

**Background:** The derivation and syntactic position of Romance clitics has long been a productive area of study in generative syntax. One topic of inquiry is the positioning of preverbal clitics. Following Kayne (1991), clitics are adjoined to the T head, Nevins (2011) and Kramer (2014) propose clitics are tucked-in (following Richards 1997) to an inner specifier, while other accounts assume the clitic to be in an outer specifier (Suñer 2003) or a higher Clitic Projection (as in Sportiche 1996, González López 2008). I examine adjunct control structures that add new data to this discussion. A previously undiscussed type of adjunct control occurs in Spanish when the controller of the adjunct subject can be an object clitic (rather than the subject). Interestingly, in these control structures there can be ambiguity between interpreting the subject or the clitic as the controller. Observe this in (1) where either the first person subject or third person clitic can establish control and be interpreted as the subject of the adjunct verb ‘ir.’

- (1) (Yoi) lo<sub>j</sub> vi antes de PRO<sub>i/j</sub> ir-<sub>{me<sub>i</sub>/se<sub>j</sub>}</sub> para España  
 I him saw.1SG before of PRO leave.INF-<sub>{RFL1SG/3SG}</sub> for Spain.  
 ‘I saw him before {my leaving/he left} for Spain.’

Following Landau’s (2015) two-tiered theory of control, control is established via movement and predication and the closest c-commanding argument to PRO is interpreted as the controller<sup>1</sup>. The data in (1) then raise questions regarding the position of the clitic. Landau’s account would predict that when the clitic controls PRO in (1), the clitic must be closer than the subject is to PRO. Yet, under the subject control reading of (1), the subject would instead be predicted to be closer to PRO. How can these seemingly contradictory predictions be accounted for?

**Proposal:** I propose that the ambiguity of controller in (1) is a reflection of two possible derivations and positions in vP for clitic movement: a clitic can either tuck-in to an inner specifier of vP or a clitic can move to an outer specifier of vP. When the clitic tucks-in to an inner specifier, it is closest to PRO and acts as the controller. When the clitic is in an outer specifier, the subject is instead closer to PRO, resulting in subject control.

**Clitic control data:** In Spanish, preverbal non-climbed clitics are able to control the subject of a non-finite adjunct clause. This option is unique to object clitics, as full DP objects generally cannot control into an adjunct (in Spanish or English) (Landau 2013, 2015, Boeckx et al. 2010). Observe this pattern in (2) where the bolded argument is the controller of PRO.

- (2) a. **La<sub>i</sub>** abracé antes de PRO<sub>i</sub> poner-se celosa. (clitic)  
 Her hugged.1SG before of PRO become.INF-RFL.3S jealous.FEM  
 ‘I hugged her before she got jealous’  
 b. \*Abracé [**a mi novia**]<sub>i</sub> antes de PRO<sub>i</sub> poner-se celosa. (full DP)  
 Hugged DOM my girlfriend before of PRO become.INF RFL.3S jealous.FEM  
 ‘I hugged my girlfriend before she got jealous’

I adopt Landau’s (2015) theory of control in which obligatory control is a result of predication. Movement of PRO to Spec,FinP turns the projection into a predicate and the closest c-commanding argument to PRO saturates that predicate to establish control. In this theory, the lack of object control in structures like (2b) arises from an in-situ object being too low to c-command a vP adjunct. Preverbal clitics avoid this problem. Finally, clitic control structures do appear to display obligatory control (OC), rather than non-obligatory control, meaning the

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<sup>1</sup> While the focus of this presentation is not the debate between theories of control, there is evidence that the clitic control data support a theory like Landau’s that depends on c-command to establish control, rather than a theory of control as movement (Hornstein 1999, 2001 and Boeckx et al. 2010). For that reason, I have adopted Landau’s account.

relationship between the controller and PRO is a strict syntactic dependency (Landau 2015, Boeckx et al. 2010). One diagnostic for OC is the availability of a [-human] controller, as in (3).

- (3) **Lo<sub>i</sub>** cosechó antes de PRO<sub>i</sub> florecer.  
 It harvested before of PRO flower.inf  
 ‘He/She harvested it before it flowered.’

**Accounting for optionality in control:** Returning to the minimal pair in (1), where the same surface order is ambiguous between a subject and clitic control interpretation, this structure may appear problematic under Landau’s account. Given that both the subject and clitic can control, it would (contradictorily) suggest that both the clitic and the subject are closest to PRO. To account for both interpretations, and maintain Landau’s account, I propose that there are two different moved positions available for clitics. Looking first at the derivation of clitic control, in order to control, the clitic must be positioned closer to PRO than the subject is. This appeals to an account of clitics such as Nevins (2011) where clitics tuck-in to an inner specifier of vP. Being tucked in below the subject, but high enough to c-command the adjunct, the clitic would be the closest c-commanding DP to PRO, and clitic control is expected. Observe this vP structure in (4).

- (4) [<sub>vP</sub> *pro lo<sub>i</sub>* [<sub>v'</sub> *ʋi t̪*]] [<sub>PP</sub> antes de PRO<sub>i</sub> irse para España]]

To derive the subject control reading of (1), I suggest that an alternate derivation is also possible where, after the subject moves to Spec, vP, instead of tucking-in, the clitic would move to an outer specifier of vP (as in Suñer 2003)<sup>2</sup>. In this derivation, the subject would be closest to PRO and would thus be expected to control, as shown in (5).

- (5) [<sub>vP</sub> *lo* [<sub>vP</sub> *pro<sub>j</sub>* [<sub>v'</sub> *ʋi t̪*]] [<sub>PP</sub> antes de PRO<sub>j</sub> irse para España]]

Following Richards (1997), both of these derivations (tucking-in to an inner specifier or moving to an outer specifier) in principle should be possible, and both respect notions of cyclicity as outlined in Chomsky (1995). Given that neither derivation seems to be less economical than the other, there should be no theoretical motivation to exclude the possibility of there being two positions for clitics in vP. The possibility of optionality in the derivation also seems to conform to Chomsky’s (2001 p.34) notion that optionality is allowed if it leads to a different outcome, i.e. a difference in the interpretation (subject vs object control).

**Support from binding:** Finally, further support for this analysis can also be found with reflexive binding which displays a similar pattern. In the examples in (6), a local c-commanding antecedent is needed to bind the reflexive pronoun. While either the (null) subject or clitic can bind the anaphor in (6a), an in-situ object is not able to do so (6b).

- (6) a. Le hablé de {mí-mismo/sí-mismo}      b. \*Hablé a Juan de sí-mismo  
 3SG spoke.1SG of myself/himself      Spoke.1SG to Juan of himself  
 ‘I spoke to him about myself/himself’      ‘I spoke to Juan about himself’

This is predicted under the proposed analysis. Either the clitic tucks in, and is the closest DP for binding, or the clitic moves to an outer specifier, and the subject then is the closer DP.

**Selected references:** **Kramer, R.** (2014). Clitic doubling or object agreement: The view from Amharic. *Natural Language & Linguistic Theory*, 32(2), 593-634. **Landau, I.** (2015). *A two-tiered theory of control* (Vol. 71). MIT Press. **Nevins, A.** (2011). Multiple agree with clitics: Person complementarity vs. omnivorous number. *Natural Language & Linguistic Theory*, 29(4), 939-971. **Suñer, M.** (2003). The lexical preverbal subject in a Romance Null Subject Language. In *31 Linguistic Symposium on Romance Languages (LSRL)*. John Benjamins.

<sup>2</sup> Following an analysis of subject positions like Cardinaletti (1997) and Suñer (2003), overt subjects would be further moved to a higher position resulting in the correct word order.