

## It's PF's own doing!

### Proclisis and enclisis at the syntax-phonology interface in Asturian

The Western Iberian Romance language Asturian displays enclisis in finite contexts, as in (1). However, when a preverbal element such as negation, a negative constituent, an instance of (e.g., exclamative/interrogative) focus, or a complementizer occurs, proclisis obtains, as illustrated for *wh*-questions in (2) (*Gramática de la llingua asturiana* 2001):

- (1) *Llamola munches vegaes.* (2) *¿Cuándo la llamó?*  
called-cl.<sub>acc.fem.</sub> many times when cl.<sub>acc.fem.</sub> called  
'She or he called her many times.' 'When did she or he call her?'

Traditional analyses assume that when the clitic is postverbal, the verb has moved past the clitic to a high position:  $V\ cl\ \forall$  (e.g., Rivero 1986 for Old Spanish; Corral Esteban 2019 for Asturian). Nevertheless, as argued by Villa-García (2019) based on adverb placement facts, the verb appears to have moved high in Asturian irrespective of the position of the clitic. Similarly, it is not clear why the verb would not move high in (2), which is in fact the standard analysis (i.e., T-to-C movement) of S-V inversion in Romance (see, e.g., Rizzi 1982, *i.a.*). Thus, I argue instead for an account which assumes that there are copies of the clitic above and below the verb, and therefore it is the P(honetic)F(orm) component that opts for one or the other, in accordance with the Copy Theory of Movement (Chomsky 1995; 2013), an analysis that has a number of welcome results.

Under the Copy Theory of Movement, moving elements leave a copy which is typically left unrealized phonologically in PF (A...A), in consonance with Pronounce Highest Copy, which states that movement should be detectable, and thus elements that have undergone movement are routinely pronounced in the moved position. However, a vast body of research into a host of languages has shown that, on occasion, a low copy of a moved element may be favored in PF to prevent the derivation from crashing, since pronouncing the element in the moved position would cause a problem (Bobaljik 1994; Pesetsky 1997; Franks 1998; Bošković 2001 et seq., *i.a.*). In this connection, consider Romanian (3). In this language, all *wh*-items must be fronted, as in (3a). However, there is a constraint against homophonous forms, exemplified in (3b). In order to avoid the ensuing PF violation in such cases, the low copy of the *wh*-item is chosen in PF, (3c), which is an illustration of the intricate interplay between syntax and phonology (Bošković & Nunes, 2007).

- (3) a. *Cine ce precede?* [Romanian, from Bošković 2002]  
who what precedes  
'Who precedes what?'  
b. *\*Ce ce precede?* c. *Ce precede ce?*  
what what precedes what precedes what  
'What precedes what?' 'What precedes what?'

Returning now to the Asturian case, it is widely assumed that this variety displays enclisis: there is an enclitic requirement that forces clitics to find a suitable host word to their left. Most authors argue that the reason is phonological (Barbosa 1995, 2000; Lorenzo, in progress; see Fernández-Rubiera 2009 for a dissenting view), an assumption that I adopt here. Moreover, since the seminal work of Kayne (1991), clitics in Romance are analysed as INFL-related elements (e.g., agreement markers), as shown by the contrast in (4), which indicates that the clitic is located in INFL (IP/TP).

- (4) a. *Tengo-y dao paseos tol día.* b. *\*Tengo dao-y paseos tol día.*  
have+cl.<sub>dat</sub> given walks all+the day  
'I've walked him/her/it around all day several times before.'

Hence, on the basis of (1), (2), and (4), it is reasonable to conclude that there is (at least) a copy of the clitic in INFL and another one in the base position (e.g., as an object of the lexical verb).

Armed with the ingredients above, let us see how the Copy Theory of Movement/Pronounce Lower Copy analysis illustrated for Romanian in (3) applies to the Asturian case. In (1), a case of

regular enclisis, we have the highly simplified derivation in (5a). Under normal circumstances, the system would opt for the high copy of the clitic, as in (5b). But (5b) would fail to meet the enclitic requirement operative in Asturian finite clauses. Therefore, the PF component chooses the low copy of the clitic in the place of the high one, thus satisfying the enclitic requirement, (5c).

(5) a. cl V cl                      b. \*cl V eł                      c. eł V cl (cf. (1))

Note that the copies of the clitic are independently created by the syntax; the PF then has a choice: under normal circumstances, Pronounce Highest Copy applies, (5b), but if this creates a PF problem, then a different copy, which is available anyway, is favored, as is the case in (1)/(5c).

What happens in cases like (2), then, which display proclisis? Such cases would be derived as follows. As before, there are two copies of the clitic –a high and a low one–, as in (6a). As usual, normally the highest copy would be realized in PF, as in (6b). Is this possible now? The answer to this question turns out to be positive: the clitic finds an appropriate host to its left, the (focal) wh-item/phrase. Therefore, the high copy of the clitic can –and must– be chosen in PF, since this satisfies both the Pronounce Highest Copy and the enclitic requirement of Asturian. Choosing to pronounce the low copy of the clitic in this scenario instead, as in (6c), would constitute a violation, since pronouncing the element in a low position when there is no need would lead to a crash.

(6) a. wh cl V cl                      b. wh cl V eł (cf. (2))                      c. \*wh eł V cl

Note, similarly, that (2) provides further evidence for the different positions of the clitic in the clause. One major advantage of the analysis in (6) is that it dispenses with the need to assume PF movement (movement is still syntactic, the choice of copy to favor being a PF decision). Further, the currently pursued account circumvents the ‘look-ahead’ problem that would ensue if we assumed that when a wh-item is fronted in this language, a position is created ad hoc for the clitic. Since the clitic showing up as a proclitic is a PF decision, creating a syntactic position for clitics only if wh-movement occurs would be rather undesirable. Put another way, a PF-related operation requiring clitics to be enclitics would be dictating the creation of a syntactic position, a process that is standardly assumed to occur pre-PF (in the syntax). This problem vanishes under (6).

As noted, along with wh-phrases, negative words and complementizers also trigger proclisis, as shown by (7a). Although complementizers do not qualify as focal elements, they do seem to serve as supporting elements for the clitic (i.e., they are atonic, but not weak elements). This is confirmed by data like (7b), discussed by the *Gramática de la llingua asturiana* (2001).

(7) a. ... *que-y lo dieron.*  
       ... that-cl.dat cl.acc.masc gave  
       ‘that they gave it to him/her.’  
       b. ... *que(.) dieron-ylo.*

In (7b), the clitic may surface postverbally despite the presence of the complementizer, which amounts to saying that there seems to be a certain degree of optionality ((7a) *vis-à-vis* (7b)). Nonetheless, as noted by the *Gramática...*, a sentence like (7b) is possible *iff* a pause/intonational break (#) occurs between *que* and the verb (i.e., *que # V*). This should come as no surprise, since in a scenario such as this one, the clitic finds no support to its left (the intonational break being immediately discarded as a potential host); hence, the clitic must surface in a position in which its enclitic requirement is satisfied, namely in the postverbal position (i.e., *que # eł V cl - (7b)*), precisely as predicted under the Copy-Theory/Pronounce-Lower-Copy account adopted here.

Overall, the Copy-Theory account of the cliticization phenomena in Asturian has empirical and theoretical advantages. The proposal places movement in the syntax and makes use of copies that are independently available syntactically, while avoiding (i) theoretically unappealing ‘look-ahead’ problems from the syntax to the PF component, (ii) the need to appeal to PF movement under alternative accounts, and (iii) the stipulation that the phonology overrides syntax.