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Oblique DOM in enriched case hierarchies

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This paper addresses syncretism patterns differential object marking (DOM) constructed with oblique morphology (dative, locative, genitive) induces cross-linguistically. It is shown that enriched case hierarchies (Starke 2017, Caha 2019, a.o.), which are also extended to ergative-absolutive systems, derive all these syncretisms. Enriched case hierarchies also capture crucial properties of the oblique DOM types discussed here: i) such categories have the syntax of direct objects, as types of structural accusatives, and not obliques, making their oblique appearance rather a matter of PF syncretism; ii) at the same time, oblique DOM can show syntactic differences from unmarked accusatives, motivating the need for more than one instance of the accusative in the hierarchy.

1 Introduction

In many languages, direct objects with specifications at the higher end of animacy, specificity or definiteness scales are, surprisingly, signaled with oblique morphology. A well known example comes from Spanish (Torrego 1998; Rodríguez-Mondoñedo 2007; López 2012; Ormazabal and Romero 2013a; 2013b; 2013c; Fábregas 2013; Bárány 2018; 2021; Muñoz Pérez 2020, among many others); the animate and definite direct object in (1a) must be introduced by a prepositional marker which is homophonous with the dative. The definite inanimate in (1b), on the other hand, does not allow the oblique marker.

(1) STANDARD SPANISH   (Ormazabal & Romero 2013a: 1a/b)

    a. Has   encontrado   *(a)   la   niña.
        have.2SG found   DAT=DOM DEF.SG.F girl
        'You have found the girl.'

    b. Has   encontrado   (*a)   el   libro.
        have.2SG found   DAT=DOM DEF.SG.M book
        'You have found the book.'

The Spanish data illustrate an instantiation of the broader phenomenon known as differential object marking constructed with oblique morphology (henceforth oblique DOM, see especially Bossong 1991; 1998; Manzini & Franco 2016; 2019; Franco & Manzini 2017; a.o.). This special oblique morphology has long puzzled linguists from various orientations: does oblique DOM have oblique syntactic status or does it only superficially resemble obliques, via syncretism at PF? For Spanish, the application of various tests suggests (at least preliminarily) that oblique DOM does not have the syntax of obliques (see especially Torrego 1998; López 2012; Bárány 2018; 2021; among others). For example, oblique DOM is grouped with unmarked accusatives as categories that can undergo periphrastic passivization (2), as opposed to indirect object datives, which cannot do so (3).

(2) STANDARD SPANISH – ACCUSATIVES AND DOM UNDER PASSIVE

    a. Veo   a   la   mujer/(*a)   la   casa.
        see.1SG DAT=DOM DEF.F.SG woman/DAT=DOM DEF.F.SG casa
        'I see the woman/the house.'

    b. La   mujer/la   casa fue vista.
        DEF.F.SG woman/DEF.F.SG house was seen.F.SG
        'The woman/the house was seen.'

(3) STANDARD SPANISH – GOAL DATIVES UNDER PASSIVE

    a. Le   doy   el   libro a   la   mujer.
        CL.3SG.DAT give.1SG DEF.M.SG book DAT DEF.F.SG woman
        'I give the book to the woman.'

    b. *La   mujer   fue dada/dado   el   libro.
       DEF.F.SG woman was given.F.SG/M.SG DEF.M.SG book
       'The woman was given the book.'

As we will see later in this paper, Spanish and other oblique DOM languages exhibit many other syntactic diagnostics under which obliques are set aside from DOM and unmarked accusatives. This observation provides support to an explanation according to which the special oblique morphology on DOM does not have a true oblique syntactic nature, but is rather a matter of syncretism established with obliques at PF. Under this approach, the question is how to capture this syncretism without having PF insertion rules that target non-contiguous cells in a sequence of cases (as we will see, a sub-type of the so-called *ABA Restriction, Bobaljik 2012; a.o.). Oblique DOM thus provides a non-trivial contribution to an understanding of two important aspects in the grammar, which this paper is interested in exploring: i) the structure and organization of case sequences; ii) how to best model syncretism.

1.1 Case sequences

Cross-linguistic regularities in the organization of case systems point to the existence of an abstract case sequence, with a demarcation between core and oblique cases (McCreight & Chvany 1991; Johnston 1996; Blake 2001; Caha 2009; 2017; Harðarson 2016; Bárány 2016; 2018; 2021; Starke 2017; McFadden 2018; Smith & al. 2018; Zompì 2019). However, various problems arise with the more precise ordering inside each of these classes or at the border between core and oblique zones. A well-known hierarchy is the one formulated by Caha (2009), as represented in (4). Here, the accusative, the locative and the genitive are adjacent, to the exclusion of the dative. Given that DOM is a type of ACC (thus explaining its similar syntactic behaviour with unmarked accusatives), it is not possible to explain its syncretism with DAT, as the latter is not contiguous with ACC. In a certain paradigm two forms cannot share a morphological property (A) across an intervening form which does not share the same property, but has instead property B. Bobaljik (2012) intuitively labeled this constraint as the *ABA RESTRICTION, demonstrating it is also operative in other domains, such as suppletion.

(4)   NOM > **ACC** > **LOC$_1$** > **GEN** > LOC$_2$ > DAT > LOC$_3$ > INSTR…   (Caha 2009: 10, 130)

Noting problems with ACC-DAT contiguity in other areas of the grammar, Harðarson (2016) proposes instead that more than one case hierarchy is active in human language. Some languages make use of the hierarchy in (5), where ACC and DAT are adjacent. However, Harðarson's (2016) sequence in (5) in itself isn't enough for Spanish. As we will see later in the paper, the *a* marker signaling DOM and datives is also a locative. Although Harðarson (2016) does not explicitly

discuss locatives, they need to be arranged outside GEN, so as to also capture the DAT-GEN syncretism that is active in some of the languages he examines.

(5)   NOM > **ACC** > **DAT** > GEN > ABL/INS   (Harðarson 2016)

1.2 Enriched case hierarchies

A different way to reconcile problematic data of this type has been formulated by Starke (2017). Instead of using different case hierarchies, Starke (2017) argued for the need to construct more complex case hierarchies, which contain more than one accusative and more than one dative, occurring on each side of the genitive. Starke (2017) labeled the two accusatives/datives SACC/SDAT and BACC/BDAT, where S stands for 'structural/smaller' and B for 'bigger'. This is represented in (6). Thus, the apparently problematic syncretism involving accusatives and datives in Spanish is not a matter of distinct case hierarchies but of what type of accusative/ dative a language selects. Spanish has both SACC which is syncretic with NOM and BACC which is syncretic with BDAT. As these classes are adjacent in the enriched hierarchy, no violation of the *ABA restriction obtains.

(6)   NOM > SACC > SDAT > GEN > BACC > BDAT…   (Starke 2017: 22, no locatives)

The main proposal we will make is that enriched case hierarchies capture syncretism patterns with oblique DOM more generally, beyond the dative-accusative syncretism discussed by Starke (2017). In this paper, we will examine other oblique strategies for DOM, beyond the dative, namely the locative (Romanian) and the genitive (Russian, Ossetic). We will also see that oblique DOM is found not only in nominative-accusative, but also in ergative-absolutive languages, such as southwestern Basque, Hindi and Gujarati. We propose that the extended hierarchy in (7) derives all these patterns. The enriched sequence in (7) contains more than one case for direct objects, abbreviated here as A (standing for accusative/absolutive) and also more than one locative (following Caha 2009, et subseq.).

(7)   Enriched case hierarchy
        UNMARKED > **SA** … > LOC_1 > SDAT > GEN > LOC_2 > **BA** > BDAT…

We will also show that an enriched case hierarchy straightforwardly accounts for another important trait of oblique DOM, namely syntactic distinctions oblique DOM establishes with respect to the unmarked accusatives, despite a general accusative profile (Section 4). Thus, two A categories are motivated in the syntax, with BA being used for objects that need to be differentially marked due to their more complex internal make-up.

    The structure of this paper is as follows. Section 2 introduces three main types of oblique DOM (DAT = DOM, LOC = DOM and GEN = DOM), using a database of 11 languages from various families,

namely Romance (Spanish, Catalan, Romanian, Neapolitan, Sardinian), southwestern Basque, Indo-Aryan (Hindi, Gujarati, Kashmiri), Slavic (Russian), Ossetic, both nominative-accusative and ergative-absolutive. Section 3 provides various diagnostics supporting the conclusion that despite oblique morphology, such objects do not have an oblique syntactic profile, but rather behave as structural accusatives (or absolutives). Section 4, in turn, examines syntactic differences oblique DOM shows as compared to unmarked objects. Section 5 demonstrates that neither the hierarchy in (4) nor that in (5) can capture the accusative-oblique syncretism in a uniform manner cross-linguistically. In Section 6 the three oblique DOM patterns are uniformly derived under the enriched case hierarchy in (7). Section 7 examines the differences between the current proposal and two recent accounts that make use of partially ordered hierarchies (Zompì 2019; Bárány 2021). Section 8 concludes.

2 Three morphological strategies for oblique DOM

Splits in the morphosyntax of direct objects, under the broad umbrella of *differential object marking* (DOM), are not rare cross-linguistically (Bossong 1985; 1991; 1998; Comrie 1989; Lazard 2001; Aissen 2003; Iemmolo 2010; Dalrymple & Nikolaeva 2011; López 2012; Ormazabal & Romero 2013a; Baker 2015; Bárány 2017; 2018; Kalin 2018; Levin 2019; Haspelmath 2019). Generally, referential direct objects at the higher end of humanness, animacy, specificity or topic hierarchies receive special marking, as opposed to direct objects which do not carry such specifications.

Although dedicated exponence is not rare, a very puzzling type of differential object encoding requires the use of oblique morphology, under the so-called *oblique* DOM (Jaeggli 1982; Bossong 1998; Torrego 1998; Rodríguez-Mondoñedo 2007; López 2012; Manzini & Franco 2016; Bárány 2018; Irimia & Pineda 2019). As surprising as oblique DOM might be, it is, in fact, quite robust cross-linguistically (see especially the discussion in Bossong 1991; 1998 or Irimia & Pineda 2019; a.o.) and affects languages with various alignment systems, such as nominative-accusative, ergative-absolutive, inverse, etc. Three oblique strategies are very common, namely the use of a dative marker (DAT = DOM), of a locative marker (LOC = DOM) or of a genitive marker (GEN = DOM). In the next subsections we illustrate examples using these strategies, first from nominative-accusative languages and then from ergative-absolutive ones.

2.1 Obique DOM in nominative-accusative languages

As we have seen in the introduction, a well known example of the dative re-purposed for DOM (DAT = DOM) comes from (varieties of) Spanish (Torrego 1998; Rodríguez-Mondoñedo 2007; López 2012; Ormazabal & Romero 2013a; 2013b; 2013c; Fábregas 2013; Bárány 2018; 2021; Muñoz Pérez 2020, among many others). In (8a), repeated from (1a), the animate definite direct object must be introduced by a preposition which is homophonous with the dative. The same oblique marker is ungrammatical with the inanimate object in (1b), repeated in (8b).

(8)   STANDARD SPANISH OBLIQUE DOM (DAT=DOM)

    a. Has   encontrado   &boxed;*(a)   la   niña.
        have.2SG found   DAT=DOM DEF.SG.F girl
        'You have found the girl.'   (Ormazabal & Romero 2013a: 1a/b)

    b. Has   encontrado   &boxed;(*a)   el   libro.
        have.2SG found   DAT=DOM DEF.SG.M book
        'You have found the book.'

A second pattern employs a locative marker. For example, in Romanian, classes of nominals including highly referential human DPs can/must carry the locative preposition *pe*, as seen in the two examples below (Farkas 1978; Dobrovie-Sorin 1994; Cornilescu 2000; Tigău 2010; Mardale 2015; Irimia 2020; Hill & Mardale 2021; a.o.).[1]

(9)   ROMANIAN OBLIQUE DOM (LOC=DOM)

    a. (Le)-am   văzut **pe**   fete/(*pe)   case.
        CL.3F.PL.ACC-have.1SG seen LOC=DOM girls/LOC=DOM houses
        'I have seen the girls/houses.'

    b. Cartea   este   **pe** masă.
        book.DEF.F.SG.NOM be.PRES.3SG on table
        'The book is on the table.'

A third sub-type of oblique DOM uses the genitive, as in Slavic (Mel'čuk 1980; Brecht & Levine (eds.) 1986; Bossong 1991; 1998; Halle & Marantz 1993; Rappaport 2003; Wiese 2004; 2011; Glushan 2010; Lieb & Friederich 2011; Franco & Manzini 2017; a.o.). The masculine animate direct object must use the genitive in (10b), while the inanimate in (10a) shows up with accusative morphology (which is homophonous with the nominative). An example with the genitive of possession is in (10c).

(10)   RUSSIAN OBLIQUE DOM (GEN=DOM)

    a. On vidit   stul-&boxed;ø.
        he see.3SG chair-ACC(=NOM)
        'He sees a chair.'

    b. On vidit   mal'čik-&boxed;a.
        he see.3SG boy-GEN=DOM
        'He sees a boy.'   (adapted after Bossong 1998)

    c. Pal'to   mal'čik-&boxed;a krasibo.
        coat.NOM.SG boy-GEN nice
        'The boy's coat is nice.'

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[1] Romanian OBL=DOM, but not unmarked direct objects, can/must also show accusative clitic doubling (see Sections 5.3 and 6).

An extensive use of GEN = DOM is found in the Ossetic family (also called Ossetian), see especially Thordarson (1989; 2009); Cheung (2008); Erschler (2009; 2012; 2021); Vydrin (2013); a.o.[2] As seen in (11a) and (11b), personal pronouns and specific animates require obligatory DOM using the genitive, while inanimates show an unmarked (nominative) form, as in (11c). The possessor genitive is illustrated in (11d).

(11) OBLIQUE DOM (GEN = DOM) IN OSSETIC (DIGOR)

    a.   soslan-***(i)**   fɐ-wwitton.
        Soslan-GEN = DOM   PRV-see.PST.1SG
        'I saw Soslan.'

    b.   **dɐw**/*du   fɐ-wwitton.
        you.GEN = DOM/you.NOM   PRV-see.PST.1SG
        'I saw you.'

    c.   **toldzɐ**/*toldz-i   fɐ-wwitton.
        oak.ACC = NOM/oak-GEN = DOM   PRV-see.PST.1SG
        'I saw a/the oak.'   (Erschler 2012: ex. 10a-c, glosses adapted)

    d.   soslan-**(i)**   χɐdzarɐ
        Soslan-GEN   house.NOM
        'Soslan's house'

2.2 Oblique DOM in ergative-absolutive languages

Oblique DOM is also widespread in ergative-absolutive languages (as seen in more detail in Sections 6.2 and 6.3). Here we will be illustrating case studies using the DAT = DOM stategy.[3] For example, in southwestern Basque (those varieties that have been under contact with Spanish), higher animates and pronouns as in (12b) are introduced by dative morphology ('dative overmarking', see especially Austin 2006; Mounole 2012; Odria 2014; 2017; Rodríguez-Ordóñez 2016; Fernández & Rezac 2016; a.o.). Additionally, they trigger dative or absolutive agreement (depending on the variety). Inanimates, on the other hand, use absolutive morphology, which triggers absolutive agreement, as seen in (12a).

(12) SOUTHWESTERN BASQUE   (Odria 2017: 3a, p.c.)

    a.   Ordenagailua ikusi **d**-u-t.
        computer.ABS see   ABS.3SG-AUX-ERG.1SG
        'I have seen the computer.'

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[2] Ossetic comprises two closely related Eastern Iranian (Indo-European) languages spoken in the Central Caucasus, namely Digor Ossetic and Iron Ossetic (Erschler 2009; 2012). Both languages have nominative-accusative alignment and robust GEN = DOM.

[3] The use of DAT as DOM is found in many other languages, irrespective of nominative-accusative, ergative-absolutive or some other type of alignment (Irimia & Pineda 2019; a.o.), ranging from western Romance (Bossong 1991; 1998; López 2012; a.o.) to Germanic (Abraham 2006; Molnárfi 2009; a.o.), Indo-Aryan (Masica 1991; Bhatt & Anagnostopoulou 1996; a.o.), Arabic (Aoun 1999; a.o.), Tupí-Guaraní (Shain 2009; Roessler 2018), etc.

b. Zu-k   ni-ri   ikusi **na**-u-zu   / d-i-**da**-zu.
   you-ERG I-DAT=DOM see   **ABS.1SG**-AUX-ERG.2SG / ABS.3-AUX-**DAT.1SG**-ERG.2SG
   'You have seen me.'

We present an example from a split ergative language too, namely Gujarati. Similarly to other Indo-Aryan languages, Gujarati shows aspect-based split ergativity. The perfective triggers the ergative marker on agents in transitive clauses, while subjects of intransitives and objects of transitives are marked with the absolutive and also trigger agreement on the participle, under a type of *past participle agreement* (PPA). Also similarly to other Indo-Aryan languages, Gujarati has oblique DOM. Objects at the higher end of animacy and specificity scales must/can be encoded using dative morphology. Oblique DOM is seen in both the perfective split-ergative alignment, as in (13b) and the imperfective nominative-accusative alignment, as in (14a); see especially Cardona (1965); Mistry (1976; 1997); Masica (1982); Magier (1983); Comrie (1984; 1985); Wunderlich (2012); Woolford (2006); Grosz & Patel-Grosz (2014); a.o. As we will also show later in the paper (Sections 3 and 6.2) a special property of Gujarati is that in the perfective (ergative alignment) oblique DOM triggers PPA just like unmarked objects; thus, both (13a) and (13b) must show object agreement.

(13)   GUJARATI OBLIQUE DOM in ergative-absolutive alignment
       a. sudha-e   radio   khəridy-**o**.
          Sudha.F-ERG radio-M buy.PFV-M.SG
          'Suddha bought a radio.'

                            (Mistry 1976, ex.10a, adapted; Sampada Deshpande, p.c.)
       b. raj-e   sita-**ne**   pajav-**i**.
          Raj.M-ERG Sita.F-DAT=DOM harass.PFV-F.SG
          'Raj harassed Sita.'

                            (Wunderlich 2012: 4b; Sampada Deshpande, p.c.)

(14)   GUJARATI OBLIQUE DOM in nominative-accusative alignment
       a. šeelaa   pāāc māṇas-o(**-ne**)   mokal-š-e.
          Sheela.F.NOM five man-PL-DAT=DOM send-FUT-SG
          'Sheela will send the five men.'

                            (Woolford 2006: ex. 40, adapted; Sampada Deshpande, p.c.)

3 Oblique DOM is not an oblique syntactically

As already indicated, the special oblique shape of these differentially marked objects has been a puzzle in all linguistic orientations (see especially the remarks in Bossong 1991; 1998). One observation is that oblique DOM passes syntactic diagnostics which unify it with unmarked accusatives and not with obliques. In the interest of space, two main diagnostics

    d. *Fuiste regresado/regresada.
       were   returned.M.SG/F.SG
       Intended: 'You were returned to.'

The same split is seen in Romanian, a language where oblique DOM uses locative morphology. The obligatory oblique DOM on the object pronoun in (17a) and the unmarked accusative in (17b) are unified as classes which are subject to periphrastic passivization, as demonstrated by (17c).

(17) ROMANIAN – ACCUSATIVES AND OBLIQUE DOM UNDER PASSIVE
    a. Am   admirat-*(o)   ***(pe)**   ea.
       have.1 admired-CL.ACC.3F.SG LOC＝DOM she
       'I admired her.'

    b. Am   admirat **(*pe)**   o   capodoperă.
       have.1 admired LOC＝DOM a.F.SG masterpiece
       'I admired a masterpiece.'

    c. Ea/o   capodoperă a   fost admirată.
       she/a.F.G masterpiece has been admired.F.SG
       'She/a masterpiece was admired.'

Spatial (and, in fact, other types of) locatives as in (18) resist this process. Similarly to Spanish, the problem is not a potential direct object intervener; the verb in (18c) and (18d) selects the locative as its unique argument, whose passivization is equally ungrammatical.

(18) ROMANIAN – LOCATIVES UNDER PASSIVE
    a. Am   aşezat caietul   **pe**   masă.
       have.1 placed notebook.DEF.N.SG PE＝on table.F.SG
       'I put the notebook on the table.'

    b. *Masa   a   fost aşezată/aşezat   caietul.
       table.DEF.F.SG has been placed.F.SG/M.SG notebook.DEF.N
       Intended: 'The table was put the notebook on.'

    c. Contează **(pe)**   mulţi   bani.
       count.PRES.3 PE＝on many.M.PL money.M.PL
       'They count on a lot of money.'

    d. *Mulţi   bani/   **(pe)**   mulţi   bani   sunt   contaţi.
       many.PL money.M.PL/ PE＝on many.M.PL money.M.PL be.PRES.3PL counted.PL.M
       Intended: 'A lot of money is being counted on.'

In Romanian clitic doubling is another syntactic diagnostic which sets aside oblique DOM from locatives. In general, accusative clitic doubling exhibits very subtle interactions with DOM in

the language (see especially Tigău 2010 or Hill & Mardale 2021); in (17a) we see that an object pronoun needs obligatory doubling, using the accusative[6] morphology of the clitic. Locatives, on the other hand, do not permit clitic doubling. The example in (19) with an accusative clitic intended to double the feminine nominal embedded under the spatial locative *pe* is strictly ungrammatical.

(19)   Romanian – locatives and clitic doubling
     *Am   aşezat-o   caietul   **pe** masă.
     have.1 placed-CL.F.SG.3ACC notebook.DEF.N.SG on table.F.SG
     Intended: 'I put the notebook on the table.'

Turning to the GEN = DOM strategy, we find a similar behaviour under periphrastic passivization. In Russian the animate genitive is subject to passivization, just like the regular accusative (as seen in (20)).[7]

(20)   russian – accusatives and oblique dom under passivization
     a.   Uchitel'   vidit/otpustil   stul-∅   / mal'čik-**a**.
       teacher.NOM.SG see.PRES.3SG/let go of.PRES.3SG chair-ACC(=NOM) / boy-GEN = DOM
       'The teacher sees/lets go of a chair/boy.'
     b.   Mal'čik-**∅**   / stul-∅   byl   otpuschen   uchitelem.
       boy-M.SG.NOM / chair-M.SG.NOM be.M.SG let go.PFV.PST.M.SG teacher.INSTR
       'A boy/chair was let go of by the teacher.'
                              (based on Bossong 1998, adapted; Julie Goncharov, p.c.)

Similar behaviour of unmarked objects and oblique DOM under periphrastic passivization is also a trait of some ergative-absolutive languages, as we will see in (25) and (26) from Hindi.

3.2 Agreement

Another diagnostic under which oblique DOM patterns like unmarked accusatives, and not like true obliques is possibility of object agreement. In the Gujarati examples in (13), which we repeat here, illustrating the ergative alignment in the perfective, we see PPA in number and gender tracking not only an unmarked absolutive, as in (21a), but also oblique DOM, as in (21b). Goal datives, or datives that are lexically selected by various verbs, as in (21c) are simply not grammatical with PPA; default, neuter inflection must instead be used.

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[6] As we show in Section 6, Romanian also has dative clitic doubling. Dative clitics are not grammatical with oblique DOM.

[7] Although passivization is less natural in Ossetic, David Erschler (p.c.) mentions that both unmarked accusatives and oblique DOM are subject to it.

(21)   GUJARATI DIRECT AND INDIRECT OBJECT AGREEMENT

    a. sudha-e   radio   khəridy-**o**.
        Sudha.F-ERG radio-M buy.PFV-M.SG
        'Suddha bought a radio.'

                             (Mistry 1976, ex.10a, adapted; Sampada Deshpande, p.c.)

    b. raj-e   sita-**ne**   pajav-**i**.
        Raj.M-ERG Sita.F-DAT=DOM harass.PFV-F.SG
        'Raj harassed Sita.'

                             (Wunderlich 2012: 4b; Sampada Deshpande, p.c.)

    c. kišor-ne   kāgaḷ-ne   aḍ-v-ū/*o   hat-**u**/***o**.
        Kishor.M-ERG letter.M-DAT touch-DESID-N/*M be-PST-N/*M
        'Kishor wanted to touch the letter.'

                           (Mistry 1997: 6c; Woolford 2006: 41; Sampada Deshpande)

The agreement facts in Gujarati present a complex picture, and not all details are relevant here; see especially Cardona (1965); Mistry (1976; 1997); Masica (1982; 1991); Magier (1983); Comrie (1984); Woolford (2006); Wunderlich (2012); Grosz & Patel-Grosz (2014); Joshi (2020); a.o., for extensive discussion and exemplification. What matters for our purposes is that in examples such as (21a) and (21b) there is clear indication of the presence of object agreement.

    Moreover, Grosz & Patel-Grosz (2014) show (for Kutchi Gujarati) that object agreement is encoded on the participle, while subject agreement is tracked on the auxiliary (unless the subject is ergative). The example below contains both subject and object agreement (see also Bárány 2021).

(22)   KUTCHI GUJARATI OBJECT AND SUBJECT AGREEMENT

    Hu chokra(-**ne**)   jo-y-a   ha-is.
    I   boys-DAT=DOM see-PFV.PL AUX-1SG
    'I saw the boys.'   (Grosz & Patel-Grosz 2014: p. 222)

We take the contrast between (21a)/(21b), on the one hand, and (21c), on the other hand, to indicate that *ne* is the syncretic spell-out of two categories with different syntactic natures. Additionally, we agree with the analysis of Gujarati agreement put forward by Grosz & Patel-Grosz (2014). The two authors motivate the presence of two probes, a higher one on T, which is responsible for subject agreement, and a lower one on Asp or *v*, where agreement with the object is implemented. As both unmarked and marked objects show participle agreement, related to the lower probe, for Grosz & Patel-Grosz (2014) both these categories are connected to abstract Case licensing by Asp/*v*. In next section, we provide a refinement of this hypothesis and propose that some aspects of oblique DOM licensing, namely its [uC] feature, are related to *v*, the same licenser involved in [uC] licensing of unmarked objects. The oblique morphology on

3.3 Other diagnostics

There are also languages in which oblique DOM does not show object agreement, while unmarked accusatives/absolutives do. One such example in our database is Hindi (Saksena 1981a; 1981b; Comrie 1984; 1985; Mahajan 1989; Mohanan 2001; Bhatt 2003; 2005; Butt 2006; Bobaljik 2008; a.o). The unmarked, inanimate object in (24a) from the ergative-absolutive alignment in the perfective is tracked by PPA, and there cannot be agreement with the ergative, similarly to what we have seen for Gujarati. On the other hand, the human proper name object in (24b) which must be differentially marked with dative morphology, *cannot* trigger PPA. Default masculine agreement must be used instead. In this respect, oblique DOM might appear to be similar to inherent datives, which do not trigger PPA. In (24c) the participle can only agree with the object *badhaaii*, and not with the indirect object dative.

(24)   HINDI AGREEMENT   (Yash Sinha, p.c.)
      a.   Sita-ne   patthar   uThaa-**yaa**.
           Sita-F.ERG   stone.M.SG   pick up-PFV.M.SG
           'Sita picked up the stone.'

      b.   corõ-ne   siita-*(ko)   pakr-**aa**/-***e**.
           thief.M.PL-M.ERG   Sita.F-DAT=DOM   catch-PFV.M.SG/*PL
           'The thieves caught Sita.'

      c.   swaasth mantrii-ne   narsõ-ko   badhaaii   d-**ii**/*ĩĩ.
           health   minister-M.ERG   nurse.F.PL.OBL-DAT   congratulation.F.SG   give-PFV.F.SG/F.PL
           'The Health minister congratulated (gave congratulations to) the nurses.'

However, despite the agreement facts, there are robust syntactic diagnostics under which unmarked absolutives and oblique DOM pattern alike, to the exclusion of indirect object datives. One such test is passivization. As observed several times (Mahajan 1989; Bhatt 2003; Kidwai 2021; a.o.), both unmarked objects and oblique DOM are possible under passivization; moreover, the latter can also preserve its differential marker.[10] Compare (24a) with (25a) and (24b) with (25b). As seen in (26), indirect object datives cannot be passivized no matter whether they preserve dative morphology or not.

(25)   HINDI DIRECT OBJECTS UNDER PASSIVIZATION   (Yash Sinha, p.c.)
      a.   patthar   uThaa-yaa   ga-yaa.
           stone.M.SG   pick up-PASS.M.SG   go-PFV.M.SG
           'The stone was picked up.'

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[10] Our informants mention that the human DP in (25b) is *ungrammatical* without DOM; Kidwai (2021) claims that for other speakers the marker is optional. As expected, oblique DOM does not trigger agreement under passivization either.

b. siita-$\boxed{\text{*(ko)}}$ pakR-aa   ga-yaa.
Sita-DAT=DOM catch-PASS.M.SG go-PFV.M.SG
'Sita was caught.'

(26) HINDI INDIRECT OBJECT DATIVE UNDER PASSIVIZATION
*nars/narsõ-ko   badhaaii   d-ii/dĩĩ   ga-ii/ĩĩ.
nurse.PL/nurse.F.PL-DAT congratulation.F.SG give-PASS.F.SG/F.PL go-PFV.F.SG/PFV.F.PL
Intended: 'The nurses were given congratulations.'

We have seen that some southwestern Basque varieties that have oblique DOM show dative[11] agreement on the verbal complex (see (12b), but also the examples below); absolutives, instead, are only possible with absolutive agreement (see Odria 2014; 2017; 2019; a.o.).

However, agreement seems to be a superficial diagnostic. As Odria (2014 et subseq.) and Fernández & Rezac (2016), a.o., have conclusively shown there are more solid diagnostics under which oblique DOM patterns syntactically with absolutives, despite its oblique morphology. For example, oblique DOM can host a depictive secondary predicate, as in (27a). The example in (27b) demonstrates that this is similar to absolutives. and the opposite of what indirect object datives do.

(27) SOUTHWESTERN BASQUE ARGUMENTS AND DEPICTIVES
a. Nik$_i$ umi-a-$\boxed{\text{ri}_j}$ *oinutsik*$_{i/j}$ ekarri diot.
I-ERG child-ART-DAT=DOM barefoot carry AUX.3SG.DAT-1SG.ERG
'I carried the child barefoot.'   (*Elgoibar Basque,* Fernández & Rezac 2016, adapted)

b. Nik$_i$ amon-a-ri$_j$ ume-a$_k$ *pozik*$_{i/*j/k}$ eraman diot.
I-ERG grandmother-ART-DAT child-ART happy carry AUX.3SG.DAT-1SG.ERG
'I carried the child to grandmother happy.'   (Odria 2014: ex. 4, adapted)

Another congruence point between Basque absolutives and oblique DOM are the similar co-occurrence restrictions they give rise to.[12] Odria (2014; 2017; 2019), or Fernández & Rezac (2016), a.o. have shown that there are speakers for whom oblique DOM blocks the presence of an agreeing dative, as in (28).

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[11] According to Anne Odria, absolutive agreement is possible in the so-called displacement varieties.

[12] As also shown in section 4, oblique DOM produces co-occurrence restrictions in many other languages, such as Romanian, Neapolitan, Sardinian, Kashmiri, etc. Ormazabal & Romero (2007) attributed these restrictions to principles behind the better known P(erson) C(ase) C(onstraint) regulating person hierarchies in transitive clauses and which has an extensive bibliography (Bonet 1991; Anagnostopoulou 2003; Béjar & Rezac 2003, a.o.).

(28) Basque varieties oblique DOM co-occurrence restrictions

    a. *Zu-k   harakina-ri $\boxed{\textbf{ni-ri}}$ saldu   **d**-i-**o**-zu.

       you-ERG butcher-DAT I-DAT=DOM sell   **DAT.1SG**-AUX-**DAT.3SG**-ERG.2SG

       'You have sold me to the butcher.'   (Odria 2017, p.c)

    b. *Marta-k   Ane-$\boxed{\textbf{ri}}$ eraman **d**-i-**o**   amon-a-ri.

       Marta-ERG Ane-DAT=DOM carry AUX-3SG.DAT-2SG.ERG grandma-ART-DAT

       'Marta carried Ane to (her) grandma.'

              (Fernández & Rezac 2016: 39b; Albizu & Fernández 2006)

Additionally, in all languages examined here, oblique DOM is crucially different from obliques given its restriction to animacy, specificity, definiteness, etc. Regular obliques do not have this limitation. In fact, as the literature has discussed (Bárány 2021; Odria 2017; 2019; Irimia 2021a, among many others), oblique DOM and obliques are distinguished in the syntax on the basis of many other diagnostics, such as the possibility of hosting nominalizations and reduced relative clauses, whose illustration we have left out here for lack of space. **Table 1** summarizes the results obtained in this section (the locative and the genitive are collapsed under OBL).

DIAGNOSTIC	ACC	DOM	IO DAT	OBL
sensitivity to animacy(all)	–	✓	*	*
clitic doubling of in-situ nominals(Neapolitan)	ACC	ACC	DAT	–
clitic doubling of DOM(Romanian)	–	ACC	DAT	–
sensitivity to specificity(all)	✓	✓	*	*
passivization	✓	✓	*	*
controlling secondary predicates(all)	✓	✓	*/??	*/??
object agreement(Gujarati, Neapolitan, Sardinian)	✓	✓	*	*

Table 1: Characteristics of unmarked nominals (ACC), DOM, IO datives and other obliques. ✓ signals participation in an operation, * failure to do so, and – non-applicability of a test.

4 The two accusatives

While it is clear that the diagnostics presented in the previous section indicate a non-oblique syntax for oblique DOM, there is also the question of whether such diagnostics are 'real'. The hypothesis that oblique DOM is syntactically oblique at core, despite the presence of various tests that rather assimilate it to accusatives, is an old one.[13] It has been entertained in both descriptive typological studies, as well as in formal generative accounts; one recurrent objection to the accusativity hypothesis is that such diagnostics are rather superficial or have to be attributed to

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[13] See especially Bossong (1991; 1998) for an overview.

independent factors, orthogonal to DOM itself. Recently, a conclusion long these lines has been supported in Manzini and Franco's work (Manzini & Franco 2016; 2019; Franco & Manzini 2017), some of whose counterarguments we will briefly examine below. Given the space limitations, we will restrict our attention to passivization, agreement, and some notions related to the problem of projection. Our results indicate that the diagnostics supporting the non-oblique syntax for oblique DOM are not superficial.

For Manzini & Franco (2016; 2019), the problem with obliques that resist passivization, as opposed to oblique DOM that allows it just like unmarked accusatives (as in examples (15)—(18) from Romance) is periphrastic passivization which has an independent restriction,[14] unrelated to DOM per se. In fact, when one tries to use another passivization-like mechanism in Romance, for example the one constructed with the pronominal marker SE, the split between oblique and oblique DOM might disappear. In (29) below we illustrate with Spanish, where we notice that all types of arguments (and even adjuncts) are allowed under the medio-passive SE (SE$_{MP}$).[15]

(29) STANDARD SPANISH SE$_{MP}$

    a. Se $\boxed{\textbf{me}}$ responde/*responden.
        SE$_{MP}$ I.DAT reply.3SG/*reply.3PL
        'They reply to me.'

    b. Se   busca $\boxed{\textbf{a}}$ las   mujeres.
        SE$_{MP}$ search.3SG DAT=DOM DEF.F.PL women
        'They are looking for the women.'

    c. Se   buscan $\boxed{\textbf{(*a)}}$ las   mujeres.
        SE$_{MP}$ search.3PL DAT=DOM DEF.F.PL women
        Intended: 'They are looking for the women.'

    d. Se   va/*van $\boxed{\textbf{a}}$ la   playa.
        SE$_{MP}$ go.3SG/*go.3PL LOC(at) DEF.F.SG beach
        'One goes to the beach/They go to the beach.'

One the basis of such paradigms, one could conclude that oblique DOM is not that different from true obliques after all; maybe periphrastic passivization (as opposed to SE$_{MP}$) might indeed have independent constraints that go beyond DOM. However, the problem is that we see here a variant of SE which does not interfere with Case licensing on internal arguments; direct or indirect objects, even adjuncts, all are allowed (just like in the corresponding active forms). As such, this SE test does not tell us whether datives and oblique DOM have the same or distinct syntax and is thus irrelevant to the issue under investigation. It certainly cannot be the case that unmarked

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[14] Whose nature is, however, not further explored.

[15] Non-nominatives, as in (29a), (29b), or (29d) cannot trigger agreement on the verb under (SE$_{MP}$). See especially Ormazabal & Romero (2013c; 2013b) for a thorough discussion of the differences between (29b) and (29c).

direct objects and locative adjuncts have the same syntax, given that they are both allowed under the medio-passive SE.

If we turn to Romanian instead, the application of the SE$_{MP}$ test on various types of internal arguments reveals that: i) datives are possible (30a); ii) *pe* locatives are possible (30b); iii) *pe* DOM is *not* allowed (30c); iv) nominatives are possible, as illustrated by plural agreement on the verb in (30d). Verb agreement is only permitted with subjects in the language. Just like the periphrastic passive diagnostic, these examples reveal that obliques and oblique DOM do *not* have the same syntax.[16]

(30)   ROMANIAN SE$_{MP}$

    a.   ⬚Mi⬚   se   răspunde.
        I.DAT   SE$_{MP}$ reply.3SG
        'They reply to me.'

    b.   Se   scrie   ⬚pe⬚   masă
        SE$_{MP}$ write.3SG   on   table.
        'They write on the desk.' (writing is done on the desk)

    c.   *Se   înscrie/înscriu   ⬚pe⬚   studenţi.
        SE$_{MP}$ register.3SG/3PL   LOC=DOM   students
        Intended: 'The students are being/getting registered.'

    d.   Se   înscriu   studenţii.
        SE$_{MP}$ register.3PL   students.DEF.PL.M
        'The students are being/getting registered.'

Thus an analysis of passivization possibilities beyond the periphrastic passive does not support the hypothesis that oblique DOM is oblique syntactically. Turning to another diagnostic now, namely agreement, in order to account for those languages in which oblique DOM behaves like unmarked accusatives/absolutives in terms of agreement (Gujarati in (21), Neapolitan in (23), etc.), something additional would be needed under the assumption of an oblique syntax for DOM.

Manzini & Franco (2019) propose to accommodate the agreement facts based on labelling. For the two authors, the assumption is that oblique morphology on DOM signals the membership of highly referential categories into a larger syntactic category which introduces a part-whole relation. This relation is also characteristic to oblique case. Structurally, both oblique DOM and the oblique case contain an elementary predicate/operator, semantically specified for possession/inclusion and notated as $Q_{\subseteq}$. The relevant structures are adapted in (31) and (32), from Manzini & Franco (2016).

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[16]   Dobrovie-Sorin (1998) has argued that Romanian exhibits a type of accusative SE, as opposed to Spanish (or Italian), where SE is nominative. Given that SE does not allow oblique DOM, this is further indication that the latter does not have an oblique syntax.

(31) Goal datives/obliques: [$_V$ V [$_{\mathbf{Q}_\subseteq \mathbf{P}}$ DP$_{DO}$ [$_{\mathbf{Q}_\subseteq}$ DP$_{IO}$ **Q**$_\subseteq$]]]

(32) Oblique DOM: [$_{\text{CAUSE}/\upsilon}$ CAUSE/υ [$_{VP}$ V [$_{\mathbf{Q}_\subseteq}$ **Q**$_\subseteq$ DP$_{DO}$]]]

Adjusting the structure in (32), if P (Q$_\subseteq$) projects, DOM is labeled as a PP; if D projects, the object is a DP and agrees. Therefore, object agreement as in (23b) is possible with oblique DOM, as P does not project. What we want to point out here is that the projection/labelling issue appears to be independent of the putative *oblique syntactic nature* of DOM. In fact, it provides contradictory results when syntactic restrictions imposed by DOM are carefully examined cross-linguistically. To give just one example, in Sardinian (another Romance language investigated here), oblique DOM shows object agreement (Jones 1993; 1995; etc.). Thus, it must be the case that P(Q$_\subseteq$) *does not project.* But, in order to explain the impossible co-occurrence of DOM with overt definiteness (in (33) either DOM or the definite must be removed, Jones 1999; a.o.), it must be the case that whatever feature is relevant for oblique DOM *must project.*

(33) SARDINIAN   (Jones 1993; 1995; 1999; Floricic 2003; a.o.)
      *Appu   vistu   **a**   **su** frate   de Juanne.
      have.1SG seen.M.SG DAT=DOM DEF brother of Juanne
      Intended 'I have seen Juanne's brother.'

Splits under which oblique DOM alternates with other morpho-syntactic means of signalling special objects, normally special agreement, are also problematic. Generally, the regulating factors are temporal-aspectual properties. For example, in Kashmiri (Indo-Aryan), pronouns and special animates must show oblique DOM in the imperfective (34a). In the perfective, oblique DOM is not permitted, but object agreement is required instead (Wali & Koul 1997, a.o.), as seen in (34b). If what signalled highly referential animates was the presence of a prepositional element containing Q$_\subseteq$ and spelled out as an oblique marker, its disappearance in the perfective would not be straightforward to explain.[17] These splits are also difficult to derive under an hypothesis according to which oblique DOM involves an abstract oblique layer, but which is however 'transparent'.

(34) KASHMIRI (Wali & Koul 1997: 156, 157, glosses adapted)
      a. tsɪ   chu-ch   **me**   parɪna:va:n.
          you.NOM be.M.SG-2SG.SBJ I.DAT=DOM teaching
          'You are teaching me.'

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[17] Similar types of alternations are seen in other languages, as discussed by Comrie (1989), or Levin (2019), the latter with data from Austronesian, a.o. They are also common diachronically. Due to space limitations we cannot provide a detailed derivation for these alternations, but see Levin (2019) for a recent analysis based on an accusative syntax for oblique DOM.

b. tse   vuch-u-th-⟨as⟩   ⟨bɪ⟩.
   you.ERG saw.PFV-M.SG-2SG.SBJ-1SG.OBJ I.ABS
   'You saw me.'

We take these types of data to indicate that oblique DOM is a type of accusative at its core. While it is true that there are languages, such as southwestern Basque, where oblique DOM shows oblique agreement, it is, in a sense, easier to derive these patterns assuming an accusative syntax. One factor could be the timing of agreement – in some languages agreement could be a post-syntactic operation (Bobaljik 2008).

4.1 A licensing operation beyond Case

Given that the accusativity diagnostics are real, the most straightforward account would take oblique DOM to involve a type of syncretism (Johnston 1996; Blake 2001; Baerman & al. 2005; Bachrach & Nevins 2008; Glushan 2010; a.o.) caused by two syntactically distinct categories being spelled out with the same overt morphology, namely the differential accusative and the oblique. However, an analysis along these lines must be formulated in such a way as to capture another crucial property of oblique DOM: despite its general accusative syntax, it *does* exhibit syntactic differences from unmarked accusatives.

In many languages, one important syntactic trait of oblique DOM is that it can be found in a higher position than unmarked accusatives. This is common in many Indo-Aryan languages and has been analyzed formally for Hindi-Urdu (see especially Bhatt & Anagnostopoulou 1996; Baker 2021; a.o.). In (35a), the unmarked theme has to follow the dative, while in (35b) and (35c) the marked nominal has to precede the dative.[18] López (2012) has argued that oblique DOM is found in a higher position in other languages too, such as Spanish, etc.[19]

(35) HINDI OBJECT POSITIONS   (Baker 2021: ex. 41a, b, c)
      a. ram-ne   anita-ko   chiTThii bhej-ii.
         ram-ERG Anita-DAT letter.F   send-PFV.F.SG
         'Ram sent the letter to Anita.'

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[18] Note that for some speakers two *ko*- marked nominals are not possible in the same sentence. See also the discussion in Mohanan (2001).

[19] One test that is sometimes used to probe the position of DOM with respect to unmarked nominals is coordination (López 2012, a.o). The general idea is that if an unmarked and a marked nominal can be coordinated, this implies that they must share the same position (Kalin & Weisser 2019). However, our findings indicate that coordination does not seem to be a reliable and relevant diagnostic for DOM position, due to its many problems. On the one hand, there appears to be disagreement among speakers with respect to the data and, on the other hand, sentential ellipsis in the second conjunct cannot be easily excluded (Saab & Zdrojewski 2021, Irimia to appear, a.o.). For these reasons, we left it aside.

b. ram-ne   chiTThii-ko   anita-ko   bhej-aa.
ram-ERG letter-DAT=DOM Anita-DAT send-PFV.M.SG
'Ram sent the letter to Anita.'

c. ram-ne   bill-ko   lika-ko   di-yaa.
ram-ERG Bill-DAT=DOM Lila-DAT give-PFV.M.SG
'Ram sent Bill to Lila.' *not* 'Ram sent Lila to Bill.'

Another syntactic correlate of oblique DOM are the co-occurrence restrictions it gives rise to, as we have already seen for Basque in (28). The data in (36) from (standard) Spanish indicate that oblique DOM cannot co-occur with a dative which is clitic doubled (using the dative form of the clitic).[20]

(36) SPANISH   (Ormazabal & Romero 2013a)
Le$_i$ enviaron *(a)   todos los   enfermos **a** **la** **doctora**$_i$.
CL.DAT.3SG sent.3PL DAT=DOM all.M.PL DEF.M.PL patients.M DAT DEF.F.SG doctor
Intended: 'They sent all the patients to the doctor.'

There are also languages where the position of oblique DOM or whether it involves raising is not straightforward. Nevertheless, there are other tests indicating that oblique DOM does exhibit syntactic differences from the unmarked accusative, despite the general accusative profile of the two. We provide here examples from Romanian, where oblique DOM is not possible in a configuration that contains a dative clitic interpreted as a possessor, as in (37a).

(37) ROMANIAN CO-OCCURRENCE RESTRICTIONS WITH OBLIQUE DOM
a. *Şi$_i$/*mi$_i$-(l)   ajută   pe   prieten$_i$.
CL.3SG.REFL.DAT/1SG.DAT-CL.3M.SG.ACC help.3SG LOC=DOM friend
Intended: 'He is helping his own/my friend.'

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[20] See also Ormazabal & Romero (2007, or 2013b; 2013c; a.o.) for co-occurrence restrictions induced by oblique DOM on clitics. Note that the problem in (36) is not putative haplology, banning two (*a-DP*) sequences that might be too similar. In these varieties, the dative is grammatical with oblique DOM in the same sentence, if the former is not clitic doubled. Also oblique DOM is grammatical in a structure which also contains a dative clitic:

(i) a. Enviaron a   todos los   enfermos **a** **la** **doctora**.
sent.3PL DAT=DOM all.M.PL DEF.M.PL patients.M DAT DEF.F.SG doctor
'They sent all the patients to the doctor.'

b. **Le**   enviaron (*a)   todos los   enfermos
CL.DAT.3SG sent.3PL DAT=DOM all.M.PL DEF.M.PL patients.M
Intended: 'They sent all the patients to him/her.'

b. Nu $și_i$/mi-a   trimis $\boxed{\textbf{pe}}$ $nimeni_{*i}$ în ajutor$_i$.
   NEG CL.3SG.REFL.DAT/1SG.DAT-has sent   LOC = DOM nobody   in help
   Lit. 'He hasn't sent anybody to his own/my aid.'/#'He hasn't sent anybody of his/mine as aid.'

That this is not a PF restriction is indicated by the grammaticality of (37b), where we see the same form of the clitic; crucially, there is a difference in interpretation. The dative clitic in (37b) is interpreted either as a goal dative (a reading which is not possible in (37a)) or as a possessor on some other DP in the structure, which is not DOM. Preliminarily, (37a) indicates a possessor raising analysis for the dative clitic, which is merged in the same position as the component accounting for oblique DOM; thus, the two cannot co-occur as they compete for the same position. All these examples indicate that an analysis according to which the special morphology of oblique DOM is just a matter of PF, for example via impoverishment of accusative features, is very difficult to support for the languages discussed here.[21] To fully account for the data, two categories with accusative syntax are needed.

We briefly point out here that the accusative general profile, on the one hand, and syntactic differences with respect to unmarked accusatives, on the other hand, can be accommodated under accounts which connect DOM to the licensing of specifications beyond Case per se, more specifically to grammaticalization of information structure categories such as *secondary topics, perspectivization, sentience, discourse-relevant humanness*, etc. (Dalrymple & Nikolaeva 2011; Belletti 2018; Hill & Mardale 2021; a.o.), as opposed to licensing just in terms of (interpretable) ϕ-features or uninterpretable Case ([uC]).

For example, a recent analysis by Irimia (2021a) takes grammaticalized humanness which is relevant in the discourse[22] to involve the merge of a δ(iscourse) related feature in the extended (KP) projection of the nominal, beyond Case per se, as schematically shown in (38).[23] This ties in with a line of research, going back to at least Jaeggli (1982), which employs the mechanics of additional licensing for DOM, also reworking it as a problem related to the complexity of differentially marked categories. As δ-linking needs licensing, an additional (local) licenser must be made available beyond the regular licenser in the relevant domain (for example v, etc.), which licenses just Case. The effect of this additional licenser at PF is the spell-out of special (oblique) morphology for DOM.

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[21] See especially Glushan (2010) for a PF analysis for (oblique) DOM. Under accounts in this line, both unmarked objects and DOM are taken to be the same category syntactically, the only difference between them being a superficial PF one, induced by the special features in DOM.

[22] The languages examined here tend to exhibit bi-dimensional DOM systems; thus, it is not just humanness that triggers oblique DOM. Normally, it's humanness and specificity, humanness and D-linking, etc.

[23] For researchers such as Cornilescu (2000); Rodríguez-Mondoñedo (2007); Richards (2008); a.o. oblique DOM is taken to be linked to a [PERSON] feature.

(38)

Voice α

α$_{DOM}$ υ

υ   V

V   KP
[ϕ:VAL]
[CASE:___]
[δ-LINKING]

- [uCase] $\leftrightarrow$ /ACC/
- [uCase] $\leftrightarrow$ /ABS/
- [uCase & δ] $\leftrightarrow$ /OBL/
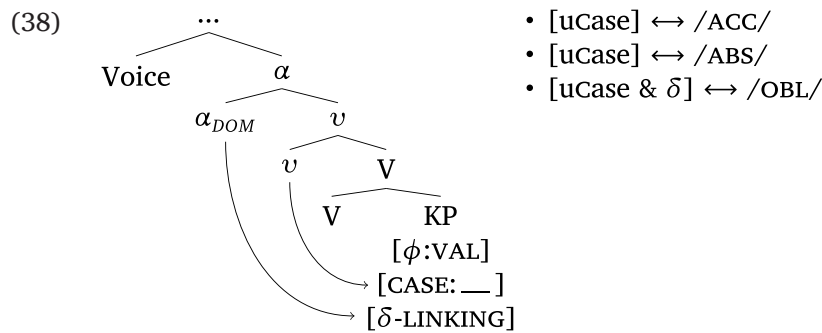
To summarize, in this section and in the previous one we have established three important facts related to oblique DOM: i) it does not have an oblique syntax; ii) despite its being an accusative at core, it does exhibit syntactic differences from unmarked accusatives and absolutives; iii) given its accusative profile, a plausible starting point is to attribute its surface identity with obliques to syncretism at PF. But the syncretism hypothesis has to be worked out in such a way as to also capture the syntactic differences with respect to unmarked accusatives.

That oblique DOM also presents syntactic characteristics of its own, despite its general accusative/absolutive behavior, is relevant and a comprehensive account should derive both these facts. In our view, the syntactic and semantic evidence motivates the presence of more than one accusative/absolutive in the hierarchy. In turn, the more complex accusative (BA, with B standing for 'bigger') which contains features beyond Case per se can be spelled out syncretically with a true oblique. This provides support for the enriched case hierarchy (modeled after Starke 2017) we briefly presented in the introduction in (7) and which we repeat here:

(39)   Enriched case hierarchy
        UNMARKED > **SA** … > LOC$_1$ > SDAT > GEN > LOC$_2$ > **BA** > BDAT…

In Section 5 we show in more detail that none of the two non-enriched hierarchies in (4) or (5) can capture the syncretism patterns established by oblique DOM for both nominative-accusative and ergative-absolutive languages.

5 Oblique DOM in case hierarchies

Given the problems with an underlying oblique syntax, other types of explanations have been explored for oblique DOM. An important line of research equates (oblique) DOM to the presence of a (accusative/absolutive) [uCASE] feature which must be licensed in the syntax (Ormazabal & Romero 2013a; Bárány 2018; Kalin 2018; Levin 2019; a.o.). One worked-out proposal that is particularly relevant to the present discussion has been formulated by Bárány (2018) for languages with DAT-DOM syncretism. In (40a) and (40b) we repeat the relevant examples from Spanish:

(40) STANDARD SPANISH

    a.   Veo $\boxed{\text{a}}$ la   mujer.

        see.1SG DAT=DOM DEF.F.SG woman

        'I see the woman.'

    b.   Le   doy   el   libro $\boxed{\text{a}}$ la   mujer.

        CL.3SG.DAT give.1SG DEF.M.SG book DAT DEF.F.SG woman

        'I give the book to the woman.'

Bárány (2018) follows López (2012) in assuming that the marked object in (40a) is assigned accusative case after raising to Spec, α, a functional projection between VP and vP involved in nominal licensing, as schematically indicated in (42). The indirect object in (40b) is assigned dative by APPL.

    Another hypothesis in Bárány (2018) is that a case category is not an atomic entity. Instead, a given case realizes a bundle of features, some of which can be shared with other cases. Assuming that the accusative contains features [A, B] and the dative contains features [A, B, C] (as in (41)), the syncretism between the two categories can be understood as a matter of underspecification in the application of insertion rules.

(41)   Spanish case features   (Bárány 2018: 42)

    a.   ACC = [A, B]

    b.   DAT = [A, B, C]

More specifically, instead of each distinct case being associated to a distinct spell-out rule, as in the hypothetical representation in (43), Spanish (and other languages with DAT-DOM syncretism) have a syncretic rule which spells out the features [A, B] with a single marker as illustrated in (44).

(42)   DOM AND DATIVE LICENSING   (Bárány 2018: 45)
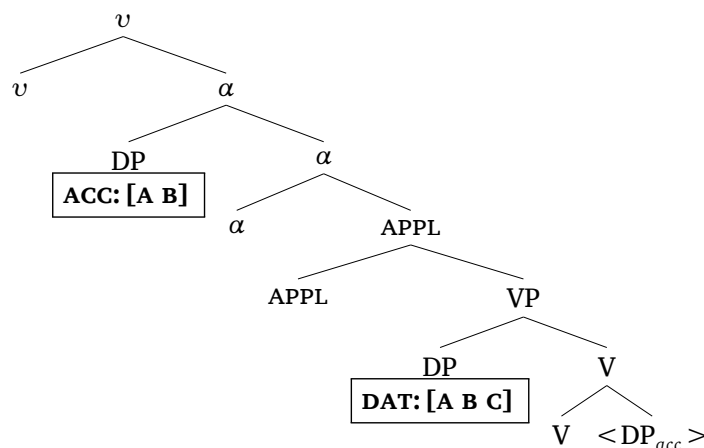
(43)   Distinct spell-out rules for distinct case markers

    a.   [A B] $\leftrightarrow$ /-w/

    b.   [A B C] $\leftrightarrow$ /-x/   (Bárány 2018: 43, 44)

(44)   Spell-out rules for Spanish

      a.   [A B] ↔ /-a/   (Syncretic spell-out rule for DOM and DAT)

      b.   [A] ↔ /∅/   (Bárány 2018: 47)

The application of the syncretic rule is possible because, for Bárány (2018), the accusative (corresponding to differentially marked objects) and the dative are the only case marked categories (in Spanish). In line with López (2012), non-DOM-ed arguments, such as the inanimates in (1b) or (40b), are hypothesized to be left caseless, as they undergo pseudo-incorporation with the verb. Thus, they will be spelled out as bare nominals.

    Bárány (2018) assumes Harðarson's (2016) case sequence, which we repeat here. In this hierarchy, the accusative and the dative are contiguous.

(45)   NOM > **ACC** > **DAT** > GEN > ABL/INS   (Harðarson 2016)

As already mentioned, one important restriction on spell-out rules is that non-accidental case syncretisms can only target adjacent regions of a linear case sequence (McCreight & Chvany 1991; Johnston 1996; Caha 2009; 2017; Bobaljik 2012; 2015; Harðarson 2016; Starke 2017; McFadden 2018; Smith & al. 2018; Zompì 2019; a.o.). More specifically, in a certain paradigm two forms cannot share a morphological property (a) across an intervening form which does not share the same property (but has instead property b). Thus, in the sequence in (46), a non-accidental syncretic spell-out rule cannot apply to Case1 and Case3, skipping Case2. Bobaljik (2012) labeled this constraint as the *ABA RESTRICTION, and demonstrated its relevance to other domains, such as suppletion. The same constraint on syncretism insertion rules in the domain of case has been formalized by Caha (2009) in the *Universal Case Contiguity* in (47), also adding the restriction that the case sequence is universal in nominative-accusative languages.

(46)   *ABA RESTRICTION

       [Case1] ↔ **/a/** > [Case2] ↔ /b/ > **[Case3]** ↔ **/a/**…

(47)   *Universal Case Contiguity*   (Caha 2009:10, 130)

       Non-accidental case syncretisms can only target contiguous regions of a linear case sequence, invariant across languages

       NOM > ACC > LOC_1 > GEN > LOC_2 > DAT > LOC_3 > INSTR…

5.1 Some problems

Harðarson's (2016) hierarchy in (45) avoids violating the *ABA restriction for Spanish DOM and datives, as the accusative and the dative are contiguous in the case sequence. However, the Spanish syncretism patterns are more complex than the DAT-DOM homophony. On the one hand, the *a* marker is also a locative, as illustrated in (48); on the other hand, the language also contains a genitive, spelled out via the *de* marker. A fragment of Spanish case markers is given in **Table 2**.

Spanish	Animate patterns – la (DEF.F.SG) mujer 'the woman'
NOM	∅ la mujer
DOM	**a la mujer**
DAT	**a la mujer**
GEN	de la mujer
LOC	**a la mujer**

Table 2: Spanish case markers – fragment.

(48) SPANISH (Ursini 2013: 26)
  Mario va/está a-l lado de la casa.
  Mario goes/is A=at-DEF.M.SG side GEN DEF.F.SG house
  'Mario goes/is near the house.'

Syncretism of DOM with locatives is not uncommon cross-linguistically, as we have seen in the introduction.[24] The same DAT-LOC-DOM syncretism is found elsewhere in Romance, for example, in Catalan, which we illustrate in **Table 3**.[25] But, as we can see in the two tables, these more complex patterns cannot be captured by the hierarchy in (45). As already mentioned, although Harðarson (2016) does not explicitly discuss locatives, in order to capture the data he is addressing, the locative must be placed outside the genitive, which in turn, includes the nominative and the accusative. Under this ordering, we obtain an *ABA violation. Rather, what we would need for Spanish is a case sequence of the type in (49), where the accusative (DOM) is adjacent to both the locative and the dative. Following the remarks in Caha (2009) we can preliminarily assume that the locative is closer to the accusative and the dative follows the two. Given their adjacency, a syncretic spell-out rule can target the three markers.

Catalan	Animate patterns – la (DEF.F.SG) noia 'the girl'
NOM	∅ la noia
DOM	**a la noia**
DAT	**a la noia**
GEN	de la noia
LOC	**a la noia**

Table 3: Catalan case markers – fragment.

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[24] In fact, under closer scrutiny, many oblique DOM patterns reduce to syncretism with locatives/directionals. See also the discussion in Haspelmath (2019).

[25] These syncretism patterns are exhibited by the other Western Romance languages examined here, namely Neapolitan and Sardinian.

(49)   NOM > $\boxed{\text{ACC} > \text{LOC}_1 > \text{DAT}}$ > GEN …   (*preliminary)*

5.2 GEN=DOM *languages*

Let's examine now whether the same preliminary case sequence can be extended to other oblique DOM languages, for example those that use the genitive. We repeat here the relevant data from Russian, where masculine animates use the genitive inflection. Inanimates, on the other hand, preserve the accusative which is homophonous with the nominative (in this declension).[26] We have seen that Ossetic is another family where this type of syncretism is active, as in (11).

(50)   RUSSIAN   (adapted after Bossong 1998)

    a.   On vidit   stul-$\boxed{\emptyset}$.
         he   see.3SG chair-ACC(=NOM)
         'He sees a chair.'

    b.   On vidit   mal'čik-$\boxed{\text{a}}$.
         he   see.3SG boy-GEN=DOM
         'He sees a boy.'

Russian is a language with rich case inflection and its intricate syncretisms have been well studied (see for example the contributions in Brecht & Levine 1986, a.o.). In **Tables 4** and **5** we present two relevant paradigms which include the masculine animate. As it is clear, the preliminary hierarchy we introduced in (49) for Spanish incurs an *ABA violation, as the dative intervenes between the accusative and the genitive. A similar problem will arise for Ossetic, as demonstrated by the case paradigms in **Table 6**.[27] What we need for Russian/Ossetic, instead, is a hierarchy more similar to the one proposed by Caha (2009). If we leave aside LOC$_1$ (assuming that Russian/Ossetic does not lexicalize this category), we can capture the accusative (DOM)-genitive syncretism. Subsequently, we can explain the differences between Spanish and Russian/Ossetic under the assumption that various languages can select various case hierarchies. Spanish uses the hierarchy in (49), while Russian/Ossetic Caha's (2009) sequence in (51):

(51)   NOM > $\boxed{\text{ACC…} > \text{GEN}}$ > LOC$_2$ > DAT > LOC$_3$ > INSTR…
                                              (Caha 2009:10, 130, LOC$_1$ omitted)

5.3 LOC=DOM languages

We have introduced a third type of oblique DOM languages, those that use the locative, with a well-known case from Romanian. We have seen one example in (9a); we present two other

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[26] Similar syncretisms are found in other Slavic languages; see especially Bossong (1991; 1998); a.o.

[27] ABL = ablative, SUP = superessive, ALL = allative, EQU = equative, COM = comitative. As Erschler (2009, p. 162) mentions, the equative forms are very rare, if at all attested.

Russian	**GEN = DOM**				
	table.SG	student.M.SG	we	bridge.SG	good.F.SG
NOM	STOL-ø	student-ø	my	most-ø	xoroš-aja
ACC	STOL-ø	**STUDENT-A**	NA-S	most-ø	xoroš-uju
GEN	stol-a	**STUDENT-A**	NA-S	most-a	XOROŠ-EJ
PREP	stol-e	student-e	NA-S	MOST-U	XOROŠ-EJ
DAT	stol-u	student-e	na-m	MOST-U	XOROŠ-EJ
INS	stol-om	student-om	na-mi	most-um	XOROŠ-EJ

Table 4: Russian case markers 1 (Caha 2009: Table 17, adapted).

Russian	**GEN = DOM**				
	window.SG	teacher.M.PL	both.M.I	book.SG	100
NOM	OKN-O	učitel-ja	dv-a	knig-a	st-o
ACC	OKN-O	**UČITEL-EJ**	dv-a	knig-u	st-o
GEN	okn-a	**UČITEL-EJ**	DV-UX	knig-y	ST-A
PREP	okn-e	učitel-jax	DV-UX	KNIG-E	ST-A
DAT	okn-u	učitel-am	dv-um	KNIG-E	ST-A
INS	okn-om	učitel-ami	dv-umja	knig-oj	ST-A

Table 5: Russian case markers 2 (Caha 2009: Table 16, adapted).

Ossetic	**GEN = DOM**		**GEN = DOM**	**GEN = DOM**	
	'who', Iron/Digor	'what', Iron/Digor	horse.SG	horse.PL, Iron	bucket, Digor
NOM	či/ka	sə/či	bɐχ	bɐχ-tɐ	k'ibila
ACC	kɐj/**ke**	sə/či	bɐχ-ə	bɐχ-t-ə	k'ibila
GEN	kɐj/**ke**	sɐ-j/cɐ-j	bɐχ-ə	bɐχ-t-ə	k'ibila-**ji**
DAT	kɐ-m-ɐn	sɐ/cɐ-m-ɐn	–	–	–
ABL	kɐ-m-ɐj	sɐ/cɐ-m-ɐj	bɐχ-əj	bɐχ-t-əj	k'ibila-jɐj
SUP	kɐ-wəl	sɐ-wəl/cɐ-bəl	–	–	–
ALL	kɐ-mɐ	sɐ-mɐ/cɐ-mɐ	–	–	–
EQU	ˀkɐ-j-aw	ˀsɐ/cɐ-j-aw	–	–	–
COM	kɐ-jimɐ	sɐ-jimɐ	–	–	–

Table 6: Ossetic case markers (Erschler 2009: Table 3 & and ex. 12, 13 adapted).

sentences here. The proper name in (52a) needs obligatory differential marking, which builds on the locative *pe*. For some speakers, the proper name also needs obligatory clitic doubling, using the accusative inflection. The inanimate in (52b) cannot take the differential marker, in this context. Instead, it shows up with morphology which is homophonous with the nominative.[28]

(52) ROMANIAN LOC = DOM

    a. L-ai   văzut $\boxed{\text{*(\textbf{pe})}}$ Ion.
        CL.3M.SG.ACC-have.2SG seen   LOC = DOM Ion
        'You have seen Ion.'

    b. Fete-**le**   au   văzut **(*pe)**   cărţi(-**le**).
        girls-DEF.F.PL have.3PL seen LOC = DOM books-DEF.F.PL
        'The girls have seen (the) books.'

The obvious means that comes to mind in order to capture the LOC = DOM syncretism is to use Caha's (2009) full hierarchy, which we repeat in (55). The adjacency between ACC and LOC$_1$ does derive the facts without incurring an *ABA violation. Moreover, the placement of the dative and the genitive outside the accusative can also explain the dative-genitive homophony which extends to all nominals in the language, both in the inflected realization and in the prepositional form. In (53) we illustrate the inflected genitive/dative, while in (54) we see the prepositional variant (some types of prepositional dative are colloquial):

(53) ROMANIAN INFLECTED DATIVE/GENITIVE

    a. I-ai   dat   carte-a   femei-*i*.
        CL.3SG.DAT-have.2SG given book-DEF.F.SG woman-DAT.F.SG
        'You have given woman the book.'

    b. carte-a   femei-*i*
        book-DEF.F.SG woman-GEN.F.SG
        'the woman's book.'

(54) ROMANIAN PREPOSITIONAL DATIVE/GENITIVE

    a. I-ai   dat   carte-a   *la femeie*.
        CL.3SG.DAT-have.2SG given book-DEF.F.SG at woman
        'You have given the book to the woman.'

    b. carte-a   *la femeie*
       book-DEF.F.SG at woman
       'the woman's book.'

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[28] Numerous contributions (Cornilescu 2000; Irimia 2020; a.o.) have shown that Romanian DOM overrides its canonical restrictions, extending to inanimates in a variety of contexts. For lack of space, we do not address oblique DOM on inanimates in this paper as they do not affect the syncretism patterns we are examining here.

(55) NOM > $\boxed{\text{ACC} > \text{LOC}_1}$ > $\boxed{\text{GEN} > \text{LOC}_2 > \text{DAT}}$ > LOC$_3$ > INSTR…[29]   (Caha 2009: 10:30)

However, we immediately run into a problem, as Romanian also exhibits ACC-DAT syncretism, as shown in **Table 7** which contains the clitic paradigms.[30] The sequence in (55) cannot capture the ACC-DAT syncretism without *ABA, as the genitive and locatives are interveners. Another complication is given by the presence in the language of bare locatives, as in (56). These are syncretic with the bare accusatives (and thus with nominatives), as in (52b).[31] This locative-accusative-nominative syncretism is morphologically distinct from the locative-accusative syncretism we have seen with DOM, which uses the obligatory preposition *pe*.

PERSON	SG	SG	PL	PL
	ACC	DAT	ACC	DAT
1	mă, -m-	îmi, -mi-	**-ne-**	**-ne-**
2	-te-	-îţi-, -ţi-	**-vă-**	**-vă-**
3 F	o	**îi, -i-**	**-le-**	**-le-**
3 M	îl, -l-,	**îi, -i-**	**îi, -i-**	**-le-**

Table 7: Romanian clitics.

(56) ROMANIAN BARE LOCATIVE

Fat-a   nu   mănâncă **sear-a**.
girl-DEF.F.SG.NOM NEG eat.3   evening-DEF.F.SG
'The girl doesn't eat in the evening.'

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[29] Both DAT and GEN are needed; the inflected genitive needs additional morphology (similar to a *linker*), when strict adjacency with an overt definite does not obtain. The linker merges with the definite suffix, as in (ib), but is not grammatical with inflected datives (ic) in the verbal domain:

(i) a. un   câine *(**a**-l)   femei-**i**
         a.M.SG dog   LK-DEF.M.SG woman-GEN.F.SG
         'a woman's dog' or 'a dog of the woman'

    b. câine-le   (***a**-l)   femei-**i**
        dog-DEF.M.SG LK-DEF.M.SG woman-GEN.F.SG
        'the woman's dog'

    c. I-ai   dat   un   câine (***a**-l)   femei-**i**.
        CL.3SG.DAT-have.2SG given a.M.SG dog LK-DEF.M.SG woman-DAT.F.SG
        'You have given a dog to the woman.'

[30] See especially Săvescu Ciucivara (2009); a.o., for Romanian clitics.

[31] Bare locatives, however, have a different syntax. For example, they do not trigger verb agreement nor clitic doubling.

To summarize, in Romanian we notice the following case syncretisms:

- locative-accusative for oblique DOM, as in (52a) and (18a)
- locative-accusative-nominative for bare locatives, as in (56) and (52b)
- genitive-dative, as in (53a) and (53b), or (54a) and (54b)
- accusative-dative for clitics, as in **Table 7**

None of two hierarchies we have introduced can capture all the patterns. Caha's (2009) sequence in (55), which we repeat in (57), gets the various dative-genitive syncretisms as well as the locative-accusative syncretism. But it cannot capture the accusative-dative syncretism, which will need a hierarchy more similar to Harðarson's (2016) instead. But the latter does not capture the ACC-LOC syncretism.

(57)   NOM > $\boxed{\text{ACC} > \text{LOC}_1}$ > $\boxed{\text{GEN} > \text{LOC}_2 > \text{DAT}}$ > LOC_3 > INSTR…   (Caha 2009: 10:130)

(58)   NOM > $\boxed{\text{ACC} > \text{DAT}}$ > GEN > ABL/INS   (Harðarson 2016)

Of course, one could hypothesize that Romanian needs to use two distinct case hierarchies. However, this solution misses some points, leaving aside its redundancy and lack of elegance. First, differential object marking interacts with clitic doubling. In contexts such as (52a) and many others, clitic doubling is *obligatory* for the greatest majority of native speakers. Secondly, a hierarchy such as (58) does not contain the locatives, which are crucial for differential object marking patterns. The question is whether a uniform case sequence could be devised in such a way as to capture all the syncretism patterns of Romanian and the other languages presented here (Spanish and Russian/Ossetic), and extend to ergative-absolutive languages, while at the same time including the locatives too.

6 Enriched case hierarchies

The solution we are exploring is the use of an enriched case hierarchy such as (59), which contains not only more than one locative (as already proposed by Caha 2009) but also more than one accusative/absolutive (abbreviated here as A) and more than one dative. The need for two distinct accusatives and datives has already been argued for by Starke (2017),[32] as seen in the case sequence in (61):

(59)   Enriched case hierarchy
       UNMARKED > **SA** … > LOC_1 > SDAT > GEN > LOC_2 > **BA** > BDAT…

(60)   NOM > ACC > LOC_1 > GEN > LOC_2 > DAT > LOC_3 > INSTR…   (Caha 2009: 10:130)

(61)   NOM > SACC > SDAT > GEN > BACC > BDAT…   (Starke 2017: 22, no locatives)

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[32] Caha (2009)[125–130] contains an earlier implementation of a similar hypothesis. See also Caha (2019) for recent discussion.

Starke (2017) took as a point of departure the observation that accusatives can establish various syncretisms, both intra-linguistically and cross-linguistically. This is precisely the situation we see in the languages examined here: inanimate accusatives/absolutives use a bare form which is homophonous with the nominative, while the animate accusative uses differential marking morphology which is homophonous with the dative, or other obliques.

Outside oblique DOM, the accusative-dative syncretism is found in languages such as Icelandic, as illustrated in the fragment in **Table 8**. The Icelandic facts prompted Harðarson (2016) to propose a case hierarchy where the accusative and the dative are adjacent. As already mentioned, two other general conclusions were supported in Harðarson's (2016) work: i) the case sequence initially formulated by Caha (2009) is not enough cross-linguistically; ii) various languages can use distinct case hierarchies. However, we have seen that there are also languages where the accusative is not syncretic with the dative, but with the genitive (such as Russian) or the locative (Romanian) and for which the sequence ACC-DAT will not be adequate. At the same time a case sequence where ACC is contiguous with GEN, to the exclusion of ACC (as initially proposed by Caha 2009) is not enough either for the languages discussed here.

Icelandic			
	table.SG	student.M.SG	we
NOM	hlutur	faðir	hreyfing
ACC	**HLUT**	**FÓÐUR**	**HREYFINGU**
DAT	**HLUT**	**FÓÐUR**	**HREYFINGU**
GEN	hlutar	fóðurs	hreyfingar

Table 8: Icelandic case markers – fragment (Starke 2017: Table 2, adapted; Harðarson 2016).

Starke (2017) proposed to reconcile problematic data involving case syncretisms in Spanish (ACC = DAT), Icelandic (ACC = DAT), Russian (ACC = GEN), etc., in a different way. Instead of using different case hierarchies, Starke (2017) argued for the need to construct more complex case hierarchies, which contain more than one accusative and more than one dative, occurring on each side of the genitive, as in (61). Starke (2017) labeled the two accusatives/datives SACC/SDAT and BACC/BDAT, where S stands for 'structural/smaller' and B for 'bigger'. The apparently problematic syncretisms involving accusatives and datives in Spanish or Icelandic, as opposed to Russian, are not a matter of distinct case hierarchies but of what type of accusative/dative a language selects. For example, Icelandic exhibits a type of SACC and SDAT, which are adjacent and can be spelled out by the same marker. Russian, on the other hand, does not lexicalize SDAT, but only BDAT. As there are other cases intervening between SACC and BDAT, the two markers do not establish syncretism.

In this paper we follow the spirit of Starke's (2017) analysis in postulating a case sequence with two accusatives and two datives. Through an examination of the morphological marking of direct objects, we have motivated the following two conclusions: i) despite its oblique surface appearance, oblique DOM is not an oblique syntactically (Section 3); ii) despite its general accusative profile, oblique DOM has syntactic properties of its own (Section 4). This strongly indicates that there are two syntactically distinct accusatives/absolutives in the inventory of the languages we examine here.

Oblique DOM is an instantiation of Starke's (2017) BACC. In our view, its 'bigness' is given by the fact that it contains additional δ-linking features beyond [uC], the feature of structural accusatives/absolutives; these features are active syntactically and require a separate licensing mechanism, as schematically shown in (38). An important goal of this work resides in understanding what the more precise structural make-up of accusatives is and what types of differences set the regular accusative/absolutive and oblique DOM apart, despite a general 'accusative profile'. A system that contains two accusatives (two case matrices for direct objects) not only permits this investigation but also predicts the existence of syntactic differences between the two A categories. This is exactly what the data show.

Starke' (2017) hierarchy in (61) does not contain the locatives. As these classes are relevant for oblique DOM strategies as well as in accusative (and also absolutive) syncretisms more generally, the question is how they can be integrated in a case sequence that contains more than one accusative and more than one dative. Taking into account data where locatives are salient in the patterns under interest here (Romanian, Gujarati, etc.), in the sequence in (59) it appears that one locative is found right after SA (which follows the nominative/unmarked case), while a second locative is located after the genitive.[33] In the next three subsections we take up the recalcitrant data presented in the previous sections and show how the enriched case hierarchy in (59) derives the syncretisms without incurring *ABA violations.

6.1 OBL=DOM in nominative-accusative systems

Let's start with the complex case of Romanian, a Romance language where oblique DOM is built on a locative preposition and which exhibits the following syncretisms:

- locative-accusative for oblique DOM, as in (52a) and (18a)
- locative-accusative-nominative for bare locatives, as in (56) and (52b)
- genitive-dative, as in (53a) and (53b), or (54a) and (54b)
- accusative-dative for clitics, as in **Table 7**

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[33] There also appears to be a third locative after BA and the second dative (BDAT). However we do not focus on it, and did not (systematically) include it in the hierarchy.

We have also seen that none of two case hierarchies containing only one accusative, repeated below, can capture the data. They both lead to *ABA violations. Caha's (2009) sequence in (62) can capture the accusative-nominative as well as the genitive-dative syncretism, but cannot derive the accusative-dative syncretisms. Harðarson's (2016) sequence in (63), on the other hand, cannot get the accusative-locative syncretism which is a hallmark of oblique DOM in this language.[34]

(62)   NOM > $\boxed{\text{ACC} > \text{LOC}_1}$ > $\boxed{\text{GEN} > \text{LOC}_2 > \text{DAT}}$ > LOC$_3$ > INSTR…   (Caha 2009: 10:130)

(63)   NOM > $\boxed{\text{ACC} > \text{DAT}}$ > GEN > ABL/INS   (Harðarson 2016)

Let's see now what the enriched hierarchy predicts. We repeat it here, in (64), and we also insert **Table 9** containing the relevant fragments from Romanian:

Romanian	Syncretism patterns		
	evening.DEF.SG	brother.M.SG	
NOM	seara	frate	
SACC	seara	frate	
LOC$_1$	seara	–	
SDAT	SERI-I	FRATE-LUI	
GEN	SERI-I	FRATE-LUI	
LOC$_2$	pe seara…	**PE FRATE**	
BACC$_{\text{DOM}}$	–	**PE FRATE**	*clitics* (Table 7)
BDAT			*clitics* (Table 7)

Table 9: Romanian case markers – fragment.

(64)   NOM > SACC > LOC$_1$ > SDAT > GEN > LOC$_2$ > BACC > BDAT…

Table 9 and (65) illustrate very clearly how the syncretisms are captured: the nominative and the accusative are homophonous for both animates and inanimates. There is also syncretism between the accusative and LOC$_1$ (for inanimates). As these three categories are adjacent, no *ABA violation obtains. Moving down the hierarchy, the dative-genitive syncretism is also captured. SDAT and GEN are adjacent. Then we also obtain the locative-DOM syncretism produced by LOC$_2$ and BACC, which are contiguous too. And lastly, the accusative – dative syncretism involves

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[34] Remember that, although Harðarson (2016) does not (explicitly) address locatives, his discussion implies that these classes are not found after the accusative (that is, in between the accusative and the dative) or after the nominative (that is, in between the nominative and the accusative).

Bacc and Bdat.[35] Thus, an enriched case hierarchy, containing several accusatives, datives and locatives does not run into any *ABA violations.

(65)   ROMANIAN (LOC = DOM)
   $\boxed{\text{NOM} > \text{Sacc} > \text{LOC}_1} > \boxed{\text{Sdat} > \text{GEN}} > \boxed{\text{LOC}_2 > \text{Bacc}} > \text{Bdat…}$

(66)   SPANISH (DAT = DOM)
   $\boxed{\text{NOM} > \text{Sacc}} > \text{LOC}_1 > \text{Sdat} > \text{GEN} > \boxed{\text{LOC}_2 > \text{Bacc} > \text{Bdat}} …$

(67)   RUSSIAN (GEN = DOM)
   $\boxed{\text{NOM} > \text{Sacc}} > \boxed{\text{GEN} > \text{Bacc}} > \text{PREP} > \text{Bdat} > \text{INS} …$

With this enriched case hierarchy we can also derive Spanish,[36] where oblique DOM is syncretic with both DAT and the *a-* locative, and NOM and Sacc use the same morphology, as in the updated fragment in **Table 10** and (66).

Spanish	Animate patterns – la (DEF.F.SG) mujer 'the woman'
NOM	Ø la mujer
Sacc	Ø la mujer[37]
GEN	de la mujer
LOC$_2$	**a la mujer**
Bacc = DOM	**a la mujer**
Bdat	**a la mujer**

Table 10: Fragment of Spanish case markers – updated.

And yet the same enriched hierarchy also captures Russian/Ossetic, where DOM uses the genitive. The relevant Russian case fragment in **Table 5** is repeated with adjustments in **Table 11** and (67).[38] Russian does not lexicalize Sdat. NOM and Sacc are adjacent and syncretism can

[35] As clitics are inflectional but cannot merge with prepositions, only dative morphology is spelled out (without *la*). There is no inflectional morphology for locatives in the language. There are, however, Romance languages (such as Catalan) where ACC-DAT syncretism obtains with clitics, even though the latter also have locative inflectional forms.

[36] As well as Catalan, or other western Romance languages (Neapolitan, Sardinian, etc.) where oblique DOM is syncretic with both DAT and the locative.

[37] In those contexts in which an animate definite object can be used without differential marking, for example nonreferential Quine definites:

(i)   Juna busca   la   mujer   perfecta.
      Juan seek.3SG DEF.F.SG woman perfect.F.SG
      'Juan is looking for the perfect woman.'   (López 2012: i, p. 155)

[38] We are grateful to an anonymous reviewer for help with the Russian case hierarchy.

Russian	GEN = DOM				
	window.SG	teacher.M.PL	both.M.I	book.SG	100
NOM	OKN-O	učitel-ja	dv-a	knig-a	st-o
SACC	OKN-O	–	dv-a	knig-u	st-o
GEN	okn-a	**UČITEL-EJ**	DV-UX	knig-y	ST-A
BACC	–	**UČITEL-EJ**	–	–	–
PREP	okn-e	učitel-jax	DV-UX	KNIG-E	ST-A
DAT	okn-u	učitel-am	dv-um	KNIG-E	ST-A
INS	okn-om	učitel-ami	dv-umja	knig-oj	ST-A

Table 11: Russian case markers 2 (Caha 2009: Table 16, adapted).

apply. With masculine animates the genitive is used in oblique DOM. The presence of LOC$_2$ cannot be motivated either, thus GEN and BACC are adjacent. A very similar picture is seen in Ossetic, as exhibited by **Table 6**. One observation about Russian is that it contains a category called the 'prepositional', which shares case morphology with the genitive. We follow the ordering in Caha (2009) under which the prepositional is found after the genitive (and thus after SACC in our enriched hierarchy).[39]

6.2 DAT=DOM in ergative systems. Gujarati

Oblique DOM is found in ergative-absolutive systems too, raising the question of whether an enriched case hierarchy is also applicable to these languages. Caha's (2009), Harðarson's (2016) or Starke's (2017) hierarchies have been formulated for nominative-accusative systems; in general, work on case hierarchies in ergative-absolutive systems is less advanced.

However, some important remarks have been made by Blake (2001), who has formulated the hierarchy in (68), or Smith & al. (2018), as well as Zompì (2019), a.o. The latter two works do not assume *strict* case hierarchies, proposing instead that an important difference is made in Universal Grammar between core cases and oblique cases. For example, Zompì (2019) has motivated the organization of cases in (69), which is assumed to regulate both nominative-accusative systems as well as ergative-absolutive systems. In the latter the unmarked case is the absolutive (71), while in the former the nominative counts as the unmarked (70). The unmarked case as well as the accusative/ergative are set aside from obliques in that they are *core, structural cases* which are calculated using the dependent case algorithm (see also Section 7.1).

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[39] Of course, Russian exhibits many other syncretisms; as they are not problematic for the enriched case hierarchy we leave them aside here. See Caha (2009); a.o. for discussion.

(68)   ABS > ERG > GEN > **DAT** (> LOC) > ABL/INS > ….   (Blake 2001:156)

(69)   UNMARKED ⊂ ACCUSATIVE/ERGATIVE ⊂ OBLIQUE   (Zompì 2019: 19)

(70)   NOMINATIVE ⊂ ACCUSATIVE ⊂ OBLIQUE   (Zompì 2019)

(71)   ABSOLUTIVE ⊂ ERGATIVE ⊂ OBLIQUE   (Zompì 2019)

Let's see now how oblique DOM can be captured in an ergative-absolutive system, against this background. We will illustrate with two languages: Gujarati (Indo-Aryan) and southwestern Basque. As we have seen in Section 3 (**Table 1**) the puzzle with oblique DOM is that it passes syntactic diagnostics which make it more similar to absolutives than to oblique datives.

In Gujarati certain types of higher animates must be introduced by a postposition which is homophonous with the dative; we repeat a relevant example in (72b). Extremely important is the fact that, in the perfective, oblique DOM exhibits agreement patterns which are characteristic to absolutives, as seen in (72a) and (72b). In both examples, the past participle must show agreement with the direct object, irrespective of whether the latter is differentially marked or not (see especially Cardona 1965; Mistry 1976; 1997; Masica 1982; Magier 1983; Comrie 1984; 1991; Wunderlich 2012; Woolford 2006; Grosz & Patel-Grosz 2014; Joshi 2020; a.o.)

(72)   GUJARATI DIRECT AND INDIRECT OBJECT AGREEMENT
    a.   sudha-e   radio   khəridy-**o**.
       Sudha.F-ERG radio-M buy.PFV-M.SG
       'Suddha bought a radio.'

                         (Mistry 1976, ex.10a, adapted; Sampada Deshpande, p.c.)

    b.   raj-e   sita-**ne**   pajav-**i**.
       Raj.M-ERG Sita.F-DAT＝DOM harass.PFV-F.SG
       'Raj harassed Sita.'

                         (Wunderlich 2012: 4b; Sampada Deshpande, p.c.)

    c.   kišor-(n)e   kāgaḷ-ne   aḍ-v-ū/*o   hat-**u**/*o.
       Kishor.M-ERG letter.M-DAT touch-DESID-N/*M be-PST-N/*M
       'Kishor wanted to touch the letter.'

                         (Mistry 1997: 6c; Woolford 2006: 41)

Indirect objects, or lexical datives more generally do not allow object agreement. Thus, in (72c), only default agreement is possible, as overt ergatives cannot agree either.

Under the assumption that oblique DOM is a type of *absolute,* not a type of *ergative,*[40] the problem is that oblique DOM (ABS)-DAT gives rise to an *ABA violation under the sequence in (68)/(71). Here, the ergative case zone intervenes between the absolutive and the oblique. As Blake (2001), Smith & al. (2018) or Zompì (2019) show, ERG cannot be below DAT/oblique cases. Thus, it will intervene between ABS and DAT. As a result, we cannot derive the syncretism, even under the assumption that cases are not ordered inside case zones. Ordering, however, must be assumed across case zones in Zompì's (2019) system.[41]

In Zompì's (2019) hierarchy in (69)/(70), the DOM-OBL syncretism might be derivable in nominative-accusative systems, as the accusative and the oblique are contiguous case zones (although we have seen numerous problems with a non-enriched case hierarchy in nominative-accusative languages). The challenge in ergative-absolutive languages is that oblique DOM is seen in configurations that also show the ergative, thus in a straightforward ergative alignment. The way out could be to say that oblique DOM is a type of accusative (and not a type of absolutive). This will entail that in languages like Gujarati the ergative, the absolutive and the accusative are all needed in the same alignment. A potential wrinkle is that oblique DOM is possible on some types of subjects, as we briefly discuss in the next section with respect to DOM passives. Such contexts are not trivial and more investigation is needed in order to safely establish whether oblique DOM is a type of accusative or a type of absolutive.

Our proposal is that an enriched case hierarchy is also active in ergative-absolutive languages. Just like nominative-accusative languages, these systems too contain more than one case associated with direct objects (absolutive or accusative). Thus, we do not run into any of the problems raised by the hierarchies in (68)-(71). Similarly, these languages also give indication that more than one locative is active in the hierarchy. Additionally, there is more than one case for indirect objects too.

To evaluate the advantages of an enriched hierarchy, let's take a look at a fragment of Gujarati case markers, as in **Table 12**.[42] What we see here is that a hierarchy with two cases for the direct objects, as well as two datives captures the facts. The data support the following sequence, which contains both a smaller case (SA) and a bigger case (BA) for the direct object:[43]

(73)　(UNMARKED$_1$ >) SA > $\boxed{\text{ERG} > \text{LOC}_1 > \text{SDAT}}$ > GEN > $\boxed{\textbf{BA} = \textbf{DOM} > \textbf{BDAT}}$ > ABL…

We notice that SA is homophonous with the unmarked case, while the ergative, LOC$_1$ and SDAT are syncretic and contain more reduced morphology than other cases. This indicates that they are adjacent

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[40] Oblique DOM does not (generally) establish syncretism with the ergative.

[41] Usually, it is ERG that includes unmarked cases and not the other way around. Thus, once again, ERG intervenes between the unmarked case zone and the oblique case zone.

[42] See also Mistry (2004: 2; a.o.)

[43] We have (tentatively) separated the unmarked case from ABS in order to also capture systems where nominatives might show different morphology from absolutives.

Gujarati	Syncretism patterns	
	book.M.SG	man.M.SG
SA	pustək-ø	mān̯as-ø
ERG	pustək-e	mān̯as-e
LOC$_1$	pustək-e	mān̯as-e
SDAT	pustək-e	mān̯as-e
GEN	pustək-n-AGR	mān̯as-n-AGR
BA = DOM	(**PUSTƏK-NE**)	**MĀN̯AS-NE**
BDAT	**PUSTƏK-NE**	**MĀN̯AS-NE**
ABL	pustək-thi	mān̯as-thi

Table 12: Gujarati case markers – fragment.

in the sequence, following S$_{ABS}$. The next case is the genitive which introduces the morpheme *-n*. A second dative, as well as the differential marker contain the morpheme *-n*, to which further material is added. As these latter two categories are adjacent, their syncretism can be easily derived. A similar organization of cases is seen in other Indo-Aryan languages such as Hindi and Kashmiri.

A potential problem is raised by examples such as (72c), where we see the ergative containing the morpheme *-n*. Is this a possible violation of the *ABA constraint? A careful examination of these patterns indicates a purely phonetic status of *-n*, which is needed to facilitate the syllabification of a vowel added to the sequence *kišor*. In fact, the same *-n* is *not* grammatical in the construction of the ergative forms of the other two proper names in (72): *sudha-ne, *raj-ne (these two forms are well-formed, but not as ergatives).

6.3 DAT=DOM in ergative systems. Basque

A second example of oblique DOM in an ergative-absolutive system comes from southwestern Basque. In examples (12a) and (12b) (repeated here in (74a) and (74b)), we illustrated two types of direct objects (Mounole 2012; Odria 2014; 2017; 2019; Fernández & Rezac 2016; a.o.). On the one hand, there are the unmarked absolutives with *absolutive* agreement on the verb, as in (74a). On the other hand, there are the highly referential direct objects which can/must be signaled by dative morphology, as in (74b). The latter can also trigger dative agreement on the verb, although their syntactic behavior is absolutive, as demonstrated with an extensive set of diagnostics by Odria (2014; 2014; 2019) or Fernández & Rezac (2016), a.o.[44]

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[44] See also Section 3 and fn. 11. In the so-called dative displacement varieties (for example, Basauri, Pasaia etc., discussed in Fernández & Rezac 2016, a.o.), such objects trigger absolutive agreement. In any case, verbal agreement is obligatory with oblique DOM.

(74) SOUTHWESTERN BASQUE   (Odria 2017: 3a, p.c)

    a.   Ordenagailua ikusi **d**-u-t.
          computer.ABS see   ABS.3SG-AUX-ERG.1SG
          'I have seen the computer.'

    b.   Zu-k   ni-ri   ikusi d-i-**da**-zu.
          you-ERG I-DAT=DOM see   ABS.3-AUX-**DAT.1SG**-ERG.2SG
          'You have seen me.'

Let's examine nominal inflection in the language, included in **Table 13**.[45]

Basque	Syncretism patterns	
	place	daughter
SA	leku-ø	alaba-ø
ERG	leku-k	alaba-k
GEN	leku-ren	alaba-ren
BA=DOM		**alaba-ri**
DAT	**leku-ri**	**alaba-ri**
BEN	leku-ren-tzat	alaba-ren-tzat
COM	leku-re-kin	alaba-re-kin

Table 13: (southwestern) Basque case markers – fragment.

    The language treats SA and ERG separately from the other cases. SA is unmarked, while ERG uses the desinence *-k*, which is not seen with any of the other cases. The latter appear to use the morpheme *-re* with its allomorphs, suggesting that they have a common core, which is not shared with the ergative. Although more needs to be said about the more precise orderings of cases such as the genitive,[46] the benefactive or the comitative,[47] all that matters to us is that there must be a second absolutive/accusative which shares the same morphology with the dative. In a system that contains only one case for direct objects these facts won't be derivable.

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[45] Adapted from Hualde (1986; 2003); Laka (1993); Trask (2003); a.o.

[46] The Basque genitive in *-ren* appears to be seen only in the nominal domain (Hualde 1986; 2003; a.o.). Here we are interested in cases that are active in the verbal domain, as oblique DOM is not typical of nominal domains. In general, it is clear that nominal cases need to have a separate sequence from verbal cases (see also the discussion in Zompì 2019; a.o.).

[47] More research is also needed on the animate marker – *gan* which appears on top of various oblique cases in Basque (animate local case ending), and according to Hualde (1986; 2003 et subseq.) also on the absolutive. However, the speakers consulted for this work did not agree with the data in Hualde (2003).

7 Partially or totally ordered case hierarchies?

In the previous sections we have demonstrated that the syncretism patterns in oblique DOM require the presence of enriched case hierarchies (extending Starke 2017), which contain more than one accusative/absolutive. One potential counterargument refers to economy considerations – can the same facts be accommodated in a system that contains just one case for direct objects? Having just one accusative is more economical, first of all.

We have seen that our data are problematic under two types of case hierarchies which contain only one accusative: i) Harðarson's (2016) case sequence, which takes ACC and DAT to be contiguous; ii) Caha's (2009) hierarchy, which takes ACC and GEN to be contiguous. However, other recent accounts have proposed case hierarchies which do not have the problems in Harðarson's (2016) and Caha's (2009) case sequences. We have already briefly introduced one example, namely Zompì's (2019) restricted case hierarchy which manipulates case zones. Another line of research which takes case hierarchies to be partially, rather than totally ordered has been proposed by Bárány (2016; 2021).

In this section we further comment on the latter two models. In so doing, we will also provide further remarks about why, in our view, the enriched case hierarchy is more adequate, despite its apparent complexity.

7.1 Direct objects and case hierarchies

As already mentioned in Section 6, Zompì (2019) puts forward the restricted case hierarchy in (69), which we repeat in (75).

(75)   UNMARKED ⊂ ACCUSATIVE/ERGATIVE ⊂ OBLIQUE   (Zompì 2019, ex.19)

Here, the leading hypothesis is that cases are partitioned into classes, which are rigidly ordered relative to each other, although internal ordering within a certain class might not be strict. The hierarchy in (75) collapses both nominative-accusative and ergative-absolutive systems. The unmarked class contains the nominative (in NOM-ACC languages) and the absolutive (in ERG-ABS languages), while the next case zone contains the ergative (in ERG-ABS languages) and the accusative (in NOM-ACC languages). And lastly, the third zone contains the inherent/oblique cases.[48] The logic is that the representation of an inherent case must contain that of a marked core case. The latter, in turn, must include the representation of an unmarked core case, according to the generalization in (76). Thus, the *ABA Generalization reduces to successive containment relations between the case categories.

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[48] 'Assigned under strict locality with a selecting head, either as an instance of arbitrary selection or in response to the semantics of theta role assignment.' (Zompì 2019, p. 15).

(76)   Zompì's (2019) Generalization: A non-accidental syncretism cannot cover an unmarked case (nominative or absolutive) and an inherent case (dative, locative) to the exclusion of a marked core case. [Zompì (2019: 3)]

One question that is relevant here centers around the status of oblique DOM. Is it a type of absolutive or a type of accusative in an ergative-absolutive alignment? If oblique DOM is a type of absolutive, the hierarchy in (75) does not capture the facts. It might appear desirable to say that oblique DOM is *always* a type of accusative, and not a type of absolutive, even in ERG-ABS languages (see also Baker 2015; Sec.3.3).[49] This would entail that ERG-ABS languages with oblique DOM grammaticalize both the absolutive and the accusative, as direct object cases. One problem is that oblique DOM appears to be preserved on certain types of subjects in many of the languages discussed here. For example, we see that in Hindi, oblique DOM is preserved (in fact, in certain instances even required) on the sole argument under passive voice. An example is provided under (77).[50]

(77)   HINDI OBLIQUE DOM UNDER PASSIVE
Siita-ko   apn-e   ghar-me   pakR-aa   ga-yaa.
Siita.F-DAT=DOM self.GEN-M.LOC house-LOC catch-PASS.M.SG go-PFV.M.SG
'Sita_i was caught in her_i own house.'   (Yash Sinha, p.c.)

Additionally, oblique DOM appears to pass subjecthood diagnostics in that it can control the possessive anaphor *apnaa* (only subjects can do so, see Mahajan 2010, a.o.). This behavior makes it more similar to absolutives. Baker (2015; 2021) proposes to account for the presence of DOM in these types of passives under the assumption that such configurations contain an implicit agent. However, demonstrating that this implicit agent is *syntactically* active is no simple task. A quick examination of the most common diagnostics used to probe the presence of the implicit agent in the syntax (depictives, reciprocals, etc.) does not yield positive results for these configurations.[51] Similar challenges are seen for other languages in which oblique DOM is possible in medio-passives, for example the Spanish SE_MP illustrated in (29b). Irimia (2021b) contains a detailed discussion on the interaction between DOM and medio-passives, with a thorough illustration of all the diagnostics for both Hindi and Spanish. Of course, further research is needed into this aspect.[52] In any case, the enriched case hierarchy we have proposed avoids these problems.

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[49] See also Legate (2008; 2012; 2014) for more details on the distinction between absolutives and accusatives in ERG-ABS languages.

[50] See also Lavine (2010); Bhatt & Pancheva (2006); Mahajan (2010); Wood (2017); a.o.

[51] Also, the informants do not accept expressing the implicit agent with a *by*-phrase in DOM passives.

[52] As one reviewer correctly points out, under the presence of an external argument only in passives the dependent Case captures the absence of DOM on lexical unaccusatives. However, the challenge is that the external argument cannot be detected in the syntax of passives.

Another point refers to the precise organization of the case zones. The ergative and the accusative are assigned to the same class, to the exclusion of inherent cases. Their grouping is motivated by these two case categories being derived as dependent cases (Marantz 1991; Baker 2015; Levin & Preminger 2015; a.o.). In a nutshell, the mechanics of dependent case presupposes: a) cyclical assignment of case in the relevant domains (TP and NP/DP); b) scanning of the domain by a case-assignment algorithm, following the three strictly ordered steps (using Zompì's 2019 model) in (78):

(78) Dependent case algorithm
     i.   The inherent cases are assigned
     ii. Case competition of as-yet-caseless nominals (79)
     iii. The algorithm assigns unmarked case

(79) Let DP_1 and DP_2 be two as-yet-caseless nominals in the same domain. If DP_1 c-commands DP_2:
     a. mark DP_1 [= in the clause, ERGATIVE] and/or
     b. mark DP_2 [= in the clause, ACCUSATIVE]

In the ergative-absolutive languages examined here the challenge is that ERG and oblique DOM (the accusative) are not dependent on each other. We have seen that in the ergative alignment, the object can appear unmarked; also, oblique DOM is possible in the nominative-accusative alignment with non-perfectives, in the absence of the ergative. Oblique DOM is a matter of properties of the nominal, and does not depend on a higher nominal (in fact, as we have just pointed out, it is not even clear that in examples with passivization such as (77) there is a higher implicit argument in the syntax). Baker (2021) proposes a solution for this problem using Hindi and southwestern Basque under the assumption that ERG and oblique DOM enter into the dependent case calculus in different domains (vP vs CP).[53] However, it is not clear the same solution can be applied to the other ergative-absolutive languages, such as Gujarati, where both unmarked and marked objects appear to raise quite high.

Nominative-accusative languages pose their problems too. For example, in languages like Neapolitan where there are agreeing objects and agreeing objects that are also differentially marked, and where both classes can be clitic doubled using the accusative form of the clitic. It is not clear which of these accusatives enters the dependent case calculus and how to apply the mechanics of (78) unstipulatively. The analysis proposed here avoids these wrinkles too.

On the other hand, it is also true that Zompì (2019) has brought some counterarguments to enriched case hierarchies in the sense that they appear to both under- and over-generate. However, most of the problematic issues that have been pointed out refer to the place and nature

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[53] We are grateful to an anonymous reviewer for clarification on this point.

of genitives which i) might not have a fixed position (see also Smith & al. 2018, a.o.); ii) in some languages might be syncretic with nominatives. We show that these aspects are not insolvable.

First, as also pointed out in fn. 46 the genitive is complicated in that it is both a verbal and a nominal case. It is clear that the nominal domain needs a separate case hierarchy from the verbal domain, as emphasized by Zompì (2019) himself. Secondly, the observation that the genitive might be spelled out with a bare form, similarly to the nominative, is not surprising. An extensive body of research has shown that (some types of) genitives have a structural nature, signaling the external argument in the nominal domain. Thus, in order to set this problem, a careful examination of the genitive in the nominal domain is necessary. In this work we have only focused on verbal cases, as DOM does not appear in nominalizations in the languages in our database, and thus cannot provide the full solution to the genitive puzzle. Also note that one example of GEN-NOM syncretism Zompì (2019) points out comes from a honorific genitive in Icelandic (and only for 1PL under suppletion). But here, once again, there might be an independent explanation. Honorifics are categories with special syntax and a nominalization structure has been proposed for them (Hill 2014; a.o.).
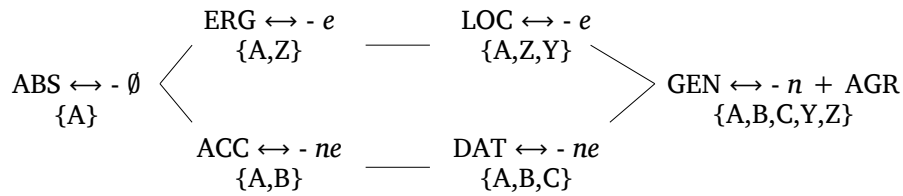
Similarly, independent facts are relevant for the observation that enriched case hierarchies predict NOM-SDAT syncretism, when SACC is not lexicalized. But here, the problem is that there don't seem to be that many languages which do not contain an accusative, due to the importance of this category. As BACC tends to be linked to differential marking, due to its complex structure, a language would not easily lexicalize *just* BACC.

7.2 Partially ordered case hierarchies

Noticing that restricted hierarchies are not enough to derive the various syncretism patterns seen with accusatives, work by Bárány (2016; 2021) or Graf (2019) makes extensive use of case hierarchies which are partially ordered. A partial ordering of cases can avoid the need for more than one instance of the same case in a hierarchy, while still obtaining case contiguity. The main intuition is that a case sequence does not exhibit a total order, but is rather a *partially ordered set (poset)*. Thus, cases in a particular hierarchy should not be obligatorily ordered with respect to each other.

Let's look at a concrete illustration from Gujarati. In the case paradigm fragment in **Table 12**, we have seen the following: an absolutive which is spelled out unmarked; oblique DOM which is homophonous with DAT and a type of locative, all of them being spelled out as *-ne*; the ergative which is homophonous with another locative, both of them being spelled out as *-e*; the genitive which uses the morpheme *-n* and agreement morphology. The partially ordered hierarchy proposed by Bárány (2021) is in (80), while the vocabulary items which correspond to the Gujarati case markers are in (81). In (80), the order is partial in the sense that not all cases are ordered with respect to each other. ERG and LOC are ordered separately from ACC and DAT. Both these groups include the feature {A}, just like the unmarked absolutive and the genitive, and thus are comparable with these latter too.

(80)   Partially ordered Gujarati case hierarchy   (Bárány 2021: 25)

$$
\begin{array}{c}
\text{ERG} \leftrightarrow \text{-}\,e \qquad\qquad \text{LOC} \leftrightarrow \text{-}\,e \\
\{A,Z\} \quad\text{------}\quad \{A,Z,Y\}
\end{array}
$$

ABS $\leftrightarrow$ - $\emptyset$
{A}

$$
\text{GEN} \leftrightarrow \text{-}\,n \,+\, \text{AGR} \\
\{A,B,C,Y,Z\}
$$

$$
\begin{array}{c}
\text{ACC} \leftrightarrow \text{-}\,ne \qquad\qquad \text{DAT} \leftrightarrow \text{-}\,ne \\
\{A,B\} \quad\text{------}\quad \{A,B,C\}
\end{array}
$$

(81)   Vocabulary items for Gujarati case markers based on (80)   (Bárány 2021: 26)
    i.   {A} $\leftrightarrow - \emptyset$
    ii. {A, Z} $\leftrightarrow - e$
    iii. {A, B} $\leftrightarrow - ne$
    iv. {A, B, C, Y, Z} $\leftrightarrow - n + \text{AGR}$

As Bárány (2021 also shows, the partial ordering in (80) captures some characteristics of other simple (i.e., 'non enriched') case sequences. For example, case contiguity is weak as in Harðarson (2016); classes of cases, as opposed to individual cases, are the ones that get ordered, and dependent and oblique cases are not interleaved, similarly to Zompì (2019).

Generally, although case hierarchies in terms of partial ordering require more attention due to their potential, there are several reasons for which we have not assumed them here. First, some additional constraint needs to specified so as to block over-generation, as noticed by Bárány (2021) himself; to focus just on oblique DOM, the system predicts syncretism with various types of obliques. The cross-linguistic picture is much more restricted. Secondly, as we have shown in the previous subsection, the divide 'dependent/oblique' is not as strict as it might seem. Thirdly, the presence of more than one case for direct objects predicts and captures better the syntactic distinctions between them (as discussed in subsection 4.1), despite a general accusative profile.

Fourthly, even under partial ordering, it is still necessary to have two datives[54] in the hierarchy. For example, as we have seen in subsection 5.3 (ex. (53a) and (54a)), in Romanian there are both an inflected dative as well as a directional, prepositional (*la*) dative. They can both get doubled by the dative clitic, indicating that they are datives, and not just locatives. In order to capture both, we need two datives.[55] The issue is important, as only one of these datives interacts with oblique DOM, which is not spelled out with the *la* marker. Two datives are also seen in Gujarati (**Table 12**), or other Indo-Aryan languages.

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[54] As well as more than one locative.

[55] A reviewer asks about the Romanian genitive in fn. 29. Although the data indicate that a genitive category needs to be separated from the dative, it is not so clear the presence of the linker is enough to postulate two genitives. In various accounts the alternations of the genitive might be attributed to PF constraints – the genitive must be adjacent to the definite at PF (Cornilescu 1992, a.o.).

It could be argued that datives should be set aside from dependent cases such as the accusative/absolutive, because they are inherent. However, what we see cross-linguistically is that the separation between accusatives and datives is not as straightforward as expected. Of course, more needs to be said about this and the limits of this paper do not allow us to do justice to this matter. However, what we notice in Romanian, as well as western Romance is the accusative-dative syncretism for clitics, irrespectively of how DOM is realized; clitics, however, interact with DOM in non-trivial ways.

8 Conclusions

This paper has examined three main patterns seen with oblique DOM cross-linguistically, namely the use of dative, locative and genitive morphology. This oblique morpho-syntactic strategy is seen not only in nominative – accusative, but also in ergative-absolutive systems. A non-trivial challenge is how to capture the syncretism between the accusative/absolutive and the corresponding oblique category without having insertion rules that apply to non-contiguous categories (*ABA violation). The findings discussed here support the conclusion that an enriched case hierarchy (following Starke 2017; Caha 2019), containing more than one case for direct objects, and extended to ergative-absolutive languages too is best equipped to derive the data. Moreover, the presence of more than one structural accusative/absolutive case category for direct objects explains not only their common core, but also opens the path to a better understanding of the differences between types of structural accusatives/absolutives which cannot be fully captured under the dependent case algorithm or under partially ordered hierarchies.

Abbreviations

1 = first person, 3 = third person, ABL = ablative, ABS = absolutive, ACC = accusative, ART = article, AUX = auxiliary, CL = clitic, DAT = dative, DEF = definite, DESID = desiderative, DOM = differential object marking, EA = external argument, ERG = ergative, F = feminine, FUT = future, GEN = genitive, INS(TR) = instrumental, LK = linker, LOC = locative, M = masculine, NEG = negation, N = neuter, NOM = nominative, OBJ = object, OBL = oblique, PASS = passive, P(ER)F(V) = perfective, PL = plural, PPA = past participle agreement, PRES = present, PRV = preverb, PST = past, REFL = reflexive, SBJ = subject, SE$_{MP}$ = medio-passive pronominal element in Romance, SG = singular

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Competing interests

The author has no competing interests to declare.

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