# Object splits and complex licensers

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## 1. Introduction

Recent work on the syntax-pragmatics interface has emphasized the important role functional projections at the (very high) left periphery play in the mediation of context-related specifications and their relation with inner syntax (Speas and Tenny 2003, a.o.). Several authors have also argued that discourse peripheries are also generated in the nominal domain, in an expanded DP layer or above the DP (Ritter and Wiltschko 2019, Ihasane 2008, a.o.). This paper explores some consequences of enriched nominal categories on the licensing of arguments, focusing on differential object marking (DOM) phenomena. Our data come from Uzbek (Turkic), nonstandard Basque, and Finnish, three DOM languages. As we show in the paper, the special marking certain classes of nominals receive in these languages presents evidence that the functional structure of nominals might contain features (such as animacy, PERSON, or definiteness, etc.) beyond structural Case per se. We derive the facts starting from recent accounts under which the licensing of certain types of nominals involves more than one licenser (Brattico 2011, Matushansky 2012, Vainikka and Brattico 2014, Irimia to appear, a.o.). This explains why DOM shares syntactic diagnostics with other *structural* direct objects, while also introducing its own syntactic restrictions. The structure of the paper is as follows. In Section (2) we present some background on DOM. We discuss two prominent theoretical approaches, one that reduces DOM to the distinction Case licensed vs. caseless nominals, and the other deriving DOM via the mechanics of dependent Case. In Section (3) we briefly introduce the problems DOM poses in the three languages under investigation as well as the gist of our proposal. In Section (4) we discuss the application of the analysis to Uzbek, and in Section (5) to non-standard Basque. In Section 6 we present preliminary observations in the same direction for Finnish. Section 7 contains the conclusions.

## 2. Differential object marking

The vast literature on DOM has unveiled systematic splits in the morpho-syntactic behavior of objects. Generally, specifications at the higher end of animacy, specificity and definiteness scales (broadly illustrated in (1)) trigger the presence of dedicated markers in many genetically-unrelated languages (Givón 1984, Comrie 1989, Bossong 1991, 1998, Lazard 2001, Aissen 2003, de Swart 2007, López 2012, Ormazabal and Romero 2013a, b, 2019, Bárány 2018, Kalin 2018, Levin 2019, a.o.).

(1) Scales for DOM (Silverstein 1976, Comrie 1989, Aissen 2003, a.o.)
  (a) ***Animacy/person***: 1/2 > 3 > proper name > human > animate > inanimate

(b) ***Definiteness/specificity***: personal pronoun > proper name > definite > specific indefinite > non specific (Aissen 2003: 437)

(c) ***Topic accessibility scale****:* active > accessible > unused > brand-new anchored > brand–new unanchored (Dalrymple & Nikolaeva 2011, a.o.)

A typical example comes from Spanish (Romance), where object splits are regulated by conjunctive sets of features, including grammaticalized animacy under certain conditions (Torrego 1998, López 2012, Fábregas 2013, Ormazabal and Romero 2013a, a.o.). The definite animate in (2)(a) must be introduced by a preposition which is homophonous with the dative. Spanish illustrates a type of *oblique* DOM, that is differential marking which relies on oblique morphology (Bossong 1991, Irimia and Pineda 2019, Manzini and Franco 2016, a.o.). The inanimate in (2)(b), on the other hand, cannot take the same marking.

(2) Standard Spanish DOM

(a) He encontrado ***(a)** la niña.[1]
have.1SG found DAT=DOM DEF.F.SG girl
'I have found the girl.' (Ormazabal and Romero 2013a, ex. 1a)

(b) He encontrado (*a) el libro.
have.1SG found DAT=DOM DEF.M.SG book
'I have found the book.' (Ormazabal and Romero 2013a, ex. 1b)

In other languages, such as Uzbek (Turkic), the special marking certain types of objects require is linked to definiteness (Levy-Forsythe and Kagan 2018, MacMillan 2020, a. o.), as seen in the contrast in (3). The unmarked object in (3)(a) can receive an indefinite interpretation and is number neutral. The object in (3)b, however, has the special marker **-ni** (also referred to as the accusative case marker in traditional grammars) and is normally restricted to definite interpretations.[2]

(3) Uzbek DOM (Levy-Forsythe and Kagan 2018, ex. 2a, b)

(a) Anvar rasm chidzli.
Anvar picture draw.PST.3SG
'Anvar drew a picture./Anvar drew pictures.'

(b) Anvar rasm-**ni** chidzli.
Anvar picture-DOM draw.PST.3SG
'Anvar drew the picture.'

In minimalism there are two main formal strategies to derive these splits. A rich theoretical

[1] ABS = absolutive, ABL = ablative, ACC = accusative, ART = article, AUX = auxiliary, CAUS = causative, CL = clitic, DAT = dative, DEF = definite, DOM = differential object marking, ERG = ergative, F = feminine, FUT = future, IMPERS= impersonal, IMPF= imperfective, LOC = locative, M = masculine, N = neuter, NEG = negative, NMZ= nominalization, OBL = oblique, PL = plural, PRES = present, PRT = participle, PST= past, RECP = reciprocal, SG = singular, SUBJ = subject.

[2] Object splits are seen in other Turkic languages (Enç 1991, Kornfilt 1984, von Heusinger and Kornfilt 2005, Öztürk 2005 for Turkish, Baker and Vinokurova 2010 or Levin and Preminger 2015 for Sakha, Johanson and Csató 2008, Guntsetseg 2016 for general presentations, a.o.).

line connects unmarked objects such as the Spanish inanimate in (2)a or the Uzbek non-specific nominal in (3)a to a process of (pseudo-)incorporation; these categories are generally assumed to be caseless NPs/DPs when it comes to structural Case, as schematically shown in (4). They might only receive inherent or lexical marking (see for example Rodríguez-Mondoñedo 2007, a.o.). Marked objects (5), such as the Spanish definite animate in (2)a or the Uzbek definite in (3)b, have a structural Case feature, which requires licensing/valuation/checking (depending on the particular analysis) in the syntax (Ormazabal and Romero 2013a, b, Preminger 2011, 2014, Kalin 2018, Bárány 2017, 2018, Levin 2019, a.o.). In some languages, Case licensing can only be implemented in a certain position, after raising above VP or even above *v*P (Baker 2015, a.o.).

(4) $[_{vP}\ldots v^0\,[_{VP}\,V\ NP/DP]]$ *Unmarked Objects*

(5) $[_{vP}\ldots v^0_{ACC}\,[_{VP}\,V\ DP_{[\_uCase]}]\,]$ *Marked Objects*

The second major theoretical stream connects differential object marking to the so-called Dependent Case algorithm (Marantz 1991, Baker and Vinokurova 2010, Preminger 2011, 2014, Levin and Preminger 2015, Baker 2015, a.o.). The general idea is that the accusative Case feature on the marked objects forces their raising into a domain where they enter into a Case competition with a higher argument. This is schematically represented in (6):

(6) Dependent Case
Let DP1and DP2be two nominals in the same domain. If DP1c-commands DP2:
a. mark DP1[= in the clause, ERGATIVE] and/or
b. mark DP2[= in the clause, ACCUSATIVE] (Baker 2015, a.o.)

## 3. Differential object marking: more complex splits

While these two formalisms address two-way splits (marked vs. unmarked), there are also languages where the morphological make-up of objects shows a more refined picture (Irimia to appear, Baker 2015 a.o.). One such language is Finnish (Finno-Ugric), which has a complex accusative category (de Hoop 1996, Kiparsky 1998, 2001, Nelson 1998, Holmberg and Nikanne 1993, Vainikka 1993, Asudeh 2003, Vainikka and Brattico 2014, a. o.). Fnnish accusatives can be morphologically realized in three ways: i) with the so-called 'true' accusative suffix *-t* in (7)a, which is reserved for pronouns (or human entities in colloquial Finnish); ii) with the accusative suffix which is homophonous with the genitive, *-n* in (7)b; and iii) with the accusative form which is homophonous with the nominative, and thus lacks an overt suffix, as in (7)c.[3]

(7) Finnish direct objects (Vainikka and Brattico 2014, ex. 1a, b, c)

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| (a) | Minä | näin | **häne-t.** |
| | I | saw.1SG | he.ACC(t) |

[3] In the glossing of Finnish examples we follow the convention from Vainikka and Brattico (2014), who represent these accusatives as ACC(t), ACC(n) and ACC(0).

'I saw him.'

(b) Minä näin *auto-n*.
I saw.1SG car.ACC(n)
'I saw the car.'

(c) Minun täytyy nähdä auto.
I must see car.ACC(0)
'I must see the car.'

Under the licensed/unlicensed approach, ACC(0) could potentially be explained as spelling out a caseless category. But something else will be needed in order to derive ACC(t) and ACC(n), as both give evidence of licensing,[4] as we will see in Section 6. Under the dependent Case explanation, it is not straightforward which of ACC(t) or ACC(n) enters the relevant calculus, as the two categories do not overtly show any differences in position. More generally, how to model the patterns is not a simple issue in a binary system.

Yet another example of a complex split comes from non-standard Basque varieties (Odria 2014, 2017, 2019, Fernández and Rezac 2016, a. o.). Non standard Basque exhibits an ergative-absolutive alignment, as opposed to Uzbek and Finnish, which are nominative-accusative. But it shows a tripartite picture of object marking, in that direct objects can show up i) bare and without absolutive agreement, ii) with absolutive agreement or iii) if they are animate/human, with morphology which is homophonous with the dative, and dative agreement. The differential encoding of animates via oblique morphology ('dative overmarking', Austin 2006, a.o.) is a property it shares with languages like Spanish.

(8) Non-standard Basque direct objects

(a) Ordenagailua ikusi **dut**.
computer-ART.ABS see AUX[3SG.ABS-1SG.ERG]
'I have seen the computer.' (Odria 2017: 3a, p.11)

(b) Zu-k ni-**ri** ikusi **didazu**.
you-ERG I-DAT=DOM see AUX[1SG.DAT-2SG.ERG]
'You have seen me.' (Odria 2019: 1b, glosses adapted)

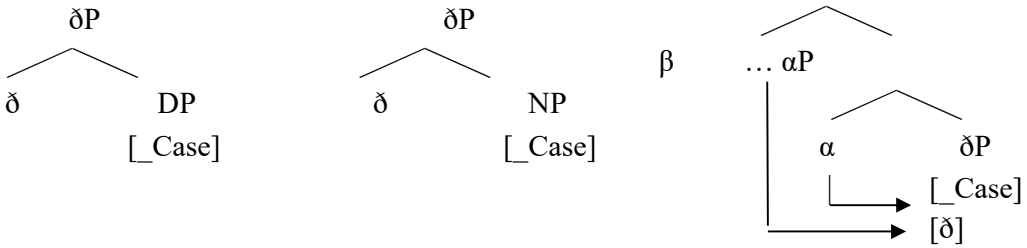
Non-standard Basque raises the same question as Finnish: how to set aside the agreeing absolutive in (8)(a) from oblique DOM in (8)(b)? First, it is not clear whether these two types of objects are found in distinct positions (see the discussion in Fernández and Rezac 2016, a.o.) and it is, thus, not clear, which one enters the dependent case calculus. Secondly, both the agreeing absolutive in (8)(a) and the 'dative' in (8)(b) show evidence that they are categories undergoing a licensing operation. For example, they give rise to PCC effects (Odria 2017, 2019), indicating that a more complex explanation is needed for oblique DOM.

In fact, if we examine the Uzbek patterns in more detail, it becomes clear that DOM does not simply reduce to the split Case licensed/caseless. As we will see in Section 4, unmarked nominals are not a homogenous class; while certain types pass diagnostics indicating true incorporation (Levy- Forsythe and Kagan 2018, a.o.), others, such as those in (3)(a) appear to be active in the syntax, and enter the Case calculus. In this paper we provide

[4] In the absence of a better term, we use 'licensing' to signal a syntactic condition regulating structural objects.

an account that can explain these types of *three-way* splits. Building on observations from Irimia (to appear), López (2012), Vainikka and Brattico (2014), or Ritter and Wiltschko (2019), ACC(t)/ACC(n) in Finnish, oblique DOM in nonstandard Basque and Uzbek *-ni* signal a separate licensing operation, beyond Case, on complex nominals. As we schematically represent in (9)a, and (9)b, a functional layer with interpretable features (which we abbreviate ðP for convenience) is generated above DP (non-standard Basque, etc.) or above NP (Uzbek, etc.), categories already containing a Case feature that requires valuation. The initial licenser endowed with Accusative case features ($v^0$, Asp, etc.) will value Case (9)c. The additional interpretable feature will need the contribution of an additional licenser (β), whose location varies cross-linguistically. The recruitment of the additional licenser is possibly a last-resort operation (Jaeggli 1982, Vainikka and Brattico 2014, a.o.) in a domain.

(9) a) nonstandard Basque b) Uzbek/Finnish c) Multiple licensers




This additional licensing mechanism appears to be particularly relevant at the syntax-semantics-pragmatics interface. It is connected with the valuation of an interpretable feature tracking the role of animates (Pancheva and Zubizarreta 2018, a.o.), individuation or how the speaker relates to other entities in the discourse (Ritter and Wiltschko 2019, a.o.).[5]

The present analysis is similar to accounts which motivate a three-way system for the licensing of nominals, but it avoids various problems. For example, López (2012) takes unmarked definites, as in (2)(b) to be specified with a Case feature, which is checked after $D^0$ incorporates into V, and the complex [D-V] head raises to *v*.[6] Spanish bare nominals, as well as unmarked indefinites are assumed to be caseless. Definite animate objects as in (2)(a), which must be differentially marked, are KPs; they must escape incorporation, as their Case feature in K is linked to a choice function (*f*), which cannot be interpreted inside VP.

(10) *Differentially marked arguments - Choice function in K*


(López 2012, ex. 13, p.78)

[5] We also build on recent discussions about a type of A licensing mechanisms, related to ð(discourse) features (Miyagawa 2017, a.o.), but extend it to other classes beyond typical information structure related categories such that topic or focus.

[6] The expected result of this process would be V-DEF adjacency at PF, which, however, is not observed in Spanish. The further solution López (2012) adopts is that, after head raising to V, the higher copy of the definite is deleted. What is pronounced instead is only the lower copy.

The mechanics of [uC] (uninterpretable Case) valuation is based on the operation *Agree*[7] (Chomsky 2001 et subseq.), implemented as feature sharing; *Agree* values or co-values all the features specified on the (two) items involved in the relevant operation. As a result of *Agree*, uninterpretable features ([uf]) are valued and removed from the derivation. The Case feature on KP can only be valued by *v* after the nominal raises to the Spec of a functional projection (α) specified with applicative and aspectual features, merged in a position between VP and *v*P.

(11) $[_{vP}\ v_{[ACC]}\ [_{\alpha P}\ DO = DOM\ \alpha\ [_{VP}\ V\ <DO>]]]$ (López 2012)

The three languages examined present clear evidence that unmarked nominals might contain a *structural* Case feature (see also Barrie and Li 2015 for similar observations). Thus, this part of López's (2012) system makes the right prediction. However, it is not clear that in languages like Basque oblique DOM nominals raise to a *different* position than the absolutives. Similar caveats hold for the Finnis. Moreover, the idea of D incorporation into V is also hard to unstipulatively motivate for these languages. Therefore, the present analysis argues for a different implementation: in some languages, [ð] specifications are merged in a nominal periphery above the projection hosting Case and require a licensing mechanism *beyond* the licensing of Case, irrespectively of raising.[8]

The ternary split argued for here (caseless, abstract Case licensing, ð licensing) and its correlation with various *nominal* sizes matches recent observations about structural representations of *pronouns*, recently made by Ritter and Wiltscko's (2019). As the two authors note, in German there is an impersonal pronoun spelled out as *man*; although it can be an antecedent for a plural reciprocal pronoun such as *einander,* it cannot carry overt plural marking and cannot trigger plural agreement on the verb, as shown in (12)a. A different type of impersonal pronoun is homophonous with the second person personal pronoun *du*. It triggers 2nd person agreement on the verb but it does not refer to the current addressee. It rather makes a general statement about people in Austria, as in (12)(b). As such, (12)c shows that it can be continued with a sentence in which *du* is interpreted as the addressee:

(12) German pronouns (Ritter and Wiltschko 2019, ex. 1a, b, 2a, b)

(a) *Impersonal man*
In Österreich gib-t/*geb-en **man(*en)** **einander** zu Weihnachten Geschenke.
in Austria give-3SG/PL IMPERS(PL) RECP to Christmas presents
'In Austria people give each other gifts at Christmas.

(b) *Impersonal du*
In Österreich gib-st **du** deinen Freunden zu Weihnachten Geschenke.
in Austria give-2SG IMPERS.2SG your friends to Christmas presents
'In Austria people give their friends gifts at Christmas.'

(c) *Personal du*
…Wenn **du** in Wien bist, sollt-est **du** das also auch tun.

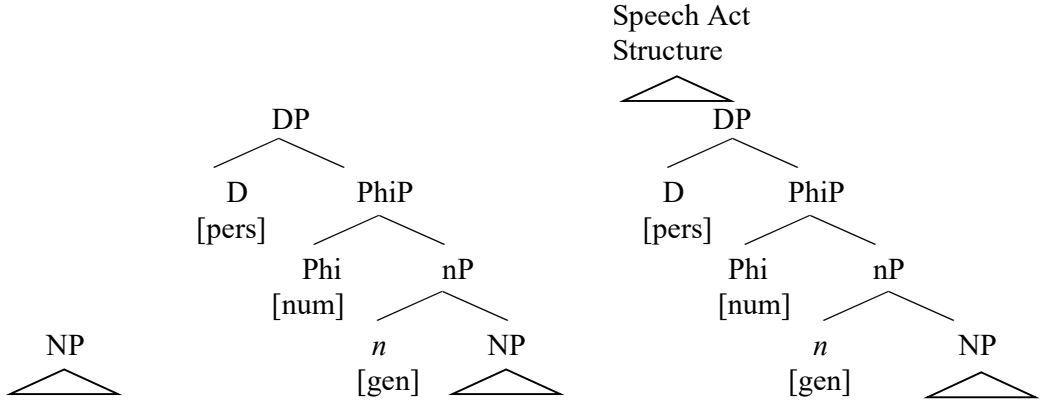
[7] Feature sharing under Agree: Agree (a[f], b[uf]) → (a[f], b[f]) (López 2012: 35, ex. 8)

[8] It could also be that raising itself is not reserved just for [ð], but it is instead also needed for those nominal structures which require licensing just for Case.

when you in Vienna be-2SG.PRES should-2SG you that therefore also do
'So, when you are in Vienna, you should do that too.'

Ritter and Wiltschko (2019) propose that the three pronouns correspond to three types of structures. Impersonal *man* is most structurally deficient, it contains only the NP layer, as in (13)a. Impersonal *du* is a bit more complex; it contains gender and number functional projections, and also a D layer, which hosts a person feature (13)b. The latter is, however, deficient, and cannot be linked to the current discourse. The personal pronoun *du*, on the other hand, contains Speech Act Structure and can pick out the current addressee (13)c.

(13) a. *man* b. impersonal *du* c. personal *du*




The data discussed in this paper indicate that a three-way partition is also active with full nominals, not just the pronouns. Importantly, the various structural possibilities have consequences on the behavior of the nominal in the syntax. If the most deficient nominals do not need Case licensing operations in the syntax[9], larger NPs and DPs might need Case licensing, while ðP normally requires some type of licensing. Thus, what sets DOM aside (in the three languages) is not its being the only category that needs Case licensing. DOM is rather the class that indicates *licensing of a feature beyond Case*. Depending on the available licensers in the language and the nature of the ð feature, morphological differences arise. In Section 3 we show how the analysis applies to Uzbek, while in Section 4 we turn to nonstandard Basque. Building on intuitions by Vainikka and Brattico (2014), in Section 6 we show, preliminarily, that the system makes the right prediction for Finnish too.

## 4. Uzbek

Object marking in Turkic languages has received renewed interest in formal approaches with Baker and Vinokurova's (B & V 2010) discussion of Sakha.[10] In Sakha direct objects with a definite interpretation must carry special marking, and must be found in a VP external position; for example, they precede adverbials such as *quickly* in (14)a, which signal the VP edge (according to B & V 2010). Unmarked objects, on the other hand, are not definite and cannot precede VP edge adverbials. In fact, they must be strictly adjacent to V, as in (14)b.

[9] If such nominals contain a Case feature, the latter can be checked via incorporation or via inherent Case.
[10] See also Levin and Preminger (2014) or Coon and Preminger (2013), a.o.

(14) Sakha direct objects (

(a) Masha **salamaat$_1$-*(y)** [$_{VP}$ türgennik $t_1$ sie-te].
Masha porridge-DOM quickly eat-PST.3SG.SUBJ
'Masha ate the porridge quickly.'

(b) Masha [$_{VP}$ türgennik **salamaat$_1$-(#y)**[11] sie-te].
Masha quickly porridge-(#DOM) eat-PST.3SG.SUBJ
'Masha ate the porridge quickly.'
(B & V 2010, ex. 11a, b, 12a, b adapted; Coon and Preminger 2013, ex. 1a, b)

After raising out of VP, the marked object is found in the same local configuration with the subject (15). As the latter is an yet caseless nominal too, the two enter into Case competition (Marantz 1991, a. o.). Following the algorithm repeated in (17), the lower nominal in the domain will receive *dependent* Case, which will be spelled out as the *-y* marker.[12] Unmarked nominals, which do not scramble out of VP, are not local enough to the subject and cannot enter the Case competition process (16). Therefore, they will not receive differential marking.

(15)
DP$_{1=\text{Subject}}$ DP$_{2=\text{Direct Object}}$
Masha **salamaat$_1$-DOM** [$_{VP}$ türgennik $t_1$ sie-te]
(for (14)a)

(16)
DP$_{1=\text{Subject}}$ DP$_{2=\text{Direct Object}}$
Masha [$_{VP}$ türgennik **salamaat$_1$-(#DOM)** sie-te]

(17) Dependent Case algorithm
Let DP1and DP2be two nominals in the same domain. If DP1c-commands DP2:
a. mark DP1[= in the clause, ERGATIVE] and/or
b. mark DP2[= in the clause, **ACCUSATIVE**] (Baker 2015, a.o.)

The configurational account derives the Sakha data. But As Öztürk (2005) or Kamali (2015) have shown, it is not the case that unmarked direct objects always show adjacency to V in other Turkic languages, such as Turkish. Levy-Forsythe and Kagan (2018) convincingly argue that bare nominals come in two types in yet another Turkic language, namely Uzbek. The bare nominal in (18)(a) has different properties from the bare nominal with a light verb[13] as in (18)(b). The latter passes diagnostics indicating *true incorporation* (TI) while the former rather instantiates a type of *pseudo-incorporation* (PI). As already mentioned in Section 2, Uzbek also has differentially marked objects, such as the definite we repeat in (18)c.

(18) Uzbek DOs (Levy-Forsythe and Kagan 2018, ex. 2a, 1b, 2c)

(a) Anvar *rasm* chidzli.
Anvar picture draw.PST.3SG

[11] The special marker is possible on *salamaat* only if the latter has contrastive focus (B & V 2010, p. 602)

[12] As Sakha is not an ergative language, the higher nominal will receive default Case, namely the nominative.

[13] A class including predicates such as: *qil-, et-* ('do, make'), *ol-* ('take'), *ber-*('give'), etc.

'Anvar drew a picture./Anvar drew pictures.'

(b) Anvar mashq qildi
Anvar exercise did.PST.3SG
'Anvar did (an) exercise. / Anvar did exercises /Anvar exercised.'

(c) Anvar rasm-**ni** chidzli.
Anvar picture-DOM draw.PST.3SG
'Anvar drew the picture.'

Importantly, although the structure of (18)a is reduced (NumP, NP), it is never the minimal N size in TI nominals. This correctly predicts that PI nominals have syntactic independence in the clause.[14] We see in (19)a that they are separated from the verb by adverbs of degree.[15]

(19) Uzbek PI and TI (Levy-Forsythe and Kagan 2018, ex. 8c)
Anvar kuzda palto [ADV **umuman/deyarli/hech]** kimadi**.**
Anvar autumn coat whatsoever virtually at all wear.NEG.PST.3SG
'Anvar did not wear a coat/coats whatsoever/virtually/al all in the autumn.'

Crucially, PI nominals also give clear evidence that they are not innocuous when it comes to abstract Case.[16] The relevant data come from contexts that contain three arguments, for example causatives.[17] Here, the differential marker on the causee must unexpectedly be replaced by the dative under certain conditions. As initially discussed by Taylan (1986) for Turkish, if the theme bears differential marking the causee cannot be differentially marked. The theme and the causee compete for accusative insertion. The causee must instead be marked dative (20)(a). That the causee is not inherently marked dative in causatives is demonstrated by (20)(b); the intransitive verb *run* does not have an internal object, therefore no competition with the accusative arises and the causee takes DOM. Importantly, PI nominals behave just like marked nominals, demonstrating that they *do have* an accusative Case feature. They trigger competition with the causee, which can only be *dative*, as (20)c. Note that an explanation according to which any nominal triggers case competition is *not* on the right track. We see in (20)(d) that a TI nominal does not give evidence of an accusative Case feature. We cannot say that the unmarked nominal in (20)(c) gets inherent/lexical case either. In (20)(e) the theme bears ablative case, lexically assigned by the predicate *get tired*, and it does not trigger competition with respect to the accusative; thus DOM is possible on the causee. All these examples show that the bare nominal in (20)(c) contains a *structural* accusative feature just like DOM in (20)a (see also Taylan 1986, Kamali 2015, a.o.).

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[14] Moreover, PI nominals can be antecedents for anaphora, as opposed to TI nominals. That observation that unmarked nominals license anaphora also holds in Spanish (López 2012, Rodríguez-Mondoñedo 2007, a.o.).

[15] While in the sentence below the PI nominal is modified by a relative clause:

(i) Anvar [RC **hammani hayratga sol-adi-gan]** rasm chiz-adi.
Anvar everyone.DOM awe.DAT put-PRES-PRT picture draw.IMPF.3SG
'Anvar draws a picture/pictures that estonish(es) everyone.' (Levy-Forsythe and Kagan 2018, ex. 5b)

Levy-Forsythe and Kagan (2018) present many other diagnostics for syntactic independence, such as grammaticality of PIs under topicalization, rightward dislocation, fragment answers, etc.

[16] In fact, this has been observed by Lyutikova and Pereltsvaig (2015) for another Turkic language, namely Tatar. The two authors propose that in Tatar both unmarked and marked objects carry Case, but the reduced structure in the unmarked nominal that does not permit the spell out of the differential marker.

[17] Similar facts are also seen in Tukish (Kornfilt 1984, Taylan 1986, Öztñrk 2004: 41-42, a.o.).

(20) Uzbek causatives (Levy-Forsythe and Kagan 2018: ex. 12a, b, c, 37)

(a) Madina **Anvar-ga/*-ni** nok-ni/ bitta nok-ni yer-dir-di.
Madina Anvar-DAT/*-DOM pear-DOM/one pear-DOM eat-CAUS-PST.3SG
'Madina made Anvar eat the pear/a pear.'

(b) Madina **Anvar-ni/*-ga** yugur-tir-di.
Madina Anvar-DOM/*-DAT run-CAUS-PST.3SG
'Madina made Anvar run.'

(c) Madina **Anvar-ga/*-ni** nok yer-dir-di.
Madina Anvar-DAT/*-DOM pear eat-CAUS-PST.3SG
'Madina made Anavar eat the pear.'

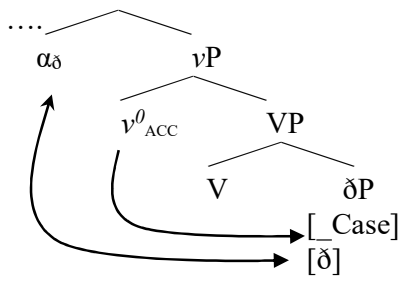
(d) Madina **Anvar-ni/*-ga** mexnat qil-dir-di.
Madina Anvar-DOM/*-DAT labour do-CAUS-PST.3SG
'Madina made Anvar work.'

(e) Madina **Anvar-ni/*ga** nok-dan bez-dir-di.
Madina Anvar-DOM/*DAT pear-ABL get.tired-CAUS-PST.3SG
'Madina made Anvar get tired of pears.' (Zarina Levy-Forsythe, p. c.)

(f) Madina **Anvar-ga/*ni** nok-dan ye-dir-di.
Madina Anvar-DAT/*-DOM pear-ABL eat-CAUS-PST.3SG
'Madina made Anvar eat some of the pears.' (Zarina Levy-Forsythe, p. c.)

What is the difference between unmarked and marked nominals, if both give indication of a structural Case feature?[18] We could hypothesize a PF explanation along these lines: the absence of the definiteness feature triggers the deletion of the accusative marker in unmarked nominals via *Impoverishment.*[19] But this won't explain the absence of DOM in causatives with an ablative theme, when the latter is interpreted as a partitive, as in (20)(f). The contrast between (20)(e) and (20)f is given by the specificity feature in partitives. This feature requires adequate licensing, just like the definiteness feature in DOM, which is *active* in the syntax. The hypothesis that DOM involves the *syntactic* licensing of a feature beyond the *syntactic licensing of* Case derives these patterns unproblematically. An additional licenser, similar to López's (2012) α head is recruited for this purpose.

(41)




[18] Using data from coordination, MacMillan (2020) argues that DOM, but not unmarked objects, involves raising. This won't be problematic for the present account. However, coordination requires further investigation.

[19] See Keine (2010), Keine and Müller (2008) or Glushan (2008) for futher discussion of object splits and PF.

## 5. Nonstandard Basque

Non standard varieties of Basque present an animacy based DOM system (Fernández and Rezac 2016, Odria 2014, 2017, 2019, Mounole 2012, Austin 2006, Rodríguez-Ordóñez 2013, 2016, a.o.). Direct objects at the higher end of the Animacy/Person hierarchy (especially 1st/2nd person pronouns and human entities)[20] must or can carry a special marker, which is homophonous with the dative. Interestingly, such objects also trigger dative agreement on the auxiliary, as seen in the two examples in (21) and in (22).[21]

(21) Southern Basque differential objects

(a) Zu-k ni-**ri** ikusi didazu.
you-ERG I-DAT=DOM see AUX[1SG.DAT-2SG.ERG]
'You have seen me.' (Odria 2019: 1b, glosses adapted)

(b) *Lekeitio Basque*
(Nik) **suri** ikusi dotzut.
I-ERG you.DAT=DOM see AUX[2SG.DAT-1SG.ERG]
'I saw you.' (Fernández and Rezac 2016; ex. 9, glosses adapted)

(22) *Lekeitio Basque indirect object dative*
(Nik) **suri** liburua emon dotzut.
I.ERG you.DAT book. ABS give AUX[2SG.DAT-1SG.ERG]
'I gave you a book.' (Fernández and Rezac 2016; ex. 10a, glosses adapted)

Direct objects in (non-standard) Basque generally show up with absolutive agreement on the verbal complex. This is clearly seen in the example below, where the internal object is an agreeing inanimate. However, as both traditional grammars and formal research have shown, absolutive arguments can also show up without agreement.[22] In (24) we provide an example from Preminger (2009) in which absolutive agreement is, in fact, not possible. The auxiliary shows up with default 3rd person singular agreement, instead.

(23) *Agreeing absolutives*
Ordenagailua ikusi **dut**.
computer.ABS see AUX[3SG.ABS-1SG.ERG]
'I have seen the computer.' (Odria 2017: 3a, p.11)

(24) *Non-agreeing absolutives* (Preminger 2009: 640-641)
Lankide-i [liburu horiek]$_{ABS}$ irakur-tze-n probatu
colleague(s)-DAT book.ABS those.PL read-NMZ-LOC attempt

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[20] Although there is dialectal variation (in some varieties only human objects being allowed), inanimates cannot be differentially marked (Fernández and Rezac 2016, Odria 2014, 2017, 2019, a.o.). Also, human direct objects have to be specific (Mounole 2012, Fernández and Rezac 2016, Odria 2017, 2019, a.o.).

[21] (Non-standard) Basque is ergative-absolutive morphologically. The verbal complex shows agreement with the ergative argument. The absolutive and the indirect object dative argument can also trigger agreement on the verbal complex, as shown in the various examples illustrated in the paper.

[22] Especially in non-finite contexts.

d-ϕ/***it***-u-(z)te.
AUX[3SG.ABS/*3PL.ABS-√-3pl.ERG]
'They have attempted to read those books to the colleagues.'

The animate differential marker in non-standard Basque is puzzling in that it is structurally similar to absolutives, despite its overt dative appearance. Various studies have shown that DOM does not seem to have the syntax of inherent dative nominals. For example, a) it allows depictive secondary predicates, unlike dative indirect objects (Odria 2014, Fernández and Rezac 2016, a.o.), as seen in (25); b) it can be used in Exceptional Case Marking;[23] d) is conditioned by clausal properties like tense,[24] a type of behavior inherent arguments do not show; e) it triggers PCC effects, just like agreeing absolutives.

(25) Depictive secondary predicates
(a) *nonstandard Basque*: no depictives with inherent datives
Nik$_i$ amona-ri$_j$ umea$_k$ *pozik$_{i/*j/k}$* eraman diot.
I.ERG grandmother.ART-DAT child.ART-ABS happy 1 carry
AUX[3SG.DAT-1SG.ERG]
'I have carried the child to his grandmother happy.' (Odria 2014, ex. 4, adapted)
(b) *Elgoibar Basque*: depictives with DOM=DAT
Nik$_i$ umia-ri$_j$ *oinutsik$_{i/j}$* ekarri diot.
I.ERG kid. ART-DAT barefoot carry AUX[3SG.DAT-1SG.ERG]
'I carried the kid barefoot.' (Fernández and Rezac 2016)

That both DOM and the absolutive direct object trigger PCC[25] effects (Odria 2017, 2019, Fernández and Rezac 2016, Albizu and Fernández 2006, Rezac et al. 2014, a.o.), indicates

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[23] Fernández and Rezac (2016) discuss evidence from an ECM construction (ii), built on a transitive predicates with a variant of the *have* copula, namely the *eduki* copula (Lit. 'Subject has X Small Clause', similar to structures of the type 'She has her parents alive', p. 22), whose structure is as in (i):
(i) BE [$_{PP}$ we [$_{PExp}$ [$_{SC}$ [$_{SUBJ}$ Subject [$_{PRED}$ PRED ]]]]][23]
(ii) *Dima Basque DOM under ECM*
(a) Ondoan edukiko **dostezu** beti.
beside eduki.FUTAUX [1SG.DAT=DOM-2SG.ERG] always
'I will always be besides you, which benefits/interests you.'
(b) Beti egongo naz zure ondoan.
always be. FUT AUX[1SG.ABS] your beside
'I will always be beside you.' (Fernández and Rezac 2016, ex. 34, glosses adapted)
The contrast in (ii) shows that the small clause subject shows up with oblique DOM. The verb in the embedded clause can only assign absolutive to its subject, as seen in (ii)(b). As *eduki* cannot assign dative case, it results that dative agreement on the auxiliary signals exceptional case marking that has been assigned to the subject of the embedded clause. As this argument is a first person nominal, its morphology will be that of a differential argument, namely the dative that signals differential object marking.

[24] For many speakers, it is either only possible or more robust in the past tense (see Odria 2017, 2019, Fernández and Rezac 2016, a.o.).

[25] In its typical instantiations, P(erson) C(ase) C(onstraint) is a restriction blocking a direct object from co-occuring with an indirect object, if the former's features are higher on the animacy hierarchy than the latter's. It has given rise to an extensive literature (see Rezac 2010, a.o.). What is relevant for our purposes is that such restrictions are only seen if the two arguments show overt agreement or require obligatory licensing by some other means.

that oblique DOM signals a type of direct object which is subject to a licensing constraint in the grammar. In (26)(a), there are two arguments that require licensing and obligatory agreement, namely the personal dative and the absolutive. But the structure contains only one licenser (following Anagnostopoulou 2003, a.o.); therefore, absolutive agreement must be removed. In (26)(b), either DOM must be removed or the goal must be marked allative.

(26) Absolutives, DOM and the PCC

(a) *Absolutive Person and agreeing datives: PCC*

*Pellori zu ezagutaraziko zaituzte/
Pello.DAT you.ABS carry.FUT AUX[2PL.ABS-3PL.ERG]
diote/dute.
AUX[3.ABS-3SG.DAT-3PL.ERG]/ AUX[3SG.ABS-3PL.ERG]/
'They will make Pelo know you.' (Fernández and Rezac 2016, ex. 38b)

(b) *DOM and agreeing datives: PCC*

*Martak **Aneri** eraman dio amonari.
Marta.ERG Ane.DAT=DOM carry AUX[3SG.DAT-2SG.ERG] gandma.to
'Marta carried Ane to (her) grandma.'
(Albizu and Fernández 2006, Fernández and Rezac 2016, ex. 39b)

Another important observation is that, for some speakers, direct objects at the higher end of animacy and referentiality scales (i.e. pronouns) can also be used without differential marking. In this case, they trigger absolutive agreement on the verb, which is otherwise independent of features that are characteristic to differential marking.[26] Moreover, oblique DOM is also subject to dative displacement, as in (27), in those dialects that show this process. Dative displacement refers to a context in which a dative marked argument controls *absolutive* agreement (for example, in the Basauri or Pasaia dialects as discussed in Fernández and Rezac 2016, fn. 13).

(27) *Dative displacement*

(Nik) **zuri** liburua emon **zaitut**.
I.ERG you.DAT book. ABS give AUX[2SG.ABS-1SG.ERG]
'I gave you a book.' (Fernández and Rezac 2016; ex. 13b, glosses adapted)

To summarize, given that oblique DOM is structurally an absolutive, we need to provide an analysis that can derive both categories in a non-stipulative way. Fernández and Rezac (2016) propose an account which links oblique DOM to object shift. Just like the

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[26] We present two examples below:

(i) Zu-k ni ikusi **nauzu**.
you.ERG I.ABS see AUX[1SG.ABS-2SG.ERG]
'You have seen me.' (Odria 2019: 1a, glosses adapted)

(ii) *Lekeitio Basque*

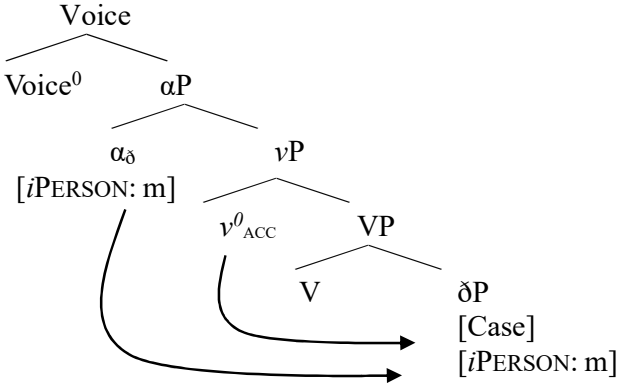
Nik su ikusi **saittut**.
I.ERG you.ABS see AUX[2SG.ABS-1SG.ERG]
'I saw you.' (Fernández and Rezac 2016; ex. 11, glosses adapted)

absolutive, oblique DOM reflects a structural Agree/Case relation with properties on high clausal heads, such as T or *v*. Oblique DOM is seen as a structural Case just like the absolutive; the latter emerges when conditions for the DOM dative are not met. The agree/Case locus for absolutive objects is a probe on *v*. The difference between the absolutive and DOM is given by the presence of a P feature on *v*, which triggers object shift as in (28).

(28) P is a trigger for object shift, associated with interpretive conditions in the way as it has been discussed for other types of object shift. (Fernández and Rezac 2016, iv)

Object shift is motivated by theory internal reasons: animacy and specificity generally feed object shift cross-linguistically (Bhatt 2007, etc.). While this is definitely correct for many languages, the problem posed by non-standard Basque is that we do not know whether absolutive arguments themselves do *not* raise.[27] Therefore, the analysis we propose here links DOM to a feature specification beyond Case itself, which requires separate licensing. Following Cornilescu (2000), Rodríguez-Mondoñedo (2007), or Richards (2008), we can assume that grammaticalized animacy involves the presence of a [PERSON] feature, merged in ðP (above D). A schematic representation is in (29), from Irimia (to appear). Thus, the nominal in (29) contains both Case as well as [PERSON] which need licensing. The differential marker results from the impossibility of the main licenser to license the two features; thus, an additional licenser must be recruited, possibly as last resort (following Jaeggli 1982, a.o.).[28] We also follow Pancheva and Zubizarreta (2018) in assuming that the additional licenser is an Appl head. For Pancheva and Zubizarreta (2018), notions such as animacy, which they collapse with perspectivization and viewpoint, are encoded as an interpretable feature in an Appl head, situated above $V^0$ but below the EA. This explains the use of dative as DOM in languages like Spanish and Basque.

(29) a.




[27] As Fernández and Rezac 2016 themselves notice (see also the discussion in Rezac, Albizu and Etxepare 2014 Vicente 2005, a. o.).

[28] Odria (2017) proposes a different analysis, according to which the oblique marker is inserted at PF to avoid a a violation of the *Distinctiveness Condition* (Richards 2010) with the ergative. As an explanation along these lines is harder to extend to Finnish, while the hypothesis of multiple licensing unifies the two languages.

## 6. Finnish

Finnish is well known for the complexity of its morphological case system (Kiparsky 2001, Holmberg and Nikanne 1993, Nelson 1993, 1993, de Hoop 1996, Vainikka and Brattico 2014, a.o.). Besides numerous semantic cases, it also presents four structural case categories: the nominative, the genitive, the accusative and the partitive (Vainikka 1993, a.o.). Here we are only concerned with the accusative. As we showed in the introduction and in the examples we repeat here, the accusative has three variants: a) the *-t* variant, seen in with human pronouns (30)a; the *-n* variant, which is homophonous with the genitive (30)b and the bare/zero form, which is homophonous with the nominative (30)c.

(30) Finnish direct objects (Vainikka and Brattico 2014, ex. 1a, b, c)

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| (a) | Minä | näin | | **häne-t.** |
| | I | saw.1PST | | he.ACC(t) |
| | 'I saw him.' | | | |
| (b) | Minä | näin | | auto-n. |
| | I | saw.1PST | | car.ACC(n) |
| | 'I saw the car.' | | | |
| (c) | Minun | täytyy | nähdä | *auto*. |
| | I | must | see | car.ACC(0) |
| | 'I must see the car.' | | | |

Formal research (Kiparsky 2001, Vainikka and Brattico 2001, a.o.) has demonstrated that the three accusatives are not phonologically but syntactically conditioned. However, the precise syntactic conditions are still in need of clarification. Here we make just some preliminary observations, showing that: a) differential marking does not simply reduce to the licensed/unlicensed distinction in nominals: b) just like non-standard Basque and Uzbek, Finnish gives evidence that several licensers can affect the case realization of a given nominal. The latter conclusion has been independently argued for by Vainikka and Brattico (2014). Moreover, what gives the distinction between various types of structural objects is not a difference in position; just like in nonstandard Basque, it cannot be unstipulatively assumed that three objects do not share the same position.[29] Vainikka and Brattico (2014) present diagnostics from topicalization, clefting and idiom construction which diagnose the three objects as sharing the same position, in fact.

The three accusatives impose various structural restrictions. Traditionally, non bare objects have been assumed to be subject to *Jahnsson's Rule* (Kiparsky 2001), which blocks objects without an overtly realized case marker in the presence of a nominative subject. However, Vainnika and Brattico (2014) have convincingly shown that this generalization is violated in both directions (bare objects can show up with nominative subjects, and case marked objects are possible in sentences that do not have a nominative subject in the local domain). Moreover, there are differences between both ACC(t) and ACC(n), and ACC(t) and ACC(n) and unmarked objects. In (31), ACC(t) is preserved under the impersonal passive, as opposed to ACC(n). Then, ACC(t) and ACC(n) are seen in certain types of embedded contexts if the *matrix* predicate shows subject agreement, such as the MA infinitive[30] in (32),

[29] This does *not* entail that they do not raise. They might raise to the same position.
[30] Terminology borrowed from Vainikka (1993) and Vainikka and Brattico (2014).

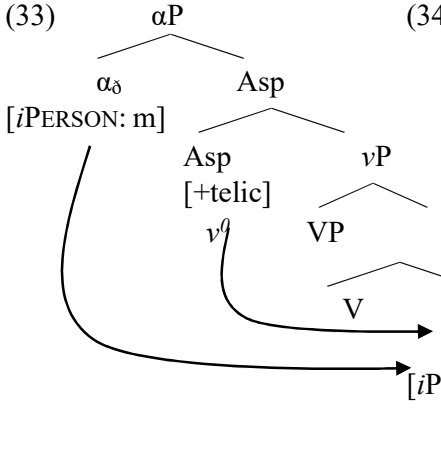
in which ACC(0) is banned instead.

(31) **Sinu-t/** **sisko/** ***sisko-n** löydettiin pihalta.
you- ACC(t) sister-ACC(0) ACC(n) found.PASS yard
'You/the sister were/was found in the (back)yard.' (Vainikka and Brattico 2014, ex. 2)

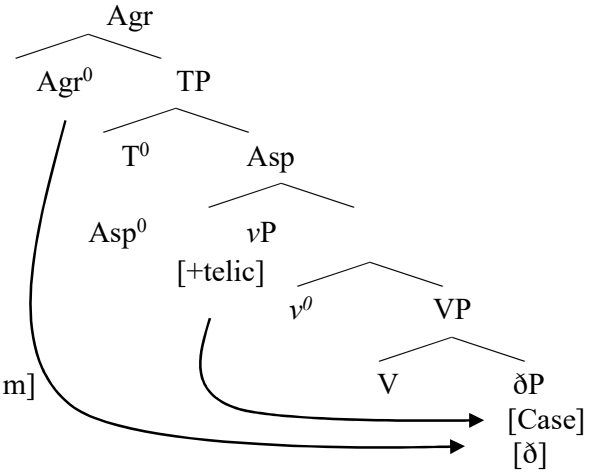
(32) Lähdimme hakemaan **hän-et/** **sisko-n/** ***sisko-0**.
went.PST.1PL get.ma him/her-ACC(t) sister-ACC(n) sister-ACC(0)
'We went to pick her/the sister up.' (Vainikka and Brattico 2014, ex. 32a)

As Nelson (1998), or Vainikka and Brattico (2014) convincingly demonstrate, these patterns are straightforwardly explained under the assumption that the case realization of *structural* arguments is *affected by several case assigners.* ACC(n), which is homophonous with the genitive, requires valuation by an Agr head in the clausal spine, which acts as a conjunctive case assigner together with Asp, as in (33). Aspect Phrase is the lowest functional projection dominating the *v*P in Finnish and is the initial licenser for direct objects.[31] Given that in the impersonal passive the Agr head is not present, this predicts that ACC(n) will be ungrammatical there, as it will be unlicensed. It is clear that the impersonal passive in (32) does not involve the removal of the accusative case, as ACC(t) is preserved. Extending the hypothesis put forward in this paper, ACC(t), generally reserved for *human* pronouns (or other human entities in colloquial Finnish), involves an additional licenser which is more local than the Agr head, for example a functional head similar to Pancheva and Zubizaretta's (2018) low sentience projection, as schematically shown in (33).

(33)




(34)




In conclusion, as Brattico (2011) emphasizes, several case assigners can affect the case realization at one case assignee. Variation in the nature of features involved in multiple licensing can result in a language like Finnish, where the split is not just marked/unmarked.

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[31] Which, very broadly put, will be spelled out as ACC(n) and ACC(t), the latter for pronouns, if the predicate is telic, or as parttiives, when the predicate is atelic. The alternation ACC-partitve has a rich litearure (see especially Kiparsky 1998, 2001, a.o.). As Vainikka (1993 has demostrated, the partitive is a structural case too in Finnish.

## 7. Conclusions

The data we have examined in this paper are problematic for two common analyses for DOM, namely i) DOM as signaling Case marked/licensed nominals and ii) DOM as signalling structural arguments that enter the dependent Case calculus. We have shown instead that Uzbek, nonstandard Basque and Finnish, three languages with apparently distinct DOM systems, can be unified under an analysis which takes differential marking to signal the action of more than one licenser on the same nominal. This derives not only the syntactic similarities between DOM and other structural accusatives, but also the differences.

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