Traditionally, subject licensing has been linked to the presence of agreement, (e.g. Chomsky (1995: 119-120) when discussing the theory of Principles and Parameters). From that point of view, Spanish infinitives are not supposed to have overt subjects since in this language infinitives do not have any agreement. Nonetheless, overt subjects of infinitives occur in Spanish whenever the infinitive is ungoverned as in (1):¹

(1) a. *prepositional clauses
   Al entrar yo por la puerta, todos se callaron.

b. *infinitival subject clauses
   [Presentarse Julia a las elecciones] fue un error (Piera 1987)

c. *exclamative clauses
   Ir yo a su casa!

d. *interrogative clauses
   Regalarles yo mi coche?

In contrast, such overt subjects are ungrammatical whenever the infinitive is governed by the main verb as in (2):

(2) *Governed infinitives
   a. *Lamenta ir allí Pedro.
   b. *Lamenta ir Pedro allí.
   c. *Lamenta Pedro ir allí.²

As a result of this distribution, Lagunilla (1987) and Torrego (1998) describe an asymmetry between governed and ungoverned infinitives with respect to their ability to appear with a lexical subject.³ In contrast to previous accounts, Lagunilla (1987), Suñer (1994), Torrego (1998) and Rigau (1995), I propose a new approach to the licensing of these overt subjects of infinitives which explains the mentioned asymmetry and provides a unified explanation for the main contexts where such overt subjects appear, that is to say, prepositional clauses and infinitival subject clauses.⁴ Given the traditional link between agreement and nominative case, I posit that infinitives in Spanish have abstract agreement in a way parallel to Portuguese, where we find morphologically realized agreement when overt subjects occur (Raposo 1987). I combine this last proposal with an agreement absorption mechanism where, in the case of governed infinitives, the

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² The examples in (2) are ungrammatical under the assumption that no rescuing intonation is used.

³ Lagunilla (1987) considers that only unmarked infinitives may have overt subjects. Within the minimalist framework (Chomsky 1995) the notion of government is no longer used. Thus, one may follow Torrego (1998) and Fernandez and Anula (1994) in drawing a distinction between L-marked infinitives and non-L-marked ones. This would exclude instances such as (2.b), an infinitival clause as subject of a matrix clause, as a context where overt subjects may occur. Drawing on Olarrea (1996) and Alexiadou and Anagnostopoulou (1998), where it is argued that preverbal subjects are in A-bar positions in Spanish, we can include (1.b) among the contexts where Spanish infinitivals allow overt subjects. Consequently, we may equate unmarked infinitives with non-L-marked infinitives and governed infinitives with L-marked ones in order to describe the asymmetry in minimalist terms.

⁴ As to the exclamative or interrogative clauses, the presence of a subject has been claimed to be related to focus more than to case, as suggested by the fact that pronouns have a greater tendency than nouns to appear in these structures (Lagunilla 1987).
main verb absorbs the abstract agreement of the infinitive, thus depriving it of its capacity to license an overt subject. The agreement properties of verbs taking default third person singular agreement, haber 'to be' (impersonal) and meteorological verbs, provide support for this approach.

Once the basic mechanism of the proposal has been presented, I plan to avoid my approach being contingent on the link between agreement and subject licensing, since such a link is being increasingly challenged (e.g. Harley 1995). Taking Alexiadou and Anagnostopoulou's (1998) proposal about the EPP in Spanish as a starting point, I show how an agreement absorption analysis of Spanish fits into a theory of the distribution of PRO as being constrained by a parametrically varying EPP feature (Harley 2000). In addition, objections to my analysis which would be raised by a null case approach to the distribution of PRO (Chomsky and Lasnik 1993) can also be accounted for.

This paper is organized as follows: in the first section, I review previous approaches of Lagunilla (1987), Suñer (1994), Torrego (1998) and Rigau (1995). In the second section, I put forward a proposal to capture the opposition between governed and ungoverned infinitives in terms of the link between (abstract) agreement and DP licensing, on one hand, and agreement absorption / government, on the other. In the third section, I take Alexiadou and Anagnostopouluou's (1998) assumptions on the EPP in Spanish as a point of departure and show that my approach is consistent with an account of the distribution of PRO as EPP-driven (Harley 2000).

**Previous proposals**

The main works on the licensing of overt subjects in ungoverned infinitival clauses are Lagunilla (1987), Suñer (1994) and Torrego (1998) and Rigau (1995). In the second section, I put forward a proposal to capture the opposition between governed and ungoverned infinitives in terms of the link between (abstract) agreement and DP licensing, on one hand, and agreement absorption / government, on the other. In the third section, I take Alexiadou and Anagnostopouluou's (1998) assumptions on the EPP in Spanish as a point of departure and show that my approach is consistent with an account of the distribution of PRO as EPP-driven (Harley 2000).

In Lagunilla's account of overt subject licensing in infinitival clauses headed by a preposition, the infinitive has moved above the final position of the subject causing it to appear post verbally. In that position, the subject would receive nominative case either by default or due to its structural position. According to Lagunilla, since the contexts exemplified under (1) share the fact that the infinitival clauses are not governed by the main verb, such a proposal could be applied to those contexts as well.

Suñer (1994) explains the post verbal nature of the subject in infinitival clauses acting as the subject of a main clause by means of the VP Internal Subject Hypothesis. She considers the overt subject of the infinitive to be licensed under government.

\( (3) \) Jugar Juan limpio a las cartas es una contradic-ción.

According to her, the subject Juan is in the Spec,VP.

Torrego (1998) makes the only attempt in the literature to treat the two main contexts in (1), prepositional clauses and infinitival subject clauses, in a unified analysis. According to her, the D-feature postulated by Chomsky (1995) can be encoded in a separate head. In Spanish infinitivals the subjects would be licensed by this D, a clitic with weak agreement features in association with Tense. Thus, we would have some kind of doubling in subject licensing, which allows her to draw a parallel between this construction and object clitic doubling constructions in Spanish. The data in (4), for instance, would have the structure included under (5):

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5 This is suggested by the fact that the subject may interrupt the sequence V-Adv as in (3) even though in jugar limpio the adverb is VP-internal. The status of the adverb as VP-internal is shown by the fact that it moves with the predicate in VP-preposing (i.a), and that it does not have liberty of movement (i.b):

i. a. [VP Jugar limpio a las cartas], Juan no puede.
   b. María juega (limpio a las cartas/*a las cartas limpio). (Suñer 1994)

The view that no V-to-C movement is to be found in Spanish would be coherent with this analysis (see Suñer (1994) for arguments against V-to-C movement in Spanish).
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(4) Todo el mundo se levantó al leer el juez el veredicto.

(5) TP
   T' VP
   T DP V DP
   double D V DP
   (el juez) (null) (leer) (el veredicto)

Lastly, Rigau (1995), focusing on temporal infinitival clauses headed by a preposition, argues that Spanish infinitives do have agreement which is not realized morphologically. This agreement would allow the infinitive to case-mark the subject. In contrast to the line of research I follow, she argues that the interaction between the preposition and the agreement of the infinitive allows for the licensing of overt subjects. Thus, her proposal applies only to (temporal) prepositional clauses.  

The problem for the approaches summarized so far is how to deal with the asymmetry between governed and ungoverned infinitives. The accounts in Lagunilla (1987), Suñer (1994) and Torrego (1998) are flawed because they do not offer any explanation as to why the strategies they put forward to license overt subjects of infinitives are not available for governed infinitives. All things being equal, these proposals would predict wrongly that sentences as (2.b), repeated here, are grammatical:

(2) Lamenta ir Pedro allí.

As to Rigau (1995), in order to avoid such drawback, she does not give a unified account of the two main productive contexts studied here, prepositional clauses and infinitival subject clauses. As opposed to these analyses, I claim that positing that Spanish infinitives have abstract agreement along the lines of Rigau (1995) (and Torrego 1998), together with an agreement absorption mechanism provides a unified analysis for both contexts while explaining the asymmetry between governed and ungoverned infinitives as far as subject licensing is concerned.

Agreement Absorption

I begin by accepting the traditional link between agreement and the capacity of assigning nominative case/licensing a subject. (Nonetheless, see the next section for an alternative which is not contingent on such link). The relationship between infinitives showing agreement and being able to assign nominative case in Portuguese is well known.

(6) a. Será difícil [eles aprovarem a proposta].
   'It will be difficult for them to approve the proposal.' (Raposo 1987)
   b. *Será difícil [eles aprovar-Ø a proposta].
      (Raposo 1987)

Given the close relationship between Spanish and Portuguese and the existence of overt subjects of infinitives in both languages, we can follow Rigau (1995) (and Torrego 1998) and posit that Spanish infinitives have abstract agreement just as Portuguese infinitives do have morphologically realized agreement. This abstract agreement would explain the licensing of overt subjects of ungoverned infinitives. Nonetheless, if this licensing strategy is not restricted to temporal adjuncts as in Rigau (1995), such account would be unable to exclude overt subjects in the case of in-

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6 Rigau herself suggests that the approach she uses might be useful in dealing with non-temporal prepositional clauses. However, the postverbal nature of overt subjects may posit some problems for her proposal. In her approach, the postverbal position of the subject is explained by positing the incorporation of the verb onto the preposition as suggested by the following data:

i. María salió al entrar Juan.
ii. *María salió al Juan entrar.
iii. Al no entrar tú, María salió.

(ii) is out because no incorporation has taken place, whereas (iii) does not allow a temporal reading but only a causal reading for the same reason. Since in prepositional clauses with no temporal meaning no incorporation seems to take place as shown by (iv), it is not clear how her approach would explain the postverbal position of overt subjects in those cases or in the case of infinitival clauses functioning as subjects of the matrix clause, also included in this study.

iv. De realmente estudiar todos geología, la disciplina avanzaría mucho.
finitives subcategorized by the main verb as in Lagunilla (1987), Suñer (1994) and Torrego (1998). In addition, positing that Spanish infinitives have agreement properties would be ad hoc, since those properties cannot be justified by empirical evidence.

As to the contrast in grammaticality of overt subjects, if we accept the link between agreement and the capacity of assigning nominative case/licensing a subject, the data in (1.-2) suggest that ungoverned infinitives would have agreement whereas governed infinitives would not. If this logic is right, it would explain the different subject licensing properties of these forms. In order to express this observation in formal terms, I claim that the abstract agreement features of governed infinitives are absorbed by the main verb and, for this reason, no overt subject licensing is available to such infinitives. In the case of ungoverned infinitives these agreement features are maintained, as indicated by the fact that they may license overt subjects. Thus, I provide a mechanism to account for the asymmetry between governed and ungoverned infinitives.

I claim that the agreement properties of verbs taking default third person singular agreement, haber 'to be' (impersonal) and meteorological verbs provide empirical evidence that infinitives do have agreement properties and that governors are sensitive to these. If this is the case, an agreement absorption analysis of governed infinitives follows. As to the claim that Spanish infinitives have abstract agreement and that this agreement is absorbed by the matrix verb governing the infinitive, in dialects where the verb haber invariably shows default third person singular agreement, as in standard Spanish, the matrix verb adopts the default agreement as well:

(7) Había personas en el coche.
(8) Había una persona en el coche.
(9) Parecía haber algún problema / problemas.

In contrast, in dialects in which haber shows agreement (e.g. rural Chilean Spanish), this is transferred to the matrix verb:

(10) a. Habían personas en el coche.
    b. Había una persona en el coche.

(11) Parecían haber problemas / Parecía haber algún problema.

If infinitives did not have agreement properties which are adopted by the main verb in the case of governed infinitives, such a coherence across dialects would be unexpected. Therefore, I claim that Spanish infinitives have abstract agreement.

A similar argument can be constructed by comparing meteorological verbs, which take default third person singular agreement, to verbs taking regular agreement or even with the following data:

(12) a. Llovía.
    b. Llovían las críticas.
(13) a. Parecía que llovía.
    b. Parecían llover las críticas.

In addition, (14) can be taken to constitute evidence of the claim being made, though the examples sound somewhat unnatural:

(14)a. Parece que quiere llover.
    b. Parece que quieren llover las críticas.

If Spanish infinitives have agreement as suggested by these last examples, they should be able to license overt subjects. Governed infinitives cannot. Consequently, an agreement absorption analysis of governed infinitives follows. In the case of ungoverned infinitives such absorption does not take place as indicated by the fact that these infinitives may license overt subjects as exemplified in (15). As the infinitives are ungoverned, there is no candidate to absorb agreement.

(15) De haber problemas, Pedro y Juan te lo dirán. (regardless of the dialect)

In the case of object control structures, as infinitives are governed in both subject and object control structures, we would expect these infinitives to behave identically as far as subject licensing is concerned. The prediction is borne out since, as (16) shows, object control infinitives do

(16) a. Parece que quiere llover las críticas.
    b. Parece que quieren llover las críticas.
not allow overt subjects in a way parallel to subject control infinitives (e.g. 2):

(16) *Pedro les obligó a ir los taxistas.  

This approach is superior to previous proposals in the sense that I put forward licensing strategies of overt subjects available to ungoverned infinitives, abstract agreement as suggested by (7-14), while I include an explanation of why those licensing strategies are not available to governed infinitives, that is to say, agreement absorption.

In the next section, I plan to avoid my approach being contingent on the link between agreement and subject licensing, since such a link is being increasingly challenged (e.g. Harley 1995). I take Alexiadou and Anagnostopoulou’s (1998) view on the EPP in Spanish as a point of departure and show that my analysis is coherent with an account of the distribution of PRO as constrained by a parametrically varying EPP (Harley 2000). In addition, objections to my analysis which would be raised by a null case approach to the distribution of PRO (Chomsky and Lasnik 1993) can also be accounted for while maintaining the basic machinery of my proposal, abstract agreement and an agreement absorption mechanism. Within such a framework, the post-infinitival position of overt subjects follows.

The EPP in Spanish and the distribution of PRO

As to the distribution of PRO in Spanish, we may maintain a null case approach as in Chomsky and Lasnik (1993), which posits that null case is assigned by Inflection lacking tense and agreement features. If we combine such an approach with the present proposal, this would restrict Spanish PRO to the subject of control infinitives. All Spanish infinitives would lack tense, but only governed infinitives would have no agreement features. Nonetheless, Spanish PRO is not necessarily restricted to governed infinitives, as Torrego (1998) argues. According to Torrego, the arbitrary subject in (17.a) and the co reference between the matrix subject and the subject of the infinitive in (17.b) seem to indicate that we find PRO as the subject of the ungoverned infinitives in the following data:

(17) a. [Para PRO aprobar], hay que estudiar.
    b. De PRO seguir así, no conseguirás nada. (Torrego 1998)

This is unexpected, since, according to the reasoning developed so far, ungoverned infinitives have agreement. Thus, the inflection of ungoverned infinitival clauses would not qualify to assign null case.

Interestingly, PRO might not even be restricted to non-finite clauses in Spanish. The following data are examples of structures where the presence of PRO might be postulated following Mendikoetxea (1992):

(18) a. Se llega antes por aquí.
    b. Se trabaja poco en este lugar. (Mendikoetxea 1992)

With regard to (18) Mendikoetxea argues that the arbitrary se in this structure would absorb nominative case thus making it necessary for an empty category which does not require nominative case and is incompatible with overtly realized DPs to appear in the structure. She identifies this empty category as PRO, which is coherent with the arbitrary interpretation of these examples. If Mendikoetxea is right, the data in (18) would jeopardize to some extent Chomsky and Lasnik’s null case approach, since the sentences in (18) are finite clauses.

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7 (16) is ungrammatical under the assumption that no rescuing intonation is used.

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8 Mendikoetxea assumes that PRO can be governed, as long as it remains Case-less, as argued by Kayne (1991). Thus, PRO can only appear in finite contexts when the agreement inflection of finite I has been absorbed, e.g. in Irish impersonal constructions as analyzed by Stenson (1989) which we will briefly mention.

Arbitrary pro seems to have plural agreement properties, whereas arbitrary PRO admits both plural and singular agreement:

i a. proarb Llaman a la puerta.
    b. *proarb Llama a la puerta.

ii a. Hay que amarse los unos a los otros.
    b. Hay que mirarse uno mismo en el espejo.

Thus, agreement would tell us that in (18) we are not dealing with proarb.
Thus, a null case approach to the distribution of PRO would be problematic for the proposal outlined here, since my analysis predicted that PRO should be restricted to governed infinitives. Most importantly, such an approach would also be problematic to deal with the Spanish data exemplified in (18) and similar Irish data we will see in (20), where we find at least indications that PRO does not follow finiteness restrictions in these languages.

So far, I have based my account on the relation between agreement and subject licensing. I propose to link agreement not to subject licensing but to the satisfaction of the EPP as in Alexiadou and Anagnostopoulou (1998), while maintaining an agreement absorption analysis. Within such framework we can generate the data seen so far under an approach where the EPP is responsible for the distribution of PRO (Harley 2000).

Following Alexiadou and Anagnostopoulou (1998) we may link agreement to the fulfillment of the EPP requirement. According to these researchers the EPP in Romance is satisfied via Verb-raising as a consequence of the nominal feature of the verbal agreement morphology. In such an account preverbal subjects occupy an A-bar position as shown for instance by the competition between subjects and adverbs in Spanish:

(19) a. Temprano salía Julia de casa.
   (Piera 1987)

In my analysis, both finite forms and ungoverned infinitives would show no EPP-effects in Spanish. Following Harley (2000), the licensing of PRO can be analyzed as dependent on a parametrically varying EPP feature rather that case. In Harley's analysis, T bears a [+overt] EPP feature in finite clauses, while in non-finite clauses T bears a [+null] EPP feature. The former would be checked by an overt DP, while the latter must be checked by PRO. That is to say, languages which exhibit EPP effects such as Icelandic and English, the distribution of PRO can be analyzed as constrained by the strong EPP feature of non-finite tense, which requires a null subject. In contrast, the free distribution of PRO and overt subject DPs in both finite and non-finite clauses in Irish we see in (20) is linked to the fact that this language has no EPP (McCloskey 1996):

(20) a. Complement infinitive clause (non-ECM)
   Ni thaithníonn leat [mé an abairt a scríobh]
   NEG please with 2SG ISG the sentence TRAN write. INF
   'You are not pleased (for) me to write the sentence.'

   b. Autonomous Impersonals
   Siúilfear abhaile
   walk.FUT.IMP PRO homeward
   '(One) will walk home.' (Harley 2000:9-11)

If we accept the reasoning on agreement absorption developed in the last section of this paper together with Alexiadou and Anagnostopoulou's analysis of the EPP in Spanish and Harley's account, the distribution of overt DPs / PRO follows. In the case of ungoverned infinitives, we do have agreement to satisfy the EPP. Thus, the EPP has no effect on subjects. Since there is no EPP at work, as is the case in Irish, there is no ban on overt subjects or PRO in the case of ungoverned infinitives (and finite clauses). In the case of governed infinitives, agreement has been absorbed, so the EPP would not be inherently satisfied. That is to say, governed infinitives show EPP effects and, consequently, the [+null] EPP feature corresponding to non-finiteness should be checked, which explains the ban on overt subjects in control structures.

A prediction of this analysis is that Spanish finite clauses (and ungoverned infinitives) may include PRO as Irish finite clauses do, since, as agreement checks the EPP in these cases, we do not expect to find any EPP effects on the distribution of PRO. As we have seen in (17) and (18), such a proposal in not unjustifiable. Notice that within a null case approach to PRO the examples including PRO in finite clauses or as subjects of ungoverned infinitives were problematic for an agreement absorption analysis. In contrast, they are coherent with the present proposal.

9 The arbitrary empty category in Irish autonomous impersonals triggers different agreement from proarb. This plays a crucial role in Stenson's argumentation that the empty category present in such structures is PRO. See Stenson (1989) for more details.
In this section, my agreement absorption analysis renders the link between agreement and subject licensing unimportant by adopting an approach to the distribution of PRO as determined by the EPP (Harley 2000) together with the framework of Alexiadou and Anagnostopoulou (1998). This framework also solves the problem a null case theory of PRO would posit for my proposal as outlined in the second section of this paper, since according to my argumentation, PRO should not appear as subject of ungoverned infinitives. This is not the case as argued in relation to (17). The present framework would also allow Spanish PRO to occur in finite clauses as suggested by (18). The postverbal nature of overt subjects of infinitives follows, since there would be no EPP feature at work to make them appear preverbally.

**Conclusion**

I have given an account of the licensing of overt subjects of infinitives in Spanish. In contrast to previous proposals, I have explained the asymmetry between governed and ungoverned infinitives as far as those licensing strategies are concerned while giving a unified approach to the two main contexts where overt subjects of infinitives appear, that is to say, prepositional clauses and infinitival subject clauses. For this reason, my proposal, abstract agreement of Spanish infinitives together with a mechanism of abstract agreement absorption is superior to previous accounts. In the light of Alexiadou and Anagnostopoulou's (1998) characterization of the EPP in Spanish, I have linked my analysis to a proposal about the distribution of PRO that departs from the null case approach (Chomsky and Lanik 1993) in favor of a parametrically varying EPP feature (Harley 2000) which is able to deal with the lack of finiteness restrictions on PRO we find in Irish (Stenson 1989) and, following Mendikeotxea (1992), in Spanish. This framework allows my analysis to depart from the traditional link between subject licensing and agreement.

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10 Even though this proposal for Spanish might prove useful in dealing with other Romance languages, the distribution of overt subjects of infinitives is far less restricted in Spanish than in Italian or French (Mensing 2000), thus suggesting that other factors may play a role in the latter languages. In the case of Portuguese, overt subjects are allowed in infinitival clauses functioning not just as adjuncts or subjects of the main clause, but also as complements of epistemic, declarative and factive predicates (Raposo 1987). In Raposo's account, the occurrence of overt subjects in infinitive clauses acting a complement is explained by arguing for a simplified structure of CP in contrast to a complex structure whenever overt subjects are not possible. A simplified structure of CP would allow the infinitive to be case-marked by the matrix verb in contrast to a complex CP. Thus, the Portuguese data might be liable to be accounted for by my proposal if we considered that in Portuguese agreement absorption might be affected by the structure of the infinitival CP.
Cited works


