

Reinterpreting *Ne-cliticization* as *Split-topicalization*

Pietro Cerrone and Hiromune Oda

University of Connecticut

Introduction: *Ne-cliticization* has been widely discussed in Italian syntax (Burzio 1986, Belletti and Rizzi 1982, Perlmutter 1989 a.o.), with comparison to similar constructions in other Romance languages (see Cardinaletti and Giusti 2006 for an overview). In this paper, however, we propose a novel way to investigate this construction, from a more cross-linguistic perspective. More specifically, we show that there are a number of similarities between (quantitative) *ne-cliticization* and *split-topicalization*, which is attested in many languages such as German and Japanese, and we will propose a unified account of the two constructions, based on Zamparelli's (1995) and Ott's (2011) proposals on those constructions.

Split-topicalization: *Split-topicalization* has been discussed for many languages, with extensive focus on German. As shown in (1), the head noun can be topicalized by stranding its modifier in situ in German. There are a number of characteristics of *split-topicalization*. First, the topic has to be non-specific (Ott 2011). Thus, a definite article is not allowed with the topic, as in (2).

- (1) **Bohnen_i** mag er (nur) [**grüne** t_i]. (2) ***Die** bohnen_i mag er (nur) [grüne t_i].
beans likes he only green the beans likes he only green
'As for beans, he likes (only) green ones.'

Second, this construction has a topic-secondary focus intonation: the left-dislocated noun has a topic intonation, and the stranded modifier has a secondary focus intonation. Third, the stranded modifier has to have a strong form in German as in (3a). This form is not allowed in the non-split case as in (3b).

- (3) a. Geld_i hat er [kein-es/*kein t_i]. b. Er hat [*kein-es/**kein** Geld].
money has he no-STRONG/no-WEAK he has no-STRONG/no-WEAK money
'As for money, he has none.' 'He has no money.'

van Hoof (2006) argues the strong form in *split-topicalization* is a "nominalizer" of the stranded modifier. In fact, strong forms nominalize adjectives as in (4). If a stranded modifier is a more nominal element like numerals, it doesn't need a strong form (or it doesn't have the strong/weak distinction), as in (5).

- (4) Er hat **keines**. (5) Autos_i hat er sogar [**drei** t_i]
he has no-STRONG cars has he even three
'He has none.' 'As for cars, he has even three.'

The form of nominalizer is different in other languages. E.g., in Japanese, the nominalizer is *-no*, which is homophonous between a genitive marker and a pronominal element, as in (6a). *-No* is not allowed in the non-split case as in (6b), patterning with the strong form in German (Sugawara (2010)).

- (6) a. **Jisho**-wa Taro-ga furui-**no** ___i-o tsukau. b. Taro-wa furui(*-**no**)jisho-o tsukau.
dictionary-TOP Taro-NOM old-NO __-ACC use Taro-TOP old-NO dictionary-ACC use
'As for dictionaries, Taro uses an old one.' 'Taro uses an old dictionary.'

Ne-cliticization: We argue that *ne-cliticization* also shows the properties discussed above. First, the referent of *ne*, which is a topic, has to be non-specific, so that a definite article is disallowed, as in (7).

- (7) **Di ragazze**/***Delle ragazze**, ne ho vista una bella.
of girls of.the girls NE I.have seen.F.SG INDEF.F.SG beautiful.F.SG
'As for girls, I saw a beautiful one.'

Second, the topic (*di ragazze* in (7)) receives a topic intonation, and the stranded modifier (*una bella* in (7)) receives a secondary focus intonation. Third, the stranded modifier has to be nominalized when it is not nominal. When an indefinite article is attached to a singular masculine noun, it has a weak form (8a), but when attached to a stranded modifier of *ne-cliticization*, it has to have a strong form (8b) like in German.

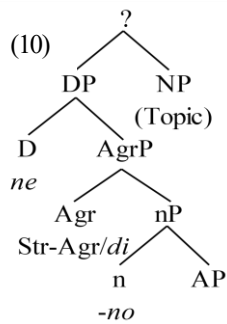
- (8) a. Ho letto **un**/***uno** lungo libro. b. Ne ho letto ***un**/**uno** lungo.
I.have read INDEF.M.WEAK/STR long.M.SG book NE I.haveread INDEF.M.WEAK/STR long.M.SG
'I have read a long book.' 'I have read a long one (book).'

As for plural, a stranded modifier has to co-occur with *di*, which is a genitive marker, as in (9). Thus, Italian shows both the strong form nominalization like German and the genitive-like nominalization like Japanese.

- (9) Ne ho viste *(di) belle.
 NE I.have seen.F.PL of beautiful.F.PL
 ‘I saw beautiful ones.’

Thus, *ne*-cliticization and split-topicalization share certain properties.

Analysis: The similarities discussed above indicate presence of the same underlying mechanism in these constructions. Interestingly, Ott 2011 and Zamparelli 1995 independently propose a symmetry-breaking analysis in Moro’s (2000) sense for split-topicalization in German and *ne*-cliticization in Italian, respectively, in which the topic is a predicate of the stranded modifier in the base position and undergoes left-dislocation. Thus, following their insights regarding unification, we propose a unified base-structure for split-topicalization in German and Japanese and *ne*-cliticization as in (10). We assume the stranded



modifier (DP) and the topic (NP) are sisters in the base-position, which creates a symmetry problem, so the topic has to move to solve it (movement of the stranded modifier is in principle possible, but it violates a general topic-comment schema; see Ott 2011). Note that we assume *ne* is base-generated within the stranded modifier, unlike Zamparelli, who assumes *ne* is a topic. Our proposal is supported by the fact that in (7) the past participle agrees with the stranded modifier, not the topic: *ne* shares the ϕ -feature with *n* and Agr, and mediates past participle agreement with the stranded modifier as an object clitic, which generally triggers past participle agreement. *Ne* selects AgrP, whose head is a strong form in German and singular in Italian or *di* in plural in Italian. This assumption is motivated by the fact that *di* appears only with the plural modifiers and shows complementary distribution with the singular strong form. Following Lobeck 2006, we assume strong agreement licenses ellipsis of the head noun (or *n*). In Japanese, *-no* is not an agreement form but a light noun in Hiraiwa’s (2016) sense, which is *n* and has a pronominal status (Sugawara 2010). Finally, we suggest *di* with the topic in (7) is a topic marker, on a par with the topic marker *-wa* in Japanese.

Consequences: There are interesting consequences of our proposal for both *ne*-cliticization and split-topicalization. First, it accounts for the otherwise puzzling gender pattern found with ‘egg(s)’ in *ne*-cliticization. In Italian, ‘egg’ is masculine when singular (11a), but it is feminine when plural (11b).

Consequences: There are interesting consequences of our proposal for both *ne*-cliticization and split-topicalization. First, it accounts for the otherwise puzzling gender pattern found with ‘egg(s)’ in *ne*-cliticization. In Italian, ‘egg’ is masculine when singular (11a), but it is feminine when plural (11b).

- (11) a. Un uovo /*una uova b. *due uovo /due uova
 INDEF.M. egg.M INDEF.F egg.F two egg.M two egg.F

When it is used in a partitive construction, both ‘one’ and ‘egg’ have to be feminine, as in (12).

- (12) a. Una delle uova b. *uno delle uova c. *uno delle uovo d. *una delle uovo
 one.F of.the egg.F one.M of.the egg.F one.M of.the egg.M one.F of.the egg.M

Crucially, *ne*-cliticization with ‘egg’ is grammatical only when the stranded modifier is masculine, as in (13a), which is not allowed in the partitives as in (12c).

- (13) a. Di uovo/a, ne ho mangiato uno solo. b. *Di uovo/a, ne ho mangiata una sola.
 of egg.M/F NE I.have eaten.M one.M only.M of egg.M/F NE I.have eaten.F one.F only.F

This is not expected in analyses where *ne* + the stranded modifier and the *di*-phrase constitute a partitive construction (e.g., Cardinaletti and Giusti 2006), since they expect that *ne*-cliticization in (13) and partitives in (12) would show the same gender pattern. In contrast, our analysis can capture the difference: there is no partitive construction involved so that when the stranded modifier is singular, its gender has to be masculine, as in the usual singular case (11a). In addition, the gender of the elided singular *n* (*uovo*) is expected to be independent of that of the topic, which can be masculine or feminine as in (13a). Thus, the gender pattern indicates that *ne*-cliticization is not a partitive construction. Second, our proposal predicts that we may find a counterpart of the clitic *ne* at least in some languages. This is borne out in Brabant Dutch as in (14), where a d-pronoun occurs between the topic and V in C. If the d-pronoun in (14) is analyzed as a phrase that moves to Spec,CP, it is unclear how come the topic *koeien* can appear at the same time, given that Brabant Dutch is a V2 language where only one constituent can fill Spec,CP. However, given Zwart’s (1993) argument that weak d-pronouns are heads/clitics, which van Hoof 1997 specifies as D, *die* in (14) can be considered as a counterpart of *ne*: *die* starts from D in (10) and incorporates to the verb *heeft* as a clitic like *ne*, and only *koeien* is located in Spec,CP, without violating the V2 requirement.

(14) [Koeien]_i **die** heeft-ie [een helehoop t_i] in de achterste wei.
cows D-pro has-he a whole.heap in the rearmost meadow
'As for cows, he has quite a lot in the rearmost meadow.' (van Hoof 1997)

Selected Ref: Cardinaletti, A. and G. Giusti 2006. The syntax of quantified phrases and quantitative clitics. In *The Blackwell companion to syntax*.
Ott, D. 2011. The syntax of split topics. Harvard diss. Zamparelli, R. 1995. Layers in the determiner phrase. U. of Rochester diss.