On contextually defined 'overt categories' in Spanish

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Null subjects have traditionally been argued to have different underlying internal structures despite their equal morpho-phonological externalization. Thus, in (1) – (3), even though we are uniformly dealing with a null subject , we have three different underlying elements either according to their morpho-syntactic properties or their derivational history: *pro*, PRO and NP-*trace*. In Romance pro-drop languages, also the corresponding overt pronominal subjects have the same morpho-phonological externalization but they have distinct syntactic properties

(1)	Julia	dice	que	{Ø / ella (misma)}	hará	el trabajo.
	Julia	says	that	{(she / (herself)}	will-do	the work.
(2)	Julia	promete	hacer	{Ø / ella (misma)}		el trabajo.
	Julia	promises	to-do	{Ø / she (self)}		the work
(3)	Julia	hizo		{Ø / ella (misma)}		el trabajo.
	Julia	did		{Ø / she (self)}		the work

In (1)–(3), the overt correlate of Ø is morphologically an emphatic pronoun, even though its (logical) syntactic properties differ and mirror those of different types of *empty categories*.

Building on the assumption that PRO can be 'overt' (see e.g. Alonso-Ovalle & D'Introno 2001, Livitz 2011, Sundaresan 2010, Herbeck 2015, 2018) we argue for a more general theory of *overt categories* which assumes that all instances of 'pronouns' in (1) – (3) are post-syntactic spell-out of a nominal $D_{[\phi]}$ category, i.e. they all reflect input to the same Vocabulary Item in morphology (adopting DM, Halle & Marantz 1993). However, $D_{[\phi]}$ is the result of different syntactic derivations (local *Agree* with AGR, mediated Agree via Fin, and movement):

(4) $[_{CP}$ C $[_{TP}$ Julia dice $[_{CP}$ que $[_{AgrP}$ **D**$_{[\phi:\_]}$ AGR-hará ... el trabajo]]]]

(5) $[_{CP}$ C $[_{TP}$ Julia promete $[_{FinP}$ Fin$_{[self]}$ $[_{AgrP}$ **D**$_{[\phi:\_]}$ AGR$_{[self]}$-hacer ... el trabajo]]]]

(6) $[_{CP}$ C $[_{AgrP}$ Julia AGR-hace $[_{vP}$ **t**$_{=D[\phi]}$ ... el trabajo]]]

Adopting the assumption that 'traces' are just morpho-syntactic feature bundles left behind by movement (cf. Chomsky 1981), an NP-*trace* is basically D and phi lacking a Root, which can receive an overt realization in post-syntactic morphology. What determines the option between null and overt spell-out post-syntactically is governed by information structure rather than Case, adopting a model in which features relating to topic/focus are assigned at the phase edge before morpho-phonological insertion applies (cf. López 2009). This way, the emphatic pronoun in (3) is basically the result of a DP which moves to topic position (see Barbosa 2009) whose *trace* (and not full copy) receives focus marking in Spec,*v*P, forming a topic-focus chain.

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