

## Variation and Change in Morphology and Syntax: Romance Object Agreement\*

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### *Abstract*

Romance past participle agreement in perfective periphrastics, it is argued, has to be analyzed as object agreement. This paper provides a general characterization of Romance object agreement in a typological perspective (§2) and then discusses the different diachronic developments of the Proto-Romance rule into the daughter languages (§3). The results suggest that change affecting the syntactic working or the morphological marking of agreement can be initiated at either the morphological, the morphosyntactic or the syntactic levels. It may proceed independently on either without affecting the others or may else have repercussions beyond the component from which it started. Special attention is devoted (§4) to a case study from a southern Italo-Romance dialect in which syntactic change and the resulting synchronic rule were sensitive to morphology, in a way that is excluded on deductive grounds under many current theories of the morphology-syntax interplay.

### 1. *Introduction*

This paper considers variation and change in the morphology and the syntax of Romance past participle agreement in perfective periphrastics, as exemplified for standard Italian in (1b):

- (1) a. Gianni ha pres-o la su-a decision-e  
Gianni have.3SG take.PTP-M.SG DEF.F.SG his-F.SG decision(F)-SG  
'Gianni has taken his decision'
- b. (la su-a decision-e) Gianni l' ha pres-a  
DEF.F.SG his-F.SG decision(F)-SG Gianni DEF.3F.SG have.3SG take.PTP-F.SG  
'Gianni has taken it'

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\* I thank the organizers of IMM 13 for the invitation, Wolfgang U. Dressler and Tania Paciaroni for comments on a previous draft as well as Olivier Bonami, H el ene Carles and Marianne Kilani-Schoch for discussing the French data with me. The following abbreviations will be used throughout the paper: GR "grammatical relation", DO "direct object", PRom "Proto-Romance", PTP "past participle", RG "Relational Grammar".

While the topic is a much-investigated one, most studies focus exclusively on the syntax of the agreement rule, for instance on the fact that agreement occurs, in languages like Italian, French or Catalan, with DO clitics ((1b)) but not with lexical direct objects ((1a)). In those studies, the morphological expression of agreement is dealt with, if at all, as a mere appendix. Here, on the contrary, the Romance facts will be discussed against the background of typological studies on agreement in theoretical morphology, following the lead of Corbett (2006). In §2 it is proposed that Romance past participle (henceforth PtP) agreement must be analyzed as (a non-canonical instance of) object agreement, and a sketch of its general properties is provided, discussing controller and conditions (§2.1), domain (§2.2), target and features (§2.3). Against this background, §3 goes on to analyze cross-linguistic variation and diachronic change, illustrating with selected examples the mutual independence of morphology and syntax in shaping the changes which affected (the signalling of) object agreement in several Romance languages and dialects. The inventory of empirical cases to be discussed includes instances of a) syntactic change under constant morphological conditions (§3.1); b) mutually independent changes in both the morphology and the syntax of agreement (§3.2); c) change dictated by either morphological or morphosyntactic features (§3.3);<sup>1</sup> and d) change sweeping away the (inflectional) morphology that serves the expression of agreement while the syntactic rule remains unaffected (§3.4). Finally, §4 will analyze the somewhat peculiar case of a syntactic change that affected selectively agreement targets belonging to different morphological classes. This represents, it is argued, an exception to Zwicky's (1996) principle of 'morphology-free syntax'.

## **2. *Romance object agreement in typological perspective***

### **2.1 *Controller and conditions***

Object agreement is a cross-referencing mechanism found in several languages of the world, as exemplified with Swahili in (2) (cf. Lehmann 1982:212):

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<sup>1</sup> We shall distinguish between morphological, morphosyntactic and syntactic properties. The former two are defined as in Corbett (2006:122-123) (see §4 for some illustration), whereas 'syntactic' is predicated of properties that are neither purely morphological (e.g. membership in an inflectional class) nor morphosyntactic (e.g. gender, number): typically, GRs and the processes/conditions referring to them.



(3)	a. Italian	b. Spanish	c. Valdôtain	d. Romanian
Clitic precedes the PtP	+	+	-	-
Clitic controls PtP agreement	+	-	+	-

Combination (3c) is instanced by the Francoprovençal variety spoken in Aosta (Chenal 1986:540-545), where the clitic DO (as seen in (4b)) follows the PtP, yet it controls agreement on it:

- (4) a. qui l'=at bati cett-a mèison?  
 who 3SG=have.3SG build.PTP[M] this-F house(F)  
 'Who's built this house?'  
 b. mè; dz'=i bati-a=la tot solet  
 1SG 1SG=have.1SG build.PTP-F=DO.3F.SG all[M] alone[M]  
 'Me. I've built it all alone'

Given the data in (4), one must conclude that the circumstance that the (3a-b) cases make up the vast majority of recorded data is just a statistical accident due to independent historical reasons, viz. the SOV > SVO change, which affected full NPs but not pronominal clitics, frozen in the original object position.<sup>4</sup> The explanatory factor for the different behaviour of clitics vs. full NPs as agreement controllers cannot be linear order but is rather the fact that clitics are different syntactic objects than full NPs.

### 2.1.2 Syntactic conditions on object agreement

One possible formalization of this structural contrast, originally proposed in the framework of RG by David Perlmutter, is displayed in the representations in (5a-b).<sup>5</sup> Clitics (5b), like full NPs (5a), are argumental DOs (or initial 2s, in RG terms) – and in this they differ from affixal morphology –<sup>6</sup> but then the GR borne by the clitic is cancelled, so that the clause becomes finally intransitive:

<sup>4</sup> Varieties like Valdôtain or Romanian have innovated by placing object clitics too (only FSG, in Romanian) to the right of the PtP. While this happened in a minority of languages, this minority by no means reduces to the two mentioned in (3c-d). Within Italo-Romance, most Piedmontese dialects have postposed clitics. The same happens in some north-western Lombard dialects, like that of Quarna di Sotto, where postposed clitics control object agreement like in Valdôtain (cf. Manzini & Savoia 2005, II: 560):

(i) i u vOrt=âf/ vErt-â=fâ  
 SUBJ.1SG have.1SG M\open.PTP[M]=DO.3M.SG/ F\open.PTP-F=DO.3F.SG  
 'I have opened it'

<sup>5</sup> In the relational diagrams in (5)-(6), **1** = subject, **2** = direct object, **P** = predicate, **Cho** = chômeur ('the relation held by a nominal that has been ousted from term status', Blake 1990: 2). The chômeur relation is extended to predicates under Davies and Rosen's (1988) 'Predicate Union'.

<sup>6</sup> Many current theories of morphology treat pronominal clitics as "inflectional matter" (Corbett 2006:75): cf. e.g. Anderson (1992:210-13).

(5)	a.	1			P			2	
		1	P	Cho			2		
		Maria	ha	visto			la casa		
		‘Mary	has	seen			the house’		

	b.	1			P			2		
		1			P			Cho		
		Maria			l’ha	vista				[3fsg]
		‘Mary			has	seen				it’

The controller of PtP agreement can also be the nuclear argument of a subset of intransitive predicates, as shown in (6a), where the PtP agrees, as opposed to (6b) (the complementary subset of intransitives), where it does not:

(6)	a.	2			P				
		1			P				
		1	P			Cho			
		Maria	è			arrivat-a			
		‘Mary	has			arrived’			

	b.	1			P				
		1	P			Cho			
		Maria	ha			lavorat-o			
		‘Mary	has			worked’			

Under Perlmutter’s Unaccusative Hypothesis, the intransitive argument of predicates like the one in (6a) is represented as an initial DO since it shares a host of syntactic properties with transitive direct objects, whereas the argument of the predicates in (6b) patterns with transitive subjects as for those properties, a selection of which are listed in (7):<sup>7</sup>

(7) Italian (= ProtoRomance) active/inactive alignment

- a. PtP agreement in perfective periphrastics
- b. perfective auxiliary
- c. *ne*-pronominalization
- d. initial nuclear argument marking with causatives
- e. participial attribute
- f. participial absolute

intransitive predicate	
inactive (2→1)	active (1)
√	*
<i>essere</i>	<i>avere</i>
√	*
∅	<i>da</i>
√	*
√	*

The intransitive split exemplified in (7) with modern standard Italian, which in this respect corresponds to Proto-Romance,<sup>8</sup> is familiar from cross-linguistic studies of the typology of alignment. It is the kind of split displayed by active/inactive systems (8b):

(8) Alignment systems under Perlmutter’s (1978) Unaccusative Hypothesis

a.	ergative	transitive				←	clause type
		unergative		unaccusative		←	initial grammatical relation
		1	1	2	2	←	final grammatical relation
		1	1	1	2	←	morphological marking (head and/or dependent)
		ERG	ABS	ABS	ABS		
		ACT	ACT	INA	INA		
		NOM	NOM	NOM	ACC		

<sup>7</sup> These syntactic properties are extensively discussed in the literature: their typological consistence was first recognized by Perlmutter (1989).

<sup>8</sup> A reconstruction of the active/inactive features of PRom was first proposed by La Fauci (1988).

Thus, under the Unaccusative Hypothesis all controllers of Romance PtP agreement, including the argument of unaccusatives, share the defining property of being a DO (in this wider sense). This is why they qualify as object agreement controllers. Not all DOs control agreement though: in most modern Romance languages, as seen with Italian examples in (1a), lexical transitive DOs do not. However, they used to control agreement in P<sub>Rom</sub>, as witnessed by the earliest Medieval documentation (cf. Loporcaro 2010:§5), given that the diachronic source of this perfective tense in Latin – the possessive-resultative construction in (9a) – displayed obligatory agreement too:

- (9) a. in ea provincia pecuni-as magn-as collocat-as habent (Cic., *Leg. Manil.* 18)  
 b. Possessive-resultative: 'they have big capitals invested in that province'  
 c. Compound *have*-perfect: 'they have invested big capitals in that province'

The reanalysis from (9b) to (9c) occurred already within Latin, as argued e.g. by Pinkster (1987). From that point on, the history of Romance compound tenses (and Romance object agreement) started. In the beginning, the only condition was “the controller is a DO”. This original condition is the backbone – to this day – in the set of parametric conditions (displayed vertically in (10)) that constrain object agreement in the different Romance varieties, a selection of which is laid out on the horizontal dimension:<sup>9</sup> (+ = the relevant condition applies; (+) = applies optionally; 0 = is subsumed under a more restrictive condition)

(10)

Conditions		Romance varieties											
		Nea	Ita	Fri	Mil	Amp	Sar	Per	Gri	Fas	Fre	Cat	Spa
initial	2 initialized by the PtP										+		
	P-initial 2 of the PtP								+	+	0	+	+
	a P-initial 2 in the clause								+	0	0	0	0
	↑ the first 2 in the clause							+	0	0	0	0	0
final	↓ The controller is a 2	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
	ex 2		+	(0)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	non-acting-2			(+)	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	0
	final 1												+
global	non-multiattached			(+)			+			+		+	+
	transitive 2											+	+

After the P<sub>Rom</sub> stage, there was a progressive retreat of object agreement, as more and more restrictive conditions were added to the syntactic rule, along different structural dimensions and, consequently, in more and more constructions object agreement became ungrammatical. The first condition that was added in most Romance languages (“ex 2”) bars agreement on finally

<sup>9</sup> Nea(politan), Ita(lian), Fri(ulan), Mil(anese), Amp(ezzano), Sar(dinian), Per(ginese), Gri(zzanese), Fas(sano), Fre(nch), Cat(alan), Spa(nish).

transitive clauses ((1a)). Some of the remaining conditions in (10) will be mentioned in due course in the following pages, and need not detain us here (cf. Loporcaro 1998, 2010 for a fuller illustration). For the sake of our present argument it suffices for us to take note of the existence of this intricate pattern of cross-linguistic variation and of the fact that this can be modelled through the syntactic conditions in (10).

### 2.1.3 *Agreement with initial vs. final objects*

From the above discussion it emerges that control of Romance PtP agreement is nowadays a property of (a syntactically defined subset of) inactive arguments, and used to be a property of all inactive arguments in Proto-Romance before full NPs ceased to qualify as controllers. Clearly, this situation cannot be equated with canonical object agreement in, say, Swahili, as exemplified above in (2). However, the typological framework sketched in (8) allows us to characterize in a principled way similarities and differences between distinct object agreement rules: the rule is sensitive to final objects in Swahili as opposed to initial objects (including the argument of unaccusatives) in Romance.

Compare subject agreement rules, which can be characterized cross-linguistically in a similar vein. In Udi (Daghestanian) the verb agrees with the (final) subject regardless of the subject NP having ergative or absolutive marking (cf. Harris 1984:246, Corbett 2006:59). The same happens in Latin and Romance, which have accusative/nominative alignment in case marking ((8c)), rather than ergative/absolutive like Udi ((8a)). On the other hand, the subject agreement rule in a language like Basque has active/inactive alignment ((8b), cf. Comrie 2005), which means (cf. e.g. Alba Salas 2004:70) that it is not simply sensitive to the final stratum, unlike those of Udi or Romance.

The characterization of Romance object agreement proposed here is made possible by the representational format of RG, which allows for generalizations to refer to GRs borne in specific strata of syntactic structure. Within a different framework, Anderson (1992:98) does exactly the same, when he assumes layered agreement conditions: “A rule referring to the *absolutive* NP analyzes the innermost level of a MSR [= morphosyntactic representation]; a rule referring to the *nominative* NP analyzes the outermost layer”. Such an account is possible only under the appropriate theory of syntax. Given alternative starting assumptions (monostratal theories of syntax, no syntactic unaccusativity, no GRs, three syntactic primitives *à la* Dixon instead of two *à la* Perlmutter, etc.) the neat picture in (8) would get blurred, as would the comparison between Romance and Swahili object agreement.

## 2.2 Domain

Romance object agreement has a clausal domain, although it occurs only in an aspectually defined subset of finite clauses: (Aspectual labels in (11) conform to Bertinetto's 1986 terminology.):

(11)

	imperfective	perfective		Aspect
		aorist	perfect	
	<i>prendeva</i>	<i>prese</i>	<i>ha preso</i>	
	Imperfect	Simple Perfect	Compound Perfect	Tense
Subject agreement:	+	+	+	
Object agreement:	-	-	+	

In clauses with an imperfective or aorist main predicate, object agreement is not found:

(12)

Gianni	prend-e	/	pres-e	un-a	decision-e
Gianni	take.PRES-3SG	/	take.PRET-3SG	INDEF-F.SG	decision(F)-SG
'Gianni takes/ took a decision'					

Again, this restriction is not typologically unheard-of. Verb agreement manifests alignment on the head-marking side, whereas case-marking on the NP does on the dependent-marking side. Case-marking in Georgian, for instance, is domain-sensitive, with alignment showing an aspect-driven split comparable to that constraining Romance object agreement (cf. Harris 1981:40, 147; Hewitt 1995:549: 122-123, 1996:49):

(13)

a. Class-1 verbs:	<table border="1"><tr><td>Subject</td><td>DO</td></tr><tr><td>NOM</td><td>DAT</td></tr><tr><td>ERG</td><td>NOM</td></tr></table>	Subject	DO	NOM	DAT	ERG	NOM	b. Class-2 verbs:	<table border="1"><tr><td>Subject</td><td>DO</td></tr><tr><td>NOM</td><td>DAT</td></tr><tr><td>NOM</td><td>DAT</td></tr></table>	Subject	DO	NOM	DAT	NOM	DAT
Subject	DO														
NOM	DAT														
ERG	NOM														
Subject	DO														
NOM	DAT														
NOM	DAT														
Series I tenses:															
Series II tenses:															

With so-called class-1 verbs ((13a), like *tes* 'to sow'), there is a different case-marking pattern in the (imperfective) tenses of the Series I ((14a)) and in the (perfective) tenses (aorist) of the Series II ((14b)):

(14)

a.	glex-i	tes-av-s	simind-s
	farmer-NOM	sow-TS-3SG	corn-DAT
	'The farmer is sowing corn'		
b.	glex-ma	da-tes-a	simind-i
	farmer-ERG	PREV-sow-3SG	corn-NOM
	'The farmer sowed corn'		

### 2.3 Target and features

The target of Romance object agreement is the PtP, which is however part of one and the same paradigm cell together with the auxiliary.<sup>10</sup> The fact that the features marked in object agreement are gender and number, not person – unlike in subject agreement – is an historical accident, just like in Russian or Hebrew subject agreement, which do not mark person in the past ((15b)) and in the present ((16b)) respectively, because the verb forms involved were originally participles:

- (15) a. ja piš-u ≠ on/on-a piš-et  
 1SG.NOM write.PRS-1SG 3SG.NOM[M]/3SG.NOM-F write.PRS-3SG  
 ‘I write’ ‘He/she writes’  
 b. ja/ on-a pisa-l-a ≠ ja/ on pisa-l  
 1SG.NOM/ 3SG.NOM-F write-PST-F.SG 1SG.NOM/ 3SG.NOM[M] write-PST.M.SG  
 ‘I/she wrote’ ‘I/he wrote’
- (16) a. ani/at kotev-et ≠ ani/atta kotev  
 1SG/2F.SG write.PRS-F.SG 1SG/2M.SG write.PRS.M.SG  
 ‘I(F)/you(F.SG) write’ ‘I(M)/you(M.SG) write’  
 b. ani katav-ti ≠ atta katav-ta ≠ at katav-t  
 1SG write.PST-1SG 2SG.M write.PST-2SG.M 2SG.F write.PST-2SG.F  
 ‘I wrote’ ‘You(M.SG) wrote’ You(F.SG) wrote’

By the way, systems of the Russian/Hebrew type are documented for Romance as well, for instance in acquisitional varieties of Italian (Volterra 1976:153) where auxiliaries have not emerged yet:

- (17) pres-a Checco pant-a (Francesco 1;11)  
 take.PTP-F.SG Francesco bell(F)-SG  
 ‘Francesco has taken the bell’ (adult: *F. ha preso la campana*)

Or Mozarabic, where due to contact with Arabic, the auxiliary was dropped in perfective periphrastics (Corriente 1997:309-11):

- (18) a. BÉN-ED LA PÁŠKA <bnyd lpskh> (H 5)  
 come-3SG DEF.F.SG Easter(F)  
 ‘Easter becomes ...’  
 b. MI-O sidÉLLO BEN-ID <mw sdylh bnyd> (H 3)<sup>11</sup>  
 my-M.SG Cidiello come-PTP.M.SG  
 ‘My Cidiello has come’

<sup>10</sup> This is the current view on verbal periphrases which partake in the tense/mood system (cf. e.g. Corbett 2008), like Romance perfective periphrastics or their formal ancestor, viz. Latin analytic forms in the passive and deponent paradigm (cf. e.g. Börjars et al. 1999, Sadler & Spencer 2000).

<sup>11</sup> The contrast between the two verb forms in (18a-b), both spelled <bnyd>, is assured by the rhyme, which requires [-'id] in (18b).

In these Romance varieties, thus, perfective tenses mark only object agreement.

## 2.4 *Intermediate summary*

Summing up, PRom, alongside subject agreement in person and number, which was inherited from Latin and passed over to the daughter languages with accusative alignment, had developed object agreement in gender, number and case (*pace* Lehmann 1982:216 fn. 24). This object agreement displayed active/inactive alignment and was part of a broader picture, since many other syntactic rules in PRom (see the list above in (7)) had the same alignment. These properties, including object agreement, clashed with subject agreement, which had accusative alignment throughout. This clash – as proposed by La Fauci (1988) – explains the progressive fading of many of these syntactic properties along the documented history of the Romance languages. As for object agreement, the effect of this clash cumulated with the well-known fact (cf. e.g. Kilani-Schoch & Dressler 2005:64) that object agreement is more marked, functionally, hence less widespread in the languages of the world.

## 3. *Variation and change in the morphology and syntax of Romance object agreement*

Having assessed the general properties of Romance object agreement, we shall now examine how the syntactic agreement rule interacts with morphology, i.e. with participle inflections available in (different diachronic stages of) different Romance varieties for the manifestation of agreement. Consider first Standard Italian:

(19)

		gender	
		M	F
number	SG	-o	-a
	PL	-i	-e

		<i>cantáre</i> ‘to sing’	
		M	F
SG	SG	<i>cantá-t-o</i>	<i>cantá-t-a</i>
	PL	<i>cantá-t-i</i>	<i>cantá-t-e</i>
		also: <i>finí-t-o</i> ‘ended’, <i>cadú-t-o</i> ‘fallen’	

		<i>préndere</i> ‘to take’	
		M	F
SG	SG	<i>pres-o</i>	<i>pres-a</i>
	PL	<i>pres-i</i>	<i>pres-e</i>
		also: <i>mess-o</i> ‘put’, <i>fatt-o</i> ‘done’, etc.	

As for contextual inflection (19a), all PtPs inflect like first declension adjectives. This situation, found throughout Romance, derives straightforwardly from the PRom one via the neutralization of morphological case: PRom had a three-case inflection on the noun and the adjective (with distinct forms for NOM, ACC and OBL; cf. e.g. Zamboni 2000:110-115), and

then with the loss of case contrasts, from the set of the corresponding endings one form was generalized to occupy each one of the cells in (19a).

As for inherent inflection, participial stems fall into two major categories (19b-c): regular (weak) vs. irregular (strong). The former are exemplified with one first macroclass PtP in the box (two second macroclass regular participles are added underneath).<sup>12</sup> While there are some differences – as the *-ato* and *-ito* PtPs are built on what Dressler & Thornton (1991) call the thematic base, including the stressed theme vowel, whereas the *-uto* has a different stressed vowel – all weak participles share two properties: a) the root vowel is not stressed, and b) the exponent of participial inflection *-t-* is clearly segmentable.

These two properties are not shared by strong PtPs ((19c)), which are built on a root-stressed base (the outcome of what Aronoff 1994:37-9 calls the third stem in Latin) and lost morphotactic transparency wrt. Latin, so that there is fused exponence of the lexical morpheme and the grammatical information ‘PtP’.

To characterize the syntax of object agreement in Italian (and PRom), all the morphology one needs to know is the inflectional paradigm in (19a): the participle stem is irrelevant.

### 3.1 *Loss of object agreement despite preservation of participial inflection*

The same holds for Spanish, whose participial morphology shows a four-forms paradigm too:

(20)	a. contextual inflection	b. inherent inflection (weak)	c. inherent inflection (strong)
	gender	<i>cantar</i> ‘to sing’	<i>hacer</i> ‘to make’
number			

Also like in Italian, the weak vs. strong contrast ((20b-c)) has no bearing on the syntax of agreement, which got lost in perfective periphrastics, even in the most resistant context, with DO clitics (21):

(21)	(tu	cart-a)	no	la	he	lei-d-o	/*lei-d-a
	2SG	letter(F)-SG	not	OBJ3F.SG.	have.PRS.1SG	read-PTP-M.SG	/read-PTP-F.SG
		‘(Your letter) I didn’t read it’					

This is the effect of syntactic change, viz the activation of the condition ‘final 1’ in (10). Note that the change affected exclusively object agreement

<sup>12</sup> For Italian verb inflection, Dressler & Thornton’s (1991) analysis and terminology are adopted here.

marking in the finite verb paradigm, not PtPs as such, which still do obligatorily agree within the NP, in the passive and in participial clauses:

- (22) lei-d-a/ \*lei-d-o la sentència, el juez se retir-ó  
 read-PTP-F.SG/ read-PTP-M.SG DEF.F.SG sentence(F) DEF.M.SG judge(M) REFL withdraw-PRET.3SG  
 ‘Having read the sentence, the judge withdrew’

In other words, in Spanish the object agreement rule died with its morphological boots on, and the same happened in a host of Romance varieties including Portuguese, Romanian, Sicilian/southern Calabrian and the North-Eastern dialects of Gallo-Romance. For instance, the Walloon patois spoken in Liège has retained a gender distinction even in weak PtPs (Remacle 1956:148):

- (23)
- |               |                  |
|---------------|------------------|
| M             | F                |
| <i>trompé</i> | <i>trompé-ye</i> |
- ‘deceived’
- |              |                |
|--------------|----------------|
| M            | F              |
| <i>vèyou</i> | <i>vèyo-we</i> |
- ‘seen’

Yet, object agreement in perfective compound tenses was completely lost in Liégeois, even with DO clitics:

- (24) (èle) dji l’ a vèyou/ \*vèyouw-e  
 (her) I OBJ3F.SG=have.1SG see.PTP.M/ see.PTP -F  
 ‘I’ve seen her’

### 3.2 Mutually independent changes in morphology and syntax

Standard French is more conservative syntactically than Liégeois or Spanish, in spite of more radical (sound) changes having affected participial morphology. The inherited endings, formerly serving contextual inflection, have been eroded by sound change:

- (25)
- |                                    |               |
|------------------------------------|---------------|
| a. contextual inflection<br>gender |               |
|                                    | M = F         |
| number                             | SG = PL    -Ø |
- |  |                      |
|--|----------------------|
| b. inherent inflection (weak)<br><i>fâte</i> ‘to sing’ |                      |
|  | M = F                |
| number   | SG = PL <i>fât-e</i> |
- |   |                    |             |
|---|--------------------|-------------|
| c. inherent inflection (strong)<br><i>pkãdk</i> ‘to take’ |                    |             |
|   | M                  | F           |
| number  | SG = PL <i>pkî</i> | <i>pkiz</i> |

The previous stage (common Western Romance) corresponds phonetically to the situation still preserved in Spanish ((20a)). Then, in French final vowels and final /s/ were deleted in several steps, the outcome being zero ((25a)), which yields – combined with deletion of intervocalic -t- in *cantatum* – only one invariable form for weak participles of all classes (as exemplified for the first macroclass in (25b)). Nevertheless, we still talk of PtP agreement in French, although with some differences with respect to Italian. In particular, as exemplified in (26) with data from Guasti and Rizzi (2002:181), agreement

with DO clitics, though prescribed, is not anymore categorical in many spoken varieties:

- (26) a. il a mis/ \*mise la voiture dans le garage  
 he have.3SG put.PTP.M/put.PTP.F DEF.F.SG car(F) into DEF.M.SG garage(M)  
 ‘He put the car into the garage’  
 b. (la voiture) il l’=a mise/ mis dans le garage  
 DEF.F.SG car(F) he OBJ3F.SG=have.3SG put.PTP.F/ put.PTP.M into DEF.M.SG garage(M)  
 ‘The car, he put it into the garage’

As is well known, only a subset of strong PtPs is involved here (exemplified by *pris*, *prise* in (25c)):

“Dans une minorité de paradigmes et microclasses (14 sur 57), le genre féminin est marqué sur le participe passé par les consonnes /z/ et /t/, lorsque la base n’est pas longue” (Kilani-Schoch & Dressler 2005:145-6).<sup>13</sup>

Diachronically, this phonetic material was originally the *signans* of inherent inflection (participial morphology):

(27)

Proto-Romance	>	Old French	>	Modern French	
<i>fak-t-u</i>		<i>fai-t</i>		<i>fɛ</i>	MSG
<i>fak-t-os</i>		<i>fai-t-s</i>			MPL
<i>fak-t-a</i>		<i>fai-t-ə</i>		<i>fɛt</i>	FSG
<i>fak-t-as</i>		<i>fai-t-əs</i>			FPL

In present-day French, on the other hand, a strong PtP like [fɛ] cumulates exponence of the lexical meaning, of the inherent inflectional category ‘participle’ and of the morphosyntactic feature (value) ‘masculine’. Likewise, the feminine final *-t* is historically the participial morpheme, that was drafted in for the new function of signalling gender.

Apparently, this residual gender marking on PtPs is quite ineffective morphologically, and the surface evidence available for acquisition is scanty, since uninflected PtPs are a vast majority in the system (cf. Kilani-Schoch & Dressler 2005:145-146). This could prompt the assumption that vacillation in object agreement in (26b), observed both in acquisitional and in adult varieties of French (Tesnière 1959:580-581, Levitt 1973:40), may be due to an on-going change further reducing the residual two-form paradigm of strong PtPs:

<sup>13</sup> We shall neglect the issue of number marking here. Whatever analysis is assumed for plural /z/, emerging under *liaison* elsewhere in the language, PtPs in modern French never occur in *liaison* contexts, so that there is no (non-graphic) evidence for distinct plural forms.

(28)

	M	F
SG = PL	<i>mi</i>	<i>miz</i>

>

M = F
<i>mi</i>

*mettre* ‘to put’

However, this morphological explanation is proven false by the observation that PtP agreement is categorically preserved in other syntactic contexts (e.g. within the NP: *la porte ouverte/\*ouvert* ‘the open door’). This suggests that the on-going change must be driven by syntactic factors: the French object agreement rule is in the process of adding the more restrictive condition ‘final 1’ (see (10)). Only, application of this condition is still optional in today’s standard French, as opposed to Spanish. This is the last step a Romance variety can take in restricting progressively the application of object agreement.

### 3.3 *Morphosyntactic and morphological features interacting with syntactic change*

In some Romance languages, this last step was taken under conditions which are dictated not only by the syntactic agreement rule but also by the morphosyntactic features involved in its operation. In varieties as diverse as Catalan (Wheeler 1988:194), Toulousan regional French (Séguy 1951:54), or Badiotto (Manzini & Savoia 2005, II:594-5), object agreement is reported to apply selectively with DO clitics along the following preference scale:

(29)

F.SG >	F.PL >	M.PL
--------	--------	------

Also changes in the morphology may affect the manifestation of object agreement, although they need not entail a modification of the syntactic rule. Thus the Northern Logudorese dialect of Luras (cf. Loporcaro 2006:334) has undergone a reshaping of the inherited agreement inflections, which were previously (and still are elsewhere in Logudorese Sardinian) identical to Spanish ((20a)) but have been reduced through loss of mpl *-os* and generalization of *-as*, formerly fpl, to mark plural as such. As seen in (30), this change was not phonetically motivated, as it did not affect the homophonous plural noun inflections:<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> The change was induced by contact with Gallurese, which neutralized gender in the plural due to regular sound change. The difference in the endings of the definite articles in (30a-b) is due to a phonological sandhi rule.

- (30) a. s-as            káqd-əzə    l-az    app-ə            yəmparáð-aza  
          this-PL       horse(M)-PL   DO-PL   have-1SG       buy:PTP-PL  
       b. s-al            vákk-aza    l-az    app-ə            yəmparáð-aza  
          this-PL       cow(F)-PL    DO-PL   have-1SG       buy:PTP-PL  
          ‘(These horses/cows) I bought them’

Although the manifestation of object agreement was reshaped, this morphological change did not import any modification of the syntactic agreement rule itself, which still prescribes agreement in gender and number (albeit with gender neutralization in the plural) under the same conditions obtaining elsewhere in Logudorese.

An interaction of morphology and syntax has been invoked also to explain the variable loss of agreement in French, which was considered above in (26a) and for which I have put forward a syntactic explanation. Guasti & Rizzi (2002) propose a morphological explanation instead, assuming that an optional morphological rule is at work in (26b). Under the authors’ view, PtPs agree with clitic DOs in Italian and French for completely different reasons. In Italian, it is assumed, the PtP moves high enough for gender/number features to be checked and hence for agreement to be triggered, given that “[i]f a feature is checked in the overt syntax, then it is expressed in the morphology” (Guasti and Rizzi 2002:178). In French, conversely, PtPs do not climb high enough and hence, contrary to Italian, the syntax does not force agreement even with DO clitics, that can however control agreement optionally because of a postulated morphological rule:

“The system is asymmetric in that it says nothing about the case in which a feature is left unchecked in the overt syntax and is to be checked in covert syntax [...]. Whether a feature is morphologically expressed or not in this case is a property of the *language-specific system of morphological rules*: in the absence of UG guidance, *a particular grammar may include a morphological rule* requiring expression of the unchecked feature, but it does not have to—whence the variation between closely related systems, the instability, and the room for normative intervention” [emphasis added, ML].

This explanation is questionable. If there were such a morphological rule, it should include the very same syntactic conditions as the Pan-Romance syntactic agreement rule (10), since PtPs in French compound tenses are not just free to agree with any argument, given the appropriate morphology. As seen in (26), they may only agree with clitics, not with lexical DOs, let alone with transitive subjects:

- (31) Marie    a            mis/            \*mise    le            vélo    dans le            garage  
       Mary    have.3SG    put.PTP.M/    put.PTP.F    DEF.M.SG    bike(M)    into    DEF.M.SG    garage(M)  
       ‘Mary put the bike into the garage’

A morphological rule here would simply duplicate the syntactic one, in contradiction with Occam's razor. Into the bargain, the status of such a morphological rule would be unclear under generalized verb movement, a framework in which all pieces of verb inflection are represented within syntactic phrase structure, each as a separate functional head (cf. Pollock 1989, Belletti 1991). For example, in Rizzi (1997:281) the inflectional layer is part of the structural representation of the clause (hence, non-distinct from syntactic structure). This is a problem for this specific analysis, that adds to the general ones concerning the treatment of morphology under generalized verb movement pointed out e.g. by Spencer (1992) or Stump (2001:18-28).

Finally, the idea that in French the syntax does not (anymore) force object agreement (unlike in older stages of the language) whereas morphology has the power to allow it, is also typologically implausible. Every language has a syntax, but not all languages have morphology. Taking on Aronoff's (1998) disease-metaphor, if morphology is a pathology by which not all languages are affected, French has almost recovered from it, which renders unlikely that, during this convalescence, a syntactic rule (object agreement in Old French) was redeployed in the province of morphology as Guasti & Rizzi would have it.

#### 3.4 *Preservation of the agreement rule despite (partial) loss of participial inflection*

Parallel changes in participial morphology, induced by sound change, may co-occur with completely different syntactic developments. This is illustrated by the Italo-Romance dialects from the Upper South (the dialect area centring on Naples), as exemplified in (32) with the Apulian dialect of Altamura (Loporcaro 1998:66):<sup>15</sup>

(32)	aʝə	ssɔltə/	*sseltə	la	ʃummwénd
	have.1SG	F\unfasten.PTP/	M\unfasten.PTP	DEF.F.SG	mare(F)
	'I have unfastened the mare'				

As shown in (32), in these dialects object agreement has been preserved in its most conservative stage: every DO – including transitive DOs realized by full NPs – controls agreement. As for the syntax of object agreement, thus, these dialects did not depart from PRom except for the loss of agreement in case. However, the morphology of agreement has changed massively in these

<sup>15</sup> On PtP agreement in Neapolitan cf. Loporcaro (1998:68-69), Ledgeway (2000:306).

dialects, much like in French, due to sound change. As seen in (33a), all final vowels have merged to schwa, which is non-contrastive and gets regularly deleted prepausally. Thus, from a previous stage like standard Italian (19a), there has been a full merger of inflections, as seen in (33a):

<p>(33) a. contextual inflection</p> <p style="text-align: center;">gender</p> <table border="1" style="margin-left: auto; margin-right: auto;"> <tr> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">M</td> <td style="text-align: center;">F</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">number</td> <td style="text-align: center;">SG</td> <td style="text-align: center;">F</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td colspan="2" style="text-align: center;">-ə</td> </tr> </table>		M	F	number	SG	F		-ə		<p>b. inherent inflection (weak)</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>lavé</i> 'to wash'</p> <table border="1" style="margin-left: auto; margin-right: auto;"> <tr> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">M</td> <td style="text-align: center;">F</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">number</td> <td colspan="2" style="text-align: center;"><i>lavɛ-tə</i></td> </tr> </table>		M	F	number	<i>lavɛ-tə</i>		<p>c. inherent inflection (strong)</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>ssɔlvə</i> 'to untie'</p> <table border="1" style="margin-left: auto; margin-right: auto;"> <tr> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">M</td> <td style="text-align: center;">F</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">number</td> <td style="text-align: center;">SG</td> <td style="text-align: center;">F</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><i>ssɛl-tə</i></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><i>ssɔl-tə</i></td> </tr> </table>		M	F	number	SG	F		<i>ssɛl-tə</i>	<i>ssɔl-tə</i>
	M	F																								
number	SG	F																								
	-ə																									
	M	F																								
number	<i>lavɛ-tə</i>																									
	M	F																								
number	SG	F																								
	<i>ssɛl-tə</i>	<i>ssɔl-tə</i>																								

Therefore, wherever agreement could rely exclusively on canonical affixal marking, it disappeared, like in French. This was the case in all (subclasses of) weak participles ((33b)), which became uninflected. When such an uninflected form occurs in a clause, there is no way to check whether agreement applies or not:

(34)	<i>aʃʃə</i>	<i>lavetə/</i>	<i>nnyttə</i>	<i>la</i>	<i>šummwénd</i>
	have.1SG	wash.PTP/	bring.PTP	DEF.F.SG	mare(F)
	'I have washed/brought the mare'				

The claim that this variety has preserved object agreement in its most conservative stage is warranted by the existence of strong participles ((33c)), some of which still do display agreement overtly, again like in French, though in a different way. Final high vowels, originally occurring in the msg and mpl endings as shown in (35a), triggered metaphony before they eventually merged to schwa:

(35)	a. PRom	>	b. Maceratese =	=	Leccese	>	c. Altamurano =	Neapolitan
	MSG	<i>kək-t-u</i>	<i>kott-</i>		<i>kwett-</i>	<i>-u</i>	<i>kwettə</i>	<i>kwottə</i>
	MPL	<i>kək-t-i</i>	<i>kott-</i>		<i>kwett-</i>	<i>-i</i>		
	FPL	<i>kək-t-e</i>	<i>kott-</i>		<i>kott-</i>	<i>-e</i>	<i>kottə</i>	<i>kottə</i>
	FSG	<i>kək-t-a</i>	<i>kott-</i>		<i>kott-</i>	<i>-a</i>		

Metaphony applied only to mid vowels: hence weak PtPs, whose stressed vowels were either low (-ATU) or high (-ITU, -UTU) (cf. standard Italian *cantato*, *finito*, *caduto* in (19b)), were not affected. These changes modified the exponence of gender/number. In (35a), the PRom stage, gender/number marking is purely affixal. The following step (35b) is still documented by the dialects spoken north and south of the Upper South area (exemplified with Maceratese, from the so called Area Mediana, and Leccese, from Meridione estremo). Here, metaphony has applied, but final vowels have not merged yet.

As a result, gender and number are still marked the canonical way, affixally, like in Latin, and, in addition, gender is co-signalled on the stem by metaphony, which is still, at this stage, a phonologically motivated morphological rule in Dressler’s (1985) terms. In other words, at this stage number relies on simple canonical exponence, whereas gender has extended exponence.

Extended exponence rescues the marking of the feature GENDER when final vowels are merged in the dialects of the Upper South like Neapolitan or Apulian (in (35c)). At this stage, gender is marked on just some subclasses of strong PtPs, like in French, by means of an allomorphic-morphological rule (Dressler 1985), since the phonetic motivation is lost. (36) presents the complete picture of participle inflection in Altamurano (Loporcaro 1988:261-2):

(36)		M	F	gloss	PRom
weak PtP	a.	<i>kandé-tə</i>		‘sung’	root vowel
	b.	<i>pəndí-tə</i>		‘repented’	
	c.	<i>frəvú-tə</i>		‘boiled’	
strong PtP	d.	<i>fattə</i>		‘done’	á í ú ó é ó é
		<i>frittə</i>		‘fried’	
		<i>strvttə</i>		‘worn’	
	e.	<i>ryttə</i>	<i>rəttə</i>	‘broken’	
	f.	<i>strində</i>	<i>strendə</i>	‘clutched’	
	g.	<i>mwertə</i>	<i>mortə</i>	‘died’	
	h.	<i>apírtə</i>	<i>apértə</i>	‘opened’	

In both the first ((36a)) and second ((36b-c)) macroclass weak PtPs, stress falls on the theme vowel, which did not undergo metaphony. Those PtPs became therefore invariable, as did strong PtPs of subclass (36d) whose stressed root vowels (*a i u*) did not undergo metaphony either. Only the few PtPs belonging to the remaining four subclasses (36e-h) display root vowel alternation correlating with gender, and can consequently show agreement.

Of course, this widespread uninflectedness, affecting productive inflectional classes ((36a) and, marginally, (36b), which make up the vast majority of agreement targets), impoverishes the surface evidence for the agreement rule. However, as long as there are at least some PtPs that inflect for gender ((36e-h)), and as long as we observe that at least those PtPs still manifest object agreement in the appropriate contexts (e.g. (32)), then we have no reason to assume that there has been any change in the rule. This still obeys only the original condition (‘the controller is a DO’), though its application has surface effects only when the appropriate morphology is (still) there.

#### 4. An example of non-morphology-free syntax

The detailed description in §3.4 of the morphology of PtP agreement in a ‘well-behaved’ dialect of the Upper South was necessary to provide background information which will now allow us to compare a more intricate case: Castrovillarese (a dialect from Northern Calabria described by Pace 1994-95).

Here, I will argue, one observes an exception to Zwicky’s (1996) principle of ‘morphology-free syntax’, an exception that, unlike some others that have been proposed over the years, cannot be explained away, like – for instance – in Zwicky & Pullum’s (1983) reanalysis of Hetzron’s (1972) account of Somali verb agreement with so-called ‘sub-plurals’.

In Castrovillarese, unlike in Apulian and like in standard Italian, final vowels are kept distinct, except that, as seen in (37a), *-e* merged with *-i*. Since these were the exponents of fpl vs. mpl respectively, this sound change resulted in convergent gender marking, as seen in (37b):

(37) a. contextual inflection gender

		M	F
number	SG	<i>-u</i>	<i>-a</i>
	PL	<i>-i</i>	

b. inherent inflection (weak) *akkattá* ‘to buy’

		M	F
number	SG	<i>akkattá-t-u</i>	<i>akkattá-t-a</i>
	PL	<i>akkattá-t-i</i>	

c. inherent inflection (strong) *kɔʃi* ‘to cook’

		M	F
number	SG	<i>kutt-u</i>	<i>kott-a</i>
	PL	<i>kutt-i</i>	<i>kott-i</i>

Also here, metaphony has applied. This dialect hence displays the same pattern exemplified above with Maceratese and Leccese in (35b), with gender and number both marked affixally on all participles, strong and weak (just like on all adjectives, for that matter), plus additional metaphonic marking of gender on the PtP stem. In passing, comparison of (37b-c) shows that it is the additional contrast found on stems that rescues parallel gender marking on strong PtPs, as illustrated in (37c).

A fuller picture of participial morphology in this variety, to be compared with the one given for Altamurano in (36), is shown in (38):<sup>16</sup>

<sup>16</sup> There are some differences between the two dialects which are immaterial for our present concerns. Number is marked affixally throughout in Calabrian, whereas it is not marked at all in Apulian. The fact that root alternations occur in Calabrian only in the last two subclasses (38g-h), not in (38e-f), depends on the stressed vowel system: here, since P Rom higher-mid vowels underwent context-free raising (the so-called Sicilian vowel system), metaphony affected only lower-mid vowels.

(38)		M	F	gloss	PRom
weak PtP	a.	<i>kandá-t-u</i>	<i>kandá-t-a</i>	'sung'	root vowel
	b.	<i>kapí-t-u</i>	<i>kapí-t-a</i>	'understood'	
	c.	<i>dulú-t-u</i>	<i>dulú-t-a</i>	'hurt'	
strong PtP	d.	<i>fatt-u</i>	<i>fatt-a</i>	'done'	á í ú ó é ó é
		<i>fritt-u</i>	<i>fritt-a</i>	'fried'	
		<i>strutt-u</i>	<i>strutt-a</i>	'worn'	
	e.	<i>rott-u</i>	<i>rott-a</i>	'broken'	
	f.	<i>mis-u</i>	<i>mis-a</i>	'put'	
	g.	<i>kut-u</i>	<i>kot-a</i>	'picked'	
	h.	<i>apírt-u</i>	<i>apért-a</i>	'opened'	

Like in (36), in this dialect too there is a subset of strong PtPs ((38g-h)) which display root vowel alternation correlated with gender (by a morphological rule). Only in those PtPs gender has double exponence, being signalled on both the stem and the ending, whereas in all other subclasses gender has single (affixal) exponence, the usual Latin-Romance way, since the stem is not variable.

If syntax is morphology-free, we would expect the contrast between the two sets of PtPs (38a-f) vs. (38g-h) to have no impact on the syntax of agreement, an expectation which is indeed borne out by the vast majority of dialects showing the same morpho(phono)logical conditions. This is exemplified with Maceratense in (39)-(41):

(39)	a.	rɔsa	ε	rvinut-a/*-o	jeri	
		Rose	be.3SG	come:PTP-F.SG/-N	yesterday	unaccusative, weak PtP
		'Rose has come'				
	b.	rɔsa	ε	mmort-a/	*mmort-o	
		Rose	be.3SG	F\die:PTP-F.SG/	N\die:PTP-N	unaccusative, strong PtP
		'Rose has died'				
(40)	a.	(l	ú-a)	rɔsa	l=a	rlaat-a/*-o
		DEF.F.SG	grapes(F)-SG	Rose	DO3F.SG=have.3SG	wash:PTP-F.SG/-N
		'(The grapes) Rose has washed them'				DO clitic, weak PtP
	b.	(l	ú-a)	rɔsa	l=a	rkord-a/
		DEF.F.SG	grapes(F)-SG	Rose	DO3F.SG=have.3SG	F\pick:PTP-F.SG/N\pick:PTP-N
		'(The grapes) Rose has picked them'				DO clitic, strong PtP
(41)	a.	rɔsa	a	rlaat-o/*-a	l	ú-a
		Rosa	have.3SG	wash:PTP-N/-F.SG	DEF.F.SG	grapes(F)-SG
		'Rose has washed the grapes'				lexical DO, weak PtP
	b.	rɔsa	a	rkord-o/	*rkord-a	l
		Rosa	have.3SG	N\pick:PTP-N.SG/	F\pick:PTP-F.SG	DEF.F.SG
		'Rose has picked the grapes'				lexical DO, strong PtP

As already seen in (35b) above, Maceratense too has double exponence of gender on strong PtPs with metaphonic root-vowel alternation: yet, this is

irrelevant for the syntax. As shown in (39)-(41), in any syntactic construction either agreement or non-agreement occur, by application of the syntactic rule, irrespective of whether the PtP is strong or weak. The same is observed in Castrovillarese too, in most syntactic constructions, as exemplified with unaccusative predicates ((42)) or with a direct object clitic ((43)):

- (42) a. rōsa je vvinut-a/\*-u  
 Rose be.3SG come:PTP-F.SG/-M.SG  
 ‘Rose has come’ unaccusative, weak PtP
- b. rōsa je mmōrt-a/ \*mmurt-u  
 Rose be.3SG F\die:PTP-F.SG/ M\die:PTP-M.SG  
 ‘Rose has died’ unaccusative, strong PtP
- (43) a. (l átʃin-a rōsa a llavat-a/\*-u  
 DEF.F.SG grapes(F)-SG Rose DO3F.SG=have.3SG wash:PTP-F.SG/-M.SG  
 ‘(The grapes) Rose has washed them’ DO clitic, weak PtP
- b. (l átʃin-a rōsa a kkōt-a/ \*kkut-u  
 DEF.F.SG grapes(F)-SG Rose DO3F.SG=have.3SG F\pick.PTP-F.SG/ M\pick.PTP-M.SG  
 ‘(The grapes) Rose has picked them’ DO clitic, strong PtP

If the PtP is weak, agreement in gender and number is marked on the endings (the (a) cases); if the participle is strong and has an inflecting stem, by contrast, number agreement is marked affixally whereas for gender there is double exponence on both ending and stem (the (b) cases). But this morphological difference, as expected, has no impact on the syntax.

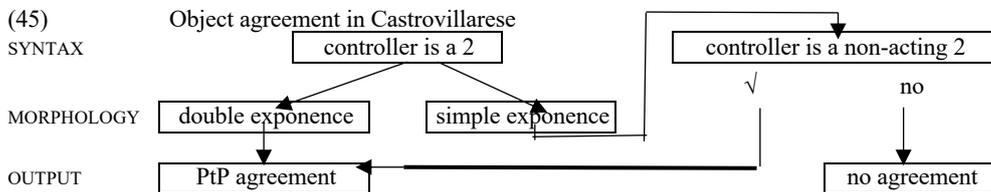
This expectation is broken, however, by the different syntactic behaviour of the two subsets of PtPs in another syntactic construction. Recall (§1.2.1) that the plain transitive clause with lexical DO is the context in which DO agreement is more prone to disappear, on a Romance scale. Dialects spoken further north from Castrovillari, like Neapolitan, Lucanian or Apulian (exemplified with Altamurano in (32)), preserve agreement even in this syntactic context, although the morphological means to show agreement overtly were retained only for a subclass of strong PtPs.

In Castrovillari, only in this syntactic context the interplay of morphological and syntactic change resulted in the syntax of agreement being sensitive to the form of the PtP:

- (44) a. rōsa a llavat-u/\*-a l átʃin-a  
 Rose have.3SG wash:PTP-M.SG/-F.SG DEF.F.SG grapes(F)-SG  
 ‘Rose has washed the grapes’ lexical DO, weak PtP
- b. rōsa a kkōt-a/ \*kkut-u l átʃin-a  
 Rose have.3SG F\pick.PTP-F.SG/ M\pick.PTP-M.SG DEF.F.SG grapes(F)-SG  
 ‘Rose has picked the grapes’ lexical DO, strong PtP

Agreement in gender and number with the DO occurs on strong PtPs in which gender has double exponence ((44b)), whereas all other PtPs ((44a)), with simple exponence of gender, do not agree syntactically, even though they could, morphologically.

As shown in (10) above, the Romance varieties in which lexical DOs control agreement preserved the object agreement rule in its original form ('the controller is a 2'), but in Castrovillarese satisfaction of this sole condition results in the triggering of agreement only if the transitive clause contains a PtP with double exponence of gender. For other PtPs, a more restrictive condition applies. While the exact formalization of this condition need not detain us here, the crucial fact for our present concerns is the syntax-morphology-syntax loop in (45), making out a *prima facie* case of non-morphology-free syntax:<sup>17</sup>



Note that in describing the facts in (44) and in proposing the formalization in (45) we have been careful to underscore that exponence of a morphosyntactic, rather than purely morphological feature, is at stake here (cf. Corbett 2006:122-123 for the distinction). An alternative way of stating the facts would have been to say that the agreement rule shows inward sensitivity to the participial stem: agreement in gender and number with lexical transitive DOs occurs only on PtPs with stems with two alternants, not on those with non-alternating stems. However, this statement would have obscured the functional motivation behind (44)-(45): in a context in which a diffusing syntactic change is causing the loss of object agreement in gender and number in the given context, participles which are morphologically better equipped (through double exponence of gender) to signal (one of) the morphosyntactic features involved in the rule resist the change, while other PtPs do not. Viewed this way, the exception to Zwicky’s principle is not quite as bad as it might have been, had we come up with a generalization of the form “apply object agreement in the context *x* iff the PtP belong to inflectional class *y*”. Yet, the result remains that we are facing here a syntactic rule whose application is sensitive to the morphology of the agreement target. In this sense, there is a

<sup>17</sup> Technically, ‘non-acting 2’ (cf. Blake 1990:137) denotes the set of direct object plus the respective *chômeur* (cf. Loporcaro 1998:234-235 for discussion of the empirical data justifying this formulation).

seizable difference between the (very unusual) facts described in this section and the (much more common) examples of selective application of syntactic change depending on morphosyntactic features mentioned in (29) above.

## 5. *Conclusion*

The first, very general conclusion is that a polycentric theory of language structure and change is preferable over any reductionism. Language change can be initiated by external, sociolinguistic factors or by structural forces, and the latter may be inherent to any structural component. We have reviewed indeed in §3 instances of change in the inflectional paradigm caused by the phonology (a commonplace in historical linguistics since the Neogrammarians) and others due to purely morphological reasons. Either may or may not have syntactic consequences. We also saw cases of change in the syntax of agreement for which no extrasyntactic cause can be spotted, an empirical observation which flies in the face of current claims in diachronic minimalism (e.g. Longobardi 2001:278).

Along with those more common patterns of diachronic change, we also considered in §4 a case in which both syntactic change and the synchronic rule arisen from that change proved sensitive to morphology, contrary to a widely-held expectation in cross-linguistic studies of agreement (Corbett 2006:184). This is no doubt, unlike the changes reviewed in §3, quite an unusual development, which must have arisen under special circumstances. And indeed such special circumstances can be located.

Castrovillari is an enclave, with final unstressed vowels (and hence affixal morphology) preserved, within an area whose dialects otherwise underwent merger (of the Neapolitan type), exemplified above in (33). There is evidence that the merger, which destroys gender/number distinctions in inflection, has been spreading southwards, irradiating from Naples, in the recent past (cf. Romito *et al.* 1997:166-169). On the other hand, the syntactic change bringing about loss of agreement with lexical DOs in finally transitive clauses is spreading northwards, from the dialects spoken south of Castrovillari (in central Calabria), which already lost object agreement in that context, albeit preserving distinct inflections.

Trapped between those two opposing waves of change, the morphosyntactic system of Castrovillarese reacted in this unpredictable way

and gave rise to the highly unusual syntactic pattern distinguishing agreement marked only affixally from agreement relying on double exponence.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> This explanation receives support by the observation that the same syntactic development has taken place in other dialects from the area which also preserved final vowels as opposed to the neighbouring ones. In the dialect of Viggianello, spoken north-west of Castrovillari in the Lucanian province of Potenza, lexical DOs optionally control agreement on PtPs with simple gender exponence ((ia)), whereas agreement is found categorically, like in Castrovillari, on PtPs with double exponence of gender ((ib)) (cf. Conte 2001-02:114-116 and p. c., November 2002):

- |     |    |          |                  |                 |            |             |                            |
|-----|----|----------|------------------|-----------------|------------|-------------|----------------------------|
| (i) | a. | m        | əʃ-ʊ             | mis-a/-ʊ        | n-a        | kammis-a    | nɔv-a                      |
|     |    | REFL.1SG | have-1SG         | put.PTP-F/-M    | INDEF-F.SG | shirt(F)-SG | new-F.SG                   |
|     |    |          |                  |                 |            |             | 'I put a new shirt on'     |
|     | b. | ai       | kɔtt-a/          | *kwɔtt-ʊ        | a          | minestr-a   |                            |
|     |    | have-2SG | F\cook.PTP-F.SG/ | M\cook.PTP-M.SG | DEF.F.SG   | soup(F)-SG  |                            |
|     |    |          |                  |                 |            |             | 'You have cooked the soup' |

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