French vs Italian datives: participle agreement, reflexives and the PCC[1]

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Overview

- In French past participles do not agree if the indirect object is reflexivized, while in Italian agreement surfaces in those cases.

- Under an unaccusative analysis of reflexives (e.g. Marantz (1984), Sportiche (1998)), the difference between French and Italian is unexpected and remains unaccounted for.

- French and Italian differ in another aspect pertaining to Case, namely the Person Case Constraint (PCC, Bonet (1991)). French obeys the strong version of the PCC (1/2 ACC > *DAT) whereas Italian only bans 1/2 ACC > 3 DAT combinations, in virtue of the weak version of the PCC.

- Anagnostopoulou (2005) proposes to derive this difference between French and Italian via the availability of Multiple Agree: French does not allow Multiple Agree while Italian does.

- I argue that the asymmetry between French and Italian participle agreement facts in dative reflexives follows from this as well.

- Furthermore, I propose that the (non-)availability of Multiple Agree is derived by the fact that datives in French and Italian have different featural specifications.

1 Data

1.1 Past participle agreement with direct objects

- Object agreement in French and Italian: past participles agree with direct objects if they are preverbal/moved (Kayne (1989), citetDR).

- Complex tenses: AUX+PP, e.g. *passé composé*, pluperfect.

- The auxiliary agrees in person and number with the subject.

- With an object in-situ/postverbal: no agreement of the participle (1).

  (1) Jean   a   décrit-ø   **Marie**.
       Jean.NOM AUX.3SG describe.PTCP-MSG Marie.ACC.
       'Jean has described Marie.'   *French*

- With a moved/preverbal direct object: agreement of the participle, in number and gender.

(2) *Past participle agreement paradigms in French and Italian*

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

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

- Preverbal objects include derived objects, as in passives:

  (3) **Marie**   est   décrit-**e**   par Jean.
      Marie.NOM AUX.3SG describe.PTCP-F.SG by Jean.
      'Marie is described by Jean.'   *French*

- Or unaccusatives:

  (4) **Le ragazze**   sono arrivat-**e**.
      the girls.FPL are   arrived-FPL
      'The girls have arrived'   *Italian*

- That also applies to pronominal, cliticized objects:

  (5) a. Les allemands **l'**   ont   détruit-**e**.   (la ville).
         the germans   it(F) AUX.3PL destroy.PTCP-F.SG the city.F.
         'The germans destroyed it (the city).'   *French*
      b. **Le**   abbiamo salutat-**e**.
         them.FPL have.1PL greeted-FPL
         'We have greeted them.'   *Italian* (D&R 2008)

- And to reflexive constructions:

  (6) a. Je me   suis   décrit-**e**   comme timide.
         I   REFL.1SG AUX.3SG describe.PTCP-F.SG as   shy
         'I described myself as shy.'   *French*
      b. Le ragazze   si   sono guardat-**e**   allo   specchio.
         the girls.FPL REFL are   looked-FPL in.the mirror
         'The girls have looked at themselves in the mirror.'   *Italian*

- Reflexives in French and Italian are formed by using reflexive clitics of the *SE* type.

  (7) *Pronouns and reflexives paradigm in French*

	ACC pronouns	**DAT pronouns**	**ACC/DAT Reflexives**
1SG	me	me	me
2SG	te	te	te
3SG	le/la	lui	se
1PL	nous	nous	nous
2PL	vous	vous	vous
3PL	les	leur	se

1.2 The dative problem

- No past participle agreement with a preverbal dative pronominal clitic in French or Italian.

  (8) a. Tu **nous**   as   écrit-ø/*s.
         2SG 1PL.DAT have.2SG written.PTCP-M.SG/*PL 2SG
         'You have written to us.'   *French*

    b. (Tu) **ci** hai scritt-o/*i.
       (2SG) 1PL.DAT have.2SG written.PTCP-M.SG/*PL
       'You have written to us.' *Italian*

- In reflexive constructions however, a different pattern obtains.

- In French the participle does not agree if it is the indirect object that is reflexivized (9), while in Italian agreement surfaces in those cases (10).

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

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

- Although dative and accusative reflexive clitics have the same form, SE in the following examples is nevertheless taken to be dative:

  1. when the non-reflexive argument corresponding to SE arises, it is overtly dative (11)

  2. it is interpreted in the same way as overtly dative forms, i.e. as a goal (Macdonald, 2015)

  3. it is generally assumed that only one accusative per clause can be assigned

  (11) Lucie lui a remis-ø le prix.
      Lucie.NOM 3SG.DAT have.3SG give.PTCP-M.SG the prize.ACC
      'Lucy gave him/her the prize.' *French*

1.2.1 Summary of the data

Past participle agreement with... ?

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

2 The valency of reflexives

2.1 Reflexives as intransitives

- Reflexives as transitive predicates?
  -Most of the literature agrees that French and Italian reflexive constructions are detransitivized predicates, which don't pattern like transitive predicates (Kayne 1975).

- Reflexives as intransitives?
  -The debate is whether they are **unaccusatives** (Marantz (1984), Grimshaw (1990), Embick 2004, Sportiche (1998)) or **unergatives** (e.g. Chierchia (1989, 2004), Reinhart and Siloni (2004), Sportiche (2014)).

- Reflexives as unergatives? → $[_{TP}$ EA SE AUX $[_{vP}$ V$]]$

  -SE absorbs the internal argument

  -the participle agrees with the subject

  → exception to the rule that only moved objects trigger participle agreement, which is undesirable

  → leaves unexplained why the participle doesn't agree in French dative reflexives.

- Reflexives as unaccusatives? → $[_{TP}$ IA SE AUX $[_{vP}$ V $t_{IA}]]$

  -SE absorbs the external argument

  -constructions in which the dative argument is reflexivized can thus be construed as 'undatives': the indirect object gets promoted to subject.

  -past participle agreement is indeed triggered by a moved object, we get the following paradox:

  1. Either as in (8a)/(8b) with dative pronouns the case marking of the indirect object would somehow make it an inactive goal for agreement → the Italian pattern in (13) is unexpected.

  2. If the derived nominative subject is a possible goal for past participle → the French pattern in (12) is unexpected.

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

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

2.2 Reflexives as unaccusatives

- Here I will assume that reflexives are unaccusatives and here is why:

  1. The use of auxiliary *être/essere* 'be', like with unaccusative verbs

  2. The presence of SE in other unaccusative constructions such as middles or inchoatives

     (14) La porte s' est ouvert-e.
          the door SE be.3SG open.PTCP-FSG
          'The door opened. ' *Inchoative*

     (15) Les frites se mangent avec les doigts.
          the fries SE eat.3PL with the fingers
          'Fries are eaten with the fingers' *Middle (French)*

  3. The requirement that the past participle agrees when the direct object is reflexivized, since past participle agreement only occurs if a direct object moves (to subject position)

  4. Reflexives cannot be formed in constructions where the external argument is lacking, such as with raising verbs (16) or passives (17): the EA cannot be absorbed by the reflexive morphology, therefore these sentences are ungrammatical.

     (16) *Jean$_i$ se semble [t_i malade].
          Jean SE seems sick
          'Jean seems (to) himself to be sick.' (Charnavel et al. 2009: 6)

     (17) *Marie s'est été décrite.
          Marie SE is been described
          'Marie was described (to) herself.' (Charnavel et al. 2009: 6)

2.3 Iterim summary

Pieces of the puzzle:

☞ French and Italian pattern widely alike in terms of past participle agreement.

☞ Reflexives in French and Italian can be analyzed as unaccusative predicates.

☞ The difference between French and Italian past participle agreement facts with dative reflexives remains unaccounted for.

3 The PCC

- French and Italian differ in another aspect pertaining to Case, namely the Person Case Constraint (PCC, Bonet 1991).

3.1 Strong vs weak PCC

(18) *The Weak Version of the PCC*
In a combination of a weak direct object and an indirect object [clitic, agreement marker or weak pronoun], if there is a third person it has to be the direct object. (Bonet 1991: 182)

(19) *Italian*
  a. 1/2 ACC > 3 DAT
    *Mi   gli   presentano.
    1SG.ACC 3SG.DAT introduce.3PL
    'They introduce me to him.'
  b. 1/2 ACC > 1/2 DAT
    Mi   ti   presentano.
    1SG.ACC 2SG.DAT introduce.3PL
    'They introduce me to you.'

*1/2 ACC > 3 DAT → ITALIAN

(20) *The Strong Version of the PCC*
In a combination of a weak direct object and an indirect object [clitic, agreement marker or weak pronoun], the direct object has to be 3rd person. (Bonet 1991: 182)

(21) *French*
  a. 1/2 ACC > 3 DAT
    *Ils   me   lui   présentent.
    3PL.NOM 1SG.ACC 3SG.DAT introduce.3PL
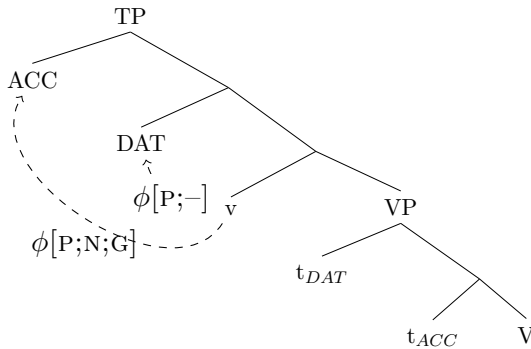   'They introduce me to him/her.'
  b. 1/2 ACC > 1/2 DAT
    *Ils   me   te   présentent.
    3PL.NOM 1SG.ACC 2SG.DAT introduce.3PL
    'They introduce me to you.'

*1/2 ACC > DAT → FRENCH

3.2 Multiple Agree (Anagnostopoulou, 2005)

- Anagnostopoulou (2005) proposes to derive the difference between French and Italian via the availability of Multiple Agree.

- PCC effects stems from a configuration where two objects (direct and indirect) are checked against one functional head v.

- This head allows split feature checking (Anagnostopoulou, 2003; Taraldsen, 1995).

- Under Anagnostopoulou's proposal, datives are defective: they have only person features, no gender or number features: [1/2/3;–].

- Two 3rd persons (Benveniste 1966, Bonet 1991, Taraldsen 1995, Ritter 1995, Kayne 2000, Anagnostopoulou 2003, Adger and Harbour 2003, Sundaresan 2016, etc.):

  1. (ACC) 3rd person = no person feature [–]
  2. DAT 3rd person = [-person]
  3. ACC/DAT 1/2 = [+person]

(22)

(23)   1/2 ACC > 3 DAT

*Ils   me   lui   présentent.
3PL.NOM 1SG.ACC 3SG.DAT introduce.3PL

'They introduce me to him/her.'   *French*

- Datives are closest to v and therefore Agree first.

- So the dative object enters in an agreement relationship with v and checks person, leaving the accusative object to check remaining number/gender features.

- French does not allow Multiple Agree, therefore the accusative object cannot subsequently check its own person features against v, if it has any (1/2 > [+person]), therefore deriving the strong version of the PCC.   *1/2 ACC > DAT

- Italian on the other hand allows Multiple Agree and an accusative object can check its person feature against v, iff there are no conflicting feature specifications. *1/2 ACC > 3 DAT.

(24)   *Conflicting feature specifications in French and Italian*

| DAT	ACC		DAT	ACC		Italian	French
3	1/2	→	[-person]	[+person]	→	X	X
1/2	1/2	→	[+person]	[+person]	→	✓	X
3	3	→	[-person]	[–]	→	✓	✓
1/2	3	→	[+person]	[–]	→	✓	✓

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4 Proposal

4.1 Applying the Multiple Agree analysis to dative reflexives

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

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

- If Anagnostopoulou (2005) analysis of PCC effects in terms of Multiple Agree is correct, then the asymmetry between French and Italian participle agreement facts in dative reflexives follows from it as well.

- Recall we adopted an analysis of reflexives as unaccusatives.

- In this approach, what is the the status of SE?

- The following structure for reflexives is assumed: SE cliticizes to a Voice head that checks an argument in Spec,VoiceP or Spec,TP (Labelle 2008, Sportiche 2013, Déchaine and Wiltschko (2017)).

(27)
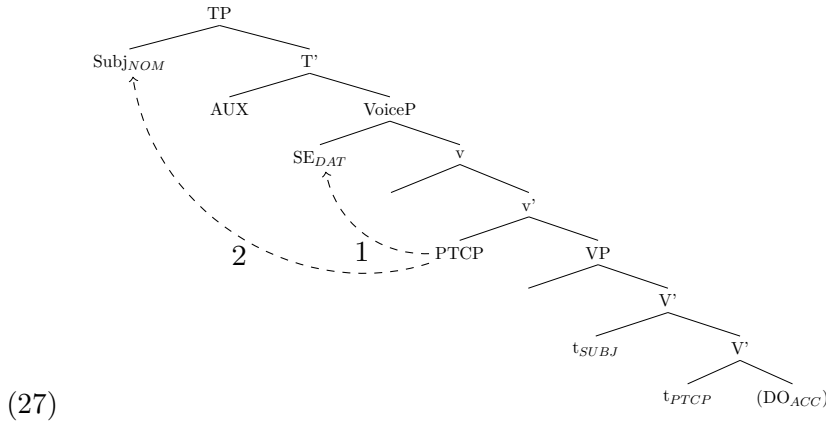
- Although reflexive SE is not an argument at the semantic level, it is nevertheless a goal for agreement in the morphosyntax and carries dative case.

- Dative SE agrees first, as it is the closest (Agree relation 1).

- If datives are underspecified for number and gender, as proposed by Anagnostopoulou (2003, 2005), they leave these features unvalued on the participle.

- The indirect object Remerges in Spec,TP and gets nominative case.

- French does not have the possibility of Multiple Agree → the participle in v cannot further Agree with the moved indirect object/surface subject (Agree relation 2) → the participle surfaces with default agreement > (25).

- In Italian, on the other hand, the participle can further Agree with the moved indirect object in Spec,TP for remaining gender and number features (Agree relation 2), deriving (26).

- So in the tree above, 2 is an Agree relation in Italian that is not allowed in French, while Agree relation 1 is fine in both.

4.2 Different featural specifications

- How can the (non-)availability of Multiple Agree be accounted for?

- I propose that datives in French and Italian have different feature specifications:

→ French datives: [3;M;SG]

→ Italian datives: [3;–]

- Rezac (2008): datives are defective targets for agreement because datives are embedded in a PP or KP shell with its own set of features (e.g. only 3rd person), which prevent the features of the complement DP to be visible for agreement, while still being interpretable (see also Bjorkman & Zeijlstra (t.a.)).

- Doing away with the parametrization of Multiple Agree:

→ French datives entirely value their probes' uninterpretable features, leaving no further features for subsequent goals

→ Italian datives only incompletely value their probe, which remains available for further Agree relations.

- This has equally correct results for past participle agreement, which then always surfaces as [3;M;SG] default agreement in French (ø-morpheme), the dative controlling agreement in disguise.

- In Italian, *v* probes further up for the nominative, valuing gender and number.

4.3 Predictions for the PCC

- Given the possible combinations of DAT/ACC clitics, how does the proposal for a fully specified dative in French vs a partially specified dative in Italian fares?

(28) *French*

DAT	ACC		DAT	ACC		
3	1/2	→	[-person]	[+person]	→	X
1/2	1/2	→	[-person]	[+person]	→	X
3	3	→	[-person]	[–]	→	✓
1/2	3	→	[-person]	[–]	→	✓

(29) *Italian*

DAT	ACC		DAT	ACC		
3	1/2	→	[-person]	[+person]	→	X
1/2	1/2	→	[-person]	[+person]	→	???
1/2	1/2	→	[+person]	[+person]	→	✓
3	3	→	[-person]	[–]	→	✓
1/2	3	→	[-/+person]	[–]	→	✓

- So it might be more accurate to say that French datives have a (fully specified and invariable) PP/KP shell [3;M;SG] and Italian datives don't (3 = [-person;...], 1/2 [+person; ...]).

5 Conclusion

- I have accounted for unexpectedly different past participle agreement facts in French and Italian dative reflexives.

- Based on the new observation that these facts and weak/strong PCC effects can be connected.

- I build on Anagnostopoulou (2005)'s idea that French and Italian differ in the avaibility of Multiple Agree.

- I tentatively propose that this might be due to different featural specifications of the datives, and try to derive some of the consequences of this proposal.

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