

# Restricted Numbers and Stubborn Datives

## A Fresh Look at Long-Distance Agreement across Basque Nominalised Complements

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### In a nutshell

Long-Distance Agreement (LDA) across Case-marked nominalised complement clauses in Basque [Etxepare 2006, Preminger 2009, i.a.]

#### Relevant properties for LDA (» 2.)

- Case of the clause (absolutive, dative)
- featural make-up of the embedded object (Case, person)

#### Tools & Assumptions

- probes are specified to look for certain feature-values [Béjar 2003]
- operations can fail [Preminger 2009, 2014]
- phases can be unlocked [Rackowski & Richards 2005]
- dative is a theta-related Case, embedded into a PP (or another XP) [Woolford 2006, Řezáč 2008]

#### Proposal (» 3.)

Absolutive: person ( $\pi$ ) and number (#) probed for separately, specified to look for participants and plural, respectively [Preminger 2009]

- the number probe is **restricted** by the person probe in the choice of the argument it Agrees with

Dative: a single integral probe ( $\pi$ &#)

- **stubborn**: it can unlock and inspect a phase in the same step

## 1. Preliminaries: Agreement in Basque

- Basque: morphologically ergative, syntactically accusative, head-final
- agreement on the auxiliary with absolutive, dative, ergative arguments

#### Case-marked nominalised clauses

- clausal DPs ( $DP_c$ ): nominaliser (NMS) *-tze*, determiner (DET) *-a*  
[ $DP_c$  [ $nP$  (...)] [ $VP$   $DP_{OBJ}$  V] (...)] *-tze* ] *-a* ]
- marked absolutive, dative, or ergative; trigger 3SG agreement on the auxiliary in the corresponding Case
- allow overt embedded subjects and temporal adverbs distinct from matrix time (in non-LDA contexts) [San Martín & Uriagereka 2002, Etxepare 2006]

## 2. Long-Distance Agreement

- in ‘substandard’ Basque [Etxepare 2006]
- only across complements (ABS, DAT); no LDA into ergative clauses
- anaphoric tense, no overt embedded subjects allowed » reduced verbal domain [Etxepare 2006, Preminger 2009]
- only with embedded direct objects (ABS and/or DAT); no LDA with embedded indirect (DAT) objects

#### Case of the Object – Embedded Datives

Absolutive clause:  $\checkmark$ ABS, \*DAT

(1) [*Liburuak irakur-tze-a-Ø*] *gustatzen Ø-zai-zki-t.*  
book.PL.ABS read-NMS-DET-ABS like 3ABS-PL.ABS-aux-1SG.DAT  
‘I like to read books.’ [Etxepare 2006: (98)]

(2) \**Erabaki d-it-u-Ø* [*buruzagiei obedi-tze-a-Ø.*]  
decided 3ABS-PL.ABS-aux-3SG.ERG chief.PL.DAT obey-NMS-DET-ABS  
‘She/he decided to obey the chiefs.’ [Etxepare 2006: (106)]

Dative clause:  $\checkmark$ ABS, ?DAT

(3) *Uko egin d-i-e-Ø* [*kalteordainak eska-tze-a-ri.*]  
refusal done 3ABS-aux-3PL.DAT-3SG.ERG damage.PL.ABS ask.for-NMS-DET-DAT  
‘She/he refused to pay damages.’ [Etxepare 2006: (2b)]

(4) ?*Uko egin d-i-e-Ø* [*buruzagiei obedi-tze-a-ri.*]  
refusal done 3ABS-aux-3PL.DAT-3SG.ERG chiefs.PL.DAT obey-NMS-DET-DAT  
‘She/he refused to obey the chiefs.’ [Etxepare 2006: (105)]

#### Person Features of the Object – Embedded Participants

Absolutive clause: \*1/2

(5) \**[Zu gonbidatzea-Ø]* *baztertu za-it-u-zte.*  
you.ABS invite.NMS.DET-ABS refused 2ABS-PL.ABS-aux-3PL.ERG  
‘They have refused to invite you.’ [Etxepare 2006: (117b)]

Dative clause: ?1/2

(6) ?*Arteak uko egin d-i-zue-Ø* [*ZUEI obeditzea-ri.*]  
Artea.ERG refusal done 3ABS-aux-2PL.DAT-3SG.ERG you.PL.DAT obey.NMS.DET-DAT  
‘Artea refused to obey you.’ [R. Etxepare, p.c.]

Case of the clause	Case of the object	person of the object	examples
absolutive	$\checkmark$ ABS, *DAT	$\checkmark$ 3, *1/2	(1, 2, 5)
dative	$\checkmark$ ABS, ?DAT	any	(3, 4, 6)

Table 1: Distribution of LDA

## 3. The Proposal

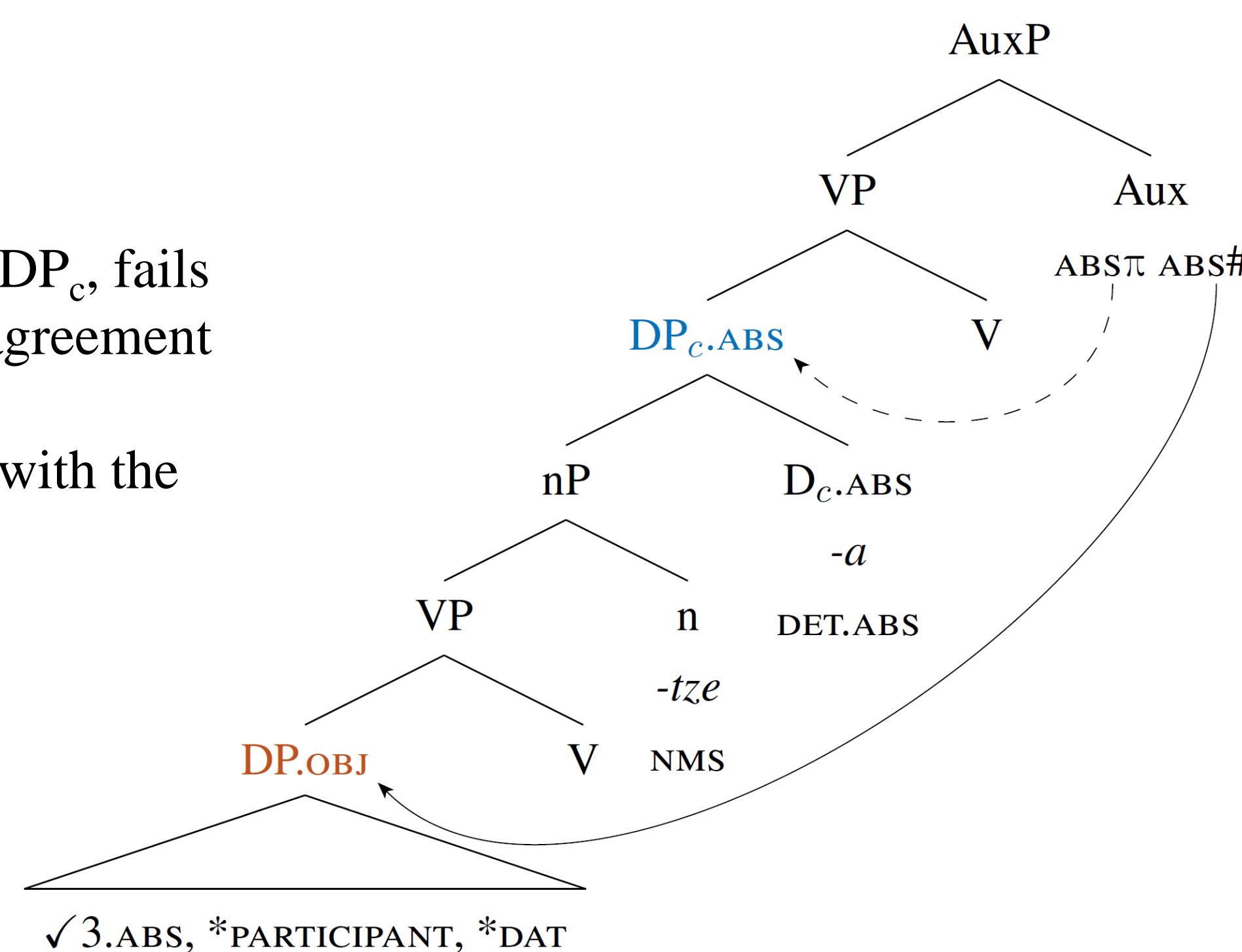
- availability of LDA: possibility of phase-unlocking

#### Restricted Number – Absolutive

- separate person ( $\pi$ ) and number (#) probes: separate agreement morphemes
  - $\pi$ : specified to look for participants; #: specified to look for plural
  - any other goal leads to failure (default features: 3SG) [Béjar 2003, Preminger 2009]
- the # probe can only agree with a participant if the  $\pi$  probe succeeds: form of the 1/2 person morphemes changes depending on the number (e.g., *na* = 1SG; *ga* = 1PL)
- if  $\pi$  fails, then # can only see 3<sup>rd</sup> person absolutive arguments (unmarked)

Derivation:

1.  $\pi$  finds the featureless  $DP_c$ , fails  
» default (3<sup>rd</sup> person) agreement  
»  $DP_c$  is unlocked
2. # crosses  $DP_c$ , Agrees with the embedded ABS object



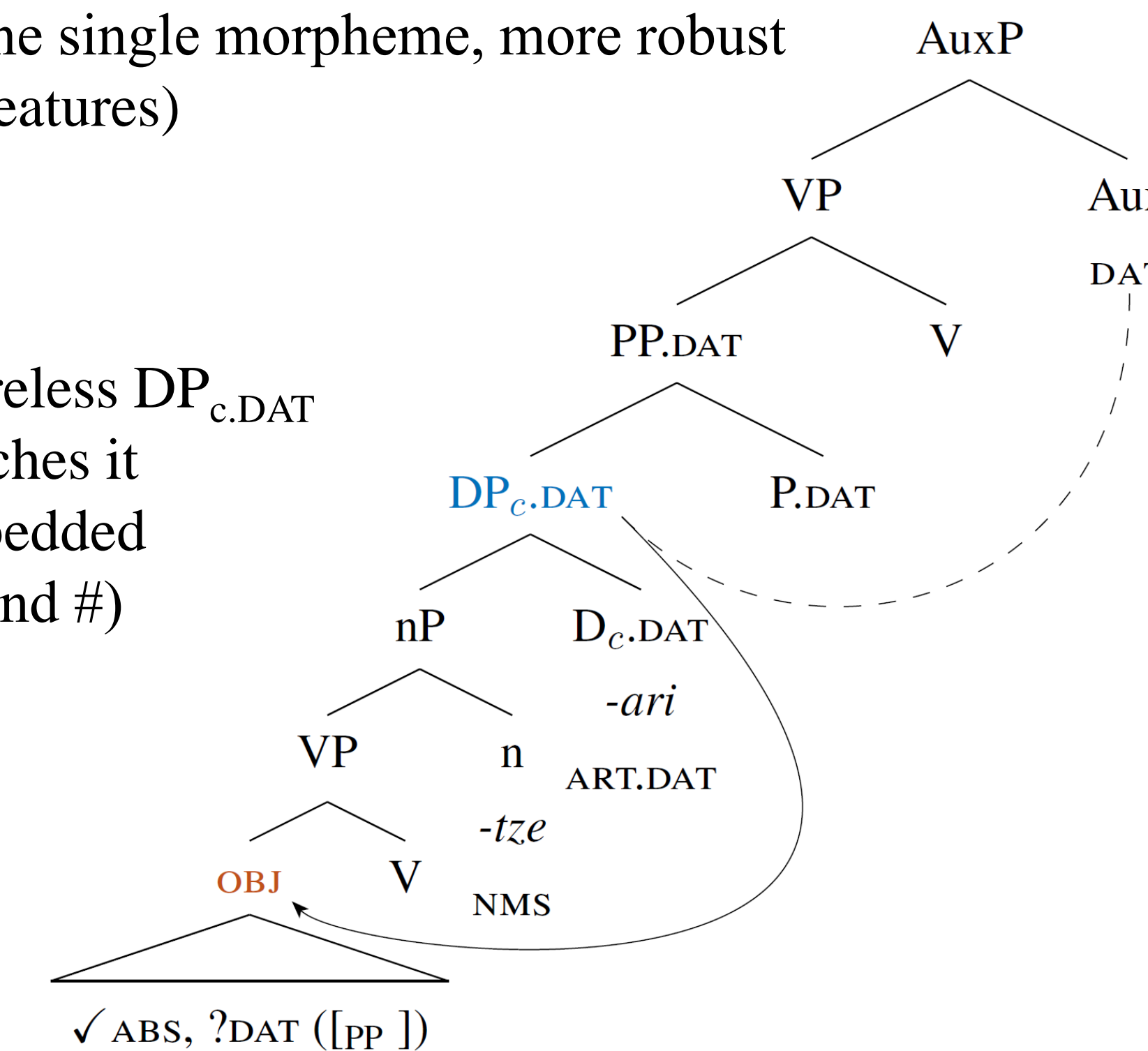
- \*Agree with participants (5):  $\pi$  will always fail; # cannot target participants » default (SG)
- \*Agree with DAT objects (2): # can only target a DAT argument if  $\pi$  has successfully targeted one as well [e.g. in dative displacement: see Řezáč 2008]

#### Stubborn Dative

- one probe ( $\pi$ &#): one single morpheme, more robust
- flat (looks for any features)

Derivation:

1. DAT finds the featureless  $DP_{c,DAT}$   
» unlocks and searches it
2. Agree with the embedded object (for both  $\pi$  and #)



Gradation of LDA: ABS > ?DAT (direct object) > \*DAT (indirect object)

- lexical (direct) vs. inherent (indirect) dative [Woolford 2006]
- ABS: DP; most easily accessible
- ?DAT (lexical): same position as ABS, but under a PP [Řezáč 2008]
- \*DAT (inherent): embedded under a (phasal)  $v_{app}P$  » inaccessible

#### Support from the Person Case Constraint

- if a DAT argument is present, the ABS argument can only be 3<sup>rd</sup> person
- explained:  $\pi$  fails ([ $PP$   $DP_{DAT}$ ]), # is restricted to 3ABS arguments

## 4. A Puzzle

(7) ?*Arteak erabaki ga-it-u-Ø* [*GURI obeditzea.*]  
Artea.ERG decided 1ABS-PL.ABS-aux-3SG.ERG we.DAT obey.NMS.ABS  
‘Artea decided to obey us.’ [R. Etxepare, p.c.]

- ABS clause: \*DAT, \*PARTICIPANT, but ?DAT&PARTICIPANT » ?
- possibly connected to ergative/dative displacement, where the ABS  $\pi$  probe agrees with an ERG/DAT argument if the ABS argument is 3<sup>rd</sup> person

## 5. Conclusion

- LDA vs. non-LDA varieties: availability of phase-unlocking
- degrees of LDA-availability across DAT clauses: distinction among unmarked (ABS) vs. lexical (DAT) vs. inherent (DAT) Case
- a possibly unified account of the Basque agreement system [pace Preminger’s 2009 Agree vs. Clitic Doubling]: different behaviour of ABS and DAT agreement follows from the properties of the corresponding probes (ABS:  $\pi$  and restricted # vs. DAT: one integral stubborn probe)

#### Selected References

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