Intervention in Romance cliticization: parameters of variation

Jan Casalicchio, Anna Pineda
& Michelle Sheehan
University of Siena, University of
Barcelona & Newcastle University

1 Outline

In this talk, we consider the distinct behaviour of locative/oblique clitics (*ci/y/hi*) in Italian, French and Catalan causative constructions. All three languages allow these clitics to function as adjuncts or arguments; we focus exclusively on argumental uses of these clitics where they replace a selected oblique PP which lacks a locative meaning. Likewise, all three languages have a similar causative construction often termed the 'faire infinitive' involving clause union for cliticization and case assignment (following Kayne 1975). Despite these parallels, we show that, for principled reasons, argumental locative clitics display very different patterns in the three languages (and in varieties thereof). Data come from online surveys in the three languages which used grammatically parallel examples with translational equivalents. All surveys included 50% fillers and were presented in randomised order with an appropriate context in the target language (rendered in English below). Data were collected via Google surveys and rated on a 5-point Likert scale by 281 L1 Italian speakers, 208 L1 Catalan speakers and 94 L1 French speakers respectively.

2 Italian results

In Italian, we observe what we call a strong 'anti-Person Case Constraint (PCC) effect' whereby locative/oblique clitics are basically incompatible with 3rd person causees (both pronouns and full DPs).[1]

The teacher is very disappointed by the behaviour of some students….

(1) **Ci=* ha fatto riflettere **tutta la classe** dopo la lezione [m=1.92, med= 2]
there= has made reflect all the class after the lesson
(intended: "She made the whole class reflect on it after the lesson.")

The teacher is very disappointed by Paolo's behaviour.…

(2) **Ce=* **l='** ha fatto riflettere dopo la lezione. [m=1.43, med =1]
there= him= has made reflect after the class
(intended: "She made him reflect on it after class")

Such examples contrast sharply with fully acceptable minimal pairs in which the oblique argument is not cliticised (cf. 3 with 2), or where the causee is not 3rd person (4):

[1] As an anonymous reviewer suggests, examples like (1) improve if the oblique argument is left-dislocated with a resumptive *ci*-clitic:

(i) Su quel comportamento, l'insegnante ci ha fatto riflettere tutta la classe
on that behaviour, the teacher there=has made reflect all the class.
'On that behaviour, the teacher made the whole class reflect.'

A preliminary survey with linguist colleagues has shown that they assign sentence (1) with a mean rating of 2.17 (median 2), while the same sentence with a left-dislocation (i) receives 3.5 (median 4). This seems to point to a different role played by the clitic *ci* in (1) vs. (i); we will take this up in the talk.

Paolo cheated on an exam.…

(3) La maestra **l**=' ha fatto riflettere *sul suo comportamento*. [m=4.79, med=5]
the teacher him= has made reflect on.the his behaviour
'The teacher made him reflect on his behaviour.'

The teacher told me that she is disappointed by my behaviour…

(4) **Mi** *ci* ha fatto riflettere dopo la lezione. [m=4.07, med=5]
me=there= has made reflect after the class
'She made me reflect on it after class.'

The near perfect acceptability of (4) is particularly relevant as it shows that the problem in (1) and (2) must be the **person** of the causee. We call this the anti-PCC effect because, in causative contexts, the PCC arises only where accusative arguments are 1st/2nd person. Our effect, with locative clitics, is the reverse; it holds only with 3rd person causees. Note, further, that the anti-PCC effect does not hold with unaccusative predicates which take locative/oblique arguments, for reasons we will outline.

3 Results in French and Catalan

Rouveret & Vergnaud (1980) claim that French displays a minimally different pattern whereby cliticization of an argumental locative is permitted in the *faire*-infinitive construction only if the causee also undergoes cliticization (5b-c). Similarly to what we see in Italian, they report that this effect holds with both transitive and unergative verbs, but not unaccusatives, suggesting that the thematic status of the causee is key (only the unergative examples are show here, for space reasons):

(5) a. Celà a fait toucher **les rideaux** *aux fenêtres***.**
This has made touch the curtains to.the windows
'This made the curtains touch the windows.'
b. Celà **les=** *y*= a fait toucher
this them.ACC LOC has made touch
'This has made them touch it.'
c. *Celà *y*= a fait toucher **les rideaux**.
this LOC=has made touch the curtains
'This has made the curtains touch it.' (Rouveret & Vergnaud 1980: 183, fn. 57)

In our survey, only a small number of speakers displayed the pattern described by Rouveret & Vergnaud; more shared the more restrictive Italian pattern; but the majority pattern was for there to be no restriction on the cliticization of argumental locatives. This is reflected by the differences in mean acceptability of (6)-(8), even though they share a median rating of 5 (reflecting the majority grammar). Thus, while there is a small penalty associated with cliticization of just the locative in (8), this example was nonetheless grammatical for most French speakers surveyed:

Paul has received a teaching excellence reward but…

(6) le syndicat **l=**' a fait renoncer *à cet honneur*. [m=4.35, med=5]
the union him= has made turn.down to this honour
'The union made him turn down that honour.'

Paul has received a teaching excellence reward…

(7) le syndicat **l**=' *y*= a fait renoncer. [m=4.28, med=5]
the union him= there= has made turn.down
'The union made him turn it down.'

What happened about the teaching excellence reward?
(8) %Le syndicat *y*= a fait renoncer **le récipiendaire**. [m=3.78, med=5]
the union there=has made turn.down the recipient
'The union made the recipient turn it down.'

Parallel examples patterned the same, suggesting that for most French speakers, there is no intervention for locative/oblique cliticization.

Catalan shows a more complex picture because of additional language-specific factors. One issue is that the specific phonology of accusative + locative *l'hi* makes it identical to dative clitic *li* and this appears to interfere with judgments, leading some speakers to dislike the patterns where both the causee and the PP are cliticised (10). Another issue is that *hi*-cliticisation of argumental PPs has been getting weaker and weaker over the past 50 years, mainly due to contact with Spanish (a language that has lost locative/oblique clitics), leading several speakers to find it unnatural (although correct from the normative point of view) (11) —note that the exact same sentences with the PP non-cliticised have a median of 5 (9). There is therefore a penalty associated with cliticising the locative argument in both (10) and (11), though this is much greater in (11), where the causee is not cliticised. It seems, then, that at least some Catalan speakers show the pattern reported by Rouveret & Vergnaud (1980) for French:

Paul has received a teaching excellence reward but…
(9) el sindicat **l**=' ha fet renunciar *a aquest honor*. [m=4.27, med=5]
the union him= has made turn.down to this honour
'The union made him turn this honour down.'

Pere has received a teaching excellence reward…
(10) %el sindicat **l**=' *hi*= ha fet renunciar. [m=3.45, med=4]
the union him= there= has made turn.down
'The union made him turn it down.'

Do you know the news about the teaching award?
(11) %El sindicat *hi*= ha fet renunciar **el Pere**, un dels guanyadors. [m=2.43, med=2]
the union there=has made turn.down the Pere one of.the recipients
'The union made Pere, one of the recipients, turn it down.'

That this is the case is reinforced by the fact that parallel examples with a 1st person causee were fully acceptable for all speakers: *M'hi ha fet reflexionar/renunciar* (m=4.11, med=5; m=4.65, med=5 respectively).

Additional nuances arise when we compare the three verbs + locative clitic analysed in the study. On the one hand, *reflexionar* 'reflect' shows the lowest scores (median for the locative cliticization = 1, median for the locative + accusative cliticisation = 2): the use of *hi* is particularly controversial here, because this verbs works very well without any PP at all; if there is a PP present, it is headed by *sobre* 'about' (*reflexionar sobre una cosa* 'reflect about something'), whereas *hi* cliticisation is much stronger with PPs headed by *weaker* prepositions, namely *a* or *en*. In turn, *renunciar* shows

higher, but still quite low, scores (median for the locative cliticization = 2, median for the locative + accusative cliticisation = 4): the above-mentioned general tendency to lose *hi* cliticisation can account for the results. Finally, *jugar* displays a very different scenario (median for the locative cliticization = 5, median for the locative + accusative cliticisation = 4): we think this is due to the fact that this verb generally combines with a locative-denoting PP, and somehow this remains in the background when processing the sentence, even if the tested sentences only included an argumental PP *jugar a futbol* '(lit.) play to football' (not place-denoting) —headed by *a*, for which *hi* cliticisation is more stable.

4 Our analysis

4.1 Background: the Person Case Constraint

We therefore find two distinct 'anti-PCC effects' in the faire infinitive:

(a) An absolute effect: no argumental locative/oblique clitics with 3rd person causees (Italian, some French and Catalan speakers)
(b) A relative effect: no argumental locative/oblique clitics with full DP causees (some Catalan and French speakers).

(a)-(b) are reminiscent of the PCC and other intervention effects which are sensitive to person and/or the clitic/DP distinction across Romance languages (see Bonet 1991, Bianchi 2006, Postal 1989, Sheehan 2020 on the PCC; Rizzi 1986. McGinnis 1998 on intervention in raising) as well as the intervention patterns observed with dative indirect objects in the faire infinitive (see Kayne 1998, Rouveret 2016) and clitic trapping (Abeillé, Godard & Sag 1998). In the faire infinitive, across Italian, Spanish, French and Catalan, dative causees of any kind are incompatible with 1st/2nd person embedded objects (Postal 1989: 2).

(12) a. *Marcel <u>vous</u>= a fait épouser **au** **médecin**.
Marcel 2PL.ACC= has made marry DAT.the doctor
Intended: 'Marcel had the doctor Marry you.'
b. Marcel l= a fait épouser **au** **médecin**.
Marcel her.ACC= has made marry DAT.the doctor
'Marcel had the doctor Marry her.'

Examples (12a-b) show that a dative causee in French (as in Italian, Catalan and, with some complications, Spanish) is incompatible with a 2nd person object of marry but fine where this object is 3rd person (see Sheehan 2020). While there are multiple accounts of this PCC effect, most agree that it arises where "two arguments are in the domain of a single probing head" (Nevins 2007: 290, see also Anagnostopoulou 2003; Rezac 2008; Pineda & Sheehan 2022). The PCC then arises because 1st/2nd person direct objects share a feature with datives. In some accounts, this feature is person and 3rd person direct objects lack person. We argue that our anti-PCC effects show that this kind of account cannot be correct: 3rd person cannot be the lack of person as only 3rd person causees create intervention effects in instances of locative cliticization**.** There must therefore be a feature shared by datives and 1st/2nd person direct objects and this is likely to be a 3rd person feature.

4.1 The Anti-PCC

Our proposal is that locative clitics have a 3rd person feature. There is evidence for this from the fact that they can be interpreted as 3rd person indirect objects, particularly in PCC contexts where they surface as a repair (Rezac 2008) but also in regional varieties of the three languages, and related dialects. Assuming that locatives have this feature and that 3rd person DPs also have a 3rd person feature, the effects in (a) and (b) arise as simple intervention effects again where a single probe agrees with two goals: a 3rd person accusative causee and a locative clitic (assuming Agree is involved in cliticization – Roberts 2010). The difference between Italian and the other two languages then results because of a difference in basic word order and structure in causatives.

In Italian, PP complements most naturally follow the causee, whereas in Catalan (and, to some extent, French) both orders are possible, leading to an alternation between dative and accusative case (Burzio 1986, Villalba 1992, Pineda & Sheehan 2022):

(13) Silvia ha fatto parlare **Gianni** *dei suoi problemi*. [Italian]
Silvia has made speak Gianni of.the his problems
'Silvia made Gianni speak about his problems.'

(14) a. Farem creure/confiar *en l' atzar* **a la Maria**. [Catalan]
make.FUT.1PL believe/trust in the fate DAT the Maria
'We will make Maria believe in the fate.'

b. Farem creure/confiar **la Maria** en l' atzar
make. FUT.1PL believe/trust the Maria in the fate
'We will make Maria believe in the fate.' (Villalba 1992: 364)

As Rouveret and Vergnaud (1980: 133) note, citing Kayne (1975), French shows this pattern only in restricted contexts:

(15) a. Cela a fait changer d' avis **à tout le monde**.
this has made change of mind to all the world
'This has made everybody change their mind.'

b. Cela a fait changer **tout le monde** d' avis.
this has made change all the world of mind
'This has made everybody change their mind.'

We propose that (14a)/(15a) show that in French and Catalan the locative can be contained in a fronted VP (smuggled past the causee) and so both arguments are visible to a single probe, mitigating the anti-PCC effect. This is the majority patter in French and it is also a common pattern in Catalan. It must be noted, however, that this order is more restricted in French and subject to lexical variation.

Finally, some Catalan and French speakers show the pattern described by Rouveret & Vergnaud: they allow the locative clitic only in combination with a cliticised causee. This pattern is reminiscent of what we find, in some Romance varieties, with raising predicates like *seem* (see Rizzi 1986, Cuervo 2003):

(16) a. Gianni non **gli=** sembrafare il suo dovere.
Gianni NEG him.DAT.CL**=** seems do the his duty
'To him, Gianni does not seem to do his duty.'

b. *Gianni non sembra **a** **Piero** fare il suo dovere.
Gianni NEG seems to Piero do the his duty

We predict that these speakers should prefer the Italian word order in (13), so that the causee is higher in the structure than the locative argument. The locative clitic can move out of the infinitival clause only if the causee also does, as in (16a-b).

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