Clitic placement in European Portuguese

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Clitic placement in European Portuguese (EP) differs significantly from that of other Romance languages. Specifically, EP typically exhibits enclitics whereas in other Romance languages proclitics are found. Environments which trigger proclisis in EP generally have no effect on clitic placement in other Romance languages. EP also exhibits an apparent endoclitic structure in future and condition forms, in which the clitic is found between the verb stem and subject agreement. I propose a version of the Tobler-Mussafia law to account for this phenomenon, updated for a current Minimalist Program framework. I propose that clitics cannot occur at the phonological border of a strong phase. If the clitic does appear in this position, the verb must raise past the clitic. Furthermore, I argue that EP possesses the following clause structure: TopP>CP>AdvP>NegP>IP>vP>VP. The resurrection of the Tobler-Mussafia law accounts for the three types of clitics in a heterogeneous set of environments in EP.

1. Introduction

1.1. Background

Accounting for clitic placement in Romance has sparked strong debate since Kayne (1975). I do not intend to give a detailed account of the various analyses here, except where they bear directly on the analysis I present. Various accounts have assumed one of three stances on the merged position of clitics. Either the clitic is merged in argument position (Kayne 1975; et al.), the clitic is merged in its surface position (Strozer, 1976, et al.), or the clitic appears in a clitic phrase (Sportiche, 1992). I assume that clitics are merged in argument position and move to their surface position during the derivation.\(^1\) I also assume that, as bare heads, clitics are able to move both as heads and

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\(^1\)I wish to thank the participants at the annual conference of the Niagara Linguistics Society 2000 for several helpful suggestions. This paper is a scaled down and updated version of an earlier M.A. thesis (Barrie, 2000a).

\(^1\)One source of evidence supporting this position is the lack of clitic doubling in EP. Clitics and full DP's are in complementary distribution in EP suggesting that the clitic is merged in argument position. See Barrie (2000a, 2000b) for details.
full phrases. I assume that clitics in EP move as phrases and adjoin to IP, rather than I° which is standardly assumed for Romance. This avoids the problem of excorporation when the verb raises to C°, stranding the clitic. Finally, I adopt Zubizaretta (1998) and assume that nominative Case can be checked while the subject is in situ. I clarify this position below in section 3.3.

Concerning clause structure for EP, I adopt the following sequence of functional projections:

1.

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TopP
  CP
    Adv₅P²
      NegP
        IP
          vP
            VP
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1.2. Theoretical Framework


Uninterpretable features now include Case, phi-features of functional projections, and the EPP feature (in addition to Wh- and perhaps other similar features). Categorial features are no longer considered to exist in the lexicon. For example, a subject in English moves up to [Spec., IP] to satisfy the EPP feature on I°. Case and phi-features are checked by Agree between the probe and goal, which in and of itself does not require the subject to move. Objects, conversely, enter into Agree with v° which does not possess the EPP feature. Thus, Case and phi-features of the object are checked by Agree without movement.

The derivation proceeds by phases. Phases include CP and v°P (transitive vP, but not unaccusatives or passives). A phase must complete all its operations before moving

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2 Adv₅P is a "special" adverb phrase roughly in the spirit of Cinque (1997). It is a functional projection which hosts one of a small class of adverbs. See section 3.1. for a more detailed explanation.
on the next phase; this includes a Spell-Out step. Thus, rather than one Spell-Out, there is a sequence of Spell-Outs.

Verb movement now takes on a markedly different character from earlier work. Since categorial features no longer exist, there is no \([V-]\) feature to check. Verb movement is considered to be a phonological process, the details of which are not entirely clear.

1.3. Layout

Section 2 of this paper presents the data for which I present an analysis. Section 3 generalizes the data presented in section 2 and ties it together in a uniform analysis. Section 4 states the conclusions and presents problematic areas in the data with suggestion for future research.

2. Description of Clitic Placement in EP

2.1. Indicative and Subjunctive Mood

In matrix tensed clauses, clitics in EP are enclitic, contrary to other Romance languages as mentioned above:

2. A Maria viu -o  
   the Mary see.3s.PST -CL.3s.ACC  
   "Mary saw it."

In contrast to this, the following environments trigger proclisis in EP: negation (example 3), certain pre-verbal adverbs (example 4), question words (example 5), some quantifiers (example 6) and focalizations (example 7):

3. A Maria não o viu  
   the Mary NEG CL.3s.ACC see.3s.PST  
   "Mary didn't see it."

4. A Maria já o viu  
   the Mary already CL.3s.ACC see.3s.PST  
   "Mary already saw it."

5. Quando o viu?  
   when CL.3s.ACC see.3s.PST  
   "When did s/he see it?"
6. Alguem o viu.
   someone CL.3s.ACC see.3s.PST
   "Someone saw it."

7. Até a Maria o viu.
   even the Mary CL.3s.ACC see.3s.PST
   "Even Mary saw it."

   Embedded clauses with an overt complementizer (example 8) or embedded question word (example 9) also exhibit proclisis. Embedded clauses with no complementizer fail to trigger proclisis (example 10):

8. Sei que a Maria o viu.
   know.1s that the Mary CL.3s.ACC see.3s.PST
   "I know that Mary saw it."

9. Sei quando a Maria o viu.
   know.1s when the Mary CL.3s.ACC see.3s.PST
   "I know when Mary saw it."

10. a. Tivesse -me visto o Pedro...
    have.3s.PSUBJ -CL.1s.ACC seen the Peter
    "Had Peter seen me...."

    b. Se me tivesse visto o Pedro...
    if CL.1s.ACC have.3s.PSUBJ seen the Peter
    "If Peter had seen me...."

   EP also exhibits an apparent endoclitic or mesoclitic structure in future and conditional forms where the clitic appears to the right of the verb stem and tense marker and to the left of the subject agreement morpheme:

11. Ver -te -ei
    see.F/C\(^3\) -CL.2s.ACC -1s.FUT
    "I will see you."

   Proclisis is triggered in EP when CP material is present (questions, focalizations, complementizers) or when there is a head higher than the verb (negation, special adverbs\(^4\)). Proclisis is also triggered sometimes when a pre-verbal quantified phrase is

\(^{3}\)F/C indicates the future/conditional marker in EP verbs. This is morphologically identical to the infinitival marker (<at’/er’/ir’). In fact, tradition grammars make no distinction between the two, and simply consider future and conditional verb forms to consist of an infinitive plus subject agreement.

\(^{4}\)Later, I present evidence that special adverbs head a functional projection (Adv,P) which appears between CP and NegP.
present. I do not discuss these examples here due to space constraints. The analysis does not change significantly from Barrie (2000a, 2000b). The essence of the analysis presented in this work is that proclitic triggering QP's appear in CP (like questions and focalizations) and enclitic triggering QP's do not appear in CP. This will become clearer when the analysis is presented in section 3.

2.2. Imperative Mood

The imperative mood does not differ significantly from the indicative. I present the paradigm here as it is integral to the analysis I present in the following section. In the affirmative, proclisis is observed:

12. Dá-me o livro!
   give.IMP -CL.1s.ACC the book
   "Give me the book!"

In the negative imperative, enclisis is observed, and subjunctive morphology appears on the verb:

13. Não me dês o livro.
    NEG CL.1s.ACC give.2s.SUBJ the book
    "Don't give me the book!"

3. Analysis

3.1. Special Adverbs

Here, I argue for the presence of a functional projection, AdvₚP, which intervenes between CP and NegP:

14. \[
    \text{CP} \quad \text{AdvₚP} \quad \text{NegP}
    \]

This structure is in the same spirit as Cinque (1997), although the class of adverbs I discuss here cuts across Cinque’s distinction. The set of adverbs in question exhaustively includes the following:
The last item, *nunca* ("never"), I hesitate to include in this list. Rather, I assume it appears under Neg° for reasons I cannot discuss here.\(^5\) In either case, it does not bear on the analysis presented here.

Note the following paradigm for clitic climbing and its interaction effects with negation and special adverbs:

16. a. O João quer ver -me
    the John wants to see -CL.1s.ACC
    "John wants to see me."

b. O João quer -me ver.
    the John wants -CL.1s.ACC to see
    "John wants to see me."

c. O João quer não me ver.
    the John wants NEG CL.1s.ACC to see
    "John wants to not see me."

d. *O João quer-me não ver.

e. O João quer tambem me ver.
    the John wants also CL.1s.ACC to see
    "John wants to also see me.(not just hear from me)"

f. *O João quer-me tambem ver.

As is well known in Romance, clitic climbing can take place freely in the appropriate environment (ex.16a.,16b). It has been noticed, though, that embedded negation blocks clitic climbing (Rizzi, 1982, for example). This is taken as evidence for a functional projection, NegP, which hosts negation elements and somehow blocks the ability for the clitic to climb to the matrix verb.\(^6\) Note that in (16e) and (16f), the

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\(^5\)See Barrie (2000a, p. 45) for details.

\(^6\)Clitic climbing is actually indicative of a phenomenon known as restructuring not discussed here. There is a vast literature on this field both in general (Wurmbrand, 1998; among many others) and as it relates to Romance (Rizzi, 1982; Burzio, 1986). Negation is assumed to create an environment where restructuring is not licit, i.e., where clitic climbing cannot take place. For a discussion, see the references above or Picallo (1990).
embedded special adverb also blocks clitic climbing. I take this as evidence that special 
adverbs also project a functional projection, Adv₃P. Note that other adverbs in this 
position do not block clitic climbing:

17. a. O João quer frequentemente ver -me. 
    the John wants frequently to.see -CL.1s.ACC    
    "John wants to frequently see me."

    b. O João quer-me frequentemente ver.

    Since a small class of adverbs (ex.15) is capable of blocking clitic climbing, 
whereas other adverbs lack this property, I conclude that these special adverbs project an 
Adv₃P in the manner discussed.

3.2. Imperatives

Imperatives might seem like an odd choice to begin a general discussion of clitic 
placement. Unlike other moods, though, clitic placement in imperatives in EP mirrors 
that of some other Romance languages, namely Spanish and French. Affirmative 
imperatives are enclitic, and negative imperatives are proclitic. It has been suggested 
(Rivero & Terzi, 1995, among others) that enclisis in imperatives is due to V-to-C 
raising, stranding the clitic inside IP. In their analysis, the verb raises to check mood 
features in C°. They also argue that negation, a head, blocks movement of the verb up to 
C°, thus proclisis obtains. I wish to adopt the same general idea here: enclisis is the result 
of the verb raising above the clitic to C°, and proclisis is the result of the verb remaining 
in I° with the clitic left-adjoined to IP.⁷ Rivero and Terzi (1995) take the presence of 
subjunctive morphology over imperative morphology in negative imperatives as evidence 
for their claim. Since the verb cannot raise to C°, it is unable to check the imperative 
feature there, and use of subjunctive (which does not possess a feature which needs to be 
checked in C°) overcomes this.

3.3. Subjects

Zubizaretta's (1998) claim that nominative Case is checked in situ in Romance 
languages is easily handled in the current framework. Unlike English, Romance, 
specifically here, EP, does not possess an EPP feature on I°. Thus, I° and the subject need 
merely enter into an Agree relationship to check uninterpretable features, including 
Case.⁸ This analysis provides an account for post-verbal subjects. Case and phi-features

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⁷For an alternative view based on acquisition data from children, see Duarte and Matos (2000).
⁸Specifically, the subject has an unvalued [Case] feature which is assigned the value Nominative as a reflex of 
the checking of phi-features between I° and the subject.
are checked without movement, since there is no EPP feature on I°. Only the EPP feature triggers movement. Pre-verbal subjects, I assume appear in the specifier of a TopP. Note that both topics and pre-verbal subjects fail to trigger proclisis, in contrast to other environments discussed in section 2:

18. a. O João viu -me.
   the John saw -CL.me
   "John saw me."

   b. Este livro, deu -me o João
   this book gave -CL.me the John
   "This book, John gave to me."

   In the two examples above, the subject and the topic, I assume, both appear in [Spec.,TopP].

3.4. Proclisis

Looking at the environments in section 2.1. that trigger proclisis, we see two distinct categories: elements which occupy CP (questions, focalizations, overt complementizers) and elements which appear between CP and IP (special adverbs, negation). Thus, there is always some phonological material present above IP up to CP. Whether material is present in TopP, does not matter here:

19. Zone which must be filled phonologically, when a clitic is adjoined to IP

This is reminiscent of the old Tobler-Mussafia law which states that clitics cannot be clause initial. I propose the following language specific constraint for EP:

20. A clitic cannot appear at the phonological barrier in a strong phase.
Following Chomsky (1999), the phonological barrier is essentially the first element with phonetic content within a given phase. Recall that phases are CP and transitive vP, thus, phrases in the TopP do not satisfy the above constraint. The proclitic triggers satisfy this constraint by virtue of their presence in the zone indicated in (19). Overt complementizers appear in C°, special adverbs in Adv° and negation in Neg°.

Questions and focalizations move to [Spec., CP] to satisfy an EPP feature on C°, which is related to the uninterpretable [Wh-] and [FOCUS] features, respectively.

In the absence of proclitic triggers, the clitic is left exposed at the phonological barrier. To prevent a violation of (18), the verb raises to C°. Since head movement is a phonological process (Chomsky, 1999), there is no need to motivate this movement in the same manner as XP movement in the narrow syntax.9

3.5. Mesoclisis

Consider the following example of mesoclisis:

21. Bebê -lo -ia
   drink -CL.it -1s.CONDIT
   "I would drink it."

I assume, following Klavans (1979) and Lema & Rivero (1990) that the subject agreement morphology appears under I°. The clitic left-adojins to IP giving us the following structure:

22. IP
    lo IP
    I° vP
    ia pro v'
    V° VP
    bebê

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9An example of movement which must be motivated in this sense is raising of subject to [Spec.,IP] in English or raising of a question phrase to [Spec., CP] as described above. Movement to TopP probably does not require the same motivation. I assume a treatment for topicalization here similar to what Chomsky (1999) proposes for English (his TH/EX). Namely, that topicalization is a phonological process, not part of narrow syntax.
At this point, the clitic is exposed at the phonological border; however, it is the main verb, rather than the closer agreement morphology under I⁰ which now raises. There are various options available at this point which I offer for future research. The verb could raise and adjoin to I⁰, as is standard in Romance, and could then excorporate and raise to C⁰ to satisfy (20). Alternatively, following Lema & Rivero (1990), the verb could undergo long head movement (LHM) to C⁰, although the motivation is unclear. In Lema & Rivero (1990) the verb was required to move to I⁰ as was standardly assumed at the time. LHM creates a chain which both crosses and is coindexed with I⁰. This chain satisfies the need for the verb to move to I⁰. Here, there is no such requirement, so it is unclear why the verb would undergo LHM. One possibility is to assume that the agreement morphology is also clitic in nature, and is also unable to appear the phonological border, so the only option is for the verb to raise.

4. Conclusions

I have examined clitic placement in EP within the framework of the Minimalist Program (Chomsky, 1998, 1999). There exist several environments which trigger proclisis in EP, all of which involve phonological material between CP and IP (including CP, but not IP). Enclisis appears in the absence of any phonological material in this zone. I proposed a resurrection of the old Tobler-Mussiafia law to account for this pattern of clisis. In its current form, this law prevents clitics from appearing at the phonological border, essentially, the front of the clause, ignoring pre-verbal subjects and topics. This constraint requires the verb to move up to C⁰, stranding the clitic in IP (or rather protecting it from exposure to the phonological border). Mesoclisis is handled in a similar way to earlier work. The main verb raises to C⁰ to satisfy the up-to-date Tobler-Mussiafia law, the clitic is left-adjoined to IP, and the subject agreement morphology appears under I⁰. What remains unclear is why the verb must raise to C⁰ and not the agreement morphology. Two suggestions are that the verb adjoins to I⁰ and then (being closer since it is on the left side) raises to C⁰, or that the agreement morphology is itself a clitic and cannot satisfy the Tobler-Mussiafia law.

Various points remain unresolved here, including some problematic data concerning embedded clauses. While subjects and topics behave uniformly in matrix clauses, the same is not true for embedded clauses. An embedded preverbal subject gives rise to proclisis, while an embedded topic usually gives rise to enclisis:

23. …que o João me viu.
   that the John CL saw
   "...that John saw me."

24. …que este livro, deu-me o João.
   that this book gave-me the John
   "...that, this book, John gave to me."
Following the analysis adopted so far, examples (23) and (24) would be expected to behave uniformly with respect to clitic placement. Since there is a difference here, an analysis must be developed which treats the subject in (23) differently from the topic in (24).

References
