, there is A. Therefore, marking cannot depend on the presence of affectedness. The proposal is that δ is the prominent lexical feature. This hypothesis implies that without δ it will not be possible to mark the inanimate object; the prediction holds. Note the following case[33]:

(111) Juan tiene   (*a)   un celular.
       Juan have-PTE (ACC) a cell phone
       'John has a cell phone'

According to Bleam (2005), the object of the possessive verb *tener* (to have) is a <e,t> property. As seen, a property does not present rpg-D, because it is non-specific. Therefore, it will not be possible to insert δ, because there will be no licenser for that feature (rpg is the licenser of δ, as assumed). It is not possible to mark the object in (111) because there is neither δ nor rpg.

In the analysis of group-P and group-N verbs, we saw that there is an interaction between the meaning of the verb and δ as a prominent lexical feature. We can now observe in the Buenos Aires dialect that the marking before inanimate objects is not restricted to one type of verb; the marking on inanimate objects appears in verbs that do not express a linear or scalar contiguity and equiparation between subject and object (e.g., sentence (109) with the verb *esconder*). The use of δ as prominent seems to have been detached from the verbal meaning. Thus, we would be dealing with a case of grammaticalization of a prominent lexical feature, δ. δ should no longer interact with the verb meaning.

As mentioned, Zdrojewsky (2020) argues that the A-marker in the dialect under study is a case of grammaticalization. In the framework developed here, grammaticalization would be equivalent to having delinked the use of δ as prominent from the meaning of the verb.

According to the analysis developed, in the Buenos Aires dialect two operations would have occurred in relation to DOM. First, affectedness was no longer the prominent lexical feature, as shown by the analysis of sentence (109); δ became the new prominent lexical feature. Second, prominent δ stopped interacting with the meaning of the verb. Thus, δ can be the prominent feature even in verbs that do not belong to the group-P or the group-N.

The geometries of the sentence heads (108a) *El gobierno devastó a una importante región del país* (The government devastated an important region of the country) follow:
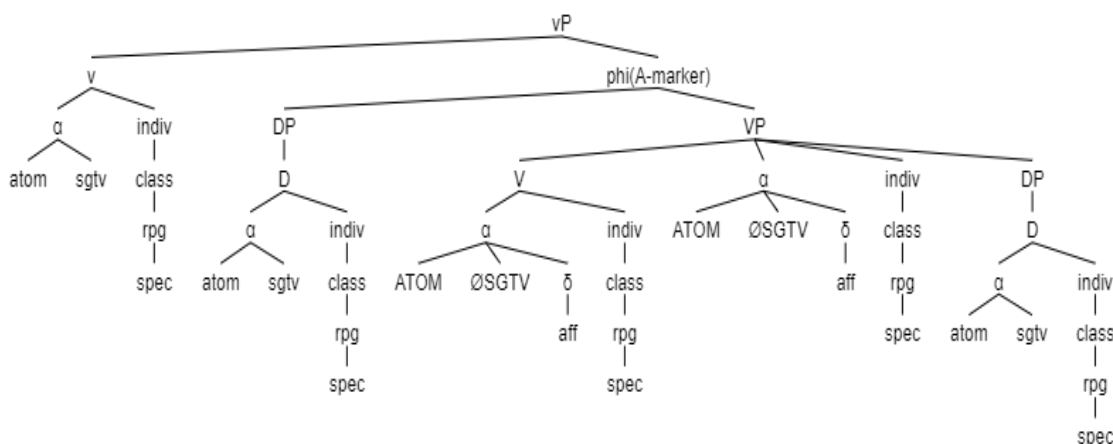
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(112)
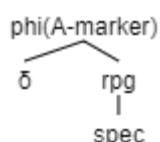
(a) Before insertion of v*, inheritance, Agree, and labeling.
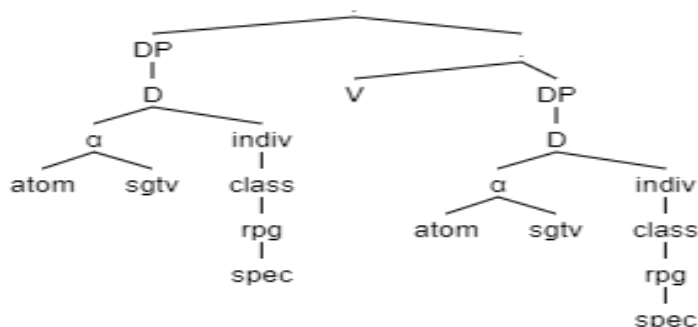
(b) After insertion of v*, inheritance, Agree, and labeling.

(c) Phi label

In geometry (112a), the object merge with V, and then it must move. v* enters with ONs similar to those of D. V inherits these ONs from v*. V's lexical features ([ATOM], [SINGULATIVE], affectedness, and δ) enter; these lexical features will be licensed with the ONs that V inherited. There is Agree between v* and the moved DP. The ONs of v* copy the features dominated by the ONs of D, and the DP receives a case; the ONs inherited by V end up with the same features as the ONs of v*. Then, there is a sharing of prominent features between the formed VP and the moved DP. That sharing forms the Phi label, where the A-marker is generated. In (112c), the Phi label contains the lexical feature δ and rpg dominating [spec].

As emphasized by Zdrojewsky, the marking of inanimate objects in the Buenos Aires dialect is still an expanding process. This could explain the impossibility of (105b) and (106b).

4. Conclusions

The analysis developed in this paper was carried out using, mainly, two theoretical tools, the feature geometry of Harley & Ritter (2002) and the labeling operation (Chomsky (2013), (2015)). The analysis shows that it is possible to consider that the DOM in Spanish inanimate objects can

be analyzed similarly to the DOM with animate objects. The difference, above all, would be in the choice of the prominent lexical feature in the verb. The prominent lexical feature affectedness, which participates of DOM in animate objects, must be changed to δ in order to mark inanimate objects. Interestingly, this change is possible only with certain verbs; suggesting that the prominent lexical feature must interact with the idiosyncratic semantics of the verb. Specifically, the verb must express a linear or scalar contiguity and equiparation between arguments, as argued by Torrego (1999). The A-marker on inanimate objects also appears in a context in which the feature [quantize] is present in the verb (Martin (2005), Rodríguez-Mondoñedo (2007)). The hypothesis advocated is that [quantize] is the prominent lexical feature this time. On the other hand, according to the proposal I defend, the prominent lexical feature must be licensed by an organizing node (ON), which will become the prominent ON. Affectedness is licensed by the prominent ON class; δ is licensed by the prominent ON rpg; [quantize] is licensed by the prominent ON individuation. Those ONs must dominate a non-default feature (hence present in the geometry) to generate the mark: class must dominate [anim]; rpg must dominate [spec] and individuation must dominate [group]. In the framework that was developed, the Buenos Aires Spanish data are analyzed as a case in which the prominent lexical feature δ generates the DOM (in animate and inanimate objects) without interacting with the semantics of the verb. That is, it would be a case of grammaticalization, according to Zdrojewsky (2020).

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