

Clitics as a Postsyntactic Operation

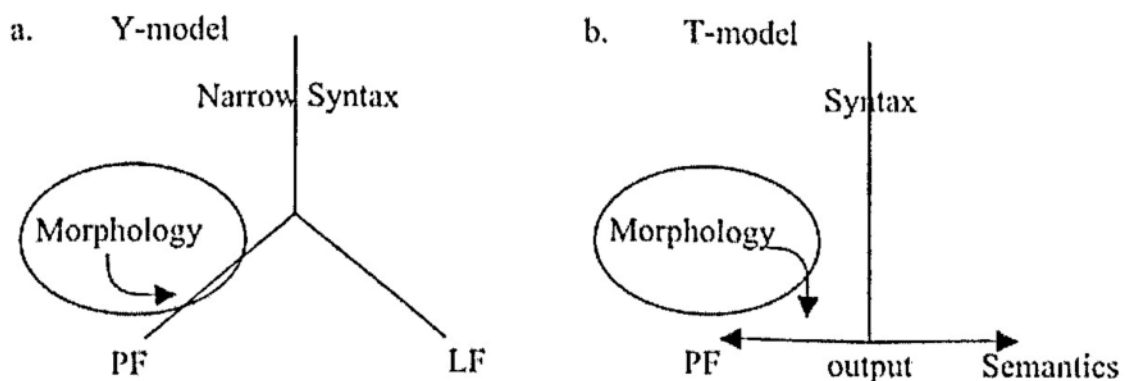
1. Main claims:

- Verbal inflection in Italian shows a similarity between unaccusatives and constructions with clitic climbing
- If verbal agreement is post-syntactic and clitics are verbal agreement, then clitics are post-syntactic

2. Theoretical background

- Syntactic structures must be linearized in order to be pronounced. This job is done by the morphological component which (more or less) incrementally alters the input structure.

(1)



- The morphological component assigns case-marking differently from the structural one

3. Quirky case in Icelandic

- There is an extensive literature (Jónson 1996 "JGJ"; Zaenen, Maling and Thráinsson 1985 "ZMT"; Harley 1995, Sigurðsson 1989, Holmberg & Hróarsdóttir 2003, Schütze 1997) where it has been shown that Icelandic has subjects that bear a different case than nominative

(2)

- a. Jóni líkuðu þessir sokkar
Jon.DAT like.PL these socks.NOM
“Jon likes these socks.” (JGJ, 143)
- b. Það líkuðu einhverjum þessir sokkar
EXPL liked.PL someone.DAT these socks.NOM
“Someone liked these socks.” (JGJ, 153)
- c. Þeim var hjálpað
them.DAT was.SG helped
“They were helped.” (ZMT, 97)
- d. Um veturinn voru konunginum gefnar ambáttir
In the winter were.PL the king.DAT given slaves.NOM
“In the winter, the king was given (female) slaves.” (ZMT, 112)

Syntactic “subjecthood” has been carefully tested:

- In (2)b the subject must be indefinite, but the object don't
- In (2)d only a subject can occur between the auxiliary and the verb.

More evidence comes from control constructions:

(3)

- a. Jón vonast til [að ___ líka þessi bók]
Jon.NOM hopes for to PRO.DAT like this book.NOM
“Jon hopes to like this book.” (JGJ, 115)
- b. *María vonast til [að ___ líka Jóni]
Maria.NOM hopes for to PRO.NOM like Jon.DAT
“Maria hopes that John likes her.” (JGJ, 116)

4. M-Case

The m-case algorithm adopted by Bobaljik is the one proposed in Marantz (1991)¹.

- (6) CASE REALIZATION DISJUNCTIVE HIERARCHY Domain: government
by V+I
- a. lexically governed case
 - b. dependent case (accusative, ergative)
 - c. unmarked/default case

1 For a more recent proposal see McFadden 2004

Derivations a and b represent respectively the case array for the regular accusative verb “love” and quirky dative “like”

(7)

a.	Subj	loves	Obj	b.	Subj	likes	Obj	
	—		—		DAT		—	lexical
	—		ACC		DAT		—	dependent
	NOM		ACC		DAT		NOM	unmarked

Of crucial importance is the observation that m-case marking is only partially determined by the syntactic structure

5. Clitics as inflection

Italian unaccusatives show a peculiar behaviour in the morphological inflection of the verb: in these constructions the participle is morphological marked for gender and number

(8) *_* sono andat-e a Brno
pro are gone.f.pl to Brno

“They went to Brno”

This is not the case in normal transitive, ditransitive and unergative constructions:

(9) **_* ho pres-a la casa

(10) **_* ho data la cas-a a Gianni

(11) **_* ho lavorat-a

.... unless clitic climbing applies:

(12) *_* l'ho presa

(13) *_* l'ho data a Gianni

The participle agrees only with the direct object and never with the indirect object:

(14) *Le ho dat-a il numero

- her.DAT have given-.f.s the number
- This seems to suggest that gender and number agreement happens at the level of the V, which is compatible with the suggestive idea that participial adjectives are Roots/V.
- If we assume that unaccusatives are base-merged as sisters of V, the agreement pattern follows straightforwardly. The question is, why does this morphological marking only shows up in these configurations?

Object-clitic-climbing constructions are similar to unaccusatives in one respect: the internal argument (a copy in the latter case) is not overtly realized.

- One conclusion that could be drawn is that the phonological deletion of an overt object must be licensed by the inflectional morphology on the verb indicating that object saturation has applied before the subject is (re-)merged.
- This is a post-syntactic operation.

The problem is that the object clitic is not deleted at PF.

(x) L'ho mangiat-a

Notice that this is not fed by displacement, it really is deletion:

(x) *LA MELA ho mangiat-a
THE APPLE have eaten.f.s

“It's the apple that I ate” (with contrastive focus)

The question is what is deleted here?

In Italian there is another case DPs that don't show up where they are supposed to: subject drop.

We could investigate the phenomenon of pro-drop in Italian to see what these two cases have in common.

One way to analyse pro-drop is, following the theory of rich morphology, that pro is a defective goal with respect to T, in that it becomes a proper subset of T after its feature are copied as a result of Agree.

(x) ϕ 1.s.m. mangi-o
 ϕ 1.s.m eat-1.s
 ↓
 ~~ϕ 1.s.m.~~ mangi-o

If we assume clitics to behave similarly then we could presume that clitics to express not only gender and number but also person. As we have seen in the case of unaccusatives V only allows for gender and number agreement. It follows that person agreement must happen at the level of T, and cannot apply anywhere else.

This is what under the current analysis clitic-climbing is, and clitics in situ are considered to be the morphological exponence of object saturation on defective Ts.

I will try to show it starting by very simple patterns and then move on to restructuring constructions, which I will try to model it as atheoretically as possible.

In the first step a pro is base merged as sister of V, it agrees for gender and number:

[V.f.s ϕ .f.s.]

then the v is merged and to this point an applicative object may have been merged

[v [_{AppIP} ϕ .m.s.[V.f.s ϕ .f.s.]]

in order to be deleted, these must be checked for person, in order to become a proper subset of the predication². This can happen at T, and nowhere else. However, the discrete slot of T is occupied by the finiteness inflection, so object agreement for person on T must be attached on the frontal slot.

From this follow some predictions:

- DO and IO clitics must both occur on the same position and it is not possible to have one of the clitic in situ while the other has climbed:

(x) *Gli ho potut-o portar-lo
CL.IO.3 have can.pp-m.s bring-CL.DO.3.m.s

“I could bring him”

(x) *L' ho potut-o portar-gli
CL.DO.3 have can.pp-m.s bring-CL.IO.3.m.s

- It should never be possible to separate the clitic from the verb. In fact clitics are phonological hosts of the elements that possess the features of which the clitics are the spell-out.

(x) *glie=lo sempre ho voluto dire
CL.IO.3=DO.3 always have wanted say

“I always wanted to tell him that”

Some syntacticians have tried to capture this view analysing clitics as head incorporation in the syntax (Roberts 2001).

Unfortunately this wrongly predicts that A movement shouldn't be possible with clitics.

(x) Gliel' è stato dato ieri

2 The idea that clitics affect whole predications is important for the technical implementation of the current analysis and is supported by the morphological theory of inflection

CL.IO.3=DO.3 is been given yesterday

“It has been given to him yesterday”

Stipulative functional projections on top of T don't fare very well either.

- (11) L_i *pro*_j ho presentato lorok per regalare una foto di se_{i,*j,*k}
CL.DO.3 have introduced them.DAT for giving a picture of self

If the object should be really raised than the anaphor should be bound by “k” and not by “i”

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