

AND THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SUBJECT AND OBJECT CLITICS

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Starting point: Clitics in Romance are usually only pronominal and locative. Some varieties make use of expletive clitics.

Data

Clitics in Modern Romance

Object clitics

Object clitics are pan-Romance. They are used in unmarked contexts to refer to an object already present in the discourse:

- (1) *Carlo la vede* (Italian)
- (2) *Charles la voit* (French)

Carlo her.CL sees

Object clitics attach to the verb: they can be proclitic (1-2) or enclitic (3), depending on the verb form.

- (3) *Carlo vuole veder=la* (Italian)

Carlo wants see.INF=her.CL

Subject clitics

Subject clitics are used in Northern Italian dialects, Tuscan, French and other Gallo-Romance varieties and (some varieties of) Brazilian Portuguese:

- (4) *Te parli* (Trentino)
- (5) *Tu parli* (Fiorentino)

you.SG.CL speak

Subject clitics can be proclitic or enclitic, depending on the syntactic context:

- (6) *Parle-t?* (Trentino)

speak=you.SG.CL

Differences between object clitics and subject clitics

Despite their superficial resemblance, in many varieties subject clitics and object clitics are different (examples from Trentino – see e.g. Brandi & Cordin 1981, 1989, Rizzi 1986).

A. Coordination:

- (7) a. *El magna e *(el) bef* (subject clitic)
- he.CL eats and he.CL drinks
- b. *El vardo e (el) studio* (object clitic)
- him.CL watch and him.CL observe

B. Clitic doubling:

- (8) a. *El Paolo *(el) magna* (subject clitic)
- the Paolo he.CL eats
- b. *(*El) vedo el Paolo* (object clitic)
- him.CL I.see the Paolo

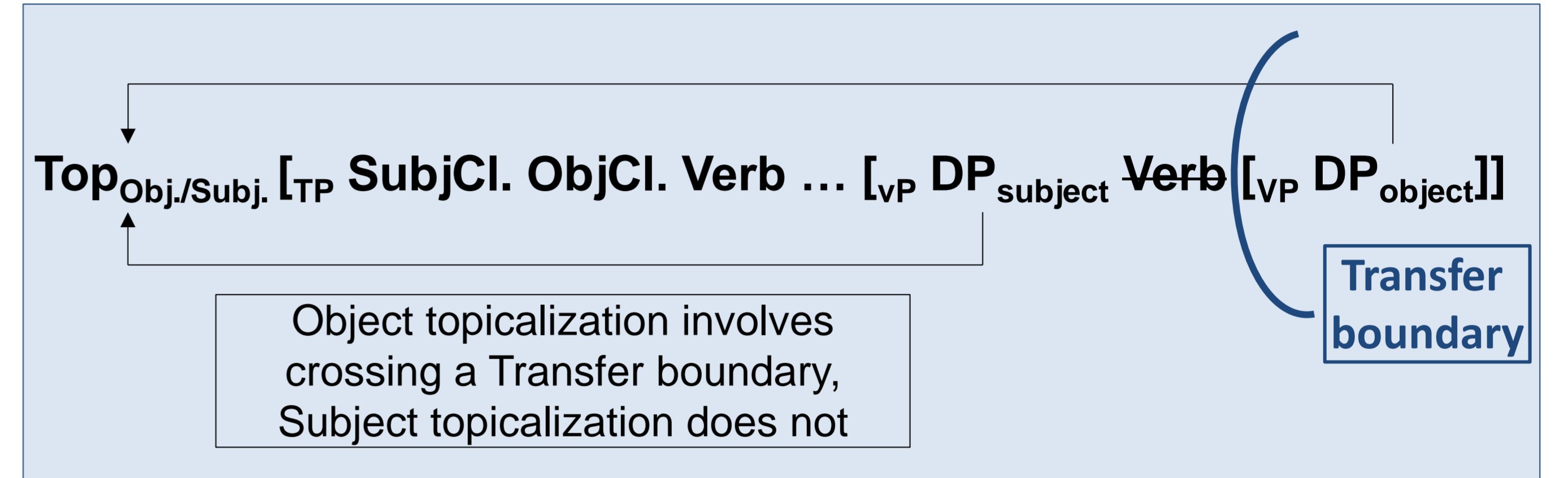
Types of clitic

Bundles of ϕ -features (agreement markers)	Pronouns with nominal D-features (richer items)
They must be repeated in coordination and require doubling	They don't need to be repeated in coordination and cannot double an argument

subject clitics have only ϕ -features in most NIDs, but in some varieties they are D-pronouns. Object clitics are D-pronouns all over Romance:

	Bundle of ϕ -features	D-pronoun
Obj. clitics	✗	✓
Subj. clitics	✓	✓

Analysis



Clitic resumption and phases

- Objects cross a Transfer boundary when they cliticize: they need to be resumed by a richer form, i.e. a pronoun with D-features.
- Subjects of transitive verbs are merged at the phase edge of the vP and they move to the Left Periphery without crossing a Transfer boundary.
- Therefore, they need not (but can) be resumed by a D-pronoun: a ϕ -bundle suffices.

subject clitics started out as D-pronouns and have then been reanalysed as a morphological agreement marker in most NIDs.

Evidence from diachrony

- In old Italo-Romance, **object clitics** emerge first in context with a highly referential dislocated Topic ('RTop').
- Later they are generalized to Aboutness Topics ('ATop'), as in modern Romance (cf. Benincà 1994, 2006, Salvi 2001, 2004, Poletto 2014, a.o.):

Periphery	X	V...
X	Focus	V...
X	ATop	V...
RTop	X	V... (clitic)

- (9) *Lo vino __ fanno di riso. La moneta __ hanno d'oro* **ATop**
- Il vino lo fanno di riso. La moneta l' hanno d'oro*
- 'The wine they make it with rice. The coin they have it of gold.'

- (10) *La bona femina per nullo modo tu non la devi gelosare* **RTop**
- La moglie buona in nessun modo la devi fare motivo di gelosia*
- 'The good wife, by no means you should make her reason for jealousy.'

Subject clitics emerge as weakened pronominal copies of Referential topical subjects (preliminary results; cf. also Benincà 1995, Poletto 1995, a.o.):

- (11) *Lo saint fo mes a garder l'ort, e el lo comencè ben apareiller* (Fr.-Piedm.)
- 'The saint was placed to watch the garden, and he started to...'

- (12) *E como eli fo tuti entro, eli comenzà forte a navegar*
- 'And when they were all inside, they started quickly to sail.'

Conclusions

- The analysis based on transfer domains allows us to capture the asymmetry between object and subject clitics;
- The diachronic evidence suggests that resumption starts first with higher (i.e. Referential) Topics.