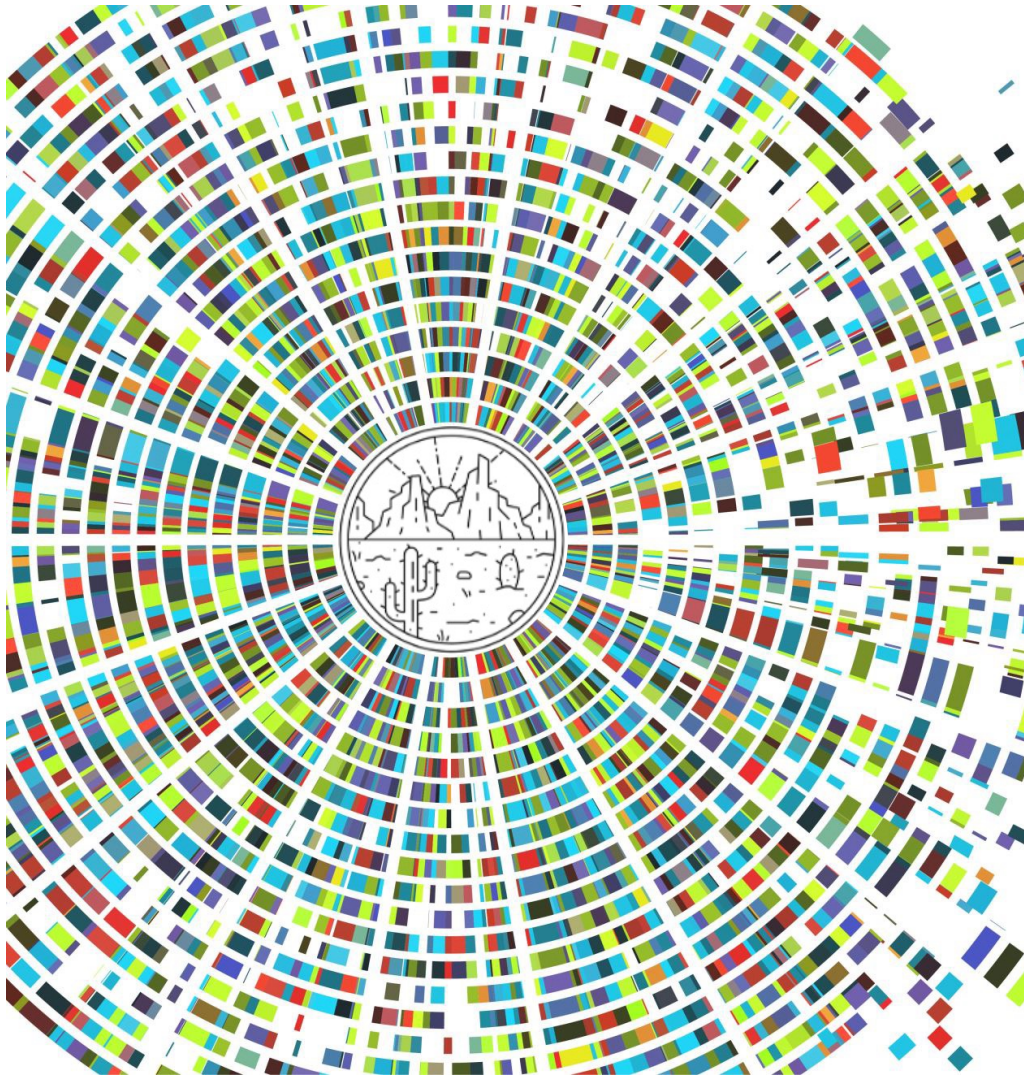




LING 696 – 12 oct, 2026
Fall 2026

Spanish clitics, clusters and climbing

Carlos A. Krapp López
University of Arizona – DSP
carloskl@arizona.edu

Outline

1. Intro
2. Spanish clitics: Basic facts
3. *Movement* and *Base-generation* Approaches
4. Recent proposals & their challenges
5. Accounting for clitic-cluster climbing in periphrases
6. Concluding remarks
7. References

1. Intro

Important questions

- What are Spanish clitics (made of)?
- Are all Spanish clitics of the same kind/category?
- How are Spanish clitics encoded in the syntax?
- Do Spanish clitics move or are they base-generated?
- If they move: how, where and why?
- What can periphrastic environments show us about clitics?
- What mechanisms regulate (un)grammaticality patterns of clitic placement in periphrases?

2.

Basic Facts

Morphology of Spanish clitics

Table 1. Spanish pronoun paradigm

	Nominative	Accusative	Dative
1,sg	yo	me	me
2,sg	tú	te	te
3,sg	él / ella	lo / la	le
1,pl	nosotros / nosotras	nos	nos
2,pl	vosotros / vosotras	os	os
3,pl	ellos / ellas / ustedes	los / las	les

(STRONG)

Status and placement

- Between words and affixes
 - Prosodically **weak**
 - **Parasite** stress from **verbs**

- **Object** pronouns

- DO (Acc)
- IO (Dat)

- Differ from overt argument position (**'climb'**)

- (1) a. Ella cantó una canción.
3sg.fem.Nom sang.3sg a song
'She sang a song.'
- b. Ella la=cantó.
3sg.fem.Nom 3sg.fem.Acc=sang.3sg
'She sang it.'

Placement

- Placement can vary in periphrases
 - **Proclisis: inflected V**
 - Auxiliary
 - **Enclisis: non-inflected V**
 - Lexical predicate
- Different placement ≠ different interpretation

- (2) a. Quiero comprar **un carro.**
want.1sg.prs buy.inf **a car**
‘I want to buy a car.’
- b. **Lo** quiero comprar.
3sg.masc.Acc want.1sg.prs buy.inf
- c. Quiero comprar=**lo.**
want.1sg.prs buy.inf=**3sg.masc.Acc**
‘I want to buy it.’

Adjectival modification

- Clitics can be modified by adjectives
- ...but not directly (sequentially?)
- Gender/number agreement is visible
- Predicative flavor

- (3) a. Martín encontró las casas destruidas.
Martín found.3sg the houses destroyed.fem.pl
'Martín found the houses destroyed.'
- b. *Martín **las=** destruidas encontró.
Martín **3sg.fem.Acc=** destroyed.fem.pl found.3sg
Intended: 'Martín found them destroyed.'
- c. Martín **las=** encontró destruidas.
Martín **3sg.fem.Acc=** found.3sg destroyed.fem.pl
'Martín found them destroyed.'

Doubling

- Clitics **double**

- only with **[+animate]** objects

(4) Sofia **le** dio un sombrero **a Helena**.

Sofia **3sg.Dat** give.3sg.pst a hat to Helena

‘Sofia gave Helena a hat.’

- **Dative** clitics are **always** (optionally) doubled*

(5) Ellos **los** buscan **a los niños**.

3pl.masc.Nom **3pl.masc.Acc** search.3pl **DOM the kids**

‘They are searching for the kids.’

- **Accusative** clitics are optionally doubled in **some** varieties

- otherwise deemed ungrammatical

*Pineda (2020) provides evidence against the claim that **dative** doubling is **mandatory** in DOC constructions.

Doubling

- Clitics **double**
 - only with **[+animate]** objects
- **Dative** and **Accusative** clitics are **always** doubled with **strong** pronouns

- (6) Sofia **le** dio un sombrero **a ella.**
Sofia **3sg.Dat** give.3sg.pst a hat **to 3.sg.fem.Str**
'Sofia gave her a hat.'
- (7) Ellas **los** buscan **a ellos.**
3pl.fem.Nom **3pl.masc.Acc** search.3pl.prs **DOM 3pl.masc.Str**
'They are searching for them'.

Clustering and climbing

- Clitics **cluster**

- Fixed order **DAT** › **ACC**

- Clitics **climb** (further)

- Every **V** is a possible target
 - Proclisis with **inflected** V
 - Enclisis with **non-inflected** Vs

- Only **one** interpretation

- (8) a. Juan va a volver a enviár =**me=lo**
 Juan go.3sg to return.Inf to send.Inf =**1sg.Dat=3sg.Acc**
- b. Juan va a volvér =**me=lo** a enviar
 Juan go.3sg to return.Inf =**1sg.Dat=3sg.Acc** to send
- c. Juan **me= lo=** va a volver a enviar
 Juan **1sg.Dat=3sg.Acc=** go.3sg to return.Inf to send.Inf
- ‘Juan will send it to me again’*

Periphrases and extraction

- A clitic cannot climb to other verbs if they are lexical
- Lexical verbs, contrary to auxiliaries, have an argument structure
- This seems to prevent further climbing

- (9)
- a. Lucía va a pasear tarareando su canción favorita.
 Lucía go.3sg.prs to walk.inf hum.ger her song favorite
 ‘Lucía is going to go for a walk humming her favorite song.’
- b. Lucía va a pasear tarareando =**la**.
 Lucía go.3sg to walk.inf hum.ger =**3sg.fem.Acc**
 ‘Lucía is going to go for a walk humming it.’
- c. *Lucía va a pasear =**la** tarareando.
 Lucía go.3sg to walk.inf =**3sg.fem.Acc** hum.ger
 Intended: ‘Lucía is going to go for a walk humming it.’
- d. *Lucía **la**= va a pasear tarareando.
 Lucía **3sg.fem.Acc**= go.3sg to walk.inf hum.ger
 Intended: ‘Lucía is going to go for a walk humming it.’

Imperatives

- Clitics attach in enclisis to affirmative imperatives
- Several authors argue that imperatives lack a tense feature

a. ¡Cierra la puerta!
close.2sg.imp the.sing.fem door
‘Shut/Close the door!’

b. ¡Ciérra =la!
close.2sg.imp =3sg.fem.Acc
‘Close it!’

c. *¡La= cierra!
3sg.fem.Acc= close.2sg.imp
Intended: ‘Close it!’

3.

Movement and Base-generation Approaches

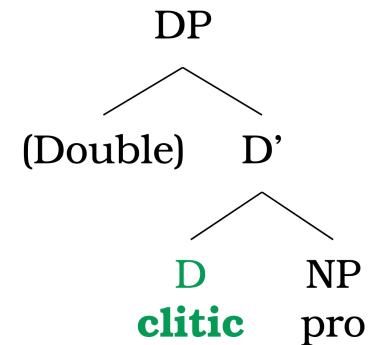
and datives in ditransitive constructions

Movement – Uriagereka (1995), Raposo & Uriagereka (2005)

- Accusative clitics are **D**-heads
- ...that head a **big DP structure**
 - hosting its double in **[Spec,DP]**
 - Thus accounting for clitic doubling!

(1) (Yo) **lo=** vi a él.
(I) 3sg.masc.Acc saw.1sg DOM 3sg.masc.Obl
'I saw him.'

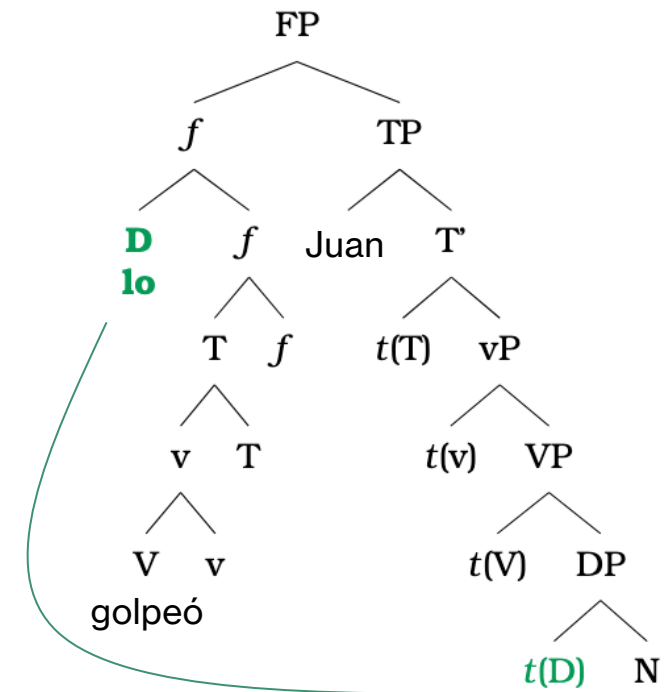
Figure 1. Big DP



Movement – Uriagereka (1995), Raposo & Uriagereka (2005)

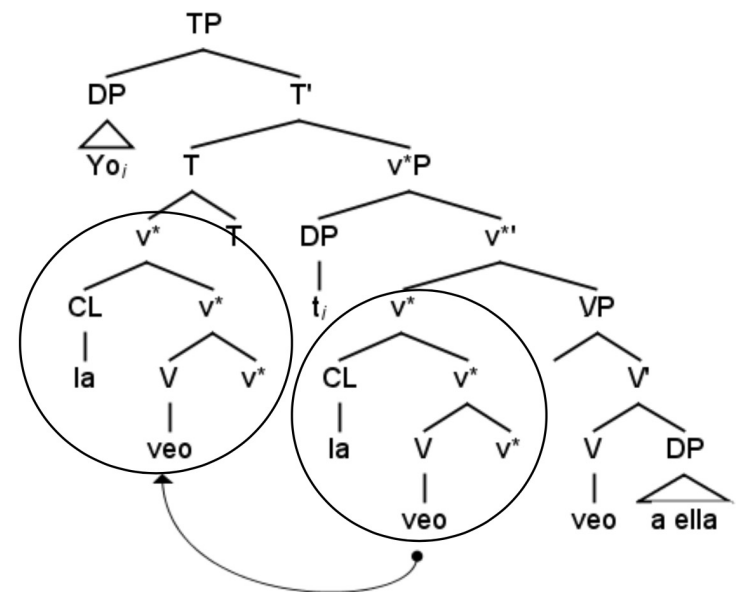
- Functional projection **FP**
 - Above **T** (below **C**)
 - headed by clitic-like **f**
 - **f** bears phi-features
 - **D** clitics **agree** with **f**
 - **D** clitics **cluster** around/with **f**
- Clitics climb in a *one-fell-swoop* movement
 - From their argumental positions (in V domain)
 - To **f** head

Figure 2. Derivation of *Juan lo golpeó*.



Base-generation - Sportiche (1996), a.m.o.

- Clitics are functional projections (or agreement markers)
- Base-generated in a high functional position
 - outside of the VP domain
 - Argument DP (or *pro*) inside VP
- Proclisis is obtained via V-to-T movement

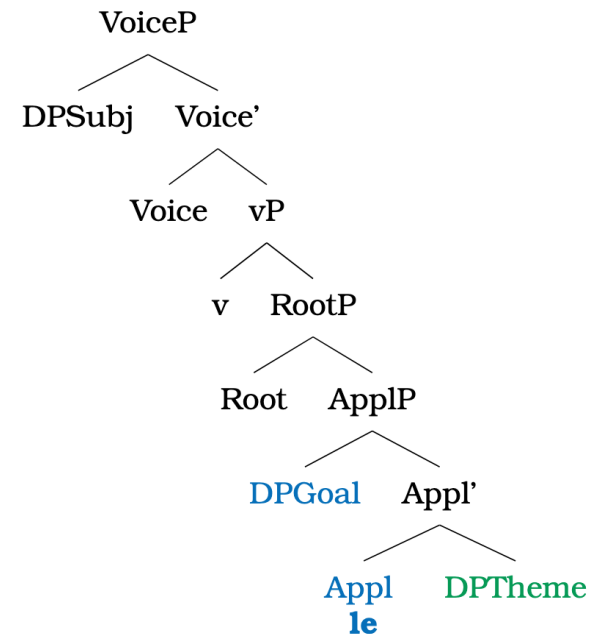


Ditransitive constructions and dative clitics – Cuervo (2003)

- **Dative** argument is introduced via **Applicative** projection
 - **Dative clitics** are *spell-out* of the **Applicative** head
 - **Not** D-heads
 - Double in [Spec, ApplP]
- **Dative argument** c-commands **accusative argument**
 - *Possession* semantic relation **DAT** » **ACC**

(8) **Le=** entregaron el primer premio **a Carolina.**
3sg.Dat= gave.3pl the first prize **to Carolina.**
 ‘They gave Carolina the first place prize.’

Figure 3. Structure of ditransitives



4.

Recent Proposals

and their challenges

Hybrid vs. Uniform approaches

- **Hybrid** approaches argue in favor of a **division** of Spanish clitics into **two different systems**
 - Some clitics are considered to be of the **Determiner** class
 - Heads of Big-DPs that **undergo Movement**
 - All other clitics are considered to be **Agreement Markers**
 - **Base-generated** in functional projection (vP) outside of VP domain
- **Uniform** approaches argue in favor of a **unified treatment** of all clitics
 - As **Determiners** (or at least having a **D component**)
 - Varying accounts for Movement and ditransitive constructions (and clustering)

Mixed analysis (Ormazábal & Romero, 2013)

- Morphological, syntactic and semantic evidence
- **3rd π accusative clitics** and all other clitics (1st/2nd π **acc**, and all **datives**) are morphologically distinct
 - **Gender-marking** is only found in the **former**, not in the **latter**
 - 3rd π **acc** = **Ds** all other clitics = **Agreement Markers**
- **Ds** in Big-DPs undergo **movement** from their argumental positions
- **AgrMs** are **base-generated** in a functional head outside VP domain

Mixed – Morphological evidence: Gender

- 3rd π **accusative** clitics show **gender variation** morphologically
- 3rd π **dative** clitics do **not** vary
- 1st/2nd π **accusative/dative** do **not** either

(8) a. **La** vimos. (e.g. the girl)

3fsDO saw.we

‘We saw her.’

b. **Lo** vimos. (e.g. the boy)

3msDO saw.we

‘We saw him.’

(9) a. **Le** di el libro a **María/a Juan**.

3sIO gave the book A **María/A Juan**

‘I gave Mary/John the book.’

Mixed – Morphological evidence: Gender

- **Gender variation** in 3rd π **accusatives** is **similar** to the one found in **articles**
 - Suggesting they are **Ds**
- **Dative** clitics (and 1st/2nd π) do **not** share this similarity with Determiners
 - Suggesting they are **AgrMs**

Table 2. Object clitics paradigm

Accusative	Dative
me	me
te	te
lo / la	le
nos	nos
os	os
los / las	les

Table 3. Spanish articles paradigm

	Definite	Indefinite
Masc., sg.	el	un
Fem., sg.	la	una
Masc., pl.	los	unos
Fem., pl.	las	unas

Morphological evidence: Gender – Challenge

- **Syntactic** gender is **not** necessarily marked **morphologically**
 - Absence of marks for gender does **not** mean that a **N/Adj** does **not** bear **gender** features
 - The same is true for **pronouns** and **clitics**
- Evidence of **gender agreement** in adjectival copular complements and object-depictive constructions

(10) a. **Me** vieron cansado.
1sg.acc.masc.sg saw.3pl tired.masc.sg
'They saw me tired.'

b. **Te** vieron cansada.
2sg.acc.fem.sg saw.3pl tired.fem.sg
'They saw you tired.'

(11) a. **Me** dieron un golpe borracho.
1sg.dat.masc.sg gave.3pl a hit drunk.masc.sg
'They hit me (while) drunk.'

b. **Te** dieron un golpe borracha.
2sg.dat.fem.sg gave.3pl a hit drunk.fem.sg
'They hit you (while) drunk.'

Morphological evidence: Gender – Challenge

- One might argue that the gender mark in the adjectives comes from a **semantic/referential** source and not syntactically...
- ...but **collective nouns** bear **only syntactic** gender, unrelated to that of the actual members in the group

Context: The Pérez family participated in a game show and ended up winning the big prize.

(12) **Le** entregaron el premio **emocionada**. (*Le = La familia Pérez*)

3sg.fem.dat gave the award excited.sg.fem

‘They gave the award to the excited family.’

Mixed – Syntactic evidence: Doubling

- Allowed with **dative** clitics
- **Dis**allowed with **accusative** clitics
- Difference in possibility of doubling
= differentiated analyses
- **DAT** = Agreement Markers
- **ACC** = Determiners

(13) **Les** recomendé un libro a **los estudiantes**.

3pl.Dat recommended a book to **the students**

‘I recommended a book to the students.’

(14) (***La**) vimos **la casa**.

3sg.fem saw **the house**

‘We saw the house.’

Syntactic evidence: Doubling – Challenge

[+animate]

- Allowed with **dative** clitics
- **AND** with **accusative** clitics
if **[+animate]**
- Similarity in possibility of doubling
= Same analysis
- **DAT** = Determiners
- **ACC** = Determiners

(13) **Les** recomendé un libro a **los estudiantes**.

3pl.Dat recommended a book to **the students**

‘I recommended a book to the students.’

(15) **La** vimos a **Marta** corriendo.

3sg.fem.sg saw DOM **Marta** running

‘We saw Marta running.’

Mixed – Semantic evidence: Range of coreference

- Ranges of coreference of **DPs** that **double accusative** and **dative** clitics are different. Evidence from negative quantifier *ningún(a)* ‘none’.
- **Narrower** for DP doubles of **accusative** clitics
- **Broader** for DP doubles of **dative** clitics

(16) a. El libro lo han vendido.

The book 3sg.masc.acc have sold

‘The book, they sold it.’

b. A la hija del rector le han dado el título.

A the daughter of.the rector 3sg.dat have given the degree

‘To the rector’s daughter, they gave the degree.’

(17) a. *Ningún libro lo han vendido.

None book 3sg.masc.acc have sold

‘They have sold no book(s).’

b. A ninguna estudiante le han dado el título.

A none student 3sg.dat have given the degree.

‘(To) No student they gave the degree.’

Semantic evidence: Range of coreference – Challenge [+animate]

- Once again, **[+animate]** is a relevant feature
- If the **accusative** argument is **[+animate]**, grammaticality arises
 - As it does with the **dative** argument

(18) a. ***Ningún libro lo** han vendido.

None book 3sg.masc.acc have sold

‘They have sold no book(s).’

b. A **ninguna estudiante le** han dado el título.

A **none student 3sg.dat** have given the degree.

‘(To) No student they gave the degree.’

(19) A **ningún policía lo** han golpeado tantas veces.

A **none policeman 3sg.masc.acc** have beaten so-many times

‘No policeman has been beaten so/as many times.’

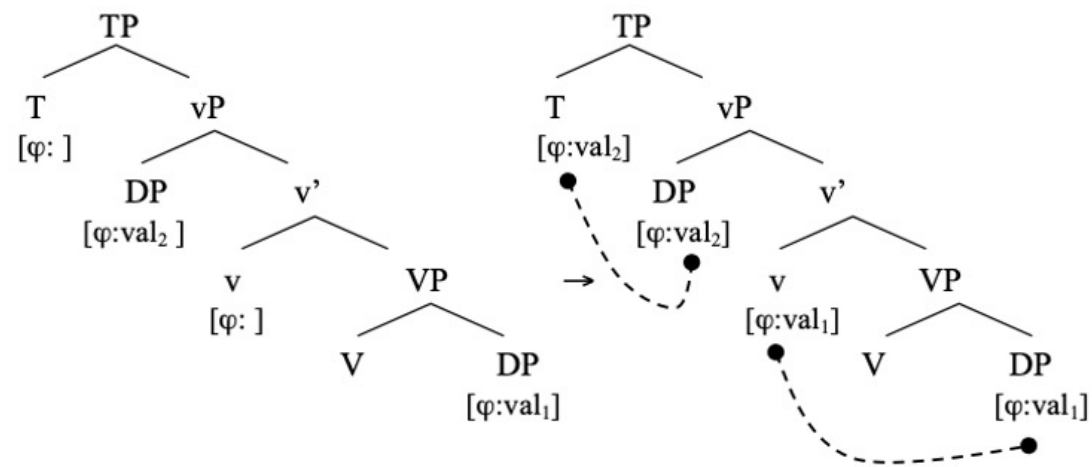
Heterogeneous analysis (Alcaraz, 2021)

- Evidence from **doubling** and **subject/object agreement**
 - Based on different **Binding-theoretical properties** between clitics and doubles
- **3rd** π **accusative** and **dative** clitics are **D-clitics**
 - **Determiners**
 - **Governed** by Principle B
 - Subject to **Movement**
- **1st/2nd** π **accusative** and **dative** clitics* are **φ -clitics**
 - **Agreement Markers**
 - **Exempt** from Principle B
 - Subject to **Agree**

*Reflexive **se** is considered a φ -clitic as well

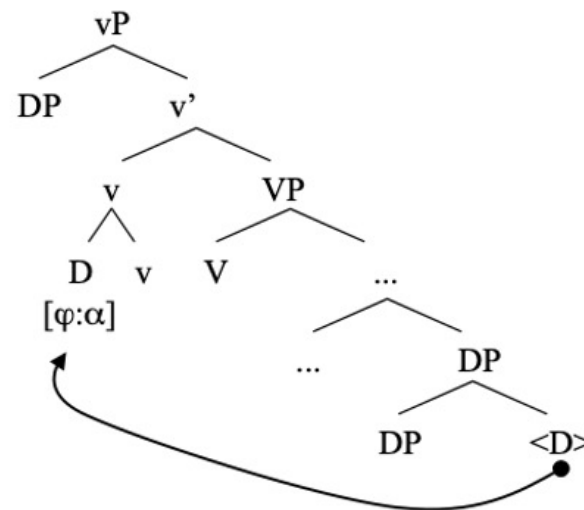
Heterogeneous – Syntax of φ -clitics

- Figure 4. (a) Featural composition, (b) Agree



Heterogeneous – Syntax of D-clitics

- Figure 5. Movement of D-clitics



Final classification

Table 4. D-clitics

	IO	DO	
		Masc.	Fem.
SG	le	lo	la
PL	les	los	las

Table 5. φ -clitics

	SG	PL
1 st	me	nos
2 nd	te	os
3 rd	se	

Heterogeneous – Binding-Doubling evidence

- Well-known fact: **variation** in **anaphoric interpretation** of **1st/2nd** π vs. **3rd** π **DO/IO** clitics
 - 1st/2nd** π clitics **must** corefer with clause-mate subject
 - 3rd** π clitics **cannot** corefer with clause-mate subject

(20) a. Juan¹ **lo**^{*1/2} vio.

J.(NOM) **3msc.sg.DO** saw3.sgSUBJ

‘Juan saw him.’

b. Juan¹ **le**^{*1/2} compró un libro.

J.(NOM) **3sg.IO** bought.3sgSUBJ a book(ACC).

‘Juan bought a book for him.’

(21) a. Yo¹ **me**¹ vi en el espejo.

I(NOM) **1sg.DO** saw.1sgSUBJ in the mirror

‘I saw myself in the mirror.’

b. Juan¹ **me**² vio en el espejo.

J.(NOM) **1sg.DO** saw.3sgSUBJ in the mirror

‘Juan saw me in the mirror.’

Binding-Doubling – Challenge: DM

- Clitics, whether **D**- or φ -heads, are **terminal nodes** in the syntax, i.e., **feature bundles**
- Computations operate on
 - **bundles** of **abstract** grammatical features (φ -features),
 - **not** Vocabulary Items, *per se*
- Within **DM**, **Vocabulary Items** provide the set of **phonological** signals available for the expression of **abstract** morphemes

[π : 1, #: sg, +Acc, +Refl, +cl] $\leftrightarrow$ /me/

[π : 3, #: sg, G: masc, +Acc, +cl] $\leftrightarrow$ /lo/

(22) a. Yo¹ me¹ vi en el espejo.

I 1sg.DO saw.1sgSUBJ in the mirror

(lit.) ‘I saw myself in the mirror.’

b. Él¹ lo^{*1/2} vio.

He 3sg.DO saw.3sgSUBJ

‘He saw him.’

DM: Syncretism vs. Competition

- **Syncretism** is found in the case of **1st** and **2nd** π clitics:

- Acc, Dat, Refl = /me/, /te/

- **Competition** is found in the case of **3rd** π clitics:

- Acc + masc = /lo/
- Acc + fem = /la/
- Dat +masc/+fem = /le/
- Refl = /se/*

*Elsewhere, default

(23) a. [π : 1, #: sg, G: masc, acc]

Luisa **me** vio cansado.

Luisa **ME** saw tired.masc

‘Luisa saw me exhausted.’

b. [π : 1, #: sg, G: fem, dat]

Jorge **me** prestó su reloj.

Jorge **ME** lent his watch

‘Jorge lent me his watch.’

c. [π : 1, #: sg, G: masc, acc, refl]

Yo **me** hablo a mí mismo.

I **ME** talk to myself.masc.

‘I talk to myself.’

DM: Syncretism vs. Competition

- **Syncretism** is found in the case of **1st** and **2nd** π clitics:

- Acc, Dat, Refl = /me/, /te/

- **Competition** is found in the case of **3rd** π clitics:

- Acc + masc = /lo/
- Acc + fem = /la/
- Dat +masc/+fem = /le/
- Refl = /se/*

*Elsewhere, default

- (24) a. [π : 3, #: sg, G: fem, acc]

Alejandro **la** vio dormida.

Alejandro **LA** saw asleep.fem

‘Alejandro saw her asleep.’

- b. [π : 3, #: pl, G: fem, dat]

Josefina **les** prestó una computadora.

Josefina **LES** lent a computer.

‘Josefina lent them a computer.’

- c. [π : 3, #: sg, G: fem, acc, refl]

Ella **se** habla a sí misma.

She **SE** talks to herself

‘She talks to herself.’

Interim conclusions – DM analysis

- i. Clitics are terminal nodes specified for the same **syntactic** features: π , #, **G**, **K**, and **+cl**;
- ii. featural difference between [π : 1, #:sg] object clitics with varying **G** and **K** specifications results in **morphological**, not syntactic, **syncretism**;
- iii. syncretism results in **insertion** of Vocabulary Item /me/ underspecified for [π : 1, #: sg, +cl];
- iv. in the case of varying 3rd π clitic Vocabulary Items, **G** and **K** (and **Refl**) features **block** some of the **competing** phonological expressions, leading to **insertion** of the **most specified** one;
- v. difference between 1st/2nd π and 3rd π clitics in terms of diversity of Vocabulary Items for 3rd π , but not 1st/2nd π is a **morphological**, not syntactic, difference of **competition** vs. **syncretism**.
- vi. Since these differences are **morphological** and **not syntactic**, I conclude that **all clitics** in Spanish are members of **one and the same class**, namely **Determiners**.

Uniform analysis – Clitic cluster derivation through movement (Romain, 2020)

- **Phase Theoretic** approach
- Both **accusative** and **dative** clitics are **D**-heads
 - **Dative** DP in [Spec,VP] (Larsonian-shell configuration)
 - **Accusative** DP in [Comp,V]
- Movement triggered by **Agree**
 - V **inherits** [uCase:**Acc**] from v^* and agrees with **Accusative** DP's [uCase:**Acc**]
 - **Acc D** moves via '**roll-up**' to edge of **V** due to inherited EPP feature in V
 - v^* keeps a **copy** of phi-features, which triggers **movement** of **Dat D** to edge of v^*
 - Complex **lo+V** head moves to v^*

$$lo + \sqrt{dar} \gg me + v^* = me + v^* + lo + \sqrt{dar}$$
 - More complex v^* head moves to **T**

$$me + v^* + lo + \sqrt{dar} \gg \mathbf{T} = me\ lo\ dio$$

**Clitic-cluster
climbing – Romain
(2020:379)**

- (16) Juan me lo dio.
 Juan me.DAT it.ACC.MASC gave
 “Juan gave me it.”

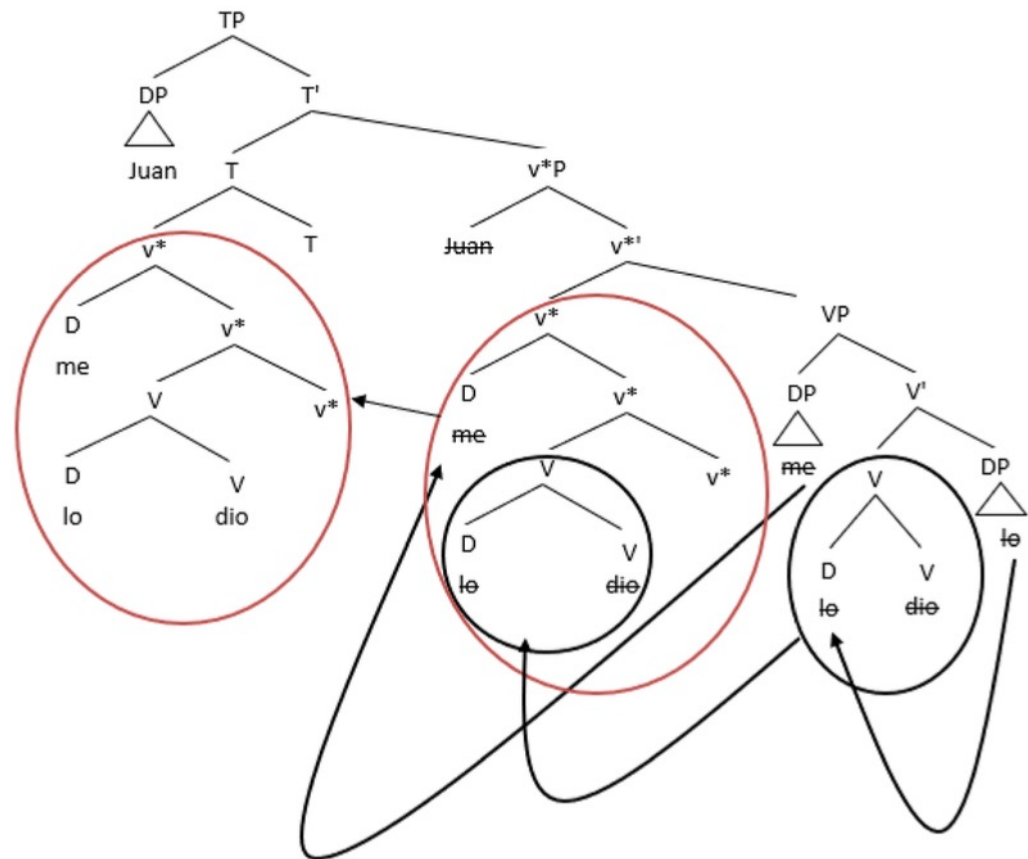


Figure 6: Derivation of an IO-DO clitic cluster (*Juan me lo dio* ('Juan gave me it')).

Challenges: VP-shell & Head-movement

(25) a. (Tú) vas a dar =me =lo.
You go.2sg to give.inf =1sg.Dat =3sg.Acc
'You will give it to me.'

b. (Tú) me= lo= vas a dar.
You 1sg.Dat= 3sg.Acc= go.2sg give.Inf
'You will give it to me.'

- Larsonian VP-shell fails to account for the semantics of Appl » DP_{Theme} c-command relation expressing *possession*
- Head-to-head movement fails to account for **climbing to T** in **periphrases**
 - *Vas a dar=me=lo*
 - *Me= lo= vas a dar (!)*
- If clitics head-to-head-move with V and v* to T...
 - ...proclisis to **T** *vas* ('go') would not be possible
 - Lower **Inf** contains head-incorporated clitics
 - **embedded clause** would have to climb to highest **T**
- This analysis predicts **ungrammatical** sentence
**Me= lo= dar vas a*
(!) *Me= lo= vas a dar* → is **not** a possible derivation under this account.

Uniform analysis – Lexical decomposition (Ausín & Fernández-Rubiera, to appear)

(26) **Le** entregamos **a las estudiantes** el libro.
LE gave_{1PL} to the students the book
'We gave the students the book.'

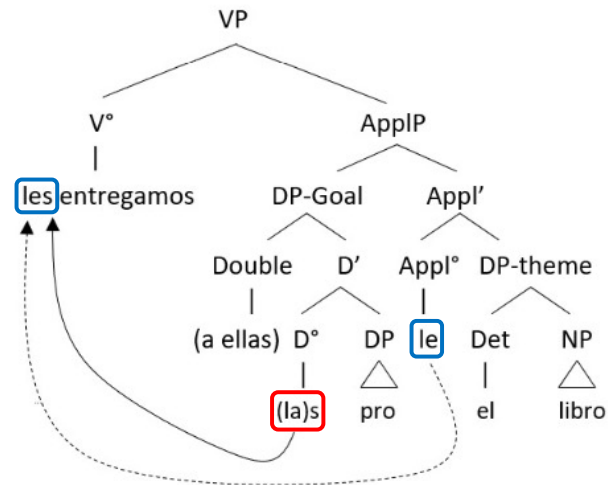
(27) **Les** entregamos (**a ellas**) el libro.
them_{DAT.CL} gave_{1PL} to them the book
'We gave them the book.'

- Doubling in ***le-for-les*** phenomenon
 - **Singular** *le* is used in doubling contexts with **plural** indirect object.
- **Agreeing dative** doubling contexts match **accusative** doubling contexts
- **Decompositional** analysis of dative clitics
 - **Non-agreeing** *le* = Appl°
 - **Agreeing** *le(s)* = Appl° + D°

Uniform analysis – Lexical decomposition (Ausín & Fernández-Rubiera, to appear)

- (28) **Les** entregamos **(a ellas)** el libro.
 them_{DAT.CL} gave_{1PL} to them the book
 ‘We gave them the book.’

(29)



- (30) **Le** entregamos **a las estudiantes** el libro.
 LE gave_{1PL} to the students the book
 ‘We gave the students the book.’

(31)



Challenges to *Decompositional* analysis

- Decompositional analysis does not account for *les* morphology:
 - If *les* is a product of combining Appl° *le* and D° *las*,
 - what morphological process causes *le* + *las* = *les*?
- Cannot account for **periphrases**
 - If Appl° and D° head-move to V°,
 - how would they climb further to T in highest clause?
 - **Excorporation** would be the only option to account for clitic climbing to the highest clause

5.
**Accounting for clitic-clusters
and climbing in periphrases**

A new proposal

- Evidence from clitic-cluster climbing in **periphrastic** environments

(32) a. Juan va a volver a enviár =me=lo
 Juan go.3sg to return.Inf to send.Inf =1sg.Dat =3sg.Acc

b. Juan va a volver =me=lo a enviar
 Juan go.3sg to return.Inf =1sg.Dat=3sg.Acc to send

c. Juan me= lo= va a volver a enviar
 Juan 1sg.Dat=3sg.Acc= go.3sg to return.Inf to send.Inf

‘Juan will send it to me again’

Theoretical assumptions

- **Bare Phrase Structure** (Chomsky, 1995:228)
 - No bar levels, no distinction between lexical items and “heads”
 - an item can be **both** an **X°** and an **XP**
 - Clitics are **Ds** under DP hypothesis and share **X° and XP properties**
 - In θ -position **DP**
 - Raises by XP-adjunction until final step of **X°**-adjunction
- **Head Movement** (Matushansky, 2006:84-85)
 - Clitics are pronominal **DPs** moved from argument positions
 - Simultaneously **heads** and **maximal** projections
 - **Move** as maximal projections, **adjoin** as heads (*M-Merger*)
- **Edge Features on Phase edge (Voice)** (Chomsky, 2001)
 - Need for an *escape hatch* to avoid violation of **PIC**

Theoretical assumptions

- **FP** (Uriagereka 1995, Raposo & Uriagereka 2005)
 - Functional projection between **C** and **T**, headed by clitic-like **f**
 - **[+cl]** feature on **f**
- **Rich structure of periphrases** (Fábregas, 2019)
 - Defective CP connecting auxiliary and auxiliated verbs does **not** constitute a **Phase**
- **Interaction & Satisfaction** (Deal 2021)
 - Probes are specified (or unspecified) for **Interaction** and **Satisfaction** conditions
 - **INT**: Determines the possible target
 - **SAT**: Determines what prevents the probe from further searching
 - If the probe is specified for **[INT: D]** and **[SAT: ∅]**, upon interaction with a **D**, it can probe again and interact with a subsequent **D**, should it find one.

Main claims

- (All) **Accusative** and **Dative** clitics are **Ds**
- **Datives** introduced via **Applicative** projection, but (pace Cuervo, 2003)
 - Appl° is **null**
 - **Dative** clitic heads a **big DP** structure in **[Spec,ApplP]** identical to the one proposed for **accusatives**
- Both, **Acc** and **Dat** Ds, move to clitic-like **f** projection (above **T/Inf**, below **C_(Def)**)
 - in **one fell swoop** – phrasal movement,
 - due to insatiable probe **[+cl]** on **f**
- In periphrases, movement occurs across **C_{Def}** heads
 - **No PIC** violation
 - first movement always to **edge of phase**, i.e. **Voice** projection

Monoverbal constructions

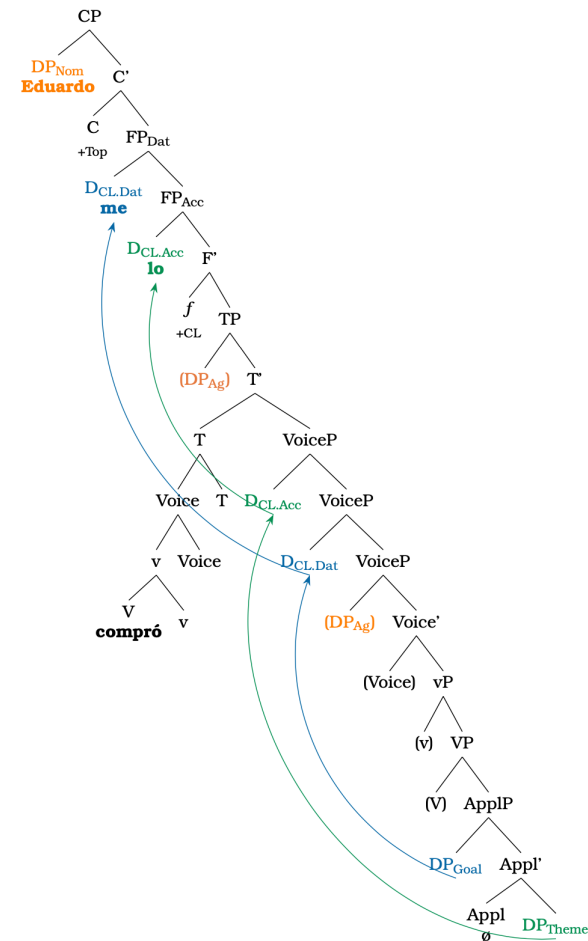
Relevant features

- **D**: [ϕ , **Acc**, Dcl, Edge]
- **D**: [ϕ , **Dat**, Dcl, Edge]
- **Voice**:
 - INT: [D, Edge, Acc]
 - SAT: [$\emptyset$]

Eduardo me lo compró.

Eduardo 1sg.dat 3sg.acc bought.3sg

‘Eduardo bought me it.’



Biverbal constructions

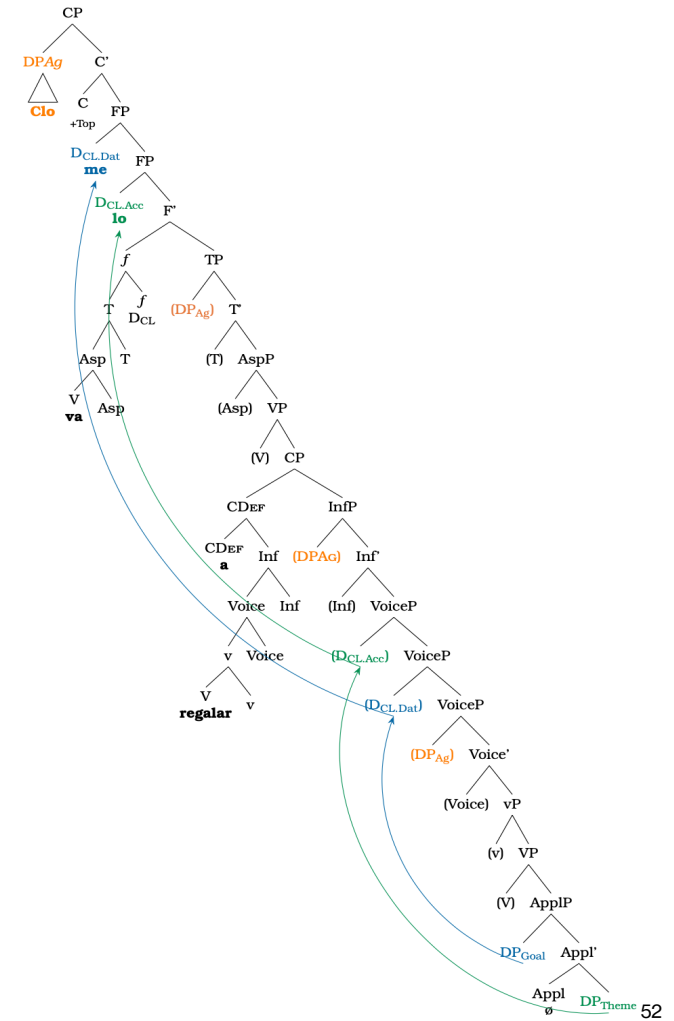
Relevant features

- **D**: [ϕ , **Acc**, Dcl, Edge]
- **D**: [ϕ , **Dat**, Dcl, Edge]
- **Voice**:
 - INT: [D, Edge, Acc]
 - SAT: [$\emptyset$]

Clo **me**= **lo**= va a regalar.

Clo **1sg.dat**= **3sg.acc**= go.3sg to gift.inf

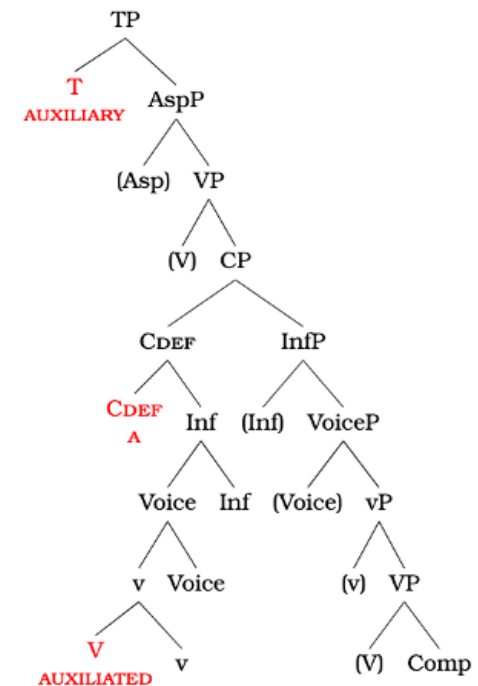
‘Clo is going to gift it to me.’



Structure of periphrases

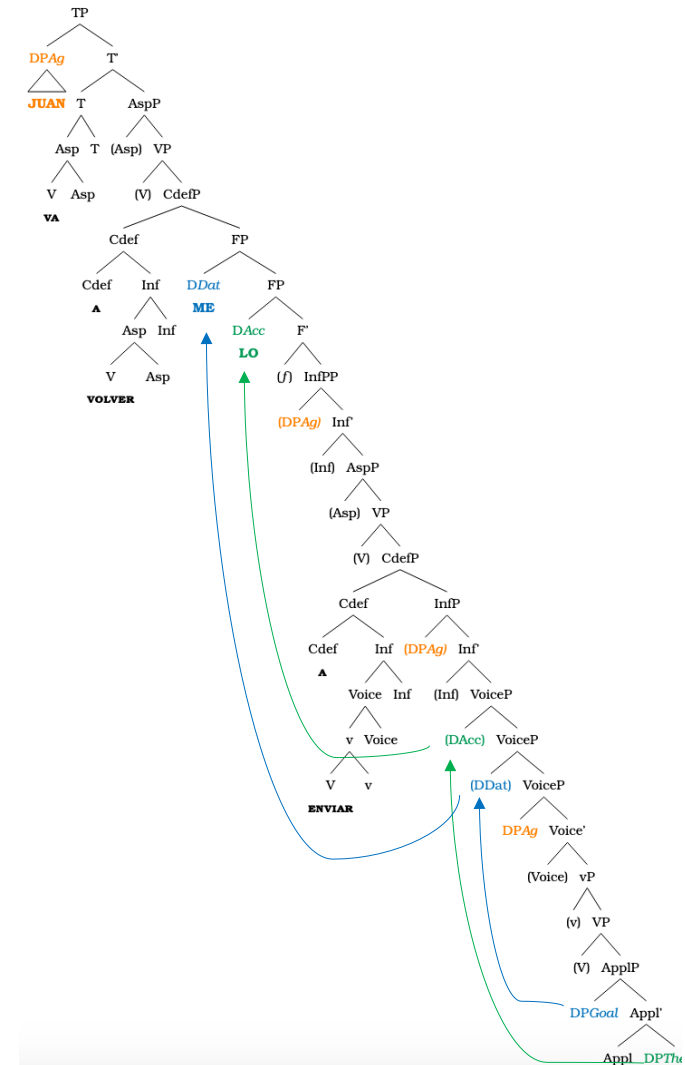
Adapted from Fábregas (2019)

- Auxiliary verbs, devoid of argument structure, are mediated by AspP
- Auxiliary verbs take C_{Def}P as complement
 - Defective Cs do not constitute phases
- C_{Def} takes InfP (or GerP) as complement



Derivation (32b)

- (32) a. Juan va a volver a enviár =me=lo
 Juan go.3sg to return.Inf to send.Inf =1sg.Dat =3sg.Acc
- b. Juan va a volvér =me=lo a enviar
 Juan go.3sg to return.Inf =1sg.Dat=3sg.Acc to send
- c. Juan me= lo= va a volver a enviar
 Juan 1sg.Dat=3sg.Acc= go.3sg to return.Inf to send.Inf
‘Juan will send it to me again’

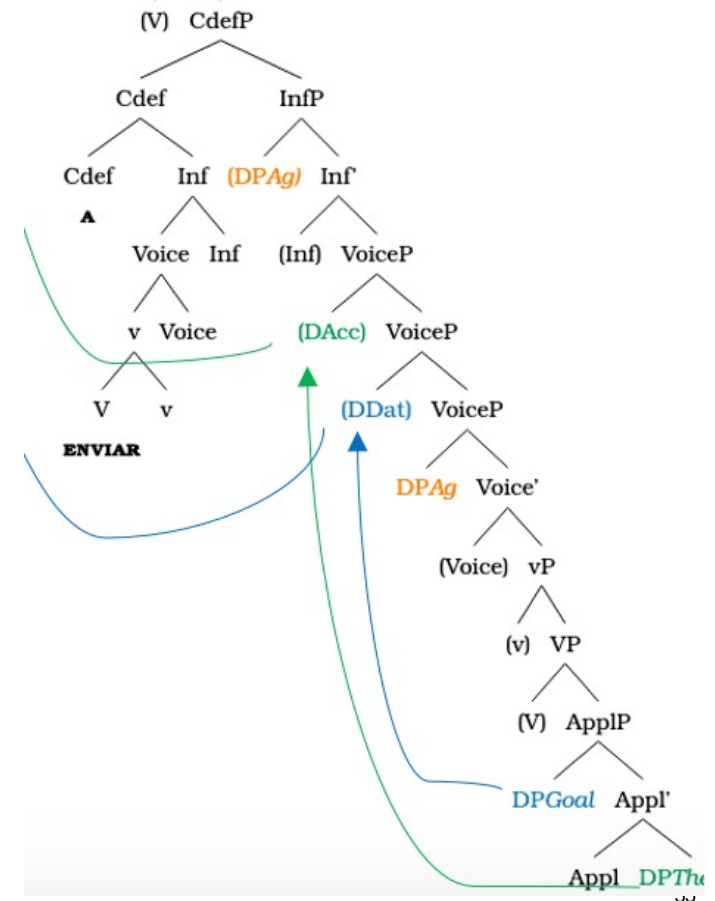


Embedded clause

Relevant features

- **D**: [φ , **Acc**, Dcl, Edge]
- **D**: [φ , **Dat**, Dcl, Edge]
- **Voice**:
 - INT: [D, Edge, Acc]
 - SAT: [$\emptyset$]

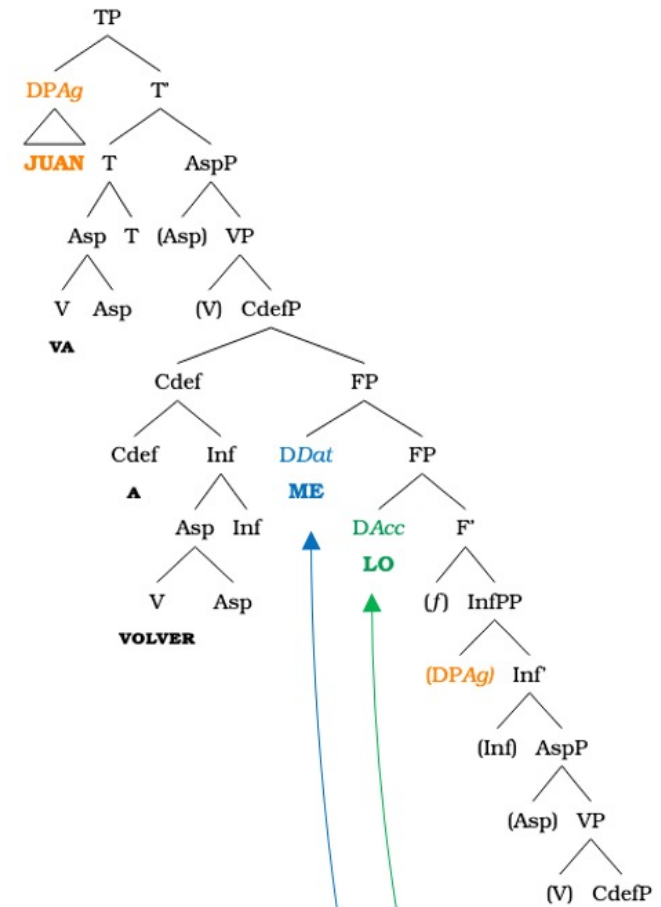
b. Juan va a volvér =me=lo a enviar
 Juan go.3sg to return.Inf =1sg.Dat=3sg.Acc to send



Main & intermediate clauses

- Periphrastic structure:
 - Infinitival *volver* and inflected *va* are **aspectual**
 - Semantically deficient
 - AspP projection
- **FP** above T, below C_{Def}
- Clitics cluster around **f** in [Spec,FP]
 - via phrasal movement, due to **[+cl]** insatiable probe

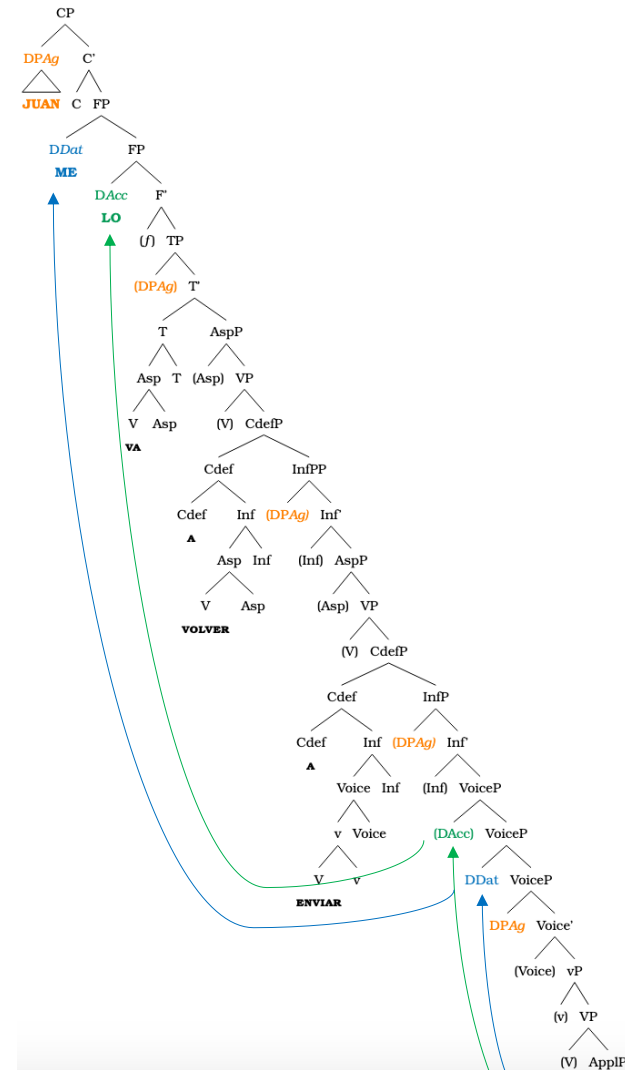
b. Juan va a volver =me=lo a enviar
 Juan go.3sg to return.Inf =1sg.Dat=3sg.Acc to send



Derivation (32c)

- (32) a. Juan va a volver a enviár =me=lo
 Juan go.3sg to return.Inf to send.Inf =1sg.Dat =3sg.Acc
- b. Juan va a volvér =me=lo a enviar
 Juan go.3sg to return.Inf =1sg.Dat=3sg.Acc to send
- c. Juan me= lo= va a volver a enviar
 Juan 1sg.Dat=3sg.Acc= go.3sg to return.Inf to send.Inf

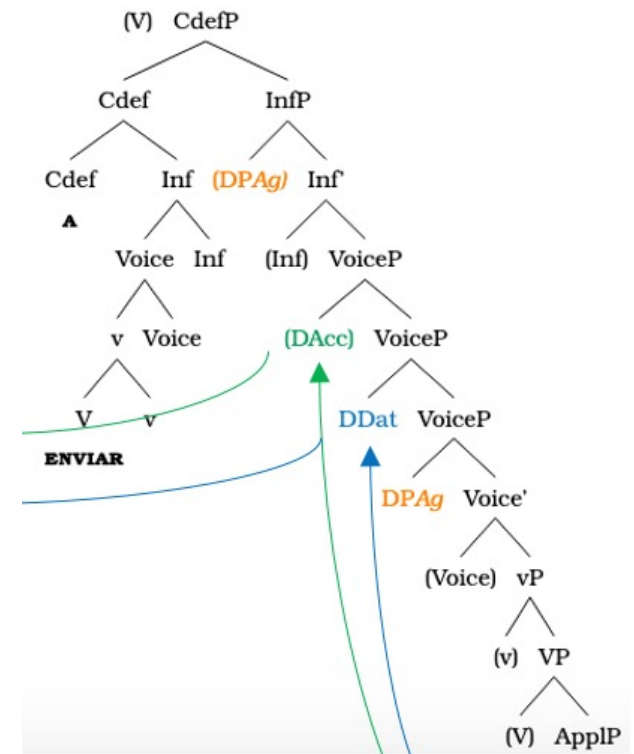
‘Juan will send it to me again’



Embedded clause

- Same relevant features
 - **D**: [φ , **Acc**, Dcl, Edge]
 - **D**: [φ , **Dat**, Dcl, Edge]
- Same mechanisms apply
 - Agree with Voice
 - Movement to edge of Phase [Spec, VoiceP]

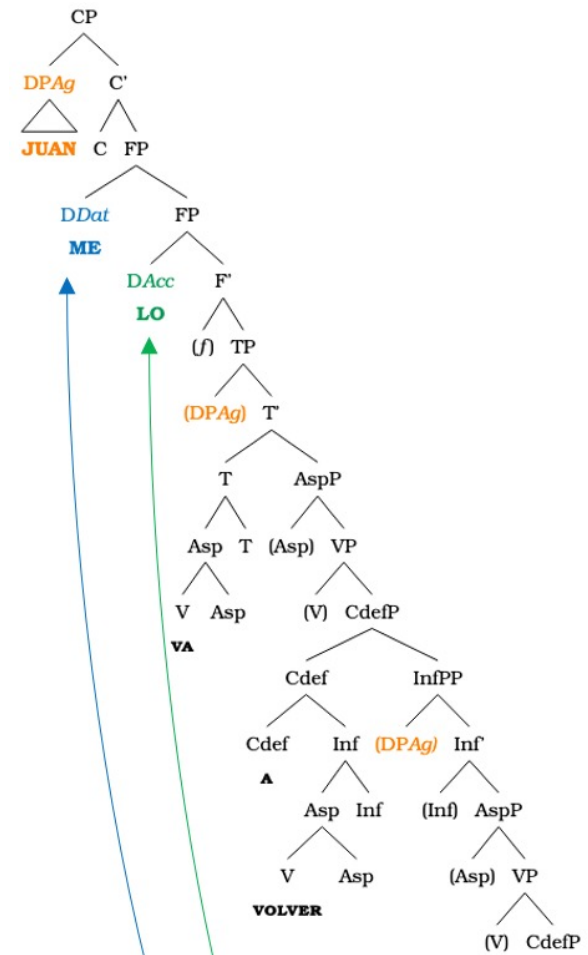
c. Juan **me**=**lo**= va a volver **a enviar**
 Juan **1sg.Dat**=**3sg.Acc**= go.3sg to return.Inf **to send.Inf**



Main & intermediate clauses

- Same relevant features
- Same mechanisms apply
 - Insatiable probe [+cl] on **f** interacts with Ds
 - Movement to [Spec,FP]

c. Juan **me=lo=** va a volver a enviar
 Juan **1sg.Dat=3sg.Acc=** go.3sg to return.Inf to send.Inf



Accounting for ungrammaticality

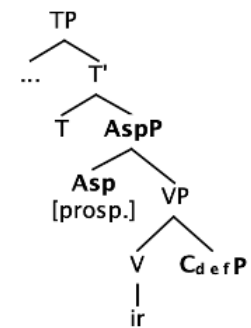
- Some periphrases **disallow** clitic climbing outside of the embedded clause
 - Crucially, due to the **lexical**, non-aspectual, status of an intermediate verb (*salir* 'leave')

- (33) a. Pepe va a salir a comprar=**me** =**lo**
 Pepe go.3sg to leave.inf to buy.inf =**1sg.dat** =**3sg.acc**
- b. *Pepe va a salir =**me** =**lo** a comprar
 Pepe go.3sg to leave.inf =**1sg.dat** =**3sg.acc** to buy
- c. *Pepe **me**= **lo**= va a salir a comprar
 Pepe =**1sg.dat** =**3sg.acc** go.3sg to leave.inf to buy.inf
 ‘Pepe is going to leave to buy it for me.’

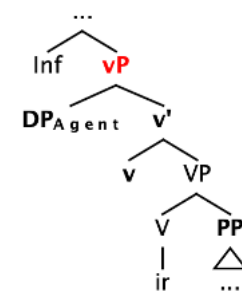
Auxiliary vs. lexical verbs

- Auxiliary/aspectual *ir* 'go' lacks vP
- Lexical *ir* 'go' does require vP between V and Inf

(a) Juan va a volver a...

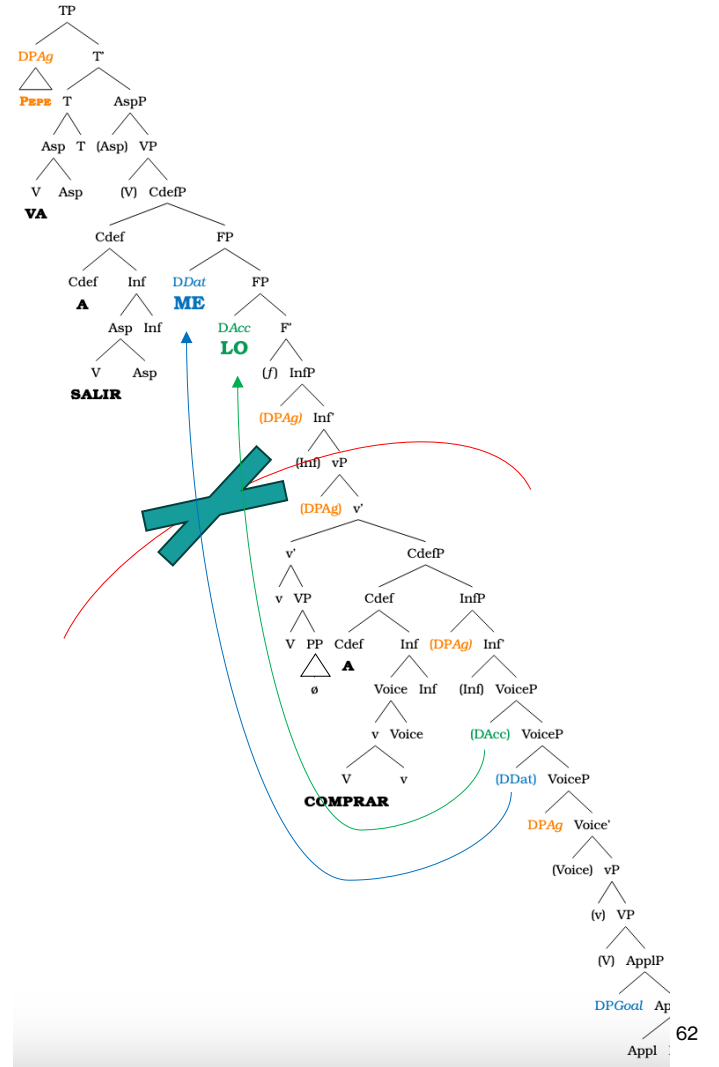


(b) Juan volvió a ir a...



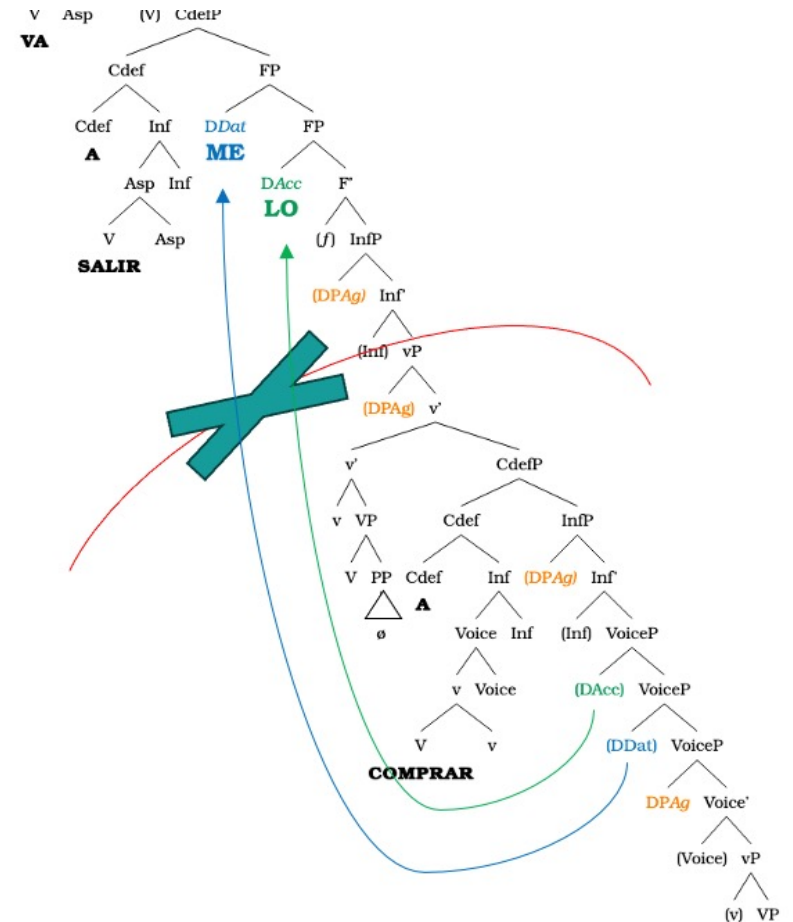
Ungrammaticality (33b)

- | | | | | |
|----|--|--------------|-----------------------------------|------------------|
| a. | Pepe va | a salir | a comprar= me | = lo |
| | Pepe go.3sg | to leave.inf | to buy.inf = 1sg.dat | = 3sg.acc |
| b. | *Pepe va | a salir | = me = lo | a comprar |
| | Pepe go.3sg | to leave.inf | = 1sg.dat = 3sg.acc | to buy |
| c. | *Pepe me = | lo = | va | a salir |
| | | | | a comprar |
| | Pepe = 1sg.dat = 3sg.acc | go.3sg | to leave.inf | to buy.inf |
| | 'Pepe is going to leave to buy it for me.' | | | |



Ungrammaticality (33b)

- *Salir* 'leave' is **not** an aspectual verb
 - Not desemantized
 - Keeps its **full argument structure**
 - Complement PP
 - Projects a **vP**
 - vP constitutes a **Phase**
 - **Precludes** climbing across the Phase
- Movement into any higher clause results in a **PIC violation**



6. Concluding Remarks

Concluding remarks

- This analysis accounts for
 - **Category** and **internal structure** of clitics:
 - **D**-heads in Big DPs
 - **Clustering**:
 - around **f** due to movement of Ds to [Spec,FP]
 - Motivated by insatiable [+cl] probe on **f**
 - **Movement**:
 - Consistently to [Spec,VoiceP]
 - Consistently to [Spec,FP]
 - **Distinct** patterns of **(un)grammaticality** for clitic climbing in **periphrases**:
 - Climbing to higher clauses allowed due to **C_{Def}** with **aspectual** auxiliaries
 - Climbing to higher clauses disallowed due to **vP Phase** in **lexical** intermediate verbs

Further research

- The world of periphrases is extremely **vast**
 - Some verbs seem to present more **blurry** results in **acceptability**
 - For example, **salir** 'leave' vs. **ir** 'go' in intermediate position evoke different degrees of (un)acceptability
 - **Reflexive** verbs in different positions might alter the possibilities for **clustering/climbing**
- **Non-argumental** datives show different placement and ordering patterns
- **Cross-dialectal** and **cross-linguistic** research seems unavoidable (that's good!)
- **Experimental** work in **processing** can further inform the theory

References

- **Alcaraz, Alejo.** 2021. *Agreement, Binding and the structure of clitics* [Doctoral dissertation, Universidad del País Vasco - Euskal Herriko Unibertsitatea]. ADDI Archive.
- **Ausín, Adolfo. & F. J. Fernández-Rubiera.** (to appear). Towards a uniform account of accusative and dative clitic doubling in Spanish, in C. Howe, P. Chamorro, T. Gupton & M. Renwick (eds.), *Theory, data, and practice: Selected papers from the 49th Linguistic Symposium on Romance Language (Studies in Diversity Linguistics 1)*. Berlin: Language Science Press.
- **Bonet, Eulàlia.** 1991. *Morphology after Syntax: Pronominal Clitics in Romance*. Doctoral dissertation, MIT.
- **Chomsky, Noam.** 1995. *Bare phrase structure*. In H. Campos & P. Kempchinsky (Eds.), *Evolution and Revolution in Linguistic Theory: Essays in Honor of Carlos Otero* (pp. 51–109). Georgetown University Press.
- **Chomsky, Noam.** 2001. Derivation by phase. In M. Kenstowicz (Ed.), *Ken Hale: A life in language* (pp. 1–52). MIT Press.
- **Chomsky, Noam.** 2015. *The Minimalist Program* (20th ed.). The MIT Press. doi: <https://doi.org/10.7551/mitpress/9780262527347.001.0001>
- **Cuervo, María Cristina.** 2003. *Datives at large*. Ph.D. dissertation, MIT.
- **Cuervo, María Cristina.** 2013. Spanish clitic clusters: Three of a perfect pair. *Borealis: An International Journal of Hispanic Linguistics* 2/2. 191–220. <https://doi.org/10.7557/1.2.2.2692>.
- **Deal, Amy Rose.** 2021. Interaction, Satisfaction, and the PCC. *Linguistic Inquiry*, 1–80.
- **Fábregas, Antonio.** 2019. Periphrases in Spanish: Properties, diagnostics and research questions. *Borealis: An International Journal of Hispanic Linguistics* (Tromsø), 8(2), 1–82.
- **Halle, Morris, Alec Marantz.** 1993. Some Key Features of Distributed Morphology
- **Harley, Heidi, Rolf Noyer.** 1999. State-of-the-article: Distributed Morphology. *Glott International*, 4(4), 3–9.
- **Harley, Heidi.** 2011. A Minimalist Approach to Argument Structure. In *The Oxford Handbook of Linguistic Minimalism* (Oxford Handbooks in Linguistics). Oxford University Press.
- **Harley, Heidi.** 2013. External arguments and the Mirror Principle: On the distinctness of Voice and v. *Lingua*, 125(1), 34–57.
- **Marchis, Mihaela & Artemis Alexiadou.** 2013. The syntax of clitics revisited: Two types of clitics. *Lingua*, 127, 1–13.

References

- **Matushansky, Ora.** 2006. Head Movement in Linguistic Theory. *Linguistic Inquiry* 37 (1): 69–109. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1162/002438906775321184>
- **Ordoñez, Francisco.** 2002. Some Clitic Combinations in the Syntax of Romance. *Catalan Journal of Linguistics*, 1, 201–224.
- **Ordoñez, Francisco.** 2012. Clitics in Spanish. In Hualde, J.I., Olarrea, A. & O'Rourke, E. (eds.) *The Handbook of Hispanic Linguistics*. Hoboken: John Wiley and Sons.
- **Ormazábal, Javier & Juan Romero.** 2013. Object clitics, agreement and dialectal variation. *Probus* 25. 301–344. <https://doi.org/10.1515/probus-2013-0012>.
- **Pineda, Anna.** 2020. Double object constructions in Romance: the common denominator. *Syntax* 23:3. 203–240. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1111/synt.12193>.
- **Pylkkänen, Liina.** 2008. *Introducing Arguments*. Cambridge MA: The MIT Press.
- **Raposo, Eduardo & Juan Uriagereka.** 2005. Clitic placement in Western Iberian: A Minimalist view. *The Oxford handbook of comparative syntax* ed. by Guglielmo Cinque and R. Kayne, 639–697. Oxford: OUP.
- **Romain, Ian.** 2020. Deriving clitic cluster formation through movement: A dialectal case study from Spanish. *The Linguistic Review*. 37. 10.1515/tlr-2020-2048.
- **Suarez-Palma, Imanol.** 2020. Applied arguments in Spanish inchoative middle constructions. *Glossa* (London), 5(1), 1–37.
- **Terzi, A.** 1999. Clitic Combinations, Their Hosts and Their Ordering. *Natural Language & Linguistic Theory*, 17(1), 85–121.
- **Uriagereka, Juan.** 1995. Aspects of the syntax of clitic placement in Western Romance. *Linguistic Inquiry* 26. 79–124.
- **Uriagereka, Juan.** 1996. Determiner Clitic Placement. In Freidin, R. (ed.), *Current Issues in Comparative Grammar*. Dordrecht: Springer, pp. 257–295.
- **Villa-García, Julio.** 2019. Clitic climbing (or lack thereof) and the Copy Theory of Movement. *Glossa* London, 4(1), 1–19.

