Unaccusativity mismatches and split intransitivity

I consider the theoretical significance of the unaccusativity mismatches with evidence from Italo-Romance. I focus in particular on mismatches which concern:

- The domains of different diagnostics within a given language (e.g., in Italian, the perfective auxiliary *essere* 'be', the marking with *si* and past-participle agreement mark all reflexives as unaccusatives, but only some classes of reflexives license *ne*-cliticization of their argument).

- The domains of a given diagnostic across different languages (e.g., agreement with the subject is exhibited by perfective, resultative, and passive past participles in Italian, but only by resultative and passive past participles in Sicilian).

- The domains of a given diagnostic within a given language (e.g. it is not the case that the past participle of any unaccusative verb can serve as a prenominal modifier in Italian).

Cross-linguistic analysis of split intransitivity suggests that unaccusativity is determined by semantic factors, and that the semantic parameters of split intransitivity vary across languages in interesting ways (Van Valin 1990). The microvariation of the semantic parameters of split intransitivity is certainly significant vis-à-vis the unaccusativity mismatches which are found in Italo-Romance, but it is not the only factor. Rather, an analysis of this group of closely related languages suggests that the unaccusativity mismatches arise primarily from the conflict of two driving forces; one is semantic, and is directly related to the semantic foundation of unaccusativity, whilst the other is syntactic, and strives to obliterate the manifestations of the semantic principle. Individual Italo-Romance languages manifest different synchronic results of the historical tension between these two forces.

I argue that (i) the unaccusativity mismatches challenge the analyses which deterministically associate each manifestation of unergativity (e.g., the perfective auxiliary 'have' in Italo-Romance) with unergative syntax across languages; (ii) the semantic parameters which are relevant to split intransitivity combine with syntactic, and,

in some cases, pragmatic constraints to characterize each diagnostic, and this explains why the domain of a given diagnostic may differ from that of other diagnostics within and across languages.