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GEOMETRIC STRUCTURE OF FEATURES AND LINEAR ORDER OF CLITIC PRONOUNS IN OCCITAN DIALECTS IN THE DEPARTMENT OF ALPES-MARITIMES

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1.0 Introduction

I focus on the linear order of clitic pronouns in Occitan and in particular those dialects spoken in the Department of Alpes-Maritimes. Dialects spoken in this region include Maritime Provençal, Alpine Provençal, and some dialects related to Ligurian such as Mentonasc; Ligurian is a dialect spoken in the north-west of Italy (see Map B). The diverse dialects of Occitan are shown on Map A.

Map A: The Dialects of Occitan
Clitic pronouns are pronouns that are phonologically dependent on the verb to which they are attached and cannot receive stress on their own. If the linear order of clitic pronouns varies between spoken varieties, this could indicate the existence of different dialects which distinguish themselves in terms of grammar.

In (1) the third person plural accusative pronoun (direct object) precedes the first person pronoun (indirect object).

(1) d’i lu mi
tell.2SG.IMPER 3SG.ACC 1SG
‘Tell me (it).’

(Malausse¹ ((PAM A, section I, line 4))

By contrast, in (2), for a closely related dialect, the reverse order is observed between the accusative pronoun and the first person pronoun:

¹ Unless otherwise specified, the names match the names of the localities studied by Dalbera (1994) in obtaining his corpus. PAM (Parlers Alpes Maritimes) consists of two questionnaires, PAM A and PAM B (see section 4.0).
(2) d’iga m u²
tell.2SG.IMP 1SG 3SG.NEUT.ACC
‘Tell me (it).’

(Grasse (PAM A, section I, line 4))

2.0 Research Questions

In this study I aim to answer the following questions:

i) How can one account for the linear order of object clitic pronouns in Occitan dialects?

ii) How can the variation in linear order of pronoun clitics in Occitan dialects be represented in the context of other Romance languages such as Spanish, Catalan, French, and Italian?

3.0 Theoretical Framework

In this section I first introduce the notion of universal parameters. This is followed by an overview of previous studies which attempt to account for the linear order of clitic pronouns. Lastly, we examine morphological approaches as well as the advantages to such approaches in explaining linear orders.

3.1 The Parameters of Universal Grammar

Rizzi (1989:9) argues that the parameters of universal grammar “characterise the limited space of possible variation”. These parameters would be “bifurcation points of the general grammatical system” (Rizzi 1989:9). It is thus necessary to focus grammatical studies on related grammatical systems in order to isolate these points of origin (Rizzi 1989:9). One can isolate differences such as the variation in linear order according to grammatical case (accusative (ACC) + dative (DAT) or DAT + ACC) by examining related dialects such as those in the department of Alpes-Maritimes.

3.2 Previous Studies

Many explanations have been proposed to account for the linear order of clitics including templates (Perlmutter 1971:72), syntactic movements (for French see Kayne 1975; for Italian see Rizzi 1982 and Cinque 2004), Optimality Theory (Grimshaw 1997, 1999) and morphological analyses using hierarchical structures that may or may not include templates (for an analysis that

2 The fact that in some dialects, the masculine is ‘lou’, while in others it is ‘ou’, is only a manifestation of dialectal variation, according to Michèle Oliviéri, Nice Sophia Antipolis University / National Research Centre scientific (UMR 7320), personal communication.
includes templates, see Bonet 1995). I argue that the morphological approach is the most useful because it potentially accounts for the variable linear order of clitics.

3.2.1 Morphological approaches

A morphological approach using a hierarchical geometry of monovalent privative features has been proposed to analyse the linear order of object clitics for Spanish (Heap 2002, 2005) and certain Gallo-Romance dialects (Heap and Kaminskaïa 2001).

Heap (2005:90) incorporates the CASE feature from Bonet’s model (1991, 1993, 1995) (which is absent in Harley and Ritter’s model) as a dependent node of CLASS. In this model, only one of the two grammatical cases needs to be specified in order to distinguish between them, the other being the default case. As in Harley and Ritter’s (2002) model the sub branches represent the grammaticalisation of “natural categories”.

![Figure 1: The hierarchical representation of clitic pronouns in nonstandard Spanish according to Heap (2005:90)](image)

In this geometrical model, structures having more nodes are considered as being more complex (Bonet 1991) and more “marked”. For example, in this geometry the plural is more marked than the singular because it requires more nodes to represent it. In addition, nodes lacking a dependant node receive a default interpretation (Harley et Ritter 1998:9; Harley et Ritter 2002:486).

3.2.1.1 The « Least Leafy to the Left » Constraint

In certain Romance languages clitic pronouns would be arranged from left to right, from the least complex to the most complex, according to a hierarchical geometry of features. This hypothesis concerning the linear order of clitics is called the “Least Leafy to the Left (LLL)” Constraint (Heap 2005:92).

Spanish (3) and certain dialects of non-standard French (4 and 5) share linear orders of clitics that would follow this constraint (Heap 2005, Heap and Kaminskaïa 2001).

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3 This geometry accounts for Greenberg’s (1963) generalisation number 45: If there exists a distinction for the gender in the plural, there exists a distinction for the gender in the singular as well.
(3) Buscó la pala y se la trajo
Look.3SG.PASSÉ (for) the shovel and 3SG.REFL 3SG.FEM.ACC bring.3SG.PASSÉ
to the house.
‘He/She looked for the shovel and brought it home.’ (Heap 2005:93)

(4) Dis-le lui
say.2SG.IMP-3SG.ACC-3SG.DAT
‘Say it to him.’ (Heap and Kaminskaia 2001:110)

(5) Dis-moi le
say.2SG.IMP-1SG-3SG.ACC
‘Say it to me.’ (Heap and Kaminskaia 2001:107)

However, the linear order of pronouns in certain dialects of Occitan would not always be
predicted by the LLL constraint. In Provençal Varois the indirect object pronoun precedes the
direct object pronoun (i.e. DAT + ACC) with the verb in the indicative (Domenge 1999:72-73).
This same linear order applies to enclitics, for example with imperatives, where the two pronouns
follow the verb (Domenge 1999:73).

(6) Mi la rendras
1SG 3SG.ACC.FEM return.2SG.FUT
‘You will return it to me.’ (Domeng 1999:72-73)

(7) Pouarto-mi la
Bring.2SG.IMPER-1SG-3SG.FEM.ACC
‘Bring it to me.’ (Domeng 1999:72-73)

However, in Niçard the direct object pronoun normally precedes the indirect object pronoun (i.e.
ACC + DAT) (Gasiglia 1984:157):

(8) a. Lou mi douna
3SG.ACC 1SG give.3SG.IND
‘He gives it to me.’ (Gasiglia 1984:157)

b. Li mi douna
3PL.ACC 1SG give.3SG.IND
‘He gives them to me.’ (Gasiglia 1984:157)

4.0 Data from the Department of Alpes-Maritimes
When an accusative or dative pronoun combine with an adverbial pronoun, the adverbial pronoun always goes in second position throughout the Department of Alpes-Maritimes (Dalbera 1991:609). Thus, the linear order is invariable. Our data confirm this observation:

(9) m eŋ farjˈɔ
1SG GEN make.3SG.COND
‘You think she would make me?’ (Malausse (PAM A line 47))

In Heap’s (2005) model all clitics marked OTHER, i.e. “NON-PARTICIPANT” (e.g. 3SG.ACC and 3SG.DAT), would have greater morphological complexity than pronouns marked as PARTICIPANT (e.g. 1SG and 2SG). Thus pronouns marked OTHER appear farthest to the right. Although initially developed for Spanish, Heap (2005) argues that the LLL constraint would apply to other Romance varieties having more clitics in their inventory.4

In Bonet’s model (1991, 1993:96, 1995:615) the third person feature (3rd) is shared by all third person clitic pronouns (accusative and dative) as well as the neuter clitic (ho), the partitive (or genitive) clitic (en), and the “locative” clitic (hi). [GEN] (genitive) is a dependant node of [OBL] (oblique), which Bonet (1995:615) employs to represent the dative clitic pronoun as well as the locative. Thus, I incorporate [GEN] within the model of Heap (2005) as a dependant node of [dative] (Figure 2).

Figure 2: A hierarchical representation comparing the geometry of the adverbial pronoun, en ([eŋ]), with that of pronouns marked for [PARTICIPANT], me

When a dative pronoun combines with an accusative pronoun the linear order varies according to the region of Alpes-Maritimes (Dalbera 1991:609). In the eastern part of the

4 French, Catalan (and also Occitan) have locative clitics (y and hi, respectively) as well as a partitive clitic, en, that would have additional CASE features (Heap 2005:93). This greater morphological complexity explains why they appear farthest to the right in clitic pronoun sequences.
Department of Alpes-Maritimes the linear order accusative + dative (ACC + DAT) is observed (Dalbera 1991:609):

(10) əʀtė dizijavˈama
3SG.ACC 2SG say.1PL.COND
‘We would say it to you.’ (La Brigue (PAM A line 235))

This order, which is the reverse of standard French, would not be predicted by the LLL constraint, even if there exists under-specification of features: The 2SG is not specified for [speaker] in the model of Heap and Kaminskaia (2001).

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{CL} \\
\text{PARTICIPANT} \\
\text{[speaker]} \\
\text{CLASS}
\end{array}
\quad \begin{array}{c}
\text{CL} \\
\text{INDIVIDUATION} \\
\text{le}
\end{array}
\]

Figure 3: The specification of the first person singular pronoun, me, and of the third person singular accusative pronoun, le (Heap and Kaminskaia 2001:107)

According to Heap and Kaminskaia (2001:106) the masculine and the accusative would be marked for gender and case by default. Consequently, there would exist some grammars (such as non-standard varieties of French) where these two clitics would have the same amount of morphological specification. In this case, the accusative pronoun, le, could precede or follow me, interchangeably.

In several localities in the central and eastern part of the region, accusative pronouns precede dative pronouns (i.e. ACC + DAT), regardless of the grammatical person:

(11) dˈi lu li
say.2SG.IMPER 3SG.ACC 3SG.DAT
‘Say it to him!’ (Malausse (PAM A, section F line 4))

In (11) the linear order follows the LLL constraint.

In the northwestern zone, as Dalbera (1991:609) indicates, the reverse order is found (12) (DAT + ACC)\(^5\):

(12) dˈuna me lus
give.2SG.IMP 1SG 3PL.ACC

\(^5\) According to Dalbera (1991:609), between the two extremes the linear order oscillates between the two, that is ACC + DAT and DAT + ACC.
'Give them to me'  
(St. Etienne (PAM A line 131))

The linear order in (12) would be predicted by the LLL constraint. This order is the reverse of what one finds in Malausse, which is located in a more central zone of Alpes-Maritimes (13) (ACC + DAT):

(13) dˈuna li mi
give.2SG.IMP 3PL.ACC-1SG
‘Give them to me!’  
(Malausse (PAM A line 130))

This linear order would not be predicted by the LLL constraint, even with under-specification, because, according to Heap and Kaminskaï’s (2001) model, the accusative pronoun, li, would also be specified for number, which is represented by [group] (see figure 4).

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Figure 4: A hierarchical representation comparing the first person singular pronoun with the third person plural accusative pronoun

There exists an analogous situation in Languedocian (cf. Alibèrt 1976) and in Catalan (cf. Bonet 1995:73): The linear order for third person pronouns varies (ACC + DAT or DAT + ACC) according to the region or the dialect in question. The Languedocian domain is divided into two regions: the Northeast (see Map C), where the linear order ACC + DAT dominates, and the Southwest region where the reverse order (DAT + ACC) is observed (Alibèrt 1976:67). The linear order in Languedocian thus varies from one region to another.

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Map C: Languedocian dialects (taken from Alibèrt 1976)
Majorcan, Valencian, and Standard Catalan are three dialects of Catalan. Although they lack significant syntactic differences between them, the linear order varies amongst these dialects, as Bonet (1995:73) shows:

a) Valencian:
   \[1^{st} - 2^{nd} - 3^{rd} \text{ dat.} - es - 3^{rd} \text{ acc.} - \text{gen./neuter}\]

b) Majorcan:
   \[3^{rd} \text{acc.} - es - 1^{st}/2^{nd} - 3^{rd} \text{ dat.} - \text{gen.} - \text{oblique/neuter}\]

c) Catalan Standard:
   \[es - 2^{nd} - 1^{st} - 3^{rd} \text{ dat. pl.} - 3^{rd} \text{ acc.} - \text{gen.} - \text{oblique/neuter}\]
   \[3^{rd} \text{ dat. sg.}\]

As with the dialects spoken in the Department of Alpes-Maritimes as well as with Languedocian dialects, the linear order varies between third person accusative and third person dative pronouns.

5.0 Research questions revisited

For Niçard and related languages in the centre and in the east of the Department of Alpes-Maritimes, I examine if the accusative pronoun (direct object) always appears farthest to the left (cf. Gasiglia 1984:157 for Niçard) in the case of the masculine singular, the feminine singular, and the plural. Clitics marked for the feminine and for the plural should have additional features such as gender and number. Having greater morphological internal complexity, it would be less probable that the third person accusative pronouns marked for either feminine or plural would appear to the left, as is the case for third person singular masculine accusative pronouns.

I examine the variable linear order of clitic pronoun sequences that precede or follow the verb. This data is compared with that of other Occitan dialects, including Languedocian, and other Romance languages.

6.0 Corpus

Data is examined for related dialects from twenty different villages located in Alpes-Maritimes. This data comes from the PAM (Parlers des Alpes-Maritimes) fieldwork notebooks (see Dalbera 1994). These surveys were done from 1972-1981.\(^6\)

There are twenty-three surveys, consisting of either 254 lines (PAM A) or 362 lines (PAM B). The sentences include combinations of forms representing a verb and object clitic pronouns (direct and indirect) or adverbial pronouns. Informants were between sixty and seventy years of age and born in the locality.

For each of the localities one of the two questionnaires was employed containing a series of sentences based on related themes. The use of a questionnaire permits a stable base for comparison for the localities in our study. The questionnaire employed is uniform and rich in

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\(^6\) Dalbera (1994:26) uses API symbols, thus giving uniformity to the survey.
morphosyntax. The results thus permit a systematic comparison of the pronominal forms as well as their linear order across the dialects studied.

7.0 Procedure for Data Analysis

Pronoun placement in verbal groups as well as their linear order is compared for all of the localities studied in the Department of Alpes-Maritimes. On an Excel file, the various combinations of linear order are systematically noted according to grammatical person, number, and case.

8.0 Discussion and Conclusion

As Dalbera notes, the linear order for our data varies (ACC + DAT or DAT + ACC) according to the region within Alpes-Maritimes. This same variability is observed for other regions where other dialects of Occitan are spoken. For example, in Provençal Varois there exists a single linear order: DAT+ACC (see e.g. 6 and 7 on page 5). This order is thus the same that exists in the western zone of Alpes-Maritimes, located immediately to the east of the department of Var.

For non-standard dialects of French, Heap and Kaminskaïa (2001) show that the third person dative pronoun can precede the third person accusative pronoun when the latter is fully specified for gender. Based on their model, this morphological marking would give the accusative pronoun the same quantity of specification as the dative pronoun:

![Diagram of pronoun specification]

Figure 5: The specification of the third person accusative and the third person dative pronoun according to Heap and Kaminskaïa (2001:111)

It is possible that there simultaneously exists a constraint for alignment according to case (cf. Grimshaw 2001) and another based on the LLL constraint. In the Theory of Optimality these two constraints can have a different ranking in the different dialects. It is also possible that there exists variable under-specification, depending on the dialect (Heap 2005).

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7 The notebooks are transcribed onto an Excel document using Doulos SIL characters.

8 This data will be part of Thésoc (Thesaurus Occitan) (cf. Oliviéri and Brun-Trigaud 2009; Oliviéri 2011), which is a linguistic data base of Occitan dialects originating from oral sources from field surveys of diverse localities.
Our study will contribute to better establishing whether or not a morphological model can explain the linear order of clitic pronouns in Occitan dialects.

References


