DIFFERENTIAL OBJECT MARKING AND INTERFACE LEGIBILITY
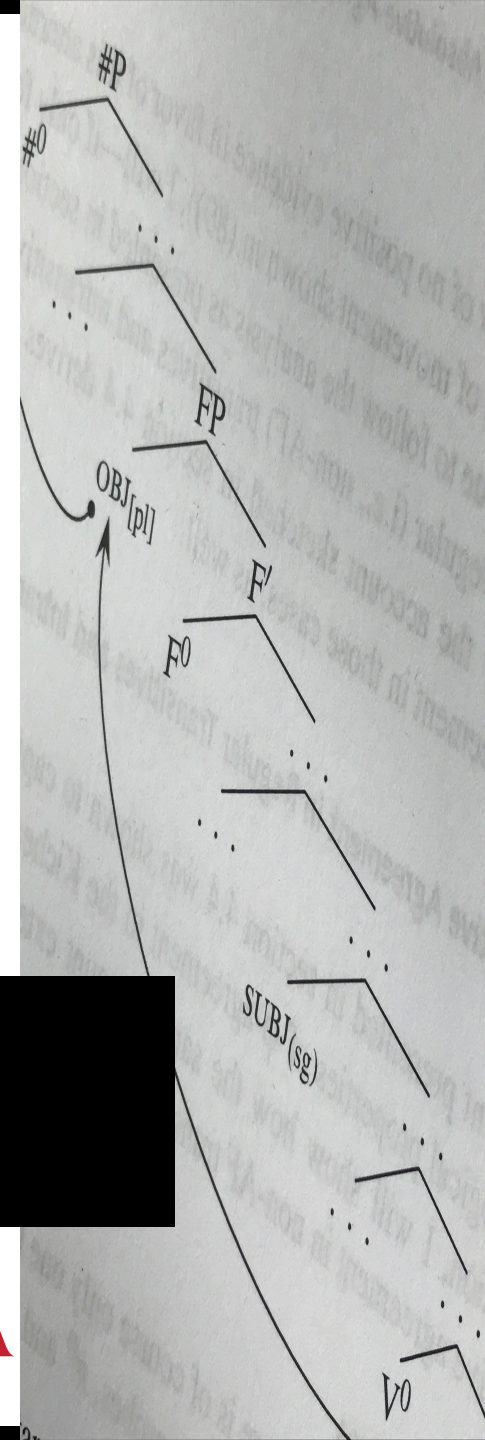
Brian Gravely
University of Georgia
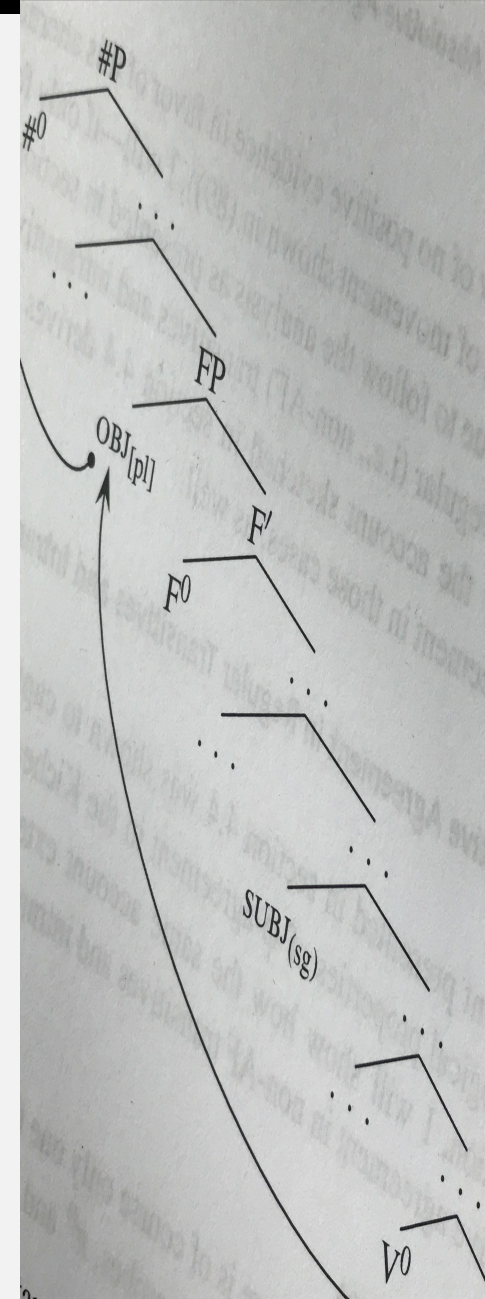**LSRL 50**
7 July, 2020

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PRESENTATION OVERVIEW

*What is special about DOM in Galician?*

- Overview of DOM
- Data
  - When DOM arises in Galician
  - The role of non-canonical word order
- Theoretical underpinnings
- Putting it all together
- Conclusion

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AN OVERVIEW OF DOM
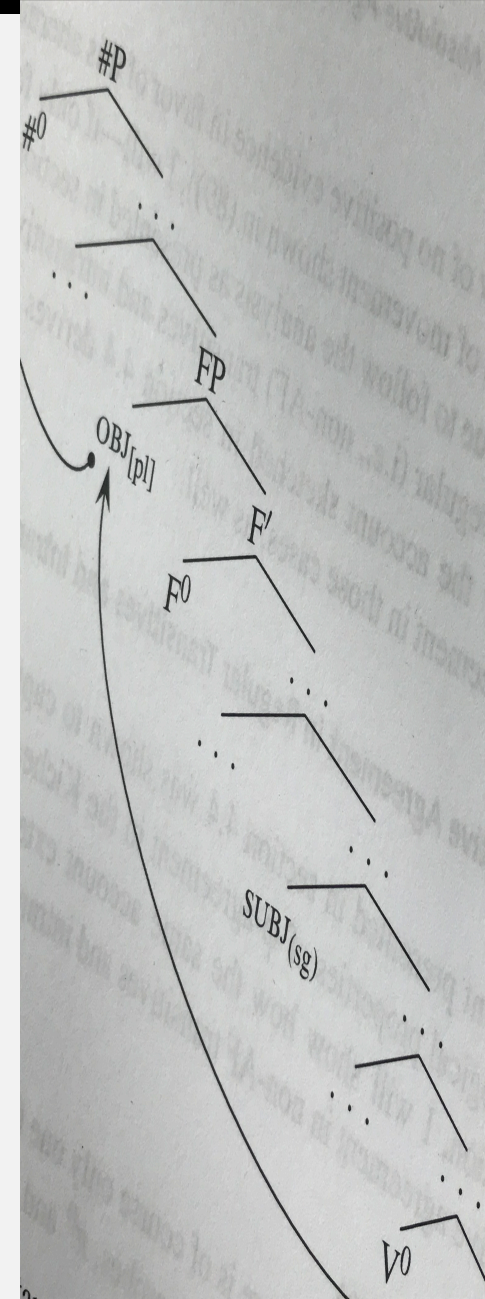
How and why DOM surfaces

- DOM is well-attested cross-linguistically and takes many forms
  - Case (Turkish)
  - Adposition (Spanish)
  - Agreement (Swahili)
  - Clitic doubling (Macedonian)

- A long-standing question has been what triggers DOM in any given language
  - Most approaches deal with 'scales' based primarily on animacy and definiteness (Comrie 1979, 1981; Croft 1988; Aissen 2003, *a.o.*)

  Animacy: 1st/2nd person > 3rd person PRN > name > human > animate > inanimate

  Specificity: pronoun > noun > definite > specific > nonspecific
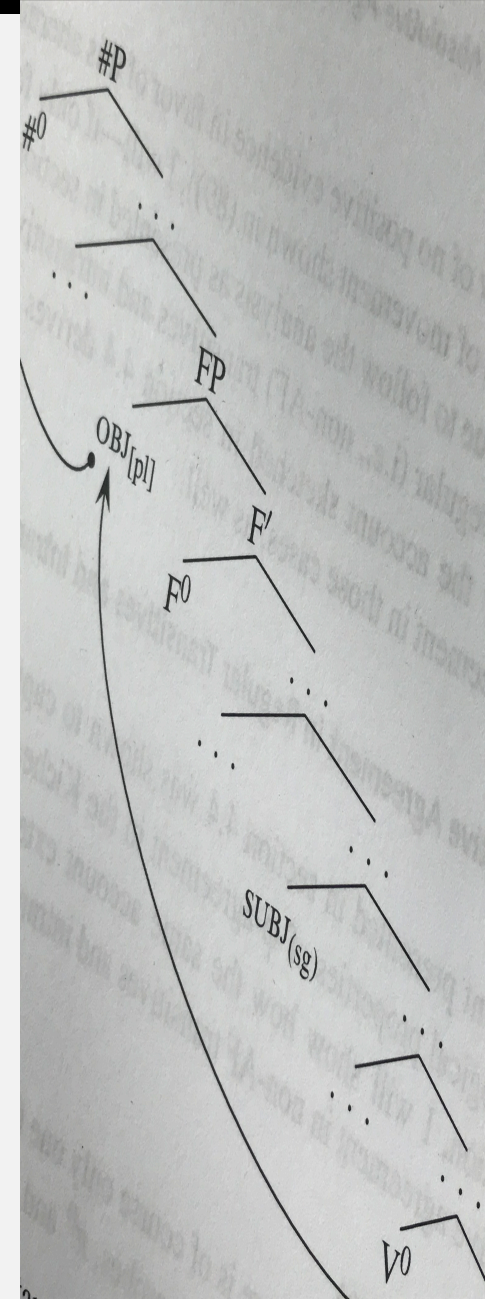
AN OVERVIEW OF DOM

Theoretical approaches to DOM

- Many theoretical approaches have dealt with ways of explaining DOM related to:
  - differentiating the subject from the object (Aissen 2003, Richards 2010)
  - identifying semantic/pragmatic aspects related to the object (De Hoop & Malchukov)
  - movement of the object (Bhatt & Anagnostopoulou 1996, López 2012)
  - invisibility of a particular class of objects to agreement and Case (Massam 2001, Danon 2006)
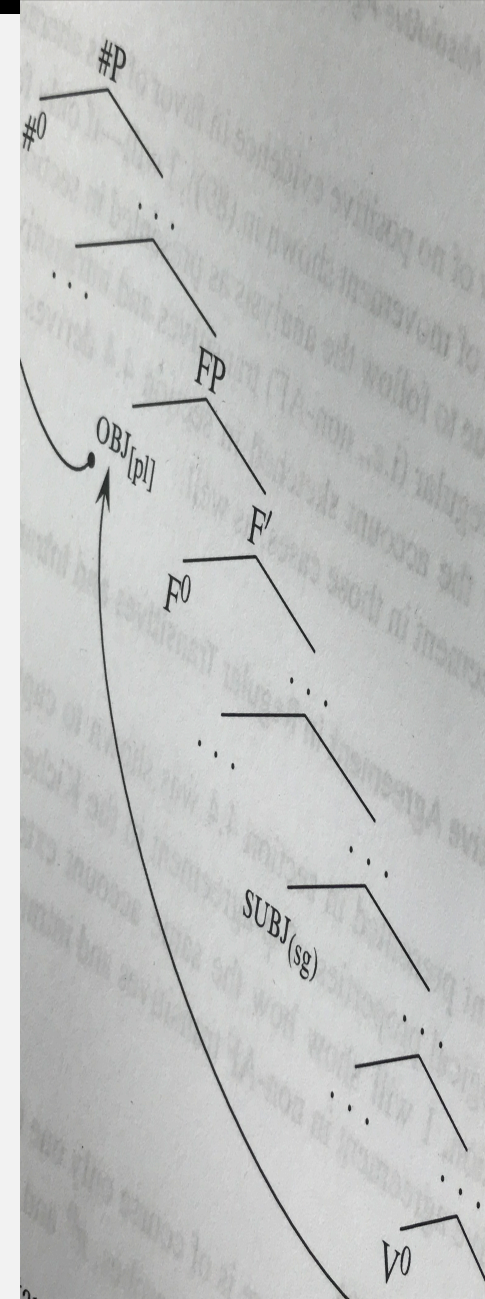
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AN OVERVIEW OF DOM

Theoretical approaches to DOM (Kalin 2018, 2019)

- Kalin (2018, 2019) argues that DOM reveals important aspects of abstract licensing in that language and the set of nominals that require it

- Following Danon (2006) & Ormazabal & Romero (2013) *a.o.*, unmarked objects are indeed unlicensed
  - However, unlike other approaches, Kalin claims that all nominals have the *potential* to be licensed

Why may this be?
  - Subject agreement applies obligatorily, whilst object nominals can escape licensing
  - Ex: *Nonspecific nominals*— It is implausible to claim they are "deficient" as objects but not as subjects (i.e., they always trigger agreement as the latter)

AN OVERVIEW OF DOM

What to take away from the aforementioned views on DOM

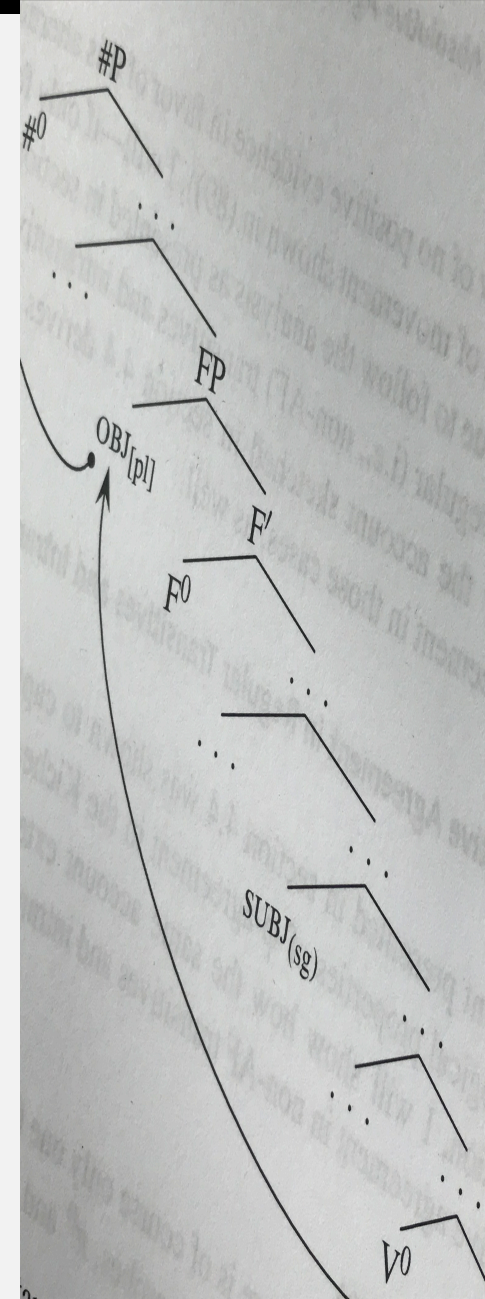Key conclusions moving forward:

- Most languages have an obligatory licenser and a 'last resort' secondary licenser (Kalin 2018, 2019)
- It is the featural composition of certain nominals that trigger the need for DOM (or a secondary licenser)
- The employment of DOM should reveal a considerable amount about why nominal objects are marked (i.e., what features trigger said marking)
    - For Galician, I claim that [+HUMAN] (and by default [+ANIMATE]) is the triggering feature for DOM
- I also provide evidence for a case in which DOM is predicated on movement (e.g. object shift) and is not simply coincidental (Kalin & Weiss (2019) on López's (2012) take on Spanish)
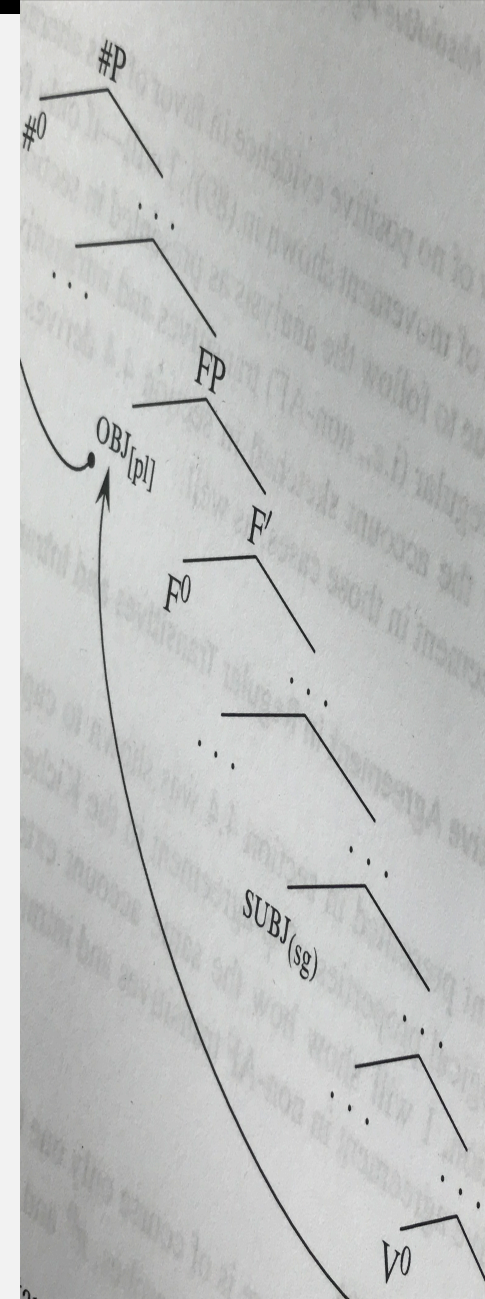
NOMINALS & WORD ORDER IN GALICIAN

Common examples (Gravely, in press)

- Direct objects in Galician almost always go unmarked (Gravely, in press)
  - SVO order (1a), non-canonical VSO (1b) and VOS orders (1c), topicalized nominals (CLLD) (1d), & focus fronting (1e)

1. a. O xardiñeiro podou o pexegueiro
   the gardener prune.PST.3SG the peach-tree

   b. Podou o xardiñeiro o pexegueiro
   prune.PST.3SG the gardener the peach-tree

   c. Podou o pexegueiro o xardiñeiro
   prune.PST.3SG the peach-tree the gardener

   d. O pexegueiro, podouno o xardiñeiro
   the peach-tree prune.PST.3SG-CL$_{MASC.SG}$ the gardener

   e. O PEXEGUEIRO podou o xardiñeiro
   the peach-tree prune.PST.3SG the gardener
   *'The gardener pruned the peach tree.'*

NOMINALS & WORD ORDER IN GALICIAN

DOM observations in traditional grammar (Freixeiro 2006)

- Freixeiro (2006:631) references a [+HUMAN] feature that may cause ambiguity when both nominals are not in the canonical SVO, but notes that:

  "In sequences in which the constituents do not follow the typical order (subject+verb+object), producing ambiguity in identifying the function of the subject and object complement […] when a preposition is not used, it is understood that the subject appears first and then the object complement."

2. a. Os pais   educan   os fillos   (SVO)
the parents   educate.PRS.3PL   the children

   b. Educan   os pais   os fillos   (VSO)
educate.PRS.3PL   the parents   the children

   c. Os fillos,   edúcanos   os pais   (CLLD)
the children   eduate.PRS.3PL-CL$_{MASC.PL}$ the parents
'Parents educate their children.'
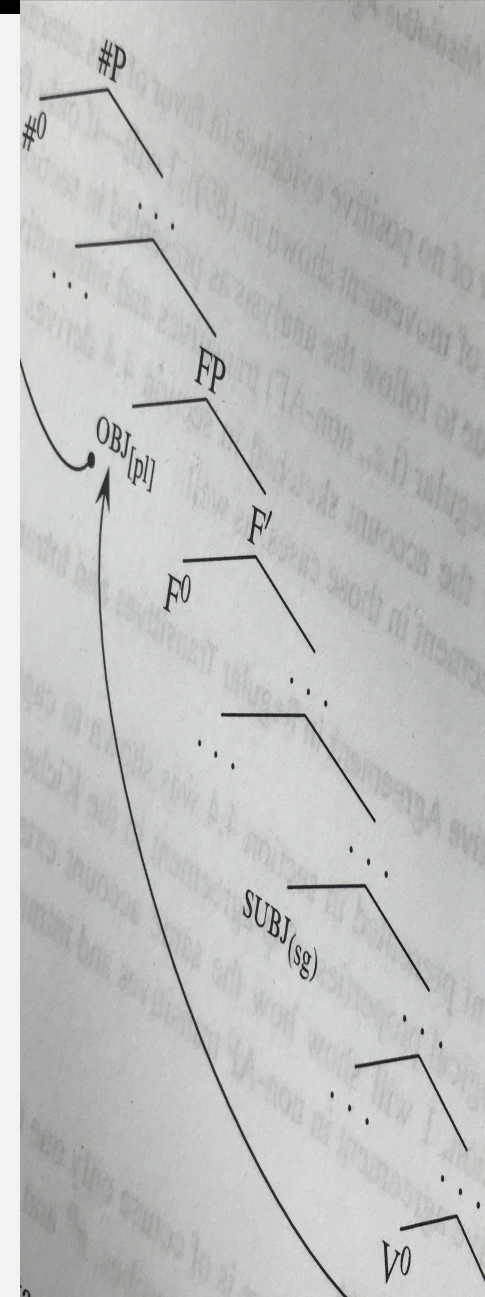
DOM & VOS ORDER

When DOM arises

- In contrast to VSO order (3a cf. 2b), when both nominals follow the verb and the order is VOS, DOM surfaces on the object nominal

3. a. Educan   os pais   os fillos   (VSO)
       educate.PRS.3PL the parents   the children

   b. Educan   **ós** fillos   os pais   (VOS)
       educate.PRS.3PL DOM-the children   the parents
       'Parents educate their children.'

- DOM surfaces here by way of fusion of the determiner and the preposition '*a*' at PF (Nunes & Ximenes 2009):

4. a. /os/ ➔ /ɔs/   (unstressed close-mid vowel ➔ open-mid vowel)

   b. /as/ ➔ /aːs/   (unstressed central vowel ➔ stressed central vowel)
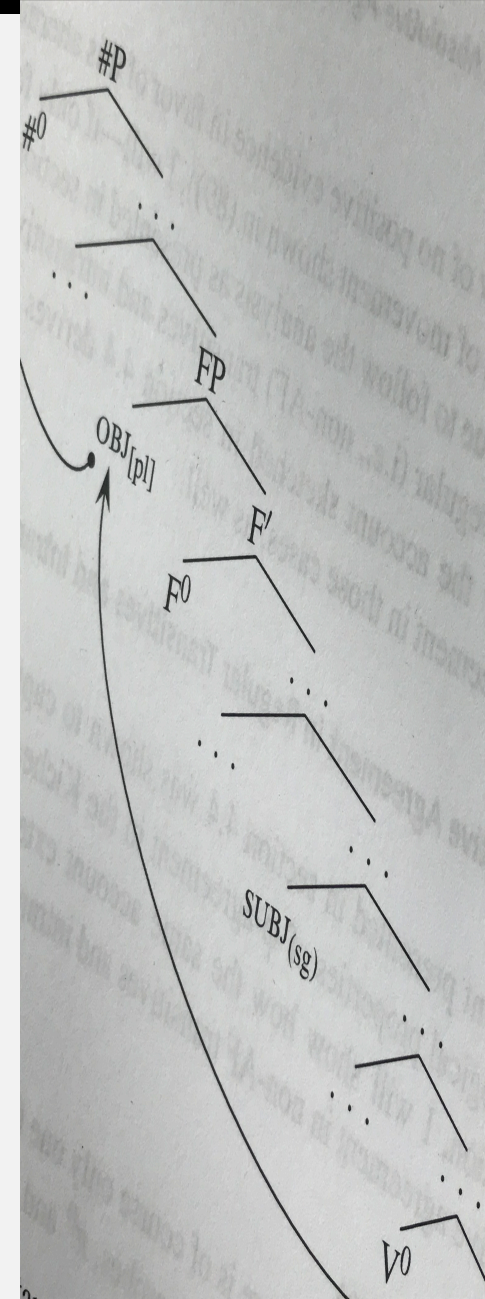
DOM & VOS ORDER

Does [+SPECIFIC] play a role?

- When an object nominal is headed by an indefinite determiner (5a) or a quantifier (5b), the adposition is phonologically distinct.
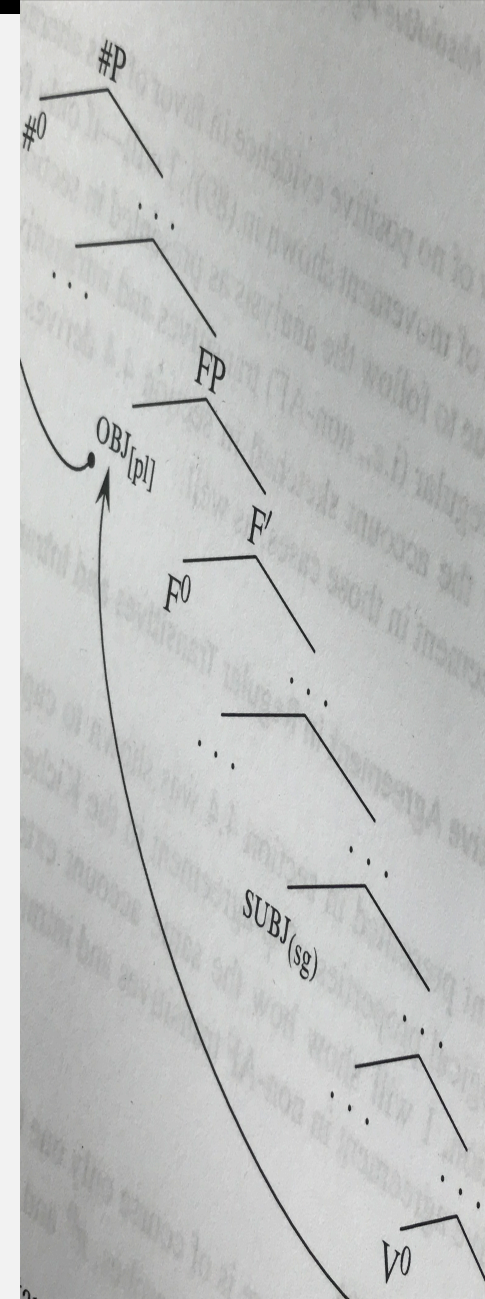
5. a. Po-la beira levou **a** un descoñecido meu curmán
   by-the bank carry.PST.3SG DOM a stranger my cousin
   'My cousin carried a stranger along the riverbank.'

   b. Despedistes **a** tóda-las enfermeiras os medicos
   release.PST.2PL DOM all-the nurses the doctors
   'You doctors sent home all of the nurses.'

- Unlike Spanish, specificity places no role in the surfacing of DOM

6. a. Busca a/∅ una trabajadora María
   search.PRS.3SG DOM/∅ a worker María

   b. Procura a/*∅ unha traballadora María
   search.PRS.3SG DOM/∅ a worker María
   'María is looking for a worker.'

INTERIM SUMMARY & QUESTIONS

Interim summary:

- Galician boasts a scare implementation of DOM

- This arises only in VOS orders

- Unlike Spanish, the featural specification for DOM is [+HUMAN]; specificity plays no role

Questions moving forward:

- What theoretical notions of movement are related to VSO/VOS orders? How does movement affect the licensing processes of nominals more generally?

- What head licenses DOM?

- Where does the role of features come into play?

OBJECT SHIFT & RELATED MOVEMENT

How are VSO/VOS orders derived?

- Since Holmberg's (1986) work on Icelandic and Diesing's (1992) work on object movement more generally, it is widely assumed that *most* nominal objects undergo object shift.
- Gallego (2013) formalized his Romance VSO/VOS correlation as such:

VSO/VOS Generalization
If a Romance language generates VOS through object shift, then it licenses VSO

- This was formulated in order to account for the differences between the option for object shift in Western Romance and VP pied-piping in Central/Eastern Romance
  - Galician licenses VSO, so VOS should be derived through object shift (7a-b, cf. 1b-c)

7. a. Podou   o xardiñeiro o pexegueiro
   prune.PST.3SG the gardener the peach-tree

   Podou   o pexegueiro   o xardiñeiro
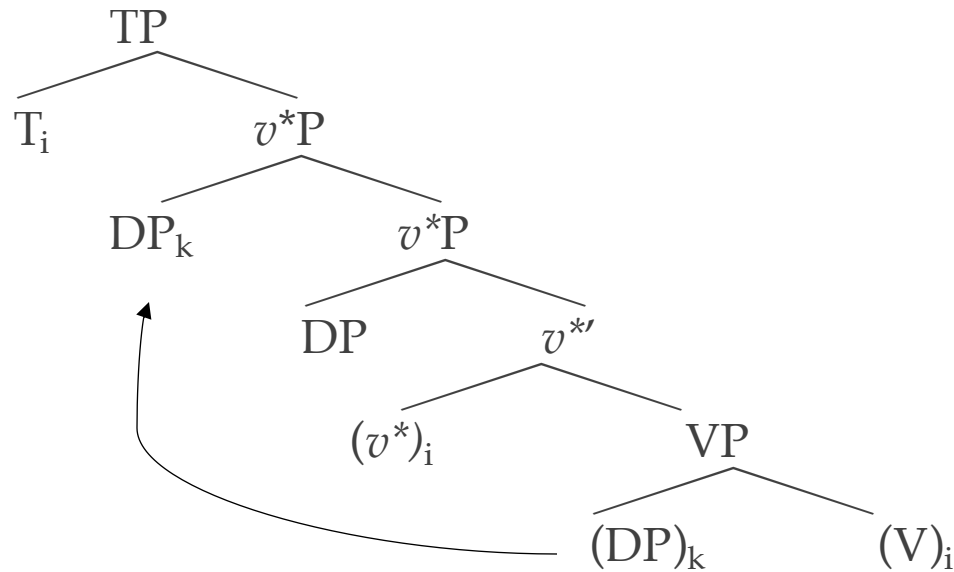   prune.PST.3SG   the peach-tree   the gardener

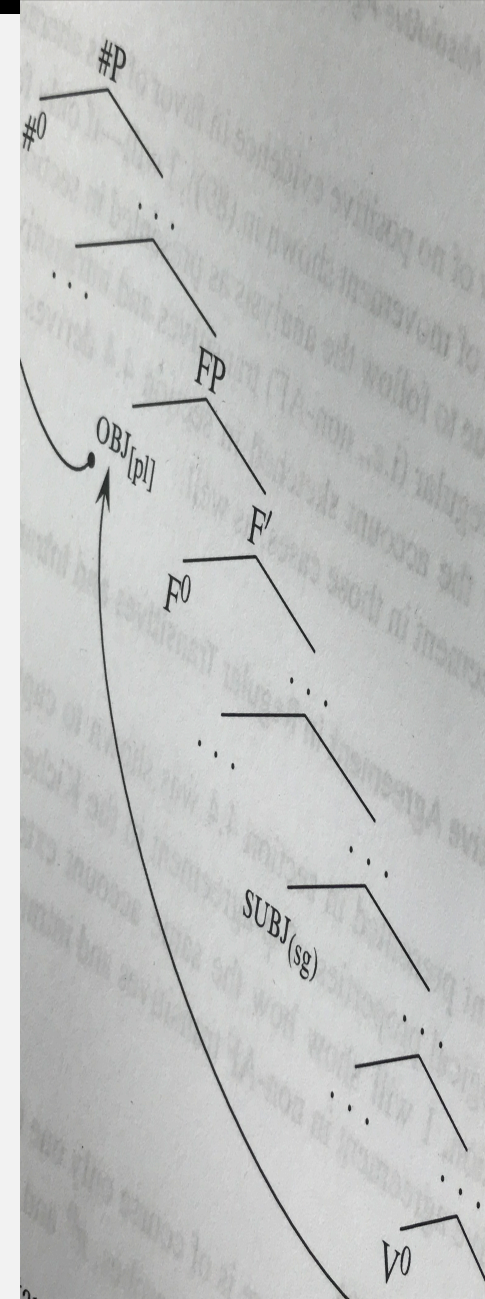- VSO and VOS orders are derived as the following in Galician:
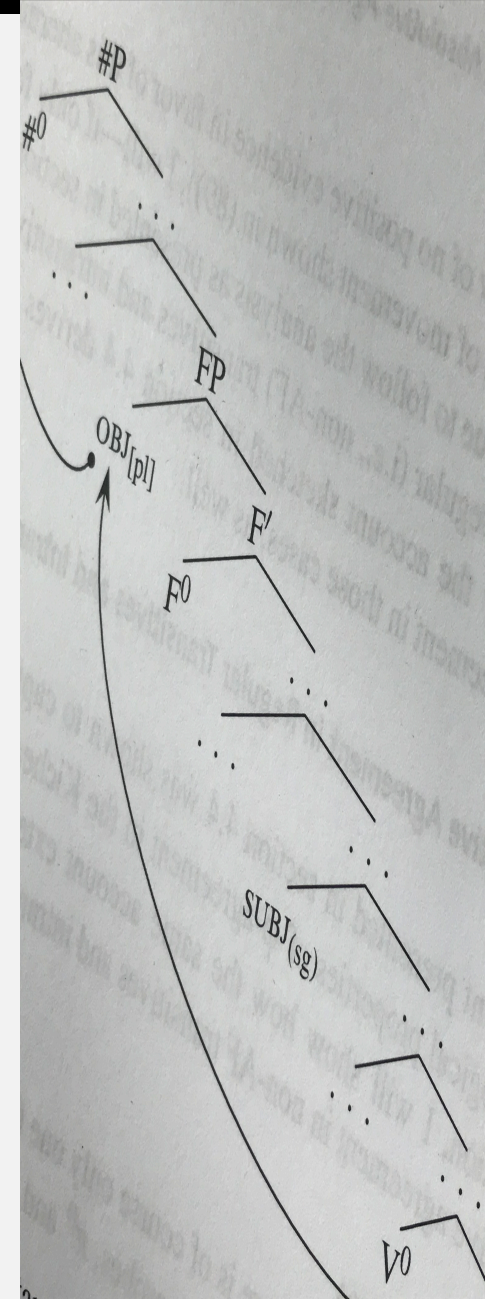
OBJECT SHIFT & RELATED MOVEMENT

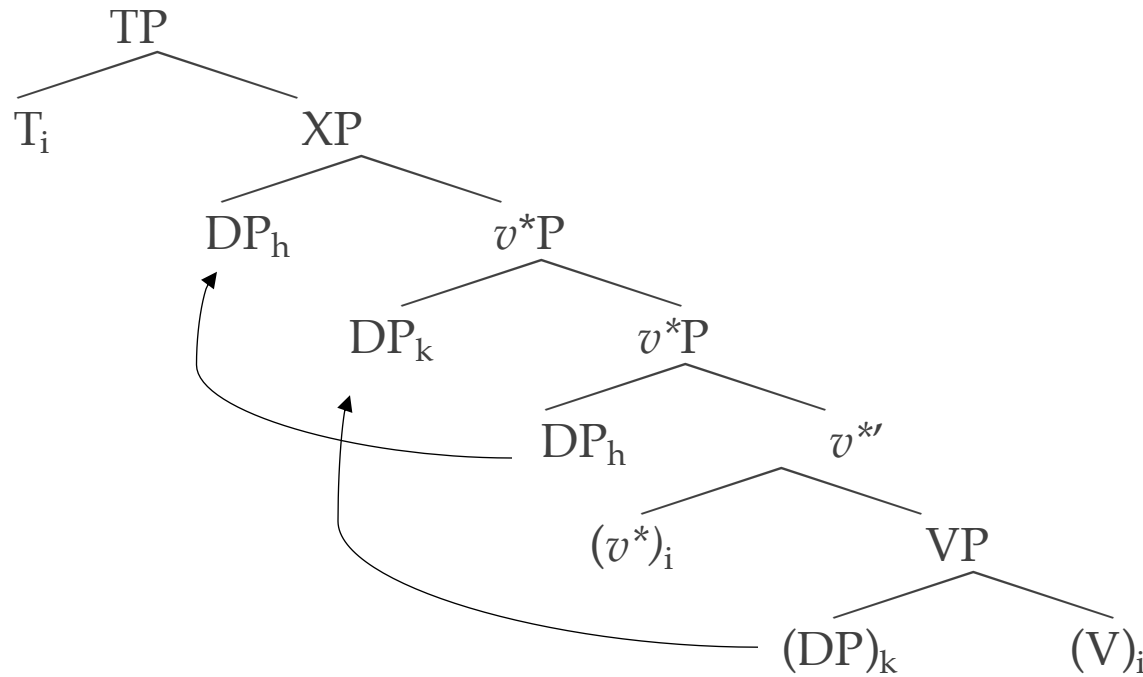*VSO/VOS orders and constituent movement*

8. *VOS order*

- The nominal object (DP$_k$) is shifted to an outer v*P-peripheral specifier
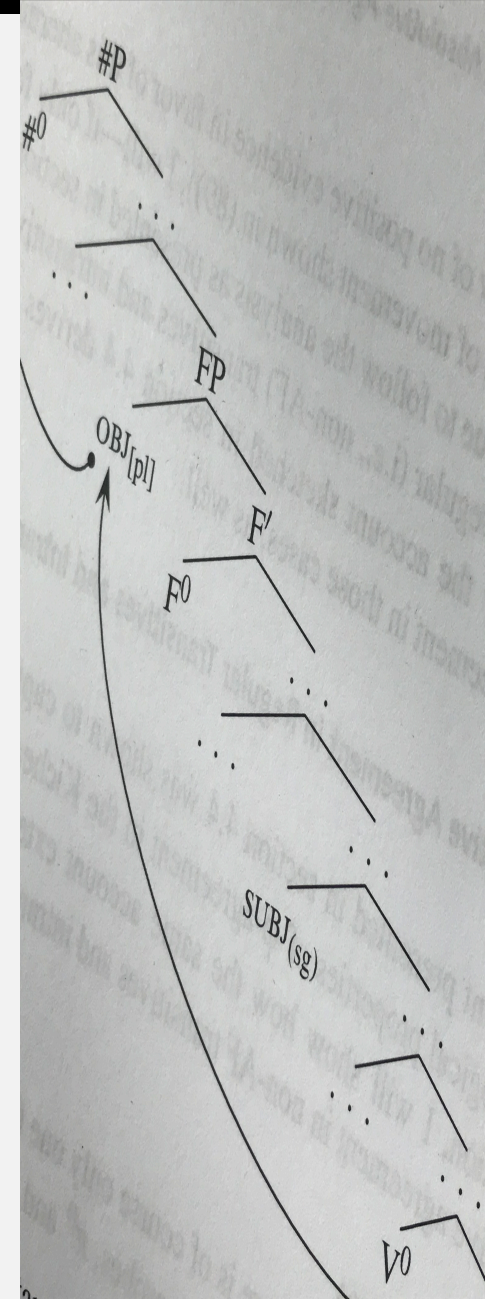
- The subject remains *in-situ*

OBJECT SHIFT & RELATED MOVEMENT

VSO/VOS orders and constituent movement

9. *VSO order*

- After object shift of DP_k has taken place, the subject is shifted over it to a further projection
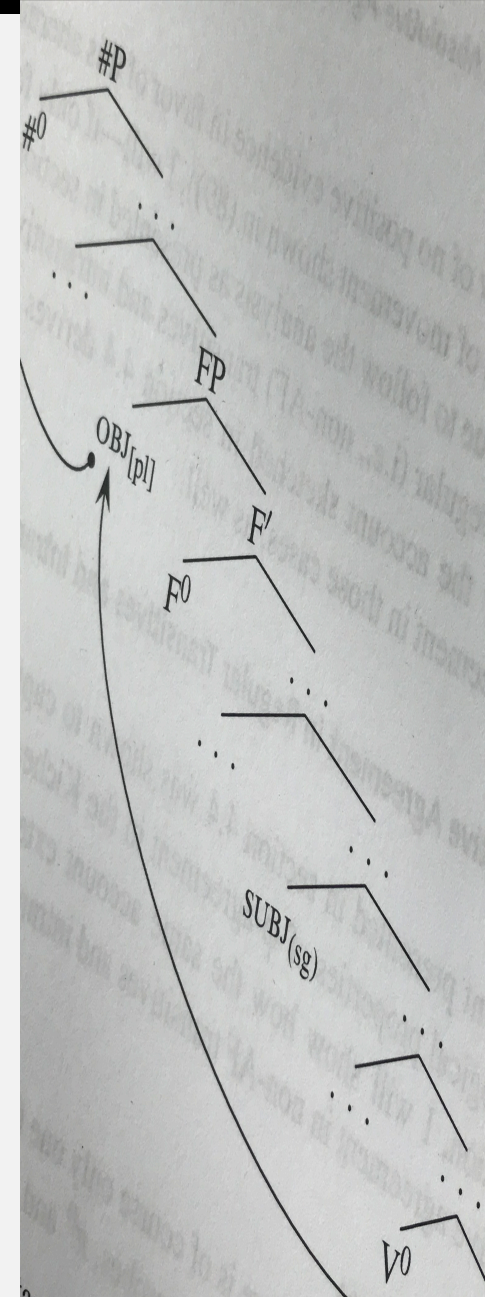
- Ordóñez (2007) called this 'SubP'

LICENSING & ORDER

Primary and secondary licensers

- Kalin (2018:149) provides an extensive list regarding possible obligatory (i.e., merged in every clause) and secondary (i.e., merged as a 'Last Resort') licenser combinations

- Following her observations, I claim that T is the obligatory licenser in Galician (and Romance more generally) and P is the secondary licenser (required in DOM contexts)

  - Some have claimed ApplP as a licenser for all DOM objects; however, the marking of applicatives (particularly in Romance) is not differential but obligatory

- As I have shown, P is only merged when
  - both nominals are postverbal and
  - the order derived is VOS

  Why should this be?

 In order for T to agree with the subject.

LICENSING & ORDER

Probing specifications for T

- When T probes, it will find the object first in VOS sentences and the subject first in VSO sentences per the derivational steps in (8) and (9)
- Imagining a feature-geometric bundle of ϕ-features (Harley & Ritter 2002, *a.o.*), let us say that part of T's probe specification is sensitive to [+HUMAN] in Galician

10. *Feature-geometric bundle*

$$[\phi]$$

$$[\pi] \qquad\qquad [\gamma]$$

[PARTICIPANT] [FEMININE] [PLURAL] [SPECIFIC] [ANIMATE]

[AUTHOR]   [DEFINITE] [HUMAN]

LICENSING & ORDER

Probing specifications for T

- Following Preminger's (2011, 2014) account of agreement in his *obligatory operations* model based on Rizzi's (1990) notion of *relativized probing*, a probe X specified for a feature under the [γ] branch will agree with the first visible goal that bears said feature
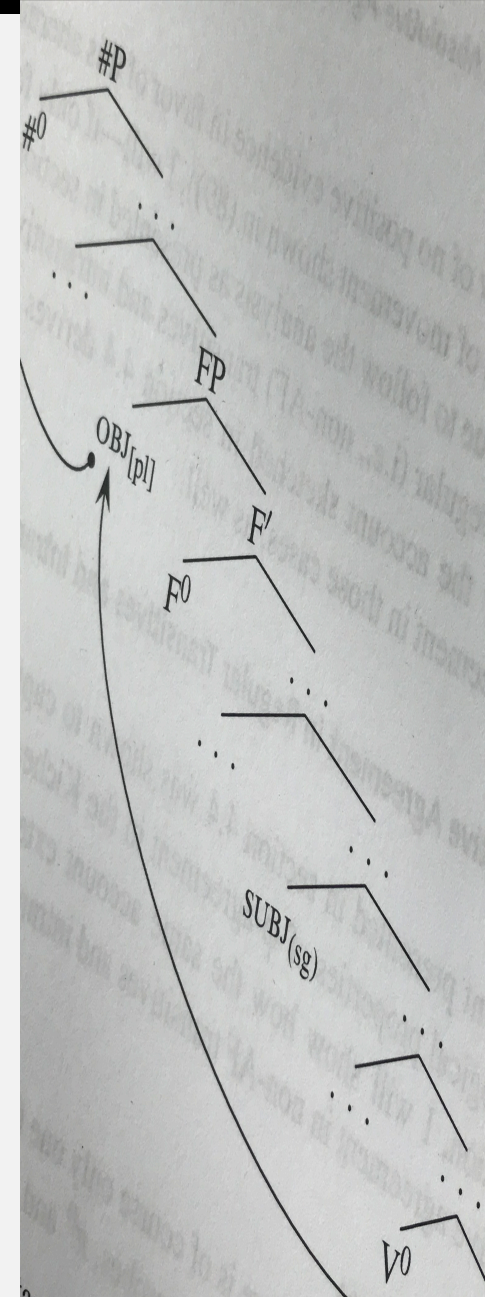
11. *Geometric φ-feature valuation*
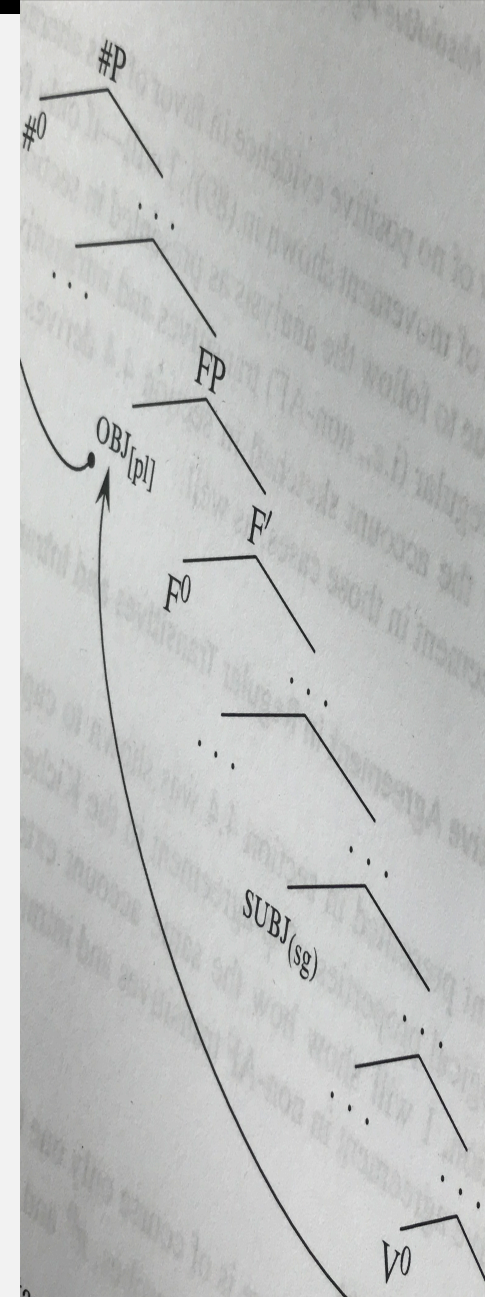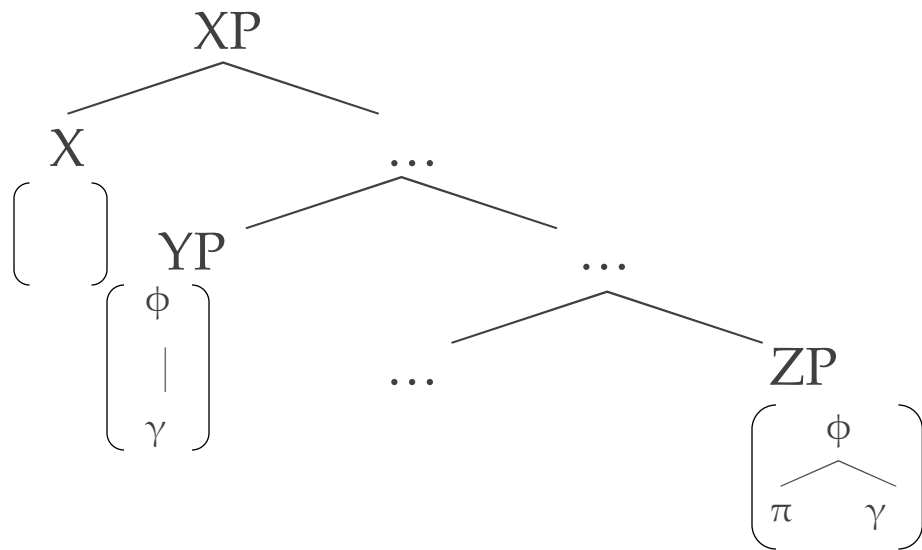
Probing specifications for T

12. a. Podou   o xardiñeiro   a maceira   (VSO)
       prune.PST.3SG   the gardener   the apple-tree
   b. Podou   a maceira   o xardiñeiro   (VOS)
       prune.PST.3SG   the apple-tree   the gardener

- When T probes for a goal specified for [+HUMAN], it will only stop when it finds *'o xardiñeiro'*
  - For (12a): this is the first constituent found with the correct featural specifications
  - For (12b): 'a maceira' does not bear the correct featural specifications
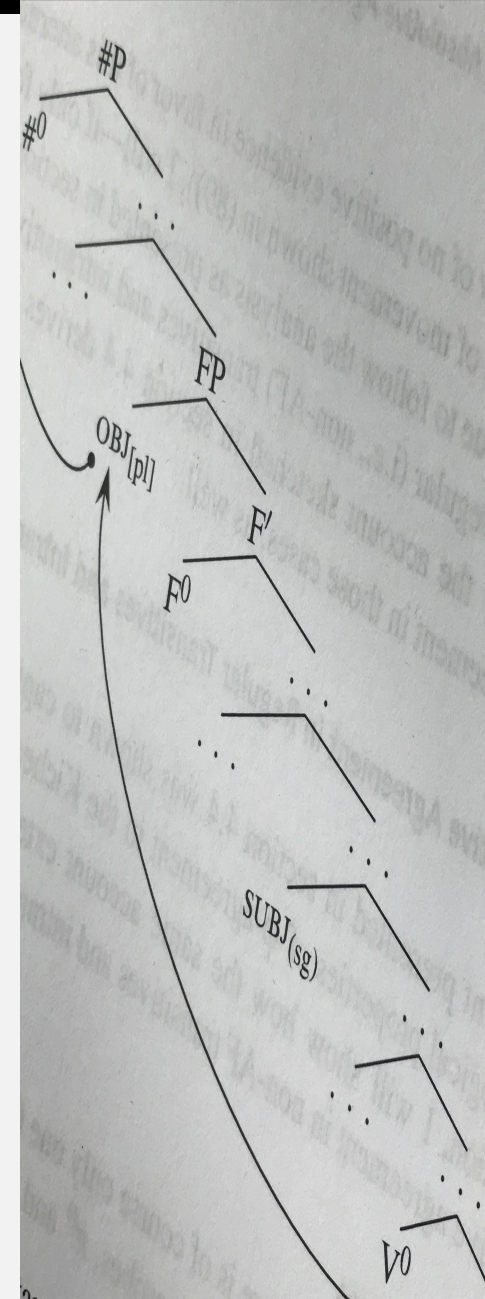
13.
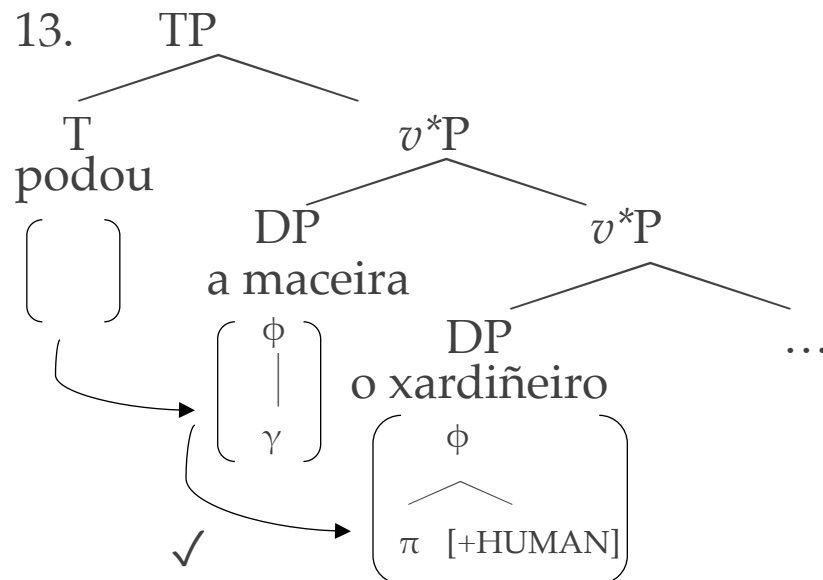
LICENSING & ORDER

Probing specifications for T: VSO

- For a probing T with two postverbal nominals with a [+HUMAN] feature, T will reach the subject first in VSO strings

14. Educan [os pais]   [os fillos]
    'Parents educate their children.'
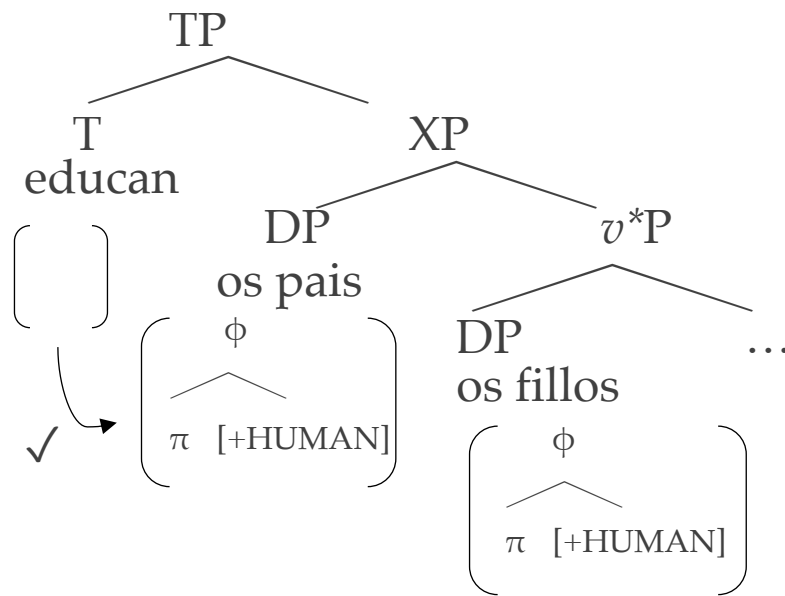
- In (14), T never reaches (or agrees with) *'os fillos'* because *'os pais'* fulfills its featural probe specification
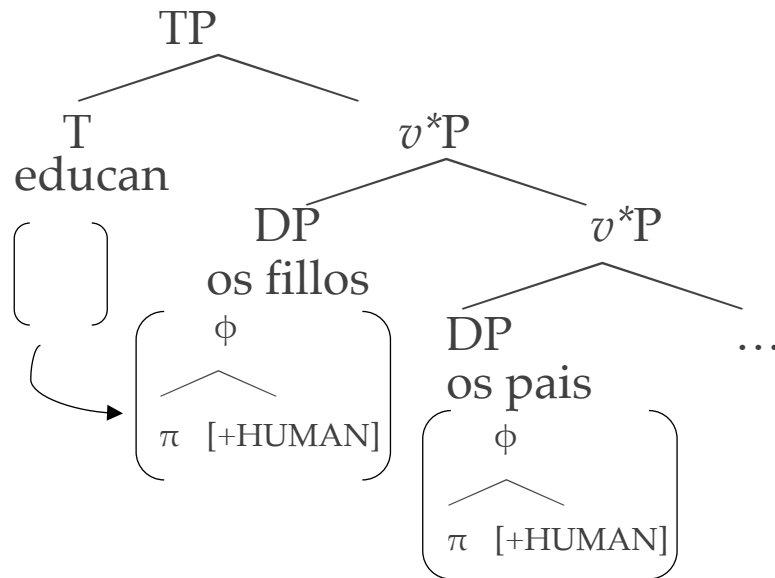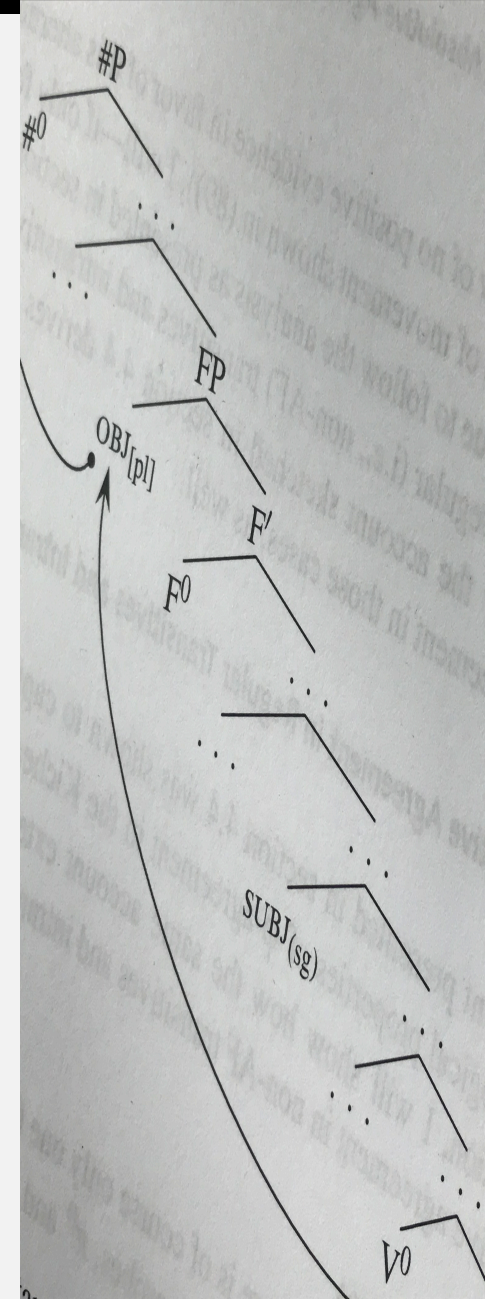
LICENSING & ORDER

Probing specifications for T: VOS

- However, in a VOS order, the subject will be above the subject
  - With the same featural specification as the subject, this will impede T to probe past the object and this nominal will erroneously agree with T

15. *Educan   [os fillos]   [os pais]
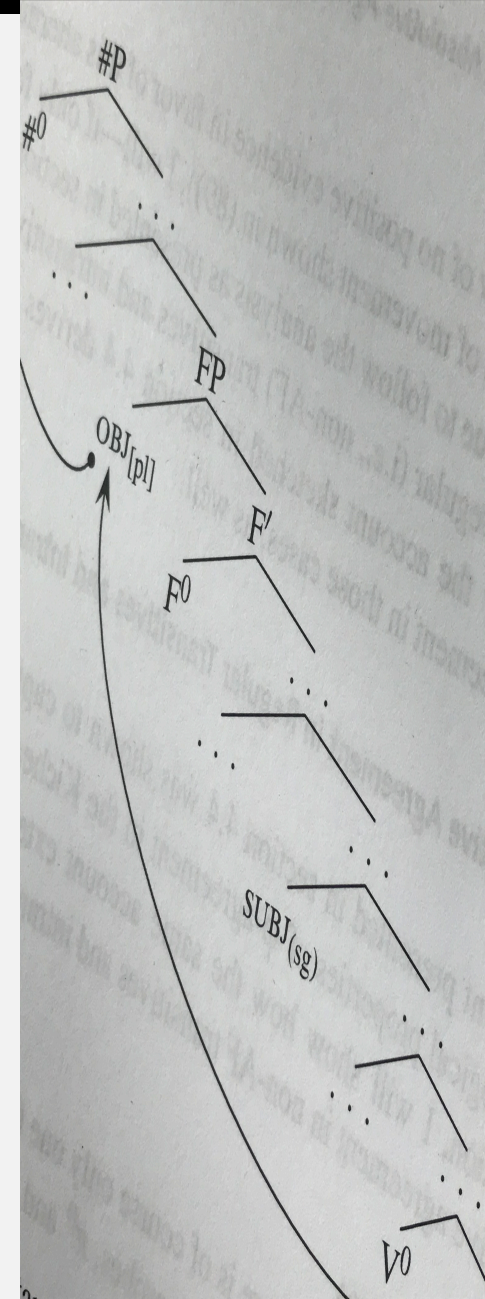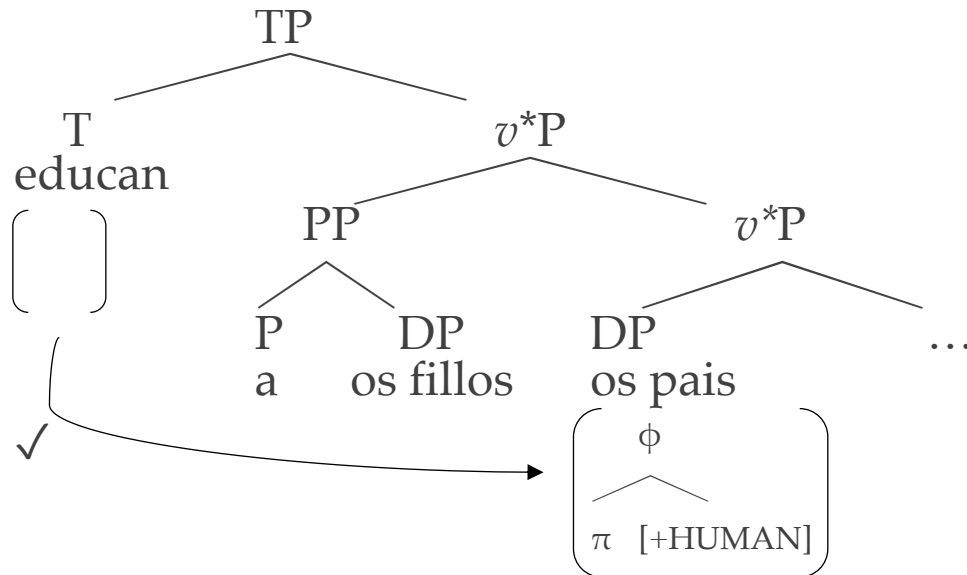   *Intended:* 'Parents educate their children'

LICENSING & ORDER

- In order for the subject nominal to agree with T, the shifted object must be 'invisible' to T's probe
- When DOM arises on the object, this is what we find: *'os fillos'* has already been assigned abstract Case by the adposition and may not agree with T
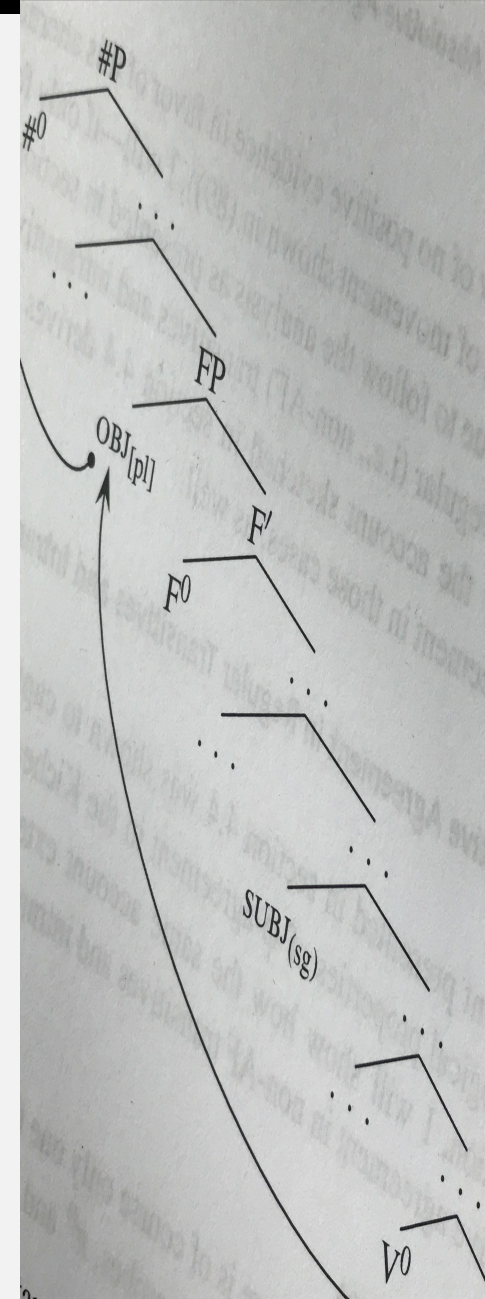
16. Educan   [**ós** fillos]   [os pais]
    'Parents educate their children.'

CONCLUSION

Summary of DOM in Galician

- Normally objects go unmarked/unlicensed in Galician

- DOM surfaces as the result of two factors:

  - VOS order

  - the object has the same (or higher) specification for [+ANIMATE] or [+HUMAN]

- I claim that this is in order for T's licensing the subject to proceed

- Although Kalin's (2018) & Kalin & Weiss' (2019) claim is that movement should not be seen as a prerequisite for DOM, Galician (along with Hindi; Bhatt & Anagnostopoulou 1996) only licenses objects that have clearly moved

GRACIÑAS!

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(E-mail for references)

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BEYOND [+HUMAN]

Extending DOM to [+ANIMATE] nominals

Does this apply to any other set of nominals?

- As [+HUMAN] is a sub-specification of [+ANIMATE], the same data should apply to two arguments marked [+ANIMATE]

17. a.   Persegue   o gato   o rato   (VSO)
             chase.PRS.3SG   the cat   the rat

    b.   Persegue   **ó** rato   o gato   (VOS)
              chase.PRS.3SG DOM-the rat   the cat
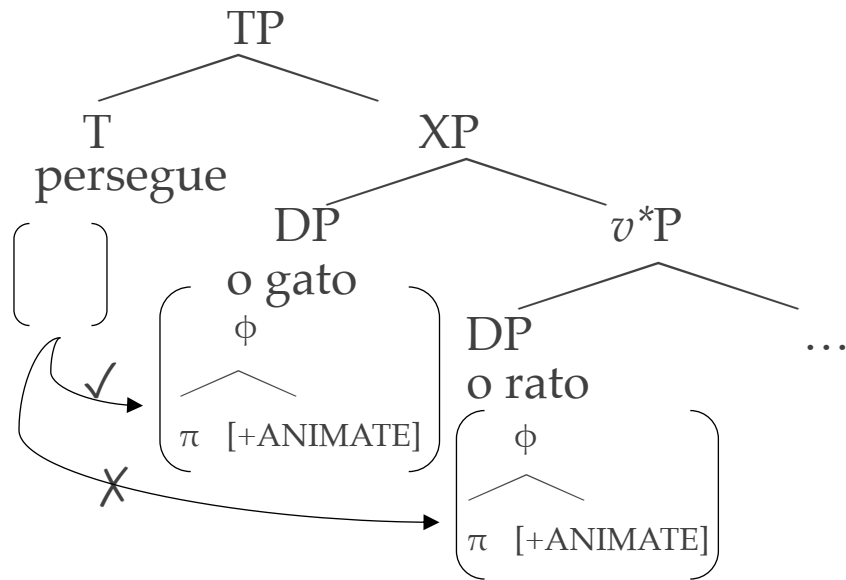   *'The cat chases the rat.'*

- Again, the object must be differentially marked when

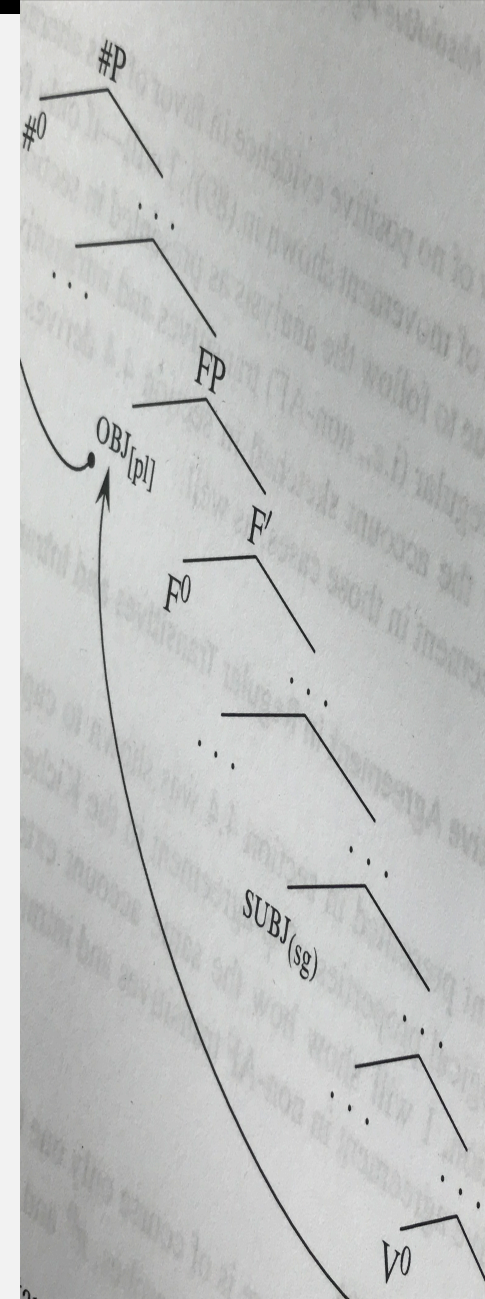 - both nominals are both [+ANIMATE]
  - the object precedes the subject
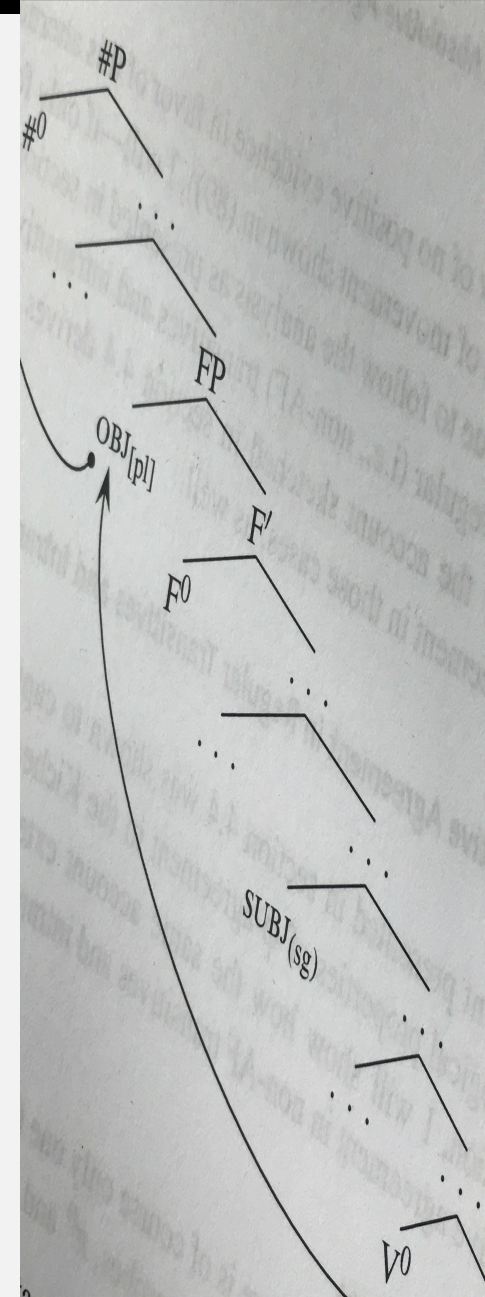
BEYOND [+HUMAN]

[+ANIMATE] probing specifications for T: VSO

18. Persegue   o gato   o rato
    chase.PRS.3SG the cat   the rat
    'The cat chases the rat.'

- As with our examples that bore [+HUMAN], we see the 'natural' postverbal order of both nominals is subject-object
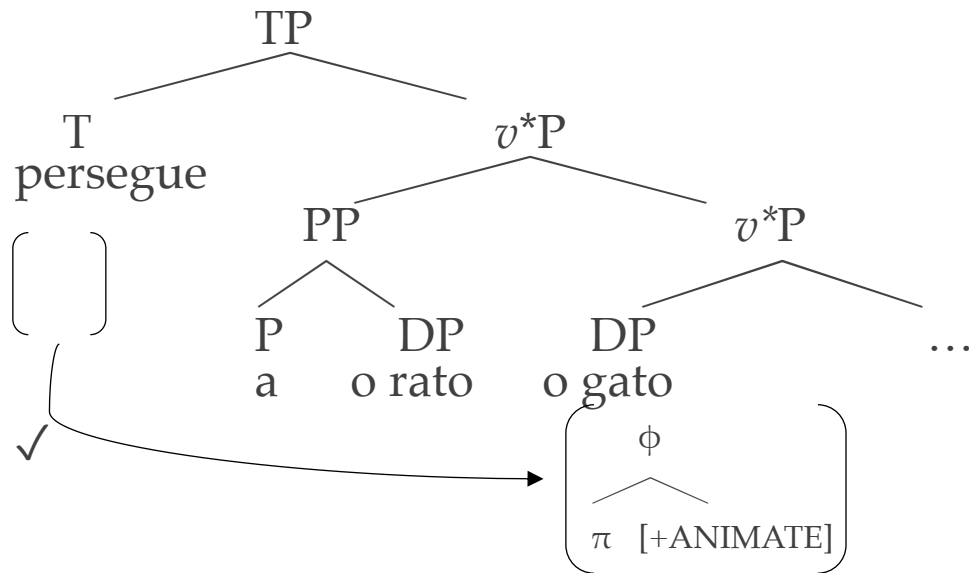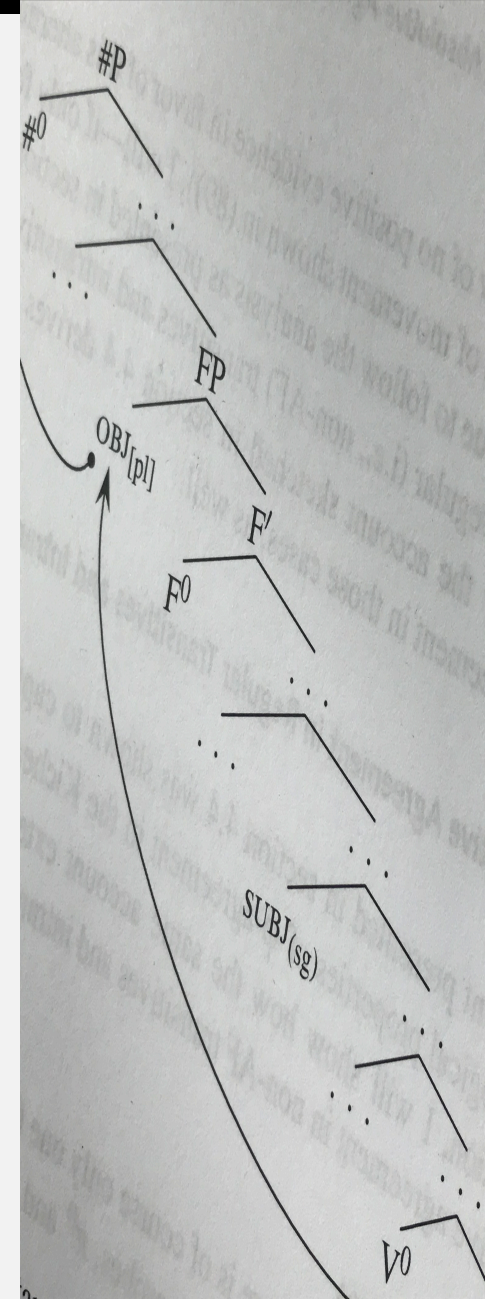- There is no differential marking on the object

BEYOND [+HUMAN]

[+ANIMATE] probing specifications for T: VSO

- As we saw with the [+HUMAN] marked nominals, *'o rato'* must be headed by the adposition *'a'* in order for *'o gato'* to agree with T

19. Persegue   **ó** rato   o gato
    chase.PRS.3SG DOM-the rat   the cat
    'The cat chases the rat.'
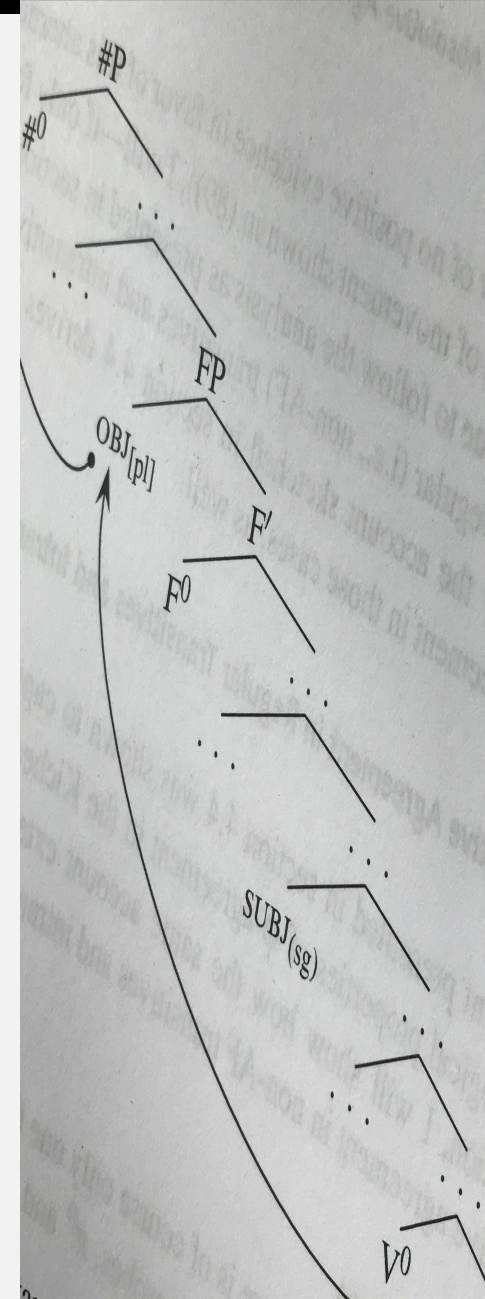
MIXED ANIMACY

[+HUMAN] & [+ANIMATE]

When one postverbal nominal bears [+ANIMATE] and another [+HUMAN]

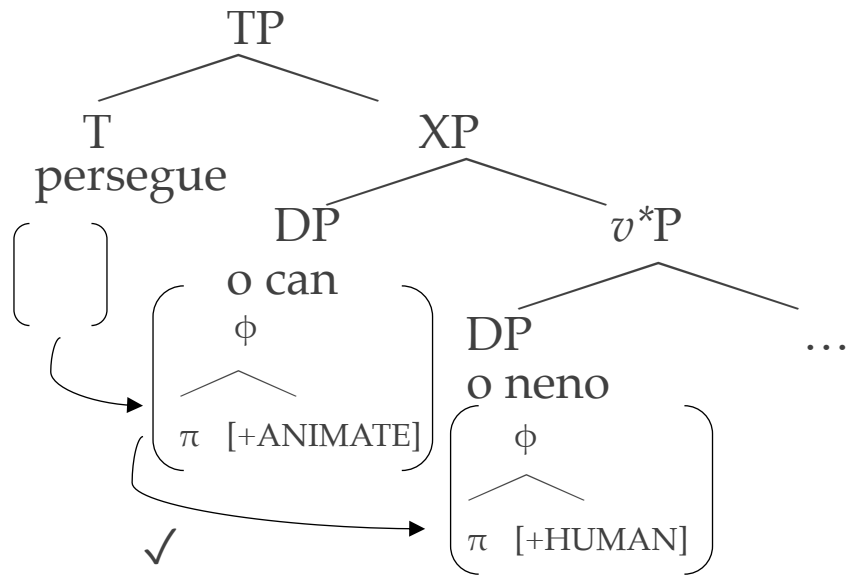20. a. Persegue   [o can]   [o neno]   (VOS)
     chase.PRS.3SG   the dog   the boy

    b. Persegue   [o neno]   [o can]   (VSO)
     chase.PRS.3SG   the boy   the dog
     'The boy chases the dog.'

21. Persegue   [**ó** neno]   [o can]   (VOS — DOM)
   chase.PRS.3SG   DOM-the boy   the dog
  'The dog chases the boy.'

22. *Persegue   [o can]   [o neno]
   chase.PRS.3SG   the dog   the boy
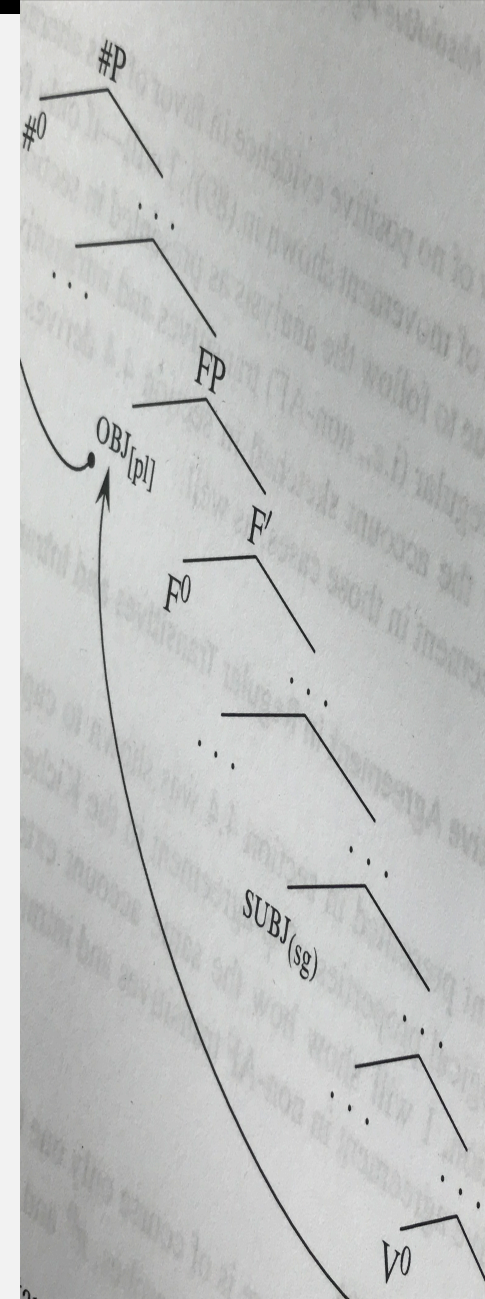   *Intended:* 'The dog chases the boy.'

MIXED ANIMACY

[+HUMAN] & [+ANIMATE]

23. Persegue   [o can]   [o neno]
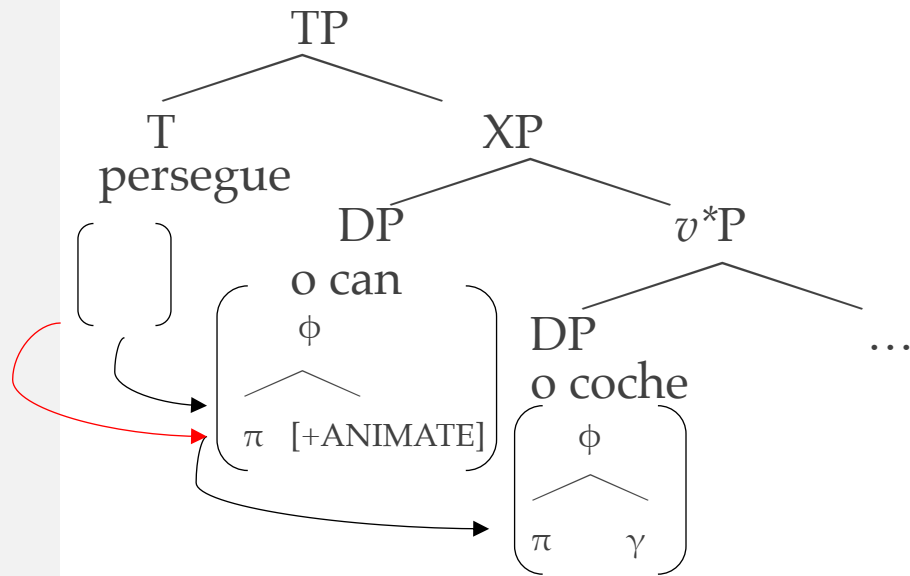   chase.PRS.3SG the dog   the boy
    'The boy chases the dog.'

TP

T
persegue

XP

DP
o can

φ
π [+ANIMATE]

v*P

DP
o neno

φ
π [+HUMAN]

…

✓

- T finds *'o can'*, but continues to probe for a [+HUMAN] feature.
- T eventually agrees with *'o neno'*
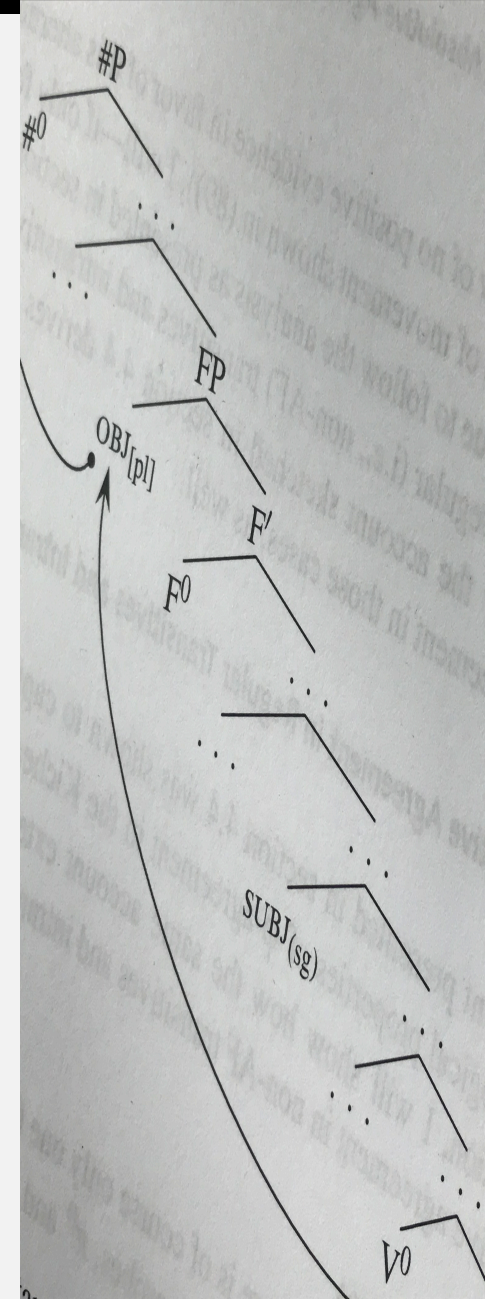
MIXED ANIMACY

No [+HUMAN] but [+ANIMATE]

24. Persegue   [o can]   [o coche]
    chase.PRS.3SG the dog   the car
    'The the dog chases the car.'

- T finds *'o can'*, but continues to probe for a [+HUMAN] feature
- T does not find a constituent bearing [+HUMAN], and probes again for the next specified feature
- T finds [+ANIMATE] borne by *'o can'* and agrees with it

NO ANIMACY

Is VOS possible?

When neither postverbal nominal bears [+HUMAN] or [+ANIMATE]

25. Derrubou   [o vento]   [a parede]
    demolish.PST.3SG   the wind   the wall
    'The wind knocked down the wall.'

26. ??? / *Derrubou   [a parede]   [o vento]
    demolish.PST.3SG   the wall   the wind
    Intended: 'The wind knocked down the wall.'

27. a. O vento   derrubou   a parede
      the wind   demolish.PST.3SG   the wall

    b. A parede,   derrubouna   o vento
      the wall   demolish.PST.3SG-CL$_{FEM.SG}$ the wall
      'The wind knocked down the wall.'