Chinese-type pro in a Romance-type null-subject language

Abstract

In this paper, I analyze null subjects in absolute clauses (AC) in Spanish, comparing them to finite-clause null subjects and infinitival subjects. AC null subjects mostly pattern like finite-clause null subjects, but they cannot be identified by a rich inflection and they require a grammatically encoded antecedent (like some infinitival subjects). I propose that AC null subjects must be identified by a topic operator through the operation of AGREE, a matching operation between two categories in which one of them copies its values to the other. AC null subjects remain unvalued in their own clause, seeking an antecedent in the preceding clause through a mediating null topic in the absolute clause’s periphery. Finite-clause null subjects, on the other hand, are identified within their own clause by verbal morphology through the same AGREE mechanism. Two distinct ways of relating null subjects to discourse-antecedents are proposed, one for finite-clause subjects, one for absolute-clause subjects. By proposing a distinct discourse-identification process not mediated by rich agreement, this proposal opens the door to a unified theory of null referential categories, in which discourse-topic identification plays a central role.

Keywords: Null subjects, Agree, correferencer, feature-valuation, absolute clauses, Spanish

1. Introduction

Traditional Generative theory assumes a clear division between the null subjects of inflected verbs (pro) in null subject languages (NSL) like Spanish or Italian, and null subjects of infinitival verbs (PRO) (with the exception of Borer 1989 and Kawasaki 1993). One crucial distinction involves Case: for pro, the availability of tense allows for Case assignment to the subject, whereas infinitivals, lacking tense, cannot. Lacking Case (or having a different type of Case, as in some analyses), overt DPs will not occur as subjects of infinitivals.

\* Thanks to Jimmy Bruno, Isabel Pérez Jiménez, Andrés Saab, Liliana Sánchez, three anonymous reviewers and the audiences at LSRL 40 (University of Washington) and at the University of Campinas (Brazil) for comments and discussion.
From another perspective, *pro* is available because the morphological properties of inflection encode enough information to recover its content (Perlmutter 1971; Rizzi 1986; Chomsky 1981 and Jaeggli and Safir 1989 among others). This intuitively distinguishes languages like English, without NS, from languages like Spanish, with a full spectrum of referential and non-referential NS. This intuitive notion of whether a language can recover the content of a null subject has been formalized as identification. Empirically, identification is an essential way to capture the distinction between English-type and Spanish-type languages. Conceptually, it captures the insight that the semantic interface requires enough overt information to process the content of a referring expression. In the case of a null category, such identification process must come from the surrounding environment. From this point of view, *PRO* must also be identified through control, a theory that has been traditionally disconnected from identification of *pro*.

While *pro*-identification can be argued to correlate with richness of verbal inflection, it is well-known that Chinese-type languages lack any verbal inflection but do allow null subjects (see below for full discussion). As Huang (1984) initially noted, the subject in these languages can be identified by a discourse topic. The possibility of *pro*-identification through a discourse topic is taken up again by Frascarelli (2007) for Italian, opening up the possibility that discourse identification plays a more fundamental role in identification of null referential categories across-the-board.

In this paper, I analyze the distribution of null subjects in absolute clauses (henceforth AC) in Spanish, showing that they have mixed properties of *PRO* and *pro*, and that they cannot be subsumed under the traditional analysis of finite-clause *pro* as identified by some property of inflection. On the one hand, the subject of ACs can be null or overt, suggesting that they are not *PRO* but *pro*. On the other hand, the inflectional properties of AC predicates lack the necessary information to identify *pro*. I will argue that *pro* in this context is identified by a discourse antecedent, grammatically encoded as a discourse topic. However, I argue that this discourse topic cannot be identified with the one proposed by Frascarelli (2007) for finite-clause *pro* in Italian. This proposal provides further evidence for the essential role of discourse operators in the identification of null categories, not only in Chinese-type languages, but also in Spanish-type.

The specific identification mechanism I will adopt is a version of Chomsky’s notion of AGREE (cf. Chomsky, 2000, 2001), by which two categories with matching features share the value of those features. I will build on Pesetsky & Torrego’s (2001, 2007, 2006, 2004) contributions in order to distinguish between feature valuation and interpretability. *Pro* is argued to be a category with unvalued features that must be identified by valuing those features. Valuation will be done by INFL, which in finite clauses will have the relevant content. In the case of ACs, INFL will also be unvalued, hence *pro* must seek another antecedent (a discourse topic). In order to respect the locality constraints on AGREE, I will argue that the discourse topic is located at the edge of the AC clause, and this topic will, in turn, seek an overt antecedent in an adjacent clause.

The main contributions this paper makes are 1) to describe an environment where *pro* cannot be identified by inflection, even within an rich-inflection language like Spanish, 2) to propose an AGREE-based mechanism to formalize the notion of discourse identification of *pro*, and 3) to open the door for a unified theory of null referential
categories, in which discourse-topic identification plays a central role.

The paper is organized as follows: section 2 discusses the distinctions proposed in the literature between pro and PRO, section 3 presents the distribution of null subjects in ACs. In section 3.1, I compare the distribution of null AC subjects, finite pro and PRO and in section 3.2, I turn to the conditions that antecedents of AC pro have. Section 4 presents previous accounts of finite pro identification, and section 5 builds on those accounts to provide an analysis of AC pro. In section 5.1, I review proposals on the structure of ACs and assume a version of Pérez Jiménez (2008); in section 5.2, I lay out the account of AC pro identification based on the AGREE mechanism. Section 6 analyzes the nature of the topic antecedent, with a particular focus on framing the current proposal against Frascarelli’s (2007) analysis (sect. 6.1), who argues that finite pro is also bound by a topic. Section 6.2 compares the distribution of finite pro and AC pro and section 6.3 derives those differences, proposing that finite pro has a broader range of binder antecedents than AC pro. Section 6.4 presents a case in which the AC pro is accommodated to be the main-clause topic. Finally, section 6.5 attempts to extend the analysis to cases in which the antecedent of the null subject is not an obvious topic of the main clause. Section 7 presents the overall conclusions of the article.

2. On PRO and pro

The null categories PRO and pro have been considered completely different null categories (with the exception of Borer, 1989 and Kawasaki, 1993). While both can appear as arguments (typically subjects) of verbs, their distribution is different: PRO usually appears as the subject of an infinitival clause, and is in complementary distribution with overt subjects. Pro, on the other hand, is usually the subject of a finite clause, and appears in the same environments as overt subjects. Furthermore, some languages have PRO and lack pro, while others have both.

Both categories are referentially dependent, specifically, pro is usually assumed to be a pronoun, whose referential content is determined in the same way as overt pronouns achieve their reference.

The distribution of pro has been accounted for by three different approaches: One very influential line of analysis (Taraldsen, 1978; Rizzi, 1986) suggests that pro is identified by the morphologically rich properties of inflection. Like any other null category, it is licensed under government, and it is identified by the category that licenses it. In order for identification to succeed, the governing head must have the relevant content to pass on to the null category. A second line of analysis represented most recently by Frascarelli (2007) suggests that identification of pro is done by a discourse topic in the left-periphery of the clause. Unlike in Rizzi’s approach, this identification process is not done under government, but rather as a distance relationship between the discourse topic and pro.

A third line of analysis suggests that the referential properties of null subjects reside in the inflectional properties themselves, not in an empty category (see, for example, Borer, 1986; Alexiadou and Anagnostopoulou 1998:529 and Barbosa, 2009).1

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1 If referentiality is housed in the inflectional properties of T, the only reason to postulate pro is the Ex-
In the Generative tradition, the distribution of PRO has been derived in one of three ways: As a by-product of the Binding Theory, by appealing to a distinction in Case assignment, or for obligatory control (see below), as an instance of movement. The preponderant view before the early 1990s assumed that PRO is both an anaphor and a pronominal, hence it can only appear wherever its binding domain cannot be determined, i.e. in ungoverned positions. Since infinitival inflection does not govern the subject position, one expects PRO to be possible precisely in that position.

The second approach assumes that PRO can only appear in positions where it does not receive Case, typically as subject of infinitivals, which cannot assign Nominative. Conversely, assuming that overt NPs require Case, it also follows that overt NPs cannot appear as subjects of infinitival clauses, unless some other category (like for) independently assigns them Case.

For both conceptual and empirical reasons, Chomsky and Lasnik (1993) argue that PRO does receive Case, specifically “null case”, which can only be checked by the T⁰ of an infinitival clause. Hornstein (2003:17) raises some questions for this proposal, particularly for the version suggested by Martin (1996), and suggests the alternative that Obligatorily controlled PRO is a trace of movement.

The literature has traditionally recognized at least two kinds of PRO: obligatorily controlled (OC) and non-obligatorily controlled (NOC). Their distributional and interpretive properties are clearly distinct, as Hornstein (2000:32-33) summarizes: OC requires an obligatory, local and c-commanding antecedent. The antecedent cannot be split, it cannot have strict identity in ellipsis contexts, and it OC PRO only accepts de se readings (cf. (1d-f)). None of these properties hold of NOC, as seen in (2).

(1) a. *It was expected PRO to shave himself.
b. *John thinks that it was expected PRO to shave himself.
c. *John’s campaign expects PRO to shave himself.
d. *John, told Mary, PRO_i+j to leave together.
e. John expects PRO to win and Bill does too (=Bill win).
f. The unfortunate expects PRO to get a medal (believes of himself).

(2) a. It was believed that PRO shaving was important.
b. John, thinks that it was believed that PRO_i shaving himself was important.
c. Clinton’s campaign believes that PRO_i keeping his sex life under control is important for electoral success.
d. John, told Mary, that PRO_i+j leaving together would be great.
e. John thinks that PRO getting his resumé in order is important and Bill does too (=getting John’s resumé in order).

tended Projection Principle (EPP). However, Alexiadou and Anagnostopoulou (1998:531) have also argued that the EPP is satisfied by referential agreement. In Frascarelli’s (2007) analysis, pro identification is not directly linked to T, but rather to an [+aboutness] feature related to the left periphery.
f. The unfortunate believes that PRO getting a medal would be boring (not necessarily believes of himself).

From this short presentation, it should be clear that pro and PRO have very different distributions and syntactic properties: pro has Case like other overt NPs, PRO lacks Case (or gets a different one, depending on the analysis). Pro appears as the subject of finite clauses in languages with the right type of inflection, PRO is not constrained by the type of agreement a language displays. Finally, pro is connected, at least in the Romance subset of NSLs to the availability of alternative SV/VS word orders, whereas PRO is not necessarily so (since it exists in languages where no such word order variation exists).

In the next sections, I will review a case in which the distinction between pro and PRO breaks down. Specifically, I will argue that certain null subjects in Spanish display the properties of pro but are not identified by agreement. Rather, they are identified by a topic operator (as Frascarelli, 2007 proposes), but in ways that are different from pro in inflected clauses. This conclusion converges with Borer’s proposal (cf. Borer, 1989) that subjects of gerunds and infinitival are pro, identified through an antecedent in the matrix clause.

3. Null subjects in absolute constructions

Absolute constructions (AC) are adjunct clausal structures with a predicate and a subject, as illustrated in (3) (cf. Hernanz, 1991; De Miguel, 1992; Gunnarson, 1994; López, 1994; Marin, 2000; Alcázar, 2007; Alcázar and Saltarelli, 2007; Pérez Jiménez, 2008; Bruno, 2011). Several categories can appear as a predicate of the AC, among them participials, PPs, APs, and adverbs (cf. (3a-d) respectively).²

(3) a. Muert-o  el  perro,  se acabo  la rabia.
   dead-MASC.SG the.SG.MASC dog.SG.MASC CL finished the rabbies
   ‘With the dog dead, rabbies was over.’

   b. En su casa para poder recibir el paquete, Doris pudo evitar
   in her house to be able to receive the packet, Doris could avoid
   in her house to avoid receiving the packet, Doris could avoid

²As an anonymous reviewer points out, it is important to distinguish absolute clauses of the type discussed in this paper from other adjunct clauses headed by infinitives and gerunds. The latter two allow se and can have non-grammatically encoded antecedents, as shown in (i)-(ii) and (iii)-(iv) respectively. ACs lack these two properties, as I will show below.

i. De castigar a los culpables, todo andaría mejor
   of punish.CL to the guilty, everything would go better
   ‘If the guilty were punished, everything would be better.’

ii. A: ¿Cuándo la encontraste muerta?
   A: ‘When did you find her dead?’

   B: Al llegar a casa.
   B: ‘Upon arriving to the house.’
mojarse.
get.CL
‘(Being) at home to be able to receive the package, Doris could avoid getting wet.

(c) Incómod-o por el incidente, Jaime evitó encontrarse
uncomfortable-MASC.SG by the incident, Jaime avoided run into
con su jefe.
with his boss
‘Uncomfortable about the incident, Jaime avoided running into his boss.’

d. Lejos ya el fantasma de la guerra, la agricultura volvió a
far already the ghost of the war the agriculture started to
desarrollarse.
develop.CL
‘The ghost of war far away, agriculture started to develop.’

Under certain circumstances, the subject of the AC can be null, as seen in (3b-c) and

(4) Una vez muert-o, el perr-o no pudo morder más.
| once dead-MASC.SG the.MASC.SG dog-MASC.SG not could bite more
| ‘Once dead, the dog could bite no more.’

Given the interpretation of these constructions, it seems clear that a null subject is

present: The interpretation of (3b-c) involves someone being in the house and being
uncomfortable respectively, and that subject must be coreferential with an argument in
the main clause (Doris and Jaime respectively). The fact that the AC subject can be
null raises the issue of what type of null category it is and how it is identified.

3.1. The nature of the AC null subject

The typology of referential null categories includes finite pro, OC and NOC PRO. Comparing the properties of these elements with those of AC subjects suggests a mixed

pattern: For some properties, the AC subject patterns with finite pro, for others, it
behaves like OC PRO and for a third set, it patterns with NOC PRO.

Regarding similarities with finite pro, we find that AC null subjects alternate with
overt ones, as already seen in the contrast between (3a) and (4). Second, an overt
pronoun in the position of pro would receive nominative Case, as seen in (5). Both of
these properties suggest that the AC null subject is pro.

3The fact that there is a clear prosodic boundary between the predicate and the following constituent in (3b-d) and (4) argue against an analysis where the following DP (Doris, Jaime, la agricultura ‘the agriculture’ and el perro ‘the dog’ respectively) is the subject of the AC. Bruno (2011) adds that following Marín (2000) and Dini (1994) for Italian, the subject position coincides with a difference in temporal ordering between the clauses: [Pred+S] imposes a precedence reading (cf. (3a)), whereas [Pred+∅] does not (cf. (3b-d)).
(5) *El profesor dividió a los estudiantes en niños y niñas y cada grupo se sentó. Una vez sentad-a-s ell-a-s, el examen empezó.*

The teacher divided the students in two groups of boys and girls and each group sat. Once they (the girls) were sat, the exam began.

On the other hand, AC pro differs from finite pro with respect to how it is identified. AC predicates provide no morphological clue about the person of the null subject (cf. (3a, c) above), and in some cases not even about number or gender (cf. (3b, d)). If AC pro and finite pro are the same grammatical object, the difference in morphological richness between AC predicates and finite verbs suggests that morphology is not a necessary condition to identify them.

While the existence of pro in languages without morphological person has been known for some time, it is usually assumed that they are identified and licensed in a different way from those in languages with rich morphology (cf. Huang, 1984, 1987, 1989). In this sense, these constructions suggest that a languages like Spanish with rich inflection resembles much more a language like Chinese without inflection than previously thought. See below for further discussion.

As I will show below, AC pro requires an antecedent, and in this sense it could be considered different from finite, referential pro. However, it has been argued that finite pro also requires a discourse antecedent. Thus, the following sentence uttered out-of-the blue is at least infelicitous, precisely because it lacks an antecedent. I will return to this issue below.


‘S/he entered the room. S/he looked for her/his keys. Then s/he left.’

Turning now to a comparison between AC pro and PRO, we can see that the patterns are mixed with respect to the properties presented in (1)-(2). First, AC pro must have an antecedent: In (7), the only potential antecedent is feminine, and because of gender clash, it cannot identify pro, hence the sentence is ungrammatical.4 Second, antecedents that are c-commanding are much better than those that aren’t, as seen in (8). Thus, in (8a), the more deeply embedded constituent de Miguel ‘of Miguel’ is much harder to interpret as the antecedent of pro than the prenominal possessive (cf. (8b)).

(7) *Una vez llegad-o pro, a la casa, María abrió la puerta.*

‘Once he arrived at the house, Maria opened the door.’

(8) a. *Hart-o pro, de discutir, las palabras de Miguel, molestaron a sick-MASC.SG pro of argue the words of Miguel bothered to

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4 A reviewer points out that if there is another constituent that can serve as antecedent, the sentence can be rescued. This is true, and I think it underlines the point that AC pro requires an antecedent.
Mónica.
Monica
‘(Miguel being) sick of it, the words of Miguel bothered Monica.’

b. Hart-o pro, de discutir, sus, palabras molestaron a Mónica.
sick-MASC.SG pro of argue POSS words bothered to Monica
‘(Miguel being) sick of it, the words of Miguel bothered Monica.’

However, as I will argue below, the relevant issue is not c-command, but how easily a constituent can be interpreted as a topic. In that sense, an anonymous reviewer suggests the following example, where for him/her, the embedded DP can be the antecedent of pro, even though there is no antecedent c-command.5

(9) Curtido por años de dolor y sufrimiento, las palabras de Miguel solo transmitían tristeza.
seasoned by years of pain and suffering, the words of Miguel only transmitted sadness
‘Seasoned by years of pain and suffering, Miguel’s words only transmitted sadness.’

Like in the case of OC pro, the antecedent of the AC pro must be local. In the following example, pro cannot pick up the distant antecedent Marta:

(10) ??Durante la recepción, primero entró Marta, inmediatamente después durante the reception first entered Marta, immediately after empezó a llover. Saludada pro, el presidente continuó con el started to rain greeted-FEM.SG she, the president continued with the evento.
event
‘During the reception, first Maria entered, immediately after, it started to rain. (Having) greeted (her), the president continued with the event.’

It is not possible to construct the relevant examples for sloppy identity with ACs, because they disallow ellipsis. Regarding the availability of split antecedents, they are possible, as seen in (11).

(11) Una vez invitad-a-s proi, María le dijo a Silvia, que comprara un once invited-FEM.PL pro Maria CL told to Silvia that buy a regalo.
gift
‘Once invited, Maria told Silvia to buy a gift.’

Finally, AC pro’s interpretation must be de se. Consider, for example the situation in (12) (after Pranav, 2006:14), which forces a de se reading. In that context, neither the AC in (12a) nor the OC in (12b) are possible, but the small clause counterpart of (12a) without the AC is possible.

5Coreference in this example is hard to obtain for me.
(12) John and his friends participated in a race, and three of them finished very close, although John was the winner. A local newspaper published a picture where it is clear that one of the racers has finished first, but his identity is obscured by an unexpected reflection. Not recognizing the winner, John thinks when he sees the photo: “That guy was the winner.”

a. ??Una vez retratad-o en el periódico, Juan se declaró ganador.

Once pictured-MASC.SG in the newspaper, Juan CL declared winner.

‘Once pictured in the newspaper, Juan declared himself the winner.’

b. ??Juan quiere ser elegid-o ganador.

Juan wants be chosen-MASC.SG winner

‘Juan wants to be chosen as the winner.’

c. Juan se declaró ganador

Juan CL chooses winner

‘Juan chose himself as the winner.’

In the table presented in (13), I summarize the patterns just described with respect to the properties of AC pro, finite pro, NOC and OC PRO.

(13) Summary of properties of null subjects.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>OC PRO</th>
<th>NOC PRO</th>
<th>AC pro</th>
<th>Fin pro</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Required Antecedent</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overt subj. Alteration</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nomin. Case-marking</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local antecedent</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-commanding antecedent</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Split antecedent</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obligatory de se readings</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From this table, we can conclude that AC pro shares most of its properties with finite

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6An anonymous reviewer points out that the impossibility of having se with ACs groups them with OC PRO. One might add this to the differences between those two null categories and finite pro, however, all clitics are banned from AC constructions, and this is regardless of whether they have an overt or null subject. Pérez Jiménez (2008) derives this property from the null nature of inflection.
pro, with the exception that in most cases, AC pro requires a local antecedent. In the following sections, I will first explore the precise conditions for antecedenthood of AC pro.

3.2. The topic nature of the null subject antecedent

Pérez Jiménez (2008:264) points out that AC null subjects are overwhelmingly identified through the subject of the main clause, as in (4) above, where pro is identified as coreferential with *el perro* ‘the dog’. Quoting Kortmann (1991), she notes that 91% of antecedents of ACs in English are also subjects.

However, it is also possible to have a different argument (cf. (14)-(15)) or even adjunct as antecedent, as seen in (16) (example (14) is from Pérez Jiménez, 2008:121; (15), after Pérez Jiménez, 2008:270 ex. (38)).

(14) Demasiado bonit-o pro, como para poder ocultarlo sin too beautiful-MASC.SG so as to be able hide.CL without levantar sospechas, Ana decidió devolver el paquete, al director.
raising suspicion, Ana decided return the package to the director.
‘Too beautiful so as to be able to hide it without raising suspicion, Ana decided to return the package to the director.’

(15) Exhaust-a-s pro, por el esfuerzo realizado, el entrenador les dio a exhausted-FEM-PL pro by the effort done, the coach CL gave to l-a-s jugador-a-si a day of rest
the-FEM-PL player-FEM-PL a day of rest
‘Exhausted by the effort done, the coach gave the players a day to rest.’

(16) Una vez identificad-o-s pro, el abogado repartió la herencia once identified-MASC-PL pro the lawyer distributed the inheritance destinada para los herederos,.
destined for the beneficiaries
‘Once identified, the lawyer distributed the inheritance destined for the beneficiaries.’

In the majority of cases, the antecedent is in the main clause, but in certain instances, it can be in the preceding clause, as seen in (17).

(17) El arquitecto diseñó la casa, Una vez construid-a pro, la inmobiliaria the architect designed the house once built-FEM.SG pro the developer se enriqueció.
CL got rich
‘The architect designed the building Once designed the developer sold it.’

The antecedent of the AC subject pro cannot be an existential indefinite NP, as seen in (18a). In these examples, a bare NP with an indefinite interpretation cannot be the antecedent of the AC pro, whereas a definite DP can (cf. (18b)).

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7Cf. Pérez Jiménez (2008:170, 212-3) for a slightly different interpretation of this observation: For her, AC subjects cannot be interpreted as existential indefinites.
(18) a. *En el desfile pasaron camiones. Una vez acabad-o-s de pasar, pro, llegaron motos.
   ‘During the parade, trucks went by. Once (trucks were) finished going by, motorbikes arrived.’

   b. En el desfile pasaron los camiones. Una vez acabad-o-s de pasar, pro, llegaron las motos.
   ‘During the parade, the trucks went by. Once (the trucks were) finished going by, the motorbikes arrived.’

   If the indefinite is modified, it can be an antecedent (thanks to an anonymous reviewer for pointing out this example). However, in that case, they are no longer pure existential contexts: The presence of the modifying adjective makes them closer to specific indefinites. As is well-known, non-specific indefinites cannot occur as subjects of individual-level predicates, but specific indefinites can (cf. Erteschik-Shir, 1997:39-40). Erteschik-Shir attributes this difference to their discourse status.

   (19) La empresa compró camiones usados y prometió que, [una vez puestos en condiciones], serán entregados a los empleados.
   ‘The company bought used trucks and promised that, once fixed up, they will be delivered to the employees.’

   The overwhelming subject-orientation, as well as the contrast between a bare NP and a definite DP as possible antecedents of the subject pro suggest that the antecedent of the AC pro has to be a topic (cf. Pérez Jiménez, 2008:263 and Kawasaki, 1993 for similar conclusions). This conclusion would be compatible with the observation above regarding the impossibility of bare indefinites as antecedents of AC por, since indefinite DPs usually do not make good topics. Gundel and Fretheim (2004:180) quote example (20) from Gundel (1988) to illustrate this point. Although in (20a) the pronoun can refer back to an indefinite in the preceding clause, in (20b) this is no longer possible because the indefinite is the topic of the clause. The same restriction against indefinite topics can explain the impossibility of having clitic left-dislocated indefinites in Romance, as illustrated in (21) (cf. Cinque, 1990; Zubizarreta, 1998; Zagona, 2002).

   (20) a. We can’t leave yet. A window is still open. It’s the one in your bedroom.
   b. *A window, it’s still open.

   (21) *Un libro cualquiera lo puedes comprar en esa librería.
   a book whichever CL can buy in that bookstore
   ‘One book or another, you can buy in that library.’
However, as an anonymous reviewer points out, it is possible to have indefinite NPs as topics in Spanish, as seen in examples such as (22)-(23). In the second case, the null object in the answer is interpreted as the topic of the preceding question.

(22) *Dinero, nunca tuve tanto.*

money, never had so much
‘Money, I never had so much.’

(23) A. ¿*Viste perros?*

saw dogs
‘Did you see dogs?’

B. *Sí, vi.*

yes, saw
‘Yes, I saw (some).’

It should be noted that even in these cases it is impossible to interpret the null categories’s antecedent as definite (i.e. as ‘the recently mentioned dogs’, for example). In section 6, I will return to the nature of the antecedent of AC *pro*.

To summarize up to this point, we have established the generalizations in (24).

(24) a. The AC *pro* subject must have a grammatically encoded antecedent in another (typically main) clause.

b. The antecedent tends to be the subject of the adjacent clause.

c. The antecedent of AC *pro* is interpreted as a (discourse) topic.

In the next section I turn to the issue of how how *pro* is identified in ACs. First, I will review the proposed views on this issue, and then advance a different account based on topic identification.

4. Identifying *pro*

A fairly traditional intuition connects null subjects to the availability of rich agreement morphology. As Gilligan’s (1987) typological survey shows, this intuition is crosslinguistically robust, although there are notable exceptions in two directions: languages with null subjects and no agreement (Chinese-type) and very few languages with rich agreement and no null subjects. Gilligan’s survey of over 100 languages finds that 76 of them have agreement and null thematic subjects, and 17 have null thematic subjects without agreement. Only two of the languages have agreement and no null subjects.

Rizzi (1986) constitutes an influential formalization of the grammar of null subjects. In his account, *pro* is subject to a licensing and an identification condition, presented in (25) (from Rizzi, 1986:519-20).

(25) a. *Licensing of pro*: *pro* is governed by $X^0$.

b. *Identification of pro*: Let $X$ be the licensing head of an occurrence of *pro*: then *pro* has the grammatical specification of the features on the $X$ coindexed with it.
Holmberg (2005) points out that from a Minimalist perspective, the idea of copying phi-features from T/AGR to pro is no longer tenable, since the φ-features on T are uninterpretable, hence they cannot serve to identify the referential properties of pro. Within this particular version of agreement theory, one is left with two possibilities: a) either the set of φ-features of AGR is interpretable, hence pro is unnecessary, or b) pro has interpretable φ-features that value the uninterpretable features of AGR. As a consequence, nullness is simply a phonological matter. Versions of a) are articulated in Contreras (1991); Kato (1999); Alexiadou and Anagnostopoulou (1998); Barbosa (1995, 2009); Jelinek (1984). Many of these proposals usually take preverbal subjects to be in an A-bar position, frequently assimilated to that of clitic left-dislocated constituents. Versions of b) are defended by Holmberg (2005); Roberts (2010) and Saab (2009), among others.

Note that if one assumes a version of agreement theory that distinguishes between uninterpretable and unvalued features (cf. for example Pesetsky and Torrego, 2006; 2007), Holmberg’s objection no longer holds: In this framework, pro can have interpretable, unvalued features and T uninterpretable, valued features. In the course of the derivation, both categories agree, and the φ-feature values of T are copied to pro, yielding an interpretable, valued result.

It should be clear that a direct extension of Rizzi’s identification condition in (25) to AC pro yields unsatisfactory results. AC predicates include adjectives, PPs and adverbs, and neither of them is associated with the kind of morphology that can anchor the reference of pro. Within Rizzi’s analysis, pro would remain underspecified for such features, and would not be able to acquire reference. The same objection arises against accounts that treat finite agreement as referential (see option a) above).

Since there is no overt person feature associated with ACs, one is left with two possible alternatives to account for why pro is possible: either there is no connection between having explicit person morphology and identifying pro, or pro can be identified through a different mechanism. The first option is what Alexiadou and Anagnostopoulou (1998:522-23 and fn. 38) and Speas (1995) assume for null subjects in general, and it is also the underlying assumption of Pérez Jiménez’s (2008) proposal for AC, which assumes that Infl/T are syntactically present, but are null (hence without an overt marking for person, number or tense). Frascarelli’s analysis also assumes no direct connection between identification and morphological richness. Given the fairly robust correlation between agreement and null subjects (cf. Gilligan’s study quoted earlier), it would be desirable to maintain at least some connection between identification of pro and overt morphology, even if indirect.

The alternative option is to assume that pro can be identified through a different mechanism. As suggested earlier, this option has already been proposed for Chinese-type languages. Huang (1984, 1987, 1989) notes that in Chinese, pronominals can be null if they can be recovered from the discourse, as seen in the Chinese examples in (26) from Huang (1989:188).

(26) Zhangsan shuo [ta lai le].
    Zhangsan say he come ASP
    ‘Zhangsan say that he will come.’
The crucial difference between Chinese and Romance-type pro, according to Huang (1984), is that a subject pro in Chinese is controlled by an antecedent in the dominating clause, and this is possible because Chinese lacks agreement, so the local binding domain for the null category is expanded. This is what happens in an example like (26), where the empty category has Zhangsan as one of its possible antecedents. In Spanish or Italian, the null subject of an embedded clause is identified by AGR.

From a slightly different perspective, Frascarelli (2007) also argues that finite pro in Italian must be identified by a discourse topic. In her analysis, pro in Italian is generated as the argumental subject in vP and enters into an AGREE relationship with a DP in topic position. The Agr projection, in turn, has no role in identifying pro. Thus, pro’s ϕ-features come from the topic antecedent, not from AGR (see section 6.1 below for a longer description of Frascarelli’s proposal).

Both Huang’s and Frascarelli’s proposals share the notion that pro is identified by an antecedent. In Frascarelli’s case, this antecedent is locally represented within pro’s clause by a possibly null topic, whereas in the case of Huang, the domain in which antecedents are computed is extended to the matrix clause because Chinese lacks AGR. However, unlike Frascarelli, Huang assumes that AGR plays a role in Romance-type pro identification. For Frascarelli, AGR plays no such role, only agreement with a topic.

In my proposal, I will extend these ideas to the analysis of AC null subjects. Specifically, I will assume Huang’s intuition that when pro appears without agreement, it is identified in the discourse. I also follow Frascarelli’s intuition that pro is locally identified by a topic. However, I will show below that the type of topics that can identify finite and AC pros are different in crucial ways, which, I believe, are connected to the presence of AGR in finite clauses. In this sense, I diverge from Frascarelli in assuming that AGR does play a role identifying pro in finite clauses.

One last important proposal for current purposes is Borer (1989). Although her account attempts to explain the distribution of subjects of infinitives and gerunds, the intuition on which it is based will also serve as a point of departure for the analysis I will propose. Borer assumes that subjects are coindexed with INFL, and as part of INFL, AGREement can be either anaphoric or pronominal. If anaphoric (for example, with controlled infinitives), it must be bound by an antecedent. This antecedent may be in the matrix clause because movement of INFL to C extends the binding domain to the whole clause.

To summarize this section, I have presented a brief overview of proposals regarding how null subjects are identified. These analyses fall into two large categories, those that link identification to some version of overt morphology (essentially Rizzi’s), and those who take pro identification to derive either from an abstract, possibly null AGR head (Pérez Jiménez 2008), or from a topic (Huang, Frascarelli).

In the next section, we will turn to a specific proposal for AC pro in Spanish based on the idea that it is identified by a topic, whereas finite pro can be identified by AGR.
5. Towards an account of AC pro

5.1. The structure of AC

Most analyses of ACs derive their distribution from their alleged aspectual properties. Hernanz (1991), De Miguel (1992), López (1994) and Bruno (2011), argue that ACs lack the complete functional architecture of a clause, and that their subjects are Case-licensed by an aspectual projection. These analyses share the notion that ACs are aspectually restricted in some way. For example, De Miguel assumes that the aspectual node encodes perfective, resultative aspect, which makes ACs compatible only with telic predicates (cf. also Bruno, 2011). However, Pérez Jiménez (2008:170) points to examples where telicity is not required (cf. (27)), and also suggests that ACs are not necessarily restricted to perfective, resultative aspect, but display the same aspectual values as participles do in regular compound tenses.8

(27) a. Mecid-a la cunita con suavidad, el niño al final se quedó dormidito.
   rocked-FEM.SG the cradle with care the child finally CL fell asleep
   ‘(Having) rocked the cradle gently the child fell asleep.’

b. Empujad-a la moto cuesta abajo con mucho impulso, al final acabó arrancando.
   pushed-FEM.SG the motorbike downhill with much impulse finally ended starting
   ‘(Having) pushed the motorbike downhill with great effort, it finally ended up starting.’

Gunnarson’s (1994) and Pérez Jiménez’s (2008) analyses differ from all of the preceding ones in arguing that ACs have exactly the same functional architecture as regular finite clauses do. The lower thematic layer of the structure starts with a Predication Phrase which takes as its complement an AP, PP, AdvP, ParticipialP or DP. In addition, ACs have an AspP, a TP and a CP, like regular clauses. However, unlike in regular clauses, neither of those projections is headed by an overt affix, so the predicate is not required to move to them. In effect, T, Asp and CP are null.

In order to account for the obligatory Pred-S word order of ACs, Pérez Jiménez proposes a remnant-movement analysis in which the subject of the Predication Phrase raises below TP, and the remnant Predication Phrase raises to the specifier of TP to satisfy a parametrized EPP option. She assumes that the EPP can be satisfied in three ways: Through a nominal phrase in Spec, TP (for English), by $V^0$ raising to T (in the

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8Hernanz (1991) assumes that AspP encodes the individual/stage-level distinction, since for her only stage-level predicates can appear in ACs. However, as Pérez Jiménez (2008:180) shows, this is not the case, at least if one takes compatibility with ser as a diagnostic of individual-level predicates:

(i.) Culpable la muchacha del delito, los jueces decidieron internarla en un psiquiátrico.
   guilty the girl of the crime the judges decided commit-CL in a psychiatric hospital
   ‘The girl being guilty of the crime, the judges decided to commit her to a psychiatric hospital.’
case of finite clauses), or by a full phrase of any kind moving to Spec, TP (the option usually available for predicate-fronting languages). ACs exemplify this last parametric option within Spanish, because T⁰ is marked with a feature EPP_{Pred}. In this sense, ACs share this syntactic setting with predicate-fronting languages. The full derivation for an AC is presented in (28) (cf. Pérez Jiménez, 2008:229).

(28) Pérez Jiménez’ structure for AC.

Evidence for the initial subject movement comes from the fact that subject NPIs are only licensed with an overt negation (cf. (29)). If the subject were to raise higher than TP, one would expect NPIs to pattern like their preverbal negative counterparts, which do not require overt negation (cf. (29c)).

(29) a. Desparecid-a una/ *ninguna joya en el robo . . .
   disappeared-FEM.SG a/ no jewel in the robbery
   ‘(Having) disappeared a/no jewel in the robbery . . .’

   b. No desparecid-a una/ ninguna joya en el robo . . .
   not disappeared-FEM.SG a/ no jewel in the robbery
   ‘Not (having) disappeared a/no jewel in the robbery . . .’

   c. Una/ Ninguna joya despareció en el robo.
   a/ no jewel disappeared in the robbery
   ‘A/no jewel disappeared in the robbery . . .’

An anonymous reviewer argues that the impossibility of having floated quantifiers with ACs (noted by Aranovich, 2002) challenges Pérez Jiménez’s assumption that the subject moves to Spec, AspP. The data presented in (30) show that todas must appear in its pre-DP position, and cannot be left stranded either after the subject (cf. (30b)) or clause-finally (cf. (30c)).
a. Una vez caídas todas las hojas del árbol . . .
   once fallen all the leaves of the tree
   ‘Once all the leaves of the tree (had) fallen . . .

b. *Una vez caídas las hojas todas del árbol . . .
   once fallen the leaves all of the tree

c. *Una vez caídas las hojas del árbol todas . . .
   once fallen the leaves of the tree all

I believe the challenge these data might pose relates to the position of the remanent (del árbol ‘of the tree’, not so much for subject-raising. Assuming that this PP is generated inside the PredP, if PredP movement is obligatory, one would expect the order in (30a) to be ungrammatical. However, Pérez Jiménez (2007:244) argues that alternative word orders such as (30a) follow from a prosodically motivated movement (cf. Zubizarreta, 1998) that right-moves the PP. Whatever process accounts for the predicate order in (30a), what seems clear is that the data in (30b, c) are consistent with the remanent movement analysis: Assuming that a floated position for todas ‘all’ is always Pred-internal, the fact that PredP has moved to Spec, TP means that todas will never appear after the subject, because the subject is lower.

I adopt Pérez Jiménez’s proposed structure for ACs. However, as she notes, the nature of the functional heads is not the same as that of a regular clause, since the temporal and aspectual affixes that are usually present in finite clauses are null in this structure. As a consequences of this difference, T will not be specified for person and number as it is with a finite clause and cannot identify AC pro. However, nothing prevents it from checking Case on the subject.

5.2. A proposal for AC pro identification.

The general idea to be developed proposes that AC pro is identified by a local topic through the mechanism of AGREE.9 Finite pro, on the other hand, is (locally) identified by agreement. I propose a reformulation of Rizzi’s condition on identification as an AGREE operation that provides values pro’s features. In order to formalize this notion, I assume Pesetsky and Torrego’s (2001, 2007, 2004, 2006) version of AGREE, in which agreement features are marked as interpretable/uninterpretable (i.e. visible/invisible at the interface) and as valued/unvalued (i.e. with/without specific content). In the course of AGREE, two categories that have a matching feature \(\alpha\) will share a feature value. For example, an adjective and a noun will AGREE as in (31).10

(31) a. casa blanca
    house,FEM white,FEM
    ‘White house’

---


10I represent uninterpretable and interpretable as \(u, i\), respectively, and unvalued as \(\{\ldots\}\). Thus, \(u_\phi\{\ldots\}\) represents an uninterpretable, unvalued \(\phi\)-feature. A bidirectional arrow means that an agreement relation is active between categories, a unidirectional arrow means that one category values the other one.
Unlike Chomsky (2000, 2001) and unlike Pesetsky & Torrego, I do not assume that the uninterpretable feature must c-command the interpretable feature (cf. also Baker, 2008 and Camacho, 2010), rather the only condition imposed on AGREE is that one of the categories must be functional.\(^{11}\) The requirement that probes c-command goals when they AGREE is surprisingly unmotivated, both theoretically and empirically, as Baker (2008:41, 45) points out. In fact, in pre-minimalist accounts, agreement occurred when the XP was in the Spec of the relevant functional projection, i.e. when it c-commanded what is now seen as the goal. Committing to a c-command requirement condition on AGREE forces one to assume that I probes and AGREES with the lower copy of the subject, since the overt copy will c-command the probe.

On the empirical side, the c-command assumption runs into complications with respect to examples such as (32), after an example by Itziar Laka, quoted in Baker (2008:45, fn. 18). In this example, juntos ‘together’ is not c-commanded by its antecedent (niños ‘children’). If one assumes \(\phi\)-features on INFL to be uninterpretable, they cannot serve as the antecedent for plural juntos. Since niños ‘children’ is embedded inside the subject DP, it cannot be the direct antecedent juntos either. This suggests either that \(\phi\)-features on INFL are interpretable, or that c-command is not relevant in this configuration.

(32) \(\text{Un grupo de niños camina-n juntos} todos los días.}\)

‘A group of children walk.PL together everyday.’

For these reasons, I assume that c-command is not a required condition on AGREE.\(^{12}\)

I assume that pro constitutes a bundle of features that includes at least person, number, and possibly gender. Following Pesetsky and Torrego (2001; 2004), I also assume that Case is an uninterpretable T feature on D. These features are unvalued on pro, as in (33).

\[\begin{align*}
\text{Features of pro} & \\
\text{iGender}\{\_\} & \\
\text{iPerson}\{\_\} & \\
\text{iNumber}\{\_\} & \\
\text{uTense}\{\_\} & 
\end{align*}\]

Postulating pro to be minimally specified but unvalued for these features can be defended on conceptual and empirical grounds: conceptually, pro has no overt information that indicates the values for person, number and gender features, so it seems

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\(^{11}\)An uninterpretable feature will usually be associated with a functional category. In the example above, I have simplified the structure, and assumed it is located on the adjective.

\(^{12}\)See Baker (2008:41, 46) for putative examples from Hindi where c-command seems to be relevant for agreement. As he points out, they can be explained in a different way.
reasonable that those feature-values are provided by some other category in the environment. The alternative option, namely that pro comes fully specified for φ-features has some empirical shortcomings: it predicts that pro should be available anywhere where the corresponding explicit counterpart is available, for example as PP complements, subjects of ECM constructions, etc. However, this is not the case, as seen in (34).

(34) a. Hablamos de él/*pro
   talk about him/pro
   ‘We talked about him.’

b. *Veo pro cansado
   see pro tired
   ‘I see (him/her) tired’

I assume that φ-features are divided among two distinct heads: T and Agr. T has the specification for tense (associated with Case), Agr for person and number, as in (35). Finite tenses are associated with valued settings for each of those features, as in (35a), whereas infinitival tenses have those same features unvalued, as in (35b).

(35) Specifications for T/Agr

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>a) Finite T</th>
<th>b) Non-finite T</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>![iTense{γ}]</td>
<td>![iTense{ }]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>c) Finite Agr</th>
<th>d) Non-finite Agr</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>![uPerson{α}]</td>
<td>![uPerson{ }]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>![uNumber{β}]</td>
<td>![uNumber{ }]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>![uGender{ }]</td>
<td>![uGender{ }]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The main reason for separating T from Agr has to do with the behavior of interpretable and uninterpretable features under ellipsis. As Saab (2009, 2010) points out, interpretable features never trigger partial identity effects under ellipsis. Thus, when a verb is gapped, interpretable tense must be identical to its overt counterpart (cf. (36)), whereas uninterpretable person and number on the verb need not be identical, as shown in (37).13

(36) a. María ha leído mucho y Elena también ha leído mucho.
    María has read much and Elena also has read much
    ‘Maria has read a lot and Elena too.

13The distinction between interpretable tense and uninterpretable person/agreement facts pointed out by Saab with respect to ellipsis do not translate immediately to null subjects. In fact, examples like (i) require strict identity of person, number and tense, hence cannot be interpreted as in (ii). Furthermore, it is strictly not possible to replicate (37a) with a null subject, as shown in (iii). This is because gapping requires contrastive stress, and pro cannot bear stress. Despite this asymmetry between null and overt pronouns, I will assume that φ-features on Agr are uninterpretable and tense features on T are interpretable across-the-board.

(i) #El sábado fuimos al cine, y el domingo también fui al cine.
   the Saturday went.1.pl. to the movies and the Sunday too went.1.sg to the movies
   ‘Saturday we went to the movies and Sunday too (I went to the movie)’
b. *María ha leído mucho y Elena en el futuro también leerá.
   Maria has read much and Elena in the future also will read much.

(37) Juan compró caramelos y nosotros también compramos caramelos.
   Juan bought.3.SG sweets and we too bought.3.PL sweets
   ‘Juan bought sweets and we did too.’

The generalization regarding strict identity and interpretability can be naturally accommodated if uninterpretable person/number are part of AGR but interpretable tense is part of T. In the following discussion, I will nevertheless collapse AGR and T under INFL for presentational purposes, and the features [person] and [number] under φ-features.

With these assumptions in mind, I propose that pro has an unvalued set of interpretable φ-features that has to be valued. In the case of finite pro, INFL’s [person] and [number] will fill pro’s unvalued features, as seen in (38).

(38) a. Pro vino ayer.
   pro came.3.SG yesterday
   ‘S/he came yesterday.’

   b. [IP pro I [VP ]] → [IP pro I [VP ]]
      iGen{ _ } uGen{ _ } iGen{ _ } uGen{ _ }
      uT{ _ } iT{PST} uT{PST} iT{PST}
      iφ{ _ _ } uφ{3, SG} iφ{3, SG} uφ{3, SG}
      $\uparrow$ $\uparrow$
      φ-feature agreement φ-feature valuation

If there is no category with the relevant φ-features or those features are unvalued, then pro will not be identified. That is the case for gender in (38b) above, and also what happens in the case of infinitivals, whose inflection lacks a value for Case.

Turning to the AC pro, the main issue is how to account for its mixed properties as a pro that requires an antecedent. Like finite pro, AC pro has interpretable, unvalued φ-features, and uninterpretable, unvalued T (i.e. Case). The inflectional heads that appear in AC, on the other hand, will be crucially different than that of finite clauses, specifically [person] and in some cases [number] will be unvalued. ACs with participials and adjectives will have valued [gender]. The agreement process is depicted in (39).
(39)  a. Saludada pro . . .  
    greeted-FEM.SG pro  
    ‘Greeted . . .’  

b. \[ [IP \ I \ pro \ [P_{redP} ]] \rightarrow [IP \ I \ pro \ [P_{redP} ]] \]
    \[
    \begin{array}{llll}
    \text{uGen} & iGen & \text{uT} & i\phi \\
    \{v\} & \{\_\} & \{\_\} & \{\_, \text{SG}\} \\
    \end{array}
    \]

Clearly, in the output representation in (39) pro still lacks the crucial interpretable feature that allows it to anchor its reference (person). Additionally, Inflection also lacks a crucial temporal valuation.

Regarding pro, I argued earlier that it was bound by a (null) topic. In terms of the current analysis, this means that the topic must have matching features that agree with pro. Since the topic is also null, its features are unvalued, and must be filled by AGREEING with another constituent, the overt antecedent. At this point, all three agreeing categories (pro, the topic and the antecedent) will share the same values and will be interpreted as coreferential. Since the topic sits in the highest specifier of the AC, it lies at the edge of the strong phase boundary (CP), and can AGREE with other elements in another local strong phase (cf. Chomsky’s 2001 Phase Impenetrability Condition).  

Note that the input and the output of (39) also have an unvalued T feature, and in this sense uT and u\phi are parallel. However, they are not completely parallel. First, ACs are temporally anchored to a reference time (cf. Dini, 1994), whereas AC pro cannot be deictically anchored. Second, the AC’s temporal anchoring does not strictly depend on that of the main clause they attach to. So, for example, the AC can temporally precede (cf. (40a)) or be temporally independent of the main clause (cf. (40b), adapted from Pérez Jiménez’s 2008:336 quotation of Dini, 1994). One possible way of capturing this asymmetry between T and \phi would be to argue that T receives existential closure.  

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14 A strong phase is the minimal unit that can be processed by the interfaces in Chomsky’s conception. They include CP and vP.  
15 The current proposal builds on Borer’s (1989) analysis of infinitival and gerund subjects in English in the sense that we share the intuition that pro is not properly identified in its clause and seeks an antecedent in the containing clause. However, the proposed mechanisms are different: For Borer, AGR raises to C, for me, there is a topic that agrees with pro. Additionally, Borer explicitly applies her proposal to infinitival PRO, whereas this one applies to AC pro.  
16 An anonymous reviewer suggests an alternative analysis where the operator is generated in subject position and moves to the left periphery, as other operators do. This alternative would simplify the picture by avoiding a null pro and an operator, however, it also places additional requirements on where and how the topic operator must appear. As I see it, the two alternatives differ in a) the content of the operator vs. pro and b) whether the two positions are related by AGREE or by movement. In the current proposal, AGREE copies the featural content of one of the categories to the slot of the other; if one assumes a copy theory of movement, the topic would be copied from its base position in Spec, IP to Spec, CP. One crucial difference is that movement of the operator would have to be triggered by some type of EPP feature, whereas the AGREE
To summarize, the current proposal suggests that \textit{pro} is a bundle of unvalued features that are filled either by INFL (in the case of finite \textit{pro}) or by a topic antecedent (in the case of AC\textit{pro}). The topic antecedent, in turn, can be valued by an overt antecedent in an adjacent clause.

One immediate prediction this analysis makes is that all things being equal, \textit{pro} should be available in an English AC, as is the case (cf. Kawasaki, 1993 for similar conclusions regarding other types of adjunct clauses in English). Thus, as seen in (41) (thanks to Jimmy Bruno for the examples and judgements), the null subject alternates with an overt one (cf. (41a-b)), suggesting this is a Case position. The proposed analysis for (41a) is the same as the one given for Spanish: \textit{pro} has its $uT$ feature valued by inflection, and its $\phi$-features valued by the topic, which in turn values its feature through agreement with the antecedent.\footnote{This fact questions De Miguel (1992), Gunnarson (1994) and Pérez Jiménez's (2008) assumption that the word order differences between ACs in English and Spanish derive from the null subject parameter (following Rizzi’s 1986 analysis). If \textit{pro} is available in both English and Spanish ACs, then the explanation for the systematic word order differences between both languages cannot be related to the null subject parameter.}

To reiterate, this section has proposed that \textit{pro} contains an unvalued matrix of $\phi$-features that can be valued either by finite inflection or by a null topic, in the case of AC. This topic, in turn, must find an antecedent with valued features in an adjacent clause.

\footnote{The question this point raises is why is finite \textit{pro} ungrammatical in English (cf. (i))? Topic identifying should yield a viable null subject, but it doesn’t. This observation goes beyond the scope of this paper, but one possible explanation has to do with locality conditions: In English, \textit{pro} and the topic are in different domains (phases), and agreement is blocked.}

\footnote{(i) *Mary left last night and Bill left this morning. As for John, is leaving tomorrow.}

\begin{enumerate}[a.]
\item \textit{Cansad-a por la caminata, María se sentó.}\\
\textit{tired-FEM-SG by the hike, María CL sat}\\
‘Tired by the hike, María sat.’
\item \textit{Sensible al perfume de las especias, María recordó que estaban cocinando un curry.}\\
\textit{sensitive to the scent of the spices, María remembered that they were cooking a curry.}\\
‘Sensitive to the scent of the spices, María remembered that they were cooking a curry.’
\end{enumerate}

Relation between the topic and \textit{pro} requires no such feature.

Regarding the content of the operator vs. \textit{pro}, within the Minimalist framework, operators have a special feature (like [+wh] for wh-words), and movement to the left periphery is not necessarily connected to that feature, hence proposing a base-generated topic in Spec, IP does not automatically trigger movement to the left periphery.
5.3. Locality of AGREE

One immediate concern the proposed analysis raises is whether AGREE is sufficiently constrained. It is generally assumed that this operation is generally constrained to the minimal clause containing the agreeing constituents (cf. Chomsky’s 2001 Phase Impenetrability Condition quoted earlier), although it is hard to come by configurations with alleged long-distance AGREE that are not ruled out by other principles. The best candidates involve subject raising, as in (42). The first example is a case of hyperraising, marginally possible in spoken Latin American Spanish and Brazilian Portuguese (cf. Ferreira 2004 and Martins and Nunes 2010 for proposals for Brazilian Portuguese). In (42a), the subject los estudiantes ‘the students’ AGREES with both the lower and the higher verb. This agreement is not possible if the subject appears clause-finally, as seen in (42b). Assuming that the clause-final position is in the lower clause, the ungrammaticality of that example can be due to the fact that the higher raising verb parecen cannot AGREE with los estudiantes ‘the students’ across the clausal boundary, as in (42c).

(42)  a. Los estudiantes parecen que van a comprar.
    the students seem.3.PL that go.3.PL to buy
    ‘The students seem to go shopping.’
  b. *Parecen que van a comprar los estudiantes.
    seem.3.PL that go.3.PL to buy the students
    ‘The students seem to go shopping.’
  c. [IP parecen [CP que [IP van a comprar [VP los estudiantes ]]]]

On the other hand, cases of long-distance AGREE across clausal borders are well-documented in the literature, for example in Tsez, Lokaa and Basque, among others (cf. Baker 2008:103-107). Baker’s analysis of long-distance agreement is still constrained by the phase condition. Recall that this condition restricts agreement to elements that are part of the same phase or between elements in one phase and elements at the edge of an embedded phase. This predicts that agreement between Fv and NP should be impossible in (43a) because Fv and NP are in different phases, but possible in (43b), because NP is at the edge of the lower strong phase ((43) is taken from Baker, 2008:103).

(43)  a. Fv verb [CP C [TP ... NP ...]]
    b. Fv verb [CP NPi C [TP ... ti ...]]

The configuration in (43b) is precisely the one proposed for AC structures, hence AGREE is constrained in the same way as it is in other cases. The appearance of a long-distance, unconstrained relationship is the result of smaller, local links (between
The nature of the topic antecedent

The proposed analysis establishes a local relationship between pro a local null topic and a more distant overt antecedent. In this section, I will turn to a more precise characterization of the null topic antecedent, and the relationship between the null topic and its own antecedent. In doing so, I will establish a comparison with the topic proposed by Frascarelli (2007) for finite pro in Italian.

As already mentioned, it is generally true that the discourse antecedent of the AC pro is coreferential with the subject of the main clause. This has been argued to follow from the fact that the antecedent must be a topic, and most subjects are topics, particularly if they are preverbal or null.

The notion of topic has received very different interpretations in the literature (cf. Casielles-Suárez, 2004: ch. 2). In particular, it has been defined as “the first constituent in the clause”, as “what the rest of the clause is about”, as “a constituent related to a discourse antecedent” and “as old or given information”. From this last perspective, Erteschik-Shir (1997:21) assumes that pronouns (including null pronouns) are de facto topics, and must be coindexed with a topic antecedent. In this spirit, Frascarelli (2007) proposes an analysis of finite pro where identification is done by a local topic antecedent, a proposal very reminiscent of what I have suggested. However, as I will point out below, the nature of the antecedent topic is very different for each pro configuration.

6.1. Frascarelli’s (2007) proposal

Frascarelli proposes an innovative perspective on the null subject parameter, particularly for Romance-type null subject languages. Her analysis shifts the burden of identifying a null subject from verbal morphology to an obligatory topic antecedent. According to her, one can distinguish three kinds of topics (partially corresponding to the different topic characterizations described above): an Aboutness-shift topic, a Contrastive topic and a Familiar topic. The first one is associated with the intonational contour L*+H and introduces a new topic or shifts from a previous one. Contrastive topic is associated with a H pitch, and it provides an alternative to an existing topic. Finally, Familiar topic has a L* tonal contour and “refer[s] to given information in the discourse” (Frascarelli, 699); it is D-linked and it is used for topic continuity or as an afterthought. These three types of topics are syntactically arranged in different left-peripheral positions, as in (44) (cf. Rizzi, 1997 and subsequent work on the structure of the left periphery).

(44) \[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{ForceP} \\
\text{ShiftTopP} \\
\text{GroundP} \\
\text{ContrastTopP} \\
\text{FocP} \\
\text{FamTopP} \\
\text{FinP} \\
\end{array}
\]
Based on the distribution of null subjects in larger discourse, Frascarelli concludes that finite pro is associated with a local Aboutness Shift topic. As an example, the antecedent of the first pro in (45) is al capo ‘to the boss’. Since by her own account, this is a Familiar topic, she argues that a silent copy of an Aboutness Shift topic binds pro (Frascarelli, 2007:709). The structure, based on my interpretation of these assumptions, is presented in (46).

(45) Conduco insieme al capo [questa rubrica] del giovedì sera [...]

conduct with my boss this program of the Thursday night

pro is written that is also because we in fact present a

serie di servizi/ di interviste fatte fuori [... ] ma speriamo che

number of services of interviews done outside but hope that

un po’ alla volta che lui, mi dia proprio tutto il Caleidoscopio

little by little that he cl give all the ‘Caleidoscopio’

‘I conduct with [my boss] [this show] on Thursday night [...] pro is written/ I mean, also because we in fact present a number of external interviews [...] but let’s hope that little by little that he will give me all the ‘Caleidoscopio’ [= the show]’

(46) [AboutShiftTopP ∅ [... [FamiliarTopP questa rubrica] [... [AboutShiftTopP[pro]]]]]

Finally, Frascarelli proposes that the relationship between pro and its antecedent is one of AGREE, where the topic has an “extended EPP feature” [+aboutness] and φ-features that match those of pro, as in (47), from Frascarelli (2007:718, ex. (30)).

(47) [ShiftP DP[αPn] [... [AgrSP [Agr0 [vP]].[pro].[VP] [...]]]]

AGREE [+aboutness] [φ-features]

To summarize, the two critical aspects of Frascarelli’s proposal are that pro is identified through an AGREE process by a silent topic antecedent, which she assumes to be an Aboutness Shift topic. My proposal shares those two characteristics with Frascarelli’s, but they differ in two crucial respects: in my analysis, pro AGREES in φ-features only, not in [+aboutness], hence it can also AGREE with inflection. Additionally, there are important differences in the type of topic antecedent that AC and finite pro can have, as I will describe in the following section.

6.2. Finite pro antecedents and AC pro antecedents

Recall that AC pro cannot have an indefinite antecedent (cf. (18) above, repeated below as (48a)). This is not the case for finite pro, as seen in (48b). Note also that

---

21 It is not clear that the topic antecedent of pro is both an Aboutness Shift topic and local (Frascarelli, 2007:704). In (46), questa rubrica ‘this program’ cannot be the Aboutness Shift topic of the second clause, because it is neither new nor reintroduced. Frascarelli seems to suggest that one can copy the Aboutness Shift topic from one clause to another, but this sounds more like a Familiar topic, which indicates topic continuity.
although the overt antecedent in (48b) is indefinite, the null subject is interpreted as having a definite referent, i.e. as the already mentioned trucks.

    ‘During the parade, trucks went by. Once (trucks were) finished going by, motorbikes arrived.’

b. En el desfile pasaron camiones. Cuando terminaron de pasar, nos fuimos.
    ‘At the parade, trucks went by. When they finished going by, we left.’

A second difference relates to the sensibility to discourse conditions: AC pro is much more sensitive to discourse conditions than finite pro is. Thus, AC pro tends to pick its topic antecedent locally (in the adjacent clause), and the further away it gets, the more degraded it becomes, as illustrated in (10) earlier, repeated below as (49a). However, finite pro is perfectly acceptable in that same context, as seen in (49b): the preferred antecedent for finite pro is “Miguel”, but “Marta” is also a possible antecedent.

(49) a. ??Durante la recepción, primero entró Marta, inmediatamente después empezó a llover. Saludó pro, el presidente continuó con el evento.
    ‘During the reception, first Maria entered, immediately after, it started to rain. (Having) greeted (her), the president continued with the event.’

b. Durante la recepción, primero entró Marta, después entró Miguel, a continuación, pro se dirigió a saludar al presidente.
    ‘During the reception, first Marta came in, then Miguel came in. Next, s/he went to greet the president.’

Both types of pro require an antecedent, particularly if they are referential. However, only generic/arbitrary finite pro is possible as a discourse-initial statement, as shown in (50). Nothing similar is possible with ACs.22

(50) En Colombia pro se come frutas.
    ‘In Colombia they eat fruits.’

---

22 pro AC can be interpreted as arbitrary, but only if the main clause also is (cf. (i)). However, AC pro cannot have a pro associated with an impersonal se as an antecedent (cf. (ii)): 
Another difference between AC and finite-clause pro involves whether the antecedent of the null subject must be a syntactically encoded constituent or not. In the case of a finite-clause pro, one can point to somebody in the room and say:

(51)  *Pro se acaba de comer dos plátanos.
      pro CL finishes of eat two bananas.
      ‘S/he just ate two bananas.’

This option does not exist for an AC pro: If I point to someone in the room, this is not enough to identify the subject of the AC in (52).

(52)  *Un vez saludado, nos vamos.
      once greeted-MASC.SG, CL leave
      ‘Once greeted, we will leave.’

These differences are summarized in (53).

(53)  Summary of discourse properties of null subjects.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Indefinite antecedent</th>
<th>Local antecedent</th>
<th>Required antecedent</th>
<th>Deictic antecedent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AC pro</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fin pro</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.3. The fine structure of the topic periphery

If both finite and AC pro are identified by an Aboutness Shift topic, the differences just described are mysterious, because the shift topic is the only element that determines pro’s identity. Rather, I will assume with Frascarelli that pro is bound by a topic, but the type of topic depends on the structural configuration pro appears in. In finite clauses, it can be bound either by inflection, by an Aboutness Shift topic or by a Familiar topic (cf. fn. 21 above). When it appears in an AC, it can be bound by a Familiar topic or by inflection, but not by Aboutness Shift topic because this topic does not project, as schematized in (54). 23

(i)  *Agotado por las repetidas traiciones de los representantes políticos, uno vota en blanco.
     tired by the repeated betrayals of the representative political one votes in blank
     ‘Tired of the repeated betrayals by political representatives, one votes blank in the elections.’

(ii) *Agotado por las repetidas traiciones de los representantes políticos, se vota en blanco.
     tired by the repeated betrayals of the representative political CL votes in blank
     ‘Tired of the repeated betrayals by political representatives, one votes blank in the elections.’

23 Perez Jimenez (2008) points out that ACs are background, secondary assertions, and in this sense, they never introduce a new (aboutness shift) topic. See sec. 6.5 below.
With this idea in mind, consider again the difference between AC and finite pro with respect to licensing by a deictic gesture. One could reasonably assume that a deictic pointing gesture introduces a new topic or reintroduces one in the background. Its syntactic correlate is to fill the Aboutness ShiftP position, which then identifies pro. Since this projection is absent in ACs, the corresponding DP cannot appear, hence it cannot identify pro.

Let us now consider the stricter locality requirement for AC pro than for finite pro (cf. (49) above). In my account, this amounts to saying that the relationship between the AC silent topic and its own antecedent is local. I’ve argued that the AC topic is a Familiar topic, which, by definition, requires, itself an antecedent. If we assume that more distant an antecedent is, the harder it is to keep it active or accessible for further mention, it follows that AC Familiar topic will seek closer antecedent than AboutnessShift topic.

The impossibility of having generic/arbitrary interpretations with pro can also be derived from the same proposal, assuming that a Familiar topic essentially means discourse old. A sentence with an arbitrary or generic DP does not introduce a specific referent in discourse that could be taken as antecedent for the AC Familiar topic, hence pro will remain unvalued.

Finally, the contrast in the possibility of having indefinite antecedents illustrated in (48) requires some more elaboration. Consider the case of a finite pro, as in (55). As mentioned earlier, when the null subject refers to the DP introduced in the first clause, the interpretation is definite (i.e. the guards just mentioned). Erteschik-Shir (1997:62) suggests “that introducing an indefinite NP on stage does not, in and of itself, make the NP specific.” According to her, “the indefinite becomes specific only by means of the entry made by updating according to the following [emphasis in the original, J.C.] sentence.” The example in (55) illustrates this point straight-forwardly.

(55) A la entrada del edificio había vigilantes. A las 4 cambiaban de turno.

at the entrance of the building was guards. At 4 changed of turn

‘At the entrance of the building there were guards. At 4, they would change shifts.’

Let us assume, then, when the Familiar topic picks up its antecedent in (55), it does so as an indefinite. The definite interpretation must come from somewhere else. In
the present framework, one can argue that specificity comes from the fact that agreement is a potential antecedent for pro. One specific implementation would be to argue that AGR carries a D feature (cf. Roberts and Holmberg, 2010:14), which makes the indefinite antecedent definite.\footnote{Clearly this cannot be the whole picture, otherwise we would predict that Ayer llegaron personas ‘Yesterday, people arrived’ would not be possible with an existential, indefinite reading. Note that in those cases there tends to be a preposed constituent, which one could take to saturate the D feature of AGR.}

In the case of AC pro, the D feature is unvalued, so it cannot turn the indefinite antecedent into a definite.

To summarize, this section has argued that the identifying antecedent varies for finite and AC pro. In the first case, it can be done either by an Aboutness Shift topic, or by a Familiar topic or by inflection. In the second case, it is vacuously identified by a Familiar topic or by inflection. Being unvalued, these two antecedents must seek another antecedent outside of the AC clause. I have also argued that these properties correlate with the distribution of topics associated with AC: only Familiar topics project in ACs, hence no bare NP indefinites or deictically identified topics are possible.

6.4. Topic accommodation

Erteschik-Shir (1997:78), quotes Reinhart’s (1986) observation that in examples of backwards generalization such as (56), “the function of backward anaphora in actual discourse might be, contrary to common assumptions, that of introducing a new topic into the discourse.” Erteschik-Shir further notes that an example like (56a) cannot be a request for information about Bill. It is clear that these cases also involve a topic antecedent, as the contrasts between (56a) and b) show. Thus, in (56a) only the passive subject can be the antecedent of the pronoun, because only the subject is the topic. (cf. Williams, 1994; Villalba, 1999 and Pérez Jiménez, 2008:263 for similar observations).

(56) a. When he\textsubscript{1}/\textsubscript{\#j} entered the room, Bill\textsubscript{1} was greeted by Max\textsubscript{j}.
   b. When he\textsubscript{1}/\textsubscript{j} entered the room, Max\textsubscript{1} greeted Bill\textsubscript{j}.

The same phenomenon can be observed with ACs: the AC’s topic can supplant the main clause’s aboutness topic. In (57) (from Pérez Jiménez, 2008:264), it is the AC that sets the topic of the main clause, not the other way around. This can be seen in (58), where only the main-clause example in (58c) can be a response to the background statement in (58a) that sets los sueños de Juan ‘Juan’s dreams’ as the aboutness topic. On the other hand, if the aboutness topic is only Juan, as in (59a), an appropriate response includes the AC (cf. (59b)) but not only the main clause (cf. (59c)).

(57) \textit{Liberado al fin tras veinte años de prisión, los sueños de Juan empezaban} to come true.CL
\textit{a cumplirse.}
\textit{‘Free after twenty years in prison, Juan’s dreams began to come true.’}

(58a) \textit{los sueños de Juan} to come true.CL
\textit{Juan’s dreams}
\textit{empezaban} to come true.CL
\textit{a cumplirse.}
\textit{to come true.CL}
\textit{to come true.CL}
\textit{to come true.CL}
\textit{Free after twenty years in prison, Juan’s dreams began to come true.’}
In order to see how this process of topic promotion or topic accommodation works, consider the discourse structure for (57). In the absence of the AC, the discourse structure for the main clause would be (60a). If the AC is present, then los sueños de Juan would become the Familiar topic inside the AC, as in (60b). However, this creates a clash between the AC INFL’s number feature (singular) and pro’s number value (plural).

(60) a. [ShiftP [Los sueños de Juan]; [IP pro; empezaban a cumplirse]]
   b. [ShiftP [Los sueños de Juan]; [AC [FamP [Los sueños de Juan]; liberado pro; empezaban a cumplirse]]]

On the other hand, if the AC Familiar topic promotes Juan in the main clause to Aboutness Shift topic, by the independently motivated process of topic accommodation (Erteschik-Shir, 1997:46), a process by which an embedded topic structure becomes the main topic structure, then the main-clause Aboutness topic the AC’s Familiar topic and pro’s referent will be the same (i.e. Juan), yielding no conflict with INFL.

The process of topic accommodation has its limits: It is well-known that postverbal subjects in Spanish are not interpreted as topics (cf. Contreras, 1976; Zubizarreta, 1999; Casielles-Suárez, 2004); they are either narrowly focused, or they can be part of the wide-focus interpretation of the sentence. The first option is illustrated in the use of (61c) as a response to (61a); the second one is shown in (61c) as a response to (61b).
(61) a. ¿Quién lava los platos en tu casa?
   ‘Who washes the dishes in your house?’

   b. ¿Qué pasa en tu casa?
   ‘What happens in your house?’

   c. En mi casa lava los platos mi hijo.
   ‘In my house, my son washes the dishes.’

This suggests that postverbal subjects should not be possible antecedents of the AC subject, as opposed to preverbal ones, and this seems to be correct, as (62) shows. In the first example, the postverbal subject cannot identify the AC subject. In the second one, it can.

(62) a. Cansado de que los platos quedaran mal lavados, en mi casa los mi hijo.
   ‘Tired of that the dishes would remain dirty, in my house, my son washed them.’

   b. Cansado de que los platos quedaran mal lavados, en mi casa mi hijo los lavó.
   ‘Tired that the dishes would always remain dirty, in my house, my son washed them.’

6.5. Topic mismatch

In certain cases, it seems that the AC pro’s topic antecedent comes from the preceding clause, but is not present in the main clause. Consider, for example, (63), suggested by an anonymous reviewer (from Fernández Fernández 1993:104, quoted in Pérez Jiménez 2008:166). In (63), the AC pro is coreferential with el permiso de conducir ‘the driving license’ from the first clause, however, that constituent does not overtly appear in the final clause. One natural, if counterintuitive extension of the proposed analysis for these cases would be to argue that the constituent from the first clause is the topic of the AC, as in (64).

(63) Solicitaron el permiso de conducir y, concedido, llevaron los requested.3.PL the license of driving and granted, took the materials.
   ‘They applied for their driving license, and once granted, they took the materials.’

(64) \[[\text{CP}_1\text{DP el permiso de conducir}_i] \ldots [\text{CP}_3\text{AC Top}_i [\text{IP concedido pro}_i] \ldots ]\]
The natural question is whether that same topic is the topic for the last clause (as in (65a)), or whether an intervening topic appears between CP1 and CP3, as in (65b). If that is the case, why doesn’t Top\textsubscript{j} block the relationship between the two instances of Top\textsubscript{i}?

(65) a. \[ [\text{CP1}[DP \text{ el permiso}\textsubscript{i}]] [\text{CP2 Top}\textsubscript{i} [\text{CP3–AC Top}\textsubscript{i} [\text{CP3–AC Top}\textsubscript{j} pro\textsubscript{i}]] \ldots ] \]

b. \[ [\text{CP1}[DP \text{ el permiso}\textsubscript{i}]] [\text{CP2 Top}\textsubscript{j} [\text{CP3–AC Top}\textsubscript{i} [\text{CP3–AC Top}\textsubscript{j} pro\textsubscript{i}]] \ldots ] \]

To explore this issue, consider the examples in (66), where CP3 has a dislocated constituent. In (66a), the clitic left-dislocated constituent is to the right of the AC and the result is acceptable, but in (66b) it appears to the left of the AC with a highly deviant result.\(^{25}\) This contrast follows if the relationship between the topic from the first clause and the AC topic is blocked by the CLLD constituent, as schematized in (67).

(66) a. \textit{Solicitaron el permiso de conducir y, concedido, los materiales,}\newline requested.3.PL the license of driving and granted.SG, the materials,\newline CL took quickly\newline ‘They applied for their driving license, and once granted, the materials, they took them quickly.’

b. \textit{??Solicitaron el permiso de conducir y, los materiales,}\newline requested.3.PL the license of driving and the materials,\newline \textit{concedido, los llevaron enseguida.}\newline granted.SG, CL took quickly\newline ‘They applied for their driving license, and the materials, once granted, they took them quickly.’

(67) \ldots \text{el permiso}\textsubscript{i} [\text{CP2 CLLD}\jmath [\text{CP3–AC Top}\textsubscript{i} pro\textsubscript{i}]]

Additionally, the contrast between (66a) and b) suggests that the right structure for (63) is (68). In this structure, CP2 has Top\textsubscript{i} as its initial topic, which identifies AC pro. However, it can still have a second topic after the AC. Presumably, this would be an Aboutness Shift Topic, which introduces a new topic.

(68) \[ [\text{CP1}[DP \text{ el permiso}\textsubscript{i}]] [\text{CP2 Top}\textsubscript{i} [\text{CP3–AC Top}\textsubscript{i} pro\textsubscript{i} ] Top\textsubscript{j} \ldots ] \]

This analysis resolves the apparent paradox that the topic from CP1 and CP3-AC does not seem to be the topic for CP2 in any obvious way: as it stands, the AC in effect allows for the succession of similar topics to break. I believe this apparent paradox relates to Pérez Jiménez (2008:225) observation that AC clauses are backgrounded secondary assertions to the main clause (in the sense of Chierchia & McConell Ginet, 1990). Pérez Jiménez and Kortmann (1991:113) note that the AC’s truth value is not affected when the main clause is embedded under negation:

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\(^{25}\)CLLD constituents can appear to the right or to the left of the AC in general (cf. Pérez Jiménez, 2008:59.)
a. No es verdad que, muy enferma por la gripe aviaría, hayan echado a Ana del trabajo. ‘It’s not true that, (being) very sick from avian flu, they have fired Ana from her job.’

b. It is still true that Ana was very sick from avian flu.’

In this sense, the topic that serves as AC subject antecedent is a part of the background but not part of the foregrounded main-clause assertion.

7. Conclusions

The analysis of absolute clauses in Spanish fosters the case for identification of pro by an antecedent in an adjacent clause. The operation is mediated by a Familiar topic located in the periphery of the clause. Formally, pro identification is taken to be AGREE, a matching operation between two categories in which one of them copies its values to the other. The theory also distinguishes two contexts for pro identification: The first one includes finite clauses, where the potential antecedents are, in addition to the Familiar topic, an Aboutness Shift topic (which introduces a new topic or reintroduces it from the discourse) or inflection. The second one is restricted to a null Familiar topic antecedent or an unvalued inflection, both of which must be valued in the preceding clause. ACs, it is argued, lack an Aboutness Shift topic projection. These asymmetries between ACs and finite clauses account for the different constraints pro antecedent topics are subjected to in AC clauses and finite clauses. Specifically, I have argued that finite clause pro can be identified by a deictic gesture, whereas AC pro cannot, and this follows from the assumption that a deictic gesture fills the Aboutness Shift position. The other differences between AC and finite pro antecedents have also been argued to follow from the analysis, specifically, from the lack of an Aboutness Shift projection and the need to value the features of pro.

References


