

1 Overview

- Null subject languages appear to allow vso orders.
- This is difficult to capture purely in terms of the EPP.
 - Why should languages that permit phonologically null subjects also be languages that don't require subject movement to SpecIP?
 - The answer cannot simply be that vso languages lack an EPP.
- Alexiadou and Anagnostopoulou (1998) (henceforth A&A 1998) propose that verbal morphology in some languages is actually pronominal and that verb movement itself can satisfy the EPP.
 - Following Chomsky (1995), A&A 1998 assume that the EPP is a strong [D] feature on Agr_S^o that, under normal assumptions, drives movement of a nominal element to $\text{SpecAgr}_S\text{P}$.
 - They propose that verbal agreement affixes in some languages have their own entries in the lexicon and carry the category feature [D]. These languages have STRONG AGREEMENT.
 - Strong agreement languages are parametrized to check the EPP by head movement to Agr^o .
 - We will see evidence from and discussion of a number of phenomena:
 1. Availability of vso/vos
 2. Availability of pro-drop
 3. A/A' status of subjects in svo
 4. Presence/absence of definiteness effects in unaccusative constructions
 5. Presence of verb movement in a language
- The idea that verb movement can check the EPP is definitely germane to one of the central questions of this course: What exactly is the status of head movement in syntactic theory? What sorts of things might it do for us?
 - While last week we looked at the view that verb movement might be driven by the *amount* of morphology a verb has. Here, the idea is about the *kind* of morphology a verb carries.
 - Consequently, the hypothesis makes a particular claim about the relation of verb movement to the syntax: Certain kinds of morphology can drive verb movement to satisfy a syntactic requirement normally thought to be handled by phrasal movement.

The best summary of what this paper actually aims to do can be found on page 516.

Unless, of course, the EPP is something about phonological expression of material in a particular position (Pesetsky and Torrego 2001).

I will generally refer to Agr_S^o as simply Agr^o except where the distinction matters.

2 Subject Placement Facts

The main examples of null subject languages are taken to be Greek and Spanish, which are compared most closely to Celtic and Germanic languages.

i. *The VSO ~ SVO alternation is not restricted to root clauses:*

- (1) i idisi oti {o Petros} episkeftike {o Petros} tin Ilektra
the news that Peter visited Peter Ilektra

‘The news that Peter visited Ilektra’

It’s unclear to me, but I think the implicit comparison here is to V2.

A&A 1998: 495, (6)

- (2) Espero que [te devuelva Juan el libro].
I hope that CL.2.SG return Juan the book

‘I hope Juan returns the book to you.’

Ordóñez 1998:313, (2)

ii. *vs order occurs with all eventive predicates:*

That is, there is no requirement that a predicate be unaccusative for the VSO order to be available:

(3) *Eventive predicates in Greek:*

- a. efige o Petros
left Peter

‘Peter left.’

Unaccusative

- b. epekse o Petros
played Peter

‘Peter played.’

Unergative

- c. ektise i Maria to spiti
built Mary house

‘Mary built the house.’

Transitive

A&A 1998:495, (7)

This is meant to stand in comparison to, e.g., English ‘inverted subject constructions,’ which reportedly occur only with intransitives. What counts as an inverted subject construction is unclear to me, but locative inversion certainly fits that description Bresnan (1994):

(Hoekstra and Mulder 1990)

(4) *English locative inversion:*

- a. Among the guests was sitting *my friend* Rose.
b. * Among the guests of honor seated *my mother* my friend Rose.

Bresnan 1994:75, (2b); 77, (10b)

iii. *There are no definiteness effects:*

Existential constructions with expletives in English (5a) typically require that the true subject not be a strong quantifier. No such restriction holds of NSLs.

(5) *Definiteness effects:*

- a. * There arrived each child.

A&A 1998:495, (7)

- b. irthe to kathe pedi.
arrived the every child
'Each child arrived.'

iv. *In Greek/Romance subjects are left internal to VP. In Arabic/Celtic they are VP external.*

As usual, this is based on adverb placement. In Greek the manner adverb *kala*, 'well' marks the left edge of the VP domain. Consequently, participles appear to leave VP, but subjects remain internal

- (6) a. an ehi idhi diavasi_j [_{VP} kala [_{VP} o Petros *t_j* to mathima]]
if has already read well Peter the lesson
'If Peter has already read the lesson well'
b. *an ehi idhi o Petros_i diavasi_j [_{VP} kala [_{VP} *t_i t_j* to mathima]]
if has already Peter read well the lesson

In Icelandic transitive expletive constructions, the subject appears to the left of VP adverbs (*alveg*, 'completely', below), while the participle remains internal to VP.

- (7) Það hefur sennilega einhver [_{VP} alveg [_{VP} lokið
there has probably someone completely finished
verkefniinu]]
assignment.DEF

Consequently, we wind up with noticeably different word order in the NSLs than we do in Icelandic:

- (8) Greek: AUX ADV₁ VERB [_{VP} ADV₂ [_{VP} SUBJ OBJ]]
Icelandic: EXPL AUX ADV₁ SUBJ [_{VP} ADV₂ [_{VP} VERB OBJ]]

Generally, *vs* sequences can be interrupted by adverbs in Greek/Spanish, unlike in Arabic/Celtic.

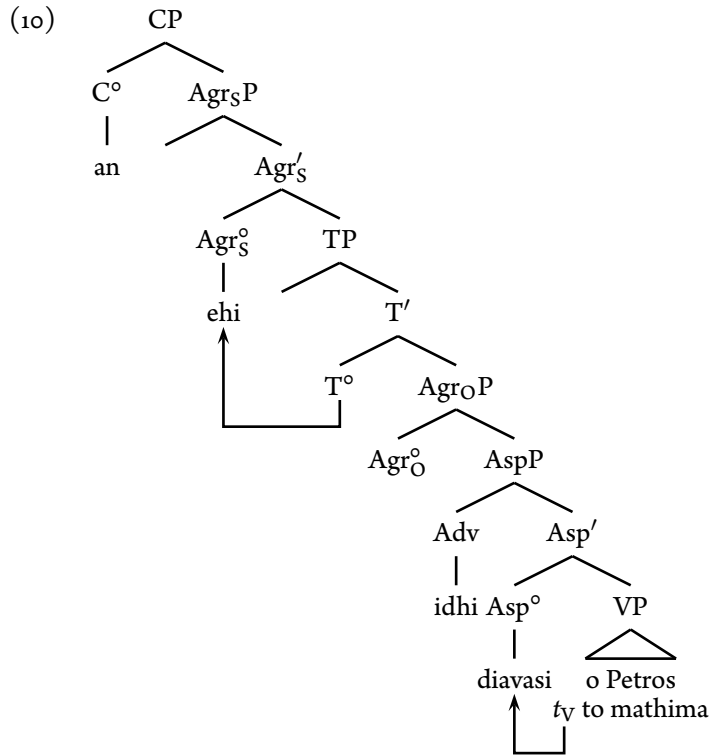
- (9) Deirann {*i gcónaí} siad {i gcónaí} o paidir roimh am luí.
Say they always a prayer before time lie
'They always say a prayer before bed-time.'

These are facts that we have seen already. Recall that this is why using adverb placement as diagnostic of verb movement is problematic in Spanish. Also recall that the adjacency facts in Irish.

2.1 Summary

A&A 1998 adopt the following clausal model for NSLs

- Participles move to Asp°.
- VP adverbs occupy SpecAspP.
- Auxiliaries are inserted in T° and move to Agr°.
- In Greek and Spanish, the subject remains internal to VP (in *vso* orders, presumably), while in Icelandic and Celtic it raises higher (presumably to SpecTP).



See example (6b).

The properties we (are meant to) have seen are summarized here:

	Overt Expletive	Def. Effects	Internal Subjs.	Intransitivity
Icelandic	+	+	-	-
English	+	+	+	+
Greek	-	-	+	-
Celtic	-	-	-	-

Remember, Greek is the NSL here, and so we want to capture the facts that distinguish it from other languages.

- A&A 1998 will go on to propose that there is a parameter for filling SpecTP, which ultimately distinguishes Irish (and Icelandic) from Greek.
- One thing that remains unclear to me, though, is whether the VP-internal split that A&A 1998 argue for is real or falls along the lines they think it does.
- For instance, the subject looks like it must move in at least some English expletive constructions:

(11) There was *a goat* being chased.

It's hard to see, in modern terms, how this is different from an EPP feature on T°.

Subject placement in this sort of expletive construction is not straightforward. See, e.g., [Harwood \(2013\)](#).

- Also, on [Ordóñez's \(2007\)](#) interpretation, vso orders in Spanish do involve some amount of subject movement. It's not clear that Romance patterns with Greek across the board here.
- I'd like to know if there is a version of (6) where the subject (*o Petros*) can intervene between the verb (*diavasi*, 'read') and the second adverb (*kala*, 'well'). One problem with (6b) is that the subject may have been moved too far.
- It's not immediately obvious that this is a problem for them, though.

Ordóñez likens this to Icelandic, but [LaCara \(2016\)](#) shows that subjects do not move as far in Spanish.

...*idhi diavasi o Petros kala* [VP ...

3 The EPP

- A&A 1998's conception of the EPP will be crucial for their hypothesis.
- They adopt Chomsky's (1995) formulation of the EPP as a checking a categorial [D] feature on I°.
- On Chomsky's original view, there are two ways of doing this:
 - Move some element (the subject) to SpecIP.
 - Merge an expletive from the numeration.
- Hence, under this view, SVO and Expletive-VSO languages are the result of the EPP, in the sense that preverbal subjects and expletives satisfy the [D] feature on I°.
- SVO orders are derived from numerations without expletives.
- Expletive-VSO orders are derived from numerations with expletives.
- Given this view, there are two ways to approach VSO orders in NSLs:
 - i. *There are null expletives that satisfy the EPP.:*
This would mean the NSLs are strong EPP languages that require XP Move/Merge in SpecAgrP. This predicts that preverbal subjects in NSLs will behave like subjects in SVO languages like English and Icelandic.
 - ii. *There is no null expletive:*
This would mean that NSLs do not require XP Move/Merge in SpecAgrP. This implies that preverbal subjects are in A'-positions, since the EPP is not driving movement. Subjects in SVO orders will show properties distinct from those in English.
- A&A 1998 argue for (ii):
 - A&A 1998 show that preverbal subjects in NSLs have A'-properties, meaning that they behave differently from preverbal subjects in English.
 - Additionally, they argue against null expletives on the grounds that they should behave similarly to overt expletives.
 - The weird thing will be that they maintain that the EPP is nonetheless active in NSLs.
- One issue worth bearing in mind here, which only comes up in later discussion, is whether the EPP is a categorial feature.
 - Stylistic inversion in Icelandic is often thought to be driven by an EPP feature on I°, since it alternates with the expletive *það*.
 - Many conceptions of English locative inversion propose that locative PPs move to (or through) SpecIP to satisfy the EPP.
 - If the EPP is simply satisfied by phrasal movement of any material in SpecAgrP/SpecIP (the more traditional view), then it is unclear how A&A's proposal could actually work.

As above, A&A 1998 assume a split-IP model, and the EPP is specifically a property of Agr°, not T°. Thus for them, subject movement to SpecTP is distinct from EPP-driven movement in some sense.

4 Evidence for the lack of SpecAgr_SP

4.1 svo orders are left dislocation

- A main argument in this paper is that preverbal subjects in NSLs are actually in an A'-position and not an A-position (SpecAgr_SP).
- This is clear in Celtic languages, where svo order only occurs with an A'-complementizer intervening between the subject and the finite verb.

(12) Mair a fwrodd ef.
 Mair REL.PART hit him
 'Mair hit him.'

Welsh, A&A 1998:493, (5b)

- In other languages this is much harder to show. A&A 1998 adduce three arguments for thinking that these subjects are not in A-positions:

- Distributional*: Preverbal subjects can be separated from the verb by several adverbs in NSLs.
- Interpretive*: Quantificational preverbal subjects take wide scope and receive specific rather than existential interpretations.
- Binding*: Subject pronouns cannot be bound if they are in preverbal position.

- This is a critical part of their argument:

- Remember that part of what they are trying to do here is figure out why null subject languages also appear to permit vso orders.
- EPP-driven movement is basically the canonical form of A-movement. If svo orders in these languages is derived by the EPP, then we don't have an obvious way of explaining why the two alternatives exist side-by-side.
- If subjects are in A'-positions, then preverbal subjects are not being moved in satisfaction of the EPP. This means that we can claim either that the EPP is inactive or satisfied by some other means.

- The main point of comparison here is to CLITIC LEFT DISLOCATION (CLLD), where a topicalized element is coindexed with a resumptive clitic:

(13) Este libro_i, lo_i leí.
 this book, CL.3.SG read.1SG.PST
 '(As for) this book, I read it.'

I'm not totally sure why *clitic left dislocation* (as opposed to normal pronominal left dislocation) is the main point of comparison.

- Looking forward, A&A 1998 will propose that agreement morphology in NSLs is pronominal.

- The [D] feature on the agreement will check the EPP, given the view of the EPP discussed above.
- Since the agreement morphology is pronominal, it will itself function as the resumptive element in the dislocation structure.

4.1.1 Distribution

- The first claim is that there is no Spec–Head relationship between preverbal subjects in Greek and the verb.
- Numerous adverbs can appear between the subject and the verb.
- Clitic left-dislocated objects.

(14) *Subect placement with adverbs in Greek:*

A&A 1998:502, (15a); 503, (16a)

- a. *O Petros* xtes meta apo poles prospathies sinandise ti Maria.
Peter yesterday after from many effort met Mary
'After many efforts, Peter met Mary yesterday.'
- b. ti Maria kthes meta apo polles prospathies ti sinandise
Maria yesterday after from many effort CL.ACC met
O Petros.
Peter
'After many efforts, Peter met Mary yesterday.'

- This is in comparison to French, where the subject and verb appear to be in a Spec–Head relationship, with no interveners:

- (15) **Jean* probablement a rencontré Marie.
Jean probably has met Mary

- Subjects can also precede *if*-clauses in Greek.

- (16) *epidi o Petros* [an erthi i Maria] tha figi.
because Peter if comes Mary FUT leave
'because if Mary comes, Peter will leave.'

- Similarly, A&A 1998 report that subjects appear to compete with subjects for the preverbal position.

I briefly discussed a related fact about *wh*-movement when I introduced V2-like behavior in non-Germanic languages.

- (17) a. *Temprano* salió *Julia* de casa.
early left Julia from house
'Julia left home early.'
- b. **Temprano* *Julia* salió de casa.
early Julia left from house
'Julia left home early.'

- The facts here are a bit more complicated than A&A 1998 report, though.
- Amongst other evidence that subjects are not in topic positions in Spanish, Goodall (2001) shows that CLLDed elements in embedded clauses create islands for extraction, whereas preverbal subjects do not.

- (18) *CLLD creates islands in Spanish; SVO does not:*

Goodall 2001:201, (21)–(22)

- a. * A quién crees que el premio se lo dieron?
to whom think.2SG that the prize CL.DAT CL.3 gave.3PL
'Who do think that the prize they gave to?'
- b. A quién crees que Juan le dio el premio?
to whom think.2SG that Juan CL.DAT gave the prize
'Who do you think that Juan gave the prize to?'

- Additionally, while bare nouns can be topics, they cannot be preverbal subjects.

Spanish allows multiple topicalization, but only one preverbal non-topic.

Goodall 2001:199–200, (16) & (17)

(19) *Bare plurals in Spanish:*

- a. Jugaban niños en el parque.
play.IMPF.3PL children in the park
'Children were playing in the park.'
- b. *Niños jugaban en el parque.
children play.IMPF.3PL in the park
'Children were playing in the park.'

- (20) Yo a él libros no le deajo.
I to him book not CL.DAT lend
'I do not lend books to him.'

- This casts doubt on the idea that preverbal subjects are in an A'-position in Spanish.

Goodall claims that *wh*-words or null locatives (Zubizarreta 1998) pass through SpecIP to satisfy the EPP in Spanish, a noticeably different view from what is found here.

They also take scope over modals and negation. CLLDed objects behave similarly, it is reported, though they do not explain the example they provide.

4.1.2 *Interpretive effects*

- Preverbal indefinites / quantificational DPs take wide scope; postverbal subject scope is ambiguous:

- (21) a. *Kapios fititis stihiothetise kathe arthro.*
some student filed every article
'Some student filed every article.' $\exists > \forall$; $*\forall > \exists$
- b. *Stihiothetise kapios fititis kathe arthro.*
filed some student every article
'Some student filed every article.' $\exists > \forall$; $\forall > \exists$

- Because of this, svo orders can have pragmatically odd interpretations. In strictly monogamous societies, (22a) is pragmatically strange:

- (22) a. # Enas oreos andras pandreftike kathe sinadelfo mu persi.
A handsome man married every colleague mine last year
'(There is) a handsome man (such that he) married every colleague of mine last year.'
- b. Persi pandreftike enas oreos andras kathe sinadelfo mu.
last year married a handsome man every colleague mine
'a handsome man married every colleague of mine last year.'

- A&A 1998 assume that the scope properties of a quantifier in its base position are preserved when it is moved to an A-position. Since scope is fixed in SVO order, the subject must be in an A'-position.
- Furthermore, preverbal subjects are interpreted as specific, whereas postverbal indefinites are interpreted as existential. CLLDed objects cannot be interpreted existentially.

- (23) Ena pedhi diavase to 'Paramithi horis Onoma.'
 A child read the 'fairytale without title'
 'A certain child/one of the children read *Fairytale without a Title*.'
- (24) ? Enan anthropon ton heretise i Maria.
 One person CL.ACC greeted Mary
 'Mary greeted one of the people.'

4.1.3 Binding

- Preverbal personal pronouns cannot be bound, but post-verbal personal pronouns can be.

- (25) * Tots els estudiants_i es pensen que *ells_i* aprovaran.
 all the students think that they pass
 'All the students think they pass.'

- (26) Tots els jugadors_i estan convencuts que guanyaran *ells_i*.
 All the students are persuaded that win they
 'All the players are persuaded that they are the ones who win.'

- The assumption here is that (overt personal) pronouns can only be bound in A-positions. Consequently, the preverbal position must be an A'-position because *ells* cannot be bound there.
- These examples struck me as kind of suspicious, so I conducted an informal Facebook questionnaire with the following examples, asking what the pronoun reference possibilities were in Spanish.
- As a baseline, I used a sentence with a null subject, and then had two cases with an overt pronoun (*ellos*, 'they'), varying their position:

- (27) a. Todos los jugadores están convencidos de que ganarán.
 All the players are convinced of that win.FUT.3PL
 'All the players are convinced they will win.'
- b. Todos los jugadores están convencidos de que *ellos* ganarán.
- c. Todos los jugadores están convencidos de que ganarán *ellos*.

- The three respondents had slightly differing judgments about whether coreference was possible in (b) and (c), but there was a preference for (b), with a preverbal subject.

A&A 1998 switch to Catalan here because Greek lacks personal pronouns, using demonstratives instead.

Thanks to María Biezma, María Turrero, and Sabrina Grimberg for their responses.

4.2 No Null expletives

- One possibility is that the EPP is being satisfied in some other way in NSLs; in particular a null expletive might be occupying SpecAgrsP, similar to the *það* of Icelandic transitive expletive constructions.

(28) *Það lasu einhverjir stúdentar bókina.*
 there read some students the.book
 ‘Some students read the book.’

- Since the expletive has no PF effect, one would expect it to have LF effects. The main LF effect we might expect a null expletive to have is the definiteness effect.

(29) There arrived a man/*the man/*every man.

- However, as mentioned above, there are no definiteness effects in VSO orders in NSLs (Section 2, item iii.).
- It might be proposed, nonetheless, that the lack of definiteness effects could be due to the covert nature of the expletive.
- As A&A 1998 point out, the null hypothesis is that a null expletive should have the same properties as a covert one.
- Furthermore there are constructions in Greek and Spanish that lack overt subjects and show definiteness effects. If there are null expletives, these constructions should have them:

(30) *Existential constructions:*
 a. *Ehi anthropus / *kathe anthropo edo.*
 has people / every person here
 b. *Hay libros / *cada libro en esta sala.*
 has books / each book in this room
 ‘There are people in this room.’

Such a thing has even been proposed for some English constructions; see Bruening (2010).

A&A 1998:513, (36). Here, the verbs have default 3rd person agreement.

- The argument here is that we do not want to have two different null expletives in these languages, one which imposes definiteness effects and one that does not.

5 The proposal

- A&A 1998 choose not to parametrize languages as either being EPP or non-EPP languages, since this makes it difficult to understand why they can also be NSLs.
 - The availability of null subjects in languages with VSO orders would just be an accident.
- Rather than parametrize the EPP itself, A&A 1998 assume that the EPP is universal and instead parametrize the way the EPP is checked.

- First, agreement morphology comes in two forms:
 - i. **STRONG AGREEMENT** affixes are listed as separate entries in the lexicon and are available to the computational component. They are clitic-like pronominal elements bearing a [+D] feature that can check the EPP.
 - ii. **WEAK AGREEMENT** affixes do not have separate entries in the lexicon. They are inserted into the derivations as part of their hosts. Since they do not have their own lexical entries, they do not have their own categorial feature.
- Second, a parameter determines how the EPP is checked: A language can check the EPP with X° movement, or it can check the EPP with XP movement/merging.
 - Languages with strong agreement affixes in the lexicon will be able to check the EPP with these elements.
 - Languages with weak agreement affixes will only be able to use XP movement.
- One important question is why NSLs should use X° movement instead of XP movement. In principle one might expect that a language could use either X° movement or XP movement to satisfy the EPP.
 - A&A 1998 propose that Economy rules this possibility out if overt verb movement is seen as less costly than overt XP movement.
 - Assuming that X° movement is head-to-head adjunction, it does not extend the root.
 - Thus, A&A 1998 propose Economy of Projection: It is better to check the EPP in a head-to-head relation than to project a new specifier.

One might, in such a case, expect to find verb movement only in clauses where subject movement has not occurred, and *vice versa*.

Remember: This is the reason that Chomsky (2001) proposes removing head movement from the narrow syntax entirely.

5.1 How will this work?

- There are basically two possibilities, given on p. 522:
 - i. The affixes can be merged with the root at an early stage of the derivation, and then the complex verbal element will move in satisfaction of the EPP.
 - ii. The affix can be merged directly in Agr° , and when the verb moves to Agr° , then Agr° will project.
- Now, there is an intuition that having null arguments is somehow correlated with RICH AGREEMENT. This is, well, a bit wrong.
 - German has (or appears to have) rich agreement, but it does not allow null subjects.
 - Chinese and Japanese have null arguments, but no agreement.
- This is OK for A&A 1998, since this proposal does not imply any sort of correlation at all.
 - They need only stipulate that in some languages, one need only stipulate that affixes have independent lexical entries.

I do not really understand this second option. The first makes more sense given their assumptions, since moving V° will bring the affix with the verb. Here, the affix is already in Agr° , which should automatically satisfy the EPP. Maybe that is OK for them?

- The criteria for determining this: Availability of *pro*-drop, availability of vso orders, and lack of definiteness effects.
- Presumably, the the pronominality of the agreement affixes explains (some of) the behavior of NSLs.
 - Because strong agreement affixes are really pronominal in nature, they can serve as resumptives for left-dislocated material.
 - I think the one interpretation of this analysis is that the null subject is not really null – the agreement itself is the subject, in some sense.
 - But if that's right, I'm not really sure what is happening in vso orders. Are strong agreement suffixes like doubled clitics generally?

It's fairly remarkable, actually, how little of this they make explicit.

I'll come back to this question at the end.

5.2 Some discussion

- A&A 1998 put this in terms of parameters, but I think it is interesting to think about whether this can be done with just lexical items.
 - In particular, if they are right that economy rules out XP movement when X° movement is available (a dubious claim, I think), then basically all a language needs is to have strong agreement morphology in the lexicon.
- Relatedly, it think it might be interesting to consider, in light of this idea, the hypothesis that vso and vob can be derived with VP movement to SpecIP as part of the satisfaction of the EPP.
 - We saw this in our discussion of Niuean (Massam 2001).
 - If the EPP is really conceptualized as a strong [D] feature, it's not clear that either of these views work.
 - It would need to be, perhaps, a [v] feature.

This goes back to the concern I raised earlier about whether the EPP is a categorial feature.

6 Issues

6.1 V-raising in non-*pro*-drop languages

- A central claim of this paper is that *pro*-drop languages must be verb movement languages.
- The problem is that there are lots of languages (e.g., French) that have verb movement but do but neither allow null subjects nor permit vso orders generally.
- Clearly, then, the relation between *pro*-drop and verb movement is not biconditional. But then why should verbs move in non-*pro*-drop languages?
- They propose that verb movement in these languages is driven by a strong [v] feature on T° , whereas as EPP-related cases are driven by the [D] feature on Agr° .
- Subsequent movement to Agr° is necessary to check the Case feature on T° , since SpecTP, they claim, is not licensed in French.

- So, unfortunately, if you want a one-size-fits-all analysis of why verbs move, you aren't getting one here.

A&A 1998 claim that the EPP is the only thing driving verb movement, but it is

6.2 Referential *pro*

- Under this view, the agreement morphology on the verb replaces referential *pro*.
- One thing that is not really mentioned in the paper is how and where full post-verbal subjects are in the structure.
- While pre-verbal subjects are argued to be CLLD-like topics (which are implied to be coindexed with the pronominal affix), post-verbal subjects cannot be in VSO orders.
- Following what I mentioned in Section 5.1, the assumption here seems to be that the agreement affixes do not themselves appear in A-positions but are merged either as an adjunct (?) to V° , or in Agr° . Thus, they do not appear in a canonical argument position (e.g., $\text{Spec}\nu\text{P}$ for external arguments).
- The post-verbal subjects are argued to be in their base-positions (presumably an A-position). If the Agreement suffix merges directly on V° , as suggested, then (external) arguments should be able to bind that pronominal element. But if the affixes are merged in Agr° , then it's not clear how the coindexation/coreference would work.

Maybe they can be in in vos orders, though?

But is binding the relation we want here?

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