Clausal domains and clitic placement generalizations in Romance
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Since the work of Kayne in the late ‘80s / early ‘90s (1989; 1991), generative syntacticians have widely pursued an approach to pronominal clitic placement in Romance which takes cliticization to involve adjunction of the clitic to a functional head, within the functional structure of the clause (e.g.: Belletti, Benincà, Bianchi, Cardinaletti, Manzini & Savoia, Martins, Ordóñez, Pescarini, Poletto, Rizzi, Roberts, Shlonsky, Terzi, Uriagereka, and many others):

(1)

For object clitics (OCLs), some authors have proposed different clitic adjunction sites within the clause, depending on the language, and/or depending on the clause-type (e.g. finite vs. non-finite). Some propose a relatively high adjunction site in the left periphery of the finite clause for some languages (2a) (e.g., within the Complementizer-domain; e.g. Uriagereka 1995 for Galician), while some propose a slightly lower adjunction site, within the Inflectional-domain (2b) (e.g., Italian). In my own work, I have argued for a lower site still for finite clauses — in the lower functional field (or, the V-domain) (2c) — for a cluster of dialects spoken in the Northeast part of the Piedmont region, and also, for non-finite clauses in languages like Italian.

(2a)

The array of proposals in the literature has done much to enrich our understanding of cross-Romance variation in OCL placement, allowing us to tease apart the different possible object clitic adjunction sites for the different languages and for different constructions / clause-types.

Nevertheless, a pair of questions continues to remain open: if the cross-linguistic variation reveals that there are different adjunction sites within the extended projections of the verb for different languages and for different clause-types, then (1) What governs which functional head is used in which language, and (2) What governs which functional head is used for which clause-type (e.g., finite vs. non-finite, causative vs. restructuring, declarative vs. imperative)? The problem can be illustrated with the following contrast between the Italian present perfect on the one hand (3a), and the Piedmontese present perfect on the other (3b):

Italian: OCL in high matrix position in compound tense
(3a) Lo hanno mangiato. / (3a') *Hanno mangiato-lo.
OCL they-have eaten
‘They have eaten it.’
**Piedmontese** (Cairo-Montenotte; Parry 2005): OCL in low position within participial clause

(3b) I an rangiò-la.

`They fixed it.`

As can be seen, in Italian, the OCL cannot appear to the right of the past participle in the compound tenses, while in Piedmontese varieties it can (and often must).

If we assume that (i) the OCL adjoins to a functional head within the extended projections of the verb, and (ii) that the OCL *la* in Piedmontese (3b) is adjoined to a functional head associated with the participle (call it $Z^0$), as in (4), then why is the $Z^0$ head not available for OCL adjunction in the case of Italian?

**Piedmontese compound tense:**

(4) \[ \text{CP} \left[ \text{TP} \right. \left. [\text{FP}_1 \text{F}^0_1 \text{FP}_2 \text{F}^0_2 \ldots \left[ \text{XP} \left. \text{YP} \text{Z} \text{Z}^0 \text{VP} \text{AUX} \right. \left. \right. \right. \text{Clause}_2 \text{X} \text{Y} \text{Z}^0 \ldots \right. \right. \right. \text{vP} \right. \]

\text{PARTICIPIAL CLAUSE}

\text{I an rangiò-la}

\text{fixed-OCL}

\text{SCL they-have}

\text{“They have fixed it”}

In this talk, I will discuss two possible approaches to the problem:

- **Approach 1:** the functional head available for adjunction in some languages is simply missing in others (*a la* Rizzi 2000); under this view, Italian would simply be missing the $Z^0$ head in (4);

- **Approach 2:** all languages have the same series of functional heads, and therefore, the same series of potential clitic adjunction sites; so there has to be some other mechanism governing the distribution of clitics across the potential hosting sites.

I argue that Approach 1 is problematic on two grounds: first, there is no independently establishable principle that predicts which languages and/or structures will be missing which heads, and (ii) it makes incorrect predictions regarding the clitic placement possibilities across languages; that is, it cannot account for a basic (and previously unnoted) cross-linguistic generalization, to be discussed in this talk. This approach is thus untenable, by itself.

Instead, then, I argue for Approach 2. The mechanism that I propose in order to account for choice of clitic placement head takes into account the featural make-up of the functional head that the clitic adjoins to. The account is driven by a series of generalizations to be made about OCL adjunction in Piedmontese. As a preview, we can note the following unidirectional entailment: If a dialect utilizes a low functional head in simple tense clauses for OCL adjunction (as in (5)), then that variety exhibits enclisis on the past participle in the compound tenses (as in (6)). There is thus no variety which exhibits OCL adjunction to a low functional head in simple tense clauses, but which does not exhibit enclisis on the past participle in the compound tenses (see the fictitious “Borgomanerese-prime” in (5’) and (6’)):

**Borgomanerese:**

(5) I vönghi piö-lla.

SCL I-see anymore-OCL

‘I don’t see her anymore.’

(6) I la ḍa mangià-lla

SCL OCL I-have eaten

‘I ate it.’

\*Borgomanerese-prime

*(5’) I vönghi piö-lla.

SCL I-see anymore-OCL

‘I don’t see her anymore.’

*(6’) I la ḍa mangià

SCL OCL I-have eaten

‘I ate it.’