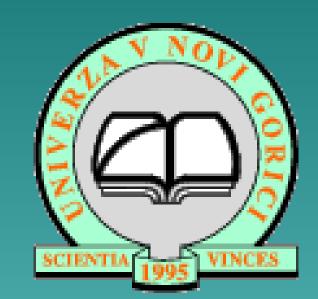# On some differences between clitic climbing and clitic fronting

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Introduction

- Clitic climbing = clitic movement from embedded nonfinite complement clauses, as in (1)
- typically: regular clitic fronting that happens because of some extra process —'restructuring'
- restructuring changes the syntactic structure — clitics can move as within matrix clauses.
- For Slavic: Franks and King (2000) and Stjepanović (2004).

(1) a. Peter ji jo pozablja [dati ___ ___.]
         Peter her.DAT it.ACC forgets   give.INF
         'Peter forgets to give it to her.'
     b. base structure: [Subj   V [XP PRO V cl]]
     c. after restructuring: [Subj cl V [XP PRO V cl]]

Differences – old

Movement vs. no movement
Clitic fronting is obligatory, clitic climbing is not

(2) a. *Peter daje mu knjigo.
          Peter gives him book
          intended: 'Peter gives him a book.'
     b. Peter pozablja || dati mu knjigo.
        Peter forgets   give.INF him book
        'Peter forgets to give him a book.'

VP Preposing
Clitics cannot be preposed with the VP in which they originate in monoclausal sentences, (3)-(4), but they can be preposed if the preposing VP is the embedded VP, (5).

(3) [Dajem darilo] pa mu že   cel teden.
     give   present PTCL him already all week
     'As for giving him a present, I've been doing it all week.'

(4) * [Dajem mu darilo] pa že   cel teden.
       give   him present PTCL already all week
       Intended: 'As for giving him a present, I've been doing it all week.'

(5) [Dati mu darilo] pa hočejo že   danes.
     give.INF him present PTCL want already today
     'As for giving him a present, they want to do it already today.'

> Both of these properties could be linked to the structural differences between embedded non-finite clauses that allow clitic climbing and those that do not.
>
> - If the structure allows climbing, clitics climb.
>   → VPs front without the clitic.
> - If the structure of the embedded clause doesn't allow climbing, clitics do not climb.
>   → VPs will carry the clitics with them.
> - Restructuring explains the difference

Differences – new

Right Node Raising

If the RNR-ed VP includes a clitic, this clitic cannot be inside the VP: it needs to be fronted and appears inside the two conjuncts, (6). But when RNR is done with the embedded non-finite VP/clause, the clitic can be dislocated together with the phrase, (7).

(6) * Peter je   včeraj, ti pa si   danes [opral ga].
       Peter AUX.3P.SG yesterday you PTCP AUX.2P.SG today   washed it
       intended: 'Peter has yesterday and you have today washed it.'

(7) ? Peter je   hotel včeraj, Janez pa   je hotel danes [oprati ga z   žajfo].
       Peter AUX wanted yesterday Janez PTCP AUX wanted today   wash.INF it with soap
       'Peter wanted yesterday and Janez wanted today to washed it with soap.'

- RNR seems to work the same way as VP preposing. The only difference is in the direction of movement of the VP.

Verb-echo answers:

Mendes et al. (2024) discuss a type of ellipsis where only the verb survives, sometimes together with the auxiliary. If the verb is inherently reflexive, the reflexive clitic has to survive ellipsis too.

(8) Ali so se   včeraj   najedli sladoleda? —   Ja, najedli so   *(se).
     Q   AUX REFL yesterday ate   ice-cream   yes eat-one's-fill AUX REFL
     'Did they eat one's fill of ice-cream yesterday?'   'Yes, they ate one's fill.'

But if such a clitic originates inside a non-finite clause, it can be ommitted.

(9) Ali so se   včeraj   pozabili najesti sladoleda? — Ja, pozabili so (se).
     Q   AUX REFL yesterday forgot   eat.INF ice-cream   yes forgot   AUX REFL
     'Did they forgot to eat one's fill of ice-cream?'   'Yes, they forgot it.'

- With Verb-echo answers, it might be the same.

Differences – new (cont.)

Si-se sequence:
When *se* is an argumnet of the inherently reflexive verb, (10-a)—though not when it is a pronominal reflexive REFL.ACC, (10-b)—the sequence of *si* REFL.DAT and *se* is impossible in either order.

(10) a. * Peter { si   se   / se   si   } spet smeji.
           Peter REFL.DAT REFL.ACC REFL.ACC REFL.DAT again laughs
           intended: 'Peter is laughing at himself again.'
     b. Peter si   se   spet posoja drugi   ekipi.
        Peter REFL.DAT REFL.ACC again loans other.DAT team.DAT
        'Peter is loaning himself to another team again.'

The *si-se* sequence is allowed with clitic climbing when the two clitics are from different clauses. This means that the problem with (10-a) is not in the composition of the clitic cluster. A structural explanation doesn't explain this contrast.

(11) Peter si   se   pomaga spet smejat.
     Peter REFL.DAT REFL.ACC helps again laugh.INF
     'Peter helps himself to laugh a little again.'

Strong CrossOver (SCO):

When the pronoun is in an argument position it cannot be coindexed with the element that moves over it. The only way to test this with clitic fronting is with a reflexive clitic as in (12).

(12) Včeraj   se₁   je on₁ predstavil ___ Micki.
     yesterday REFL aux he introduced   Micka.DAT
     'Yesterday, he introduced himself to Micka.'

In clitic climbing cases, reflexive climbing is ok, but in such cases, the reflexive really moves over the coindexed PRO, which disrupts SCO (PRO is within the same clause and the clitic thus fronts over it and fronting is ok). But when a pronominal clitic climbs over a coindexed argument as in (14), the example is completely out, apparently because of SCO.

(13) Včeraj   se₁   je on₁ hotel predstavit ___ Micki.
     Yesterday REFL.ACC AUX he wanted introduce.INF Micka.DAT
     'Yesterday he wanted to introduce himself to Micka.'

(14) * Včeraj   si ga₁   Petru₁   obljubil poklicat ___.
       yesterday aux him.CL.ACC Peter.DAT promised call.INF
       intended: 'Yesterday you promised Peter to call him.'

The last two properties of clitic climbing in particular cannot be explained with restructuring. As an optional operation, restructuring should make the embedded clitics behave like main clause clitics, but this is not what we observe. The mechanisms behind the two types of clitic movement seem to be simply different and only one of them shares restrictions with other types of syntactic movement.

Tabachnick (2024)

- Dvorak (2010): two classes of ditransitives with different basic orders of arguments: *svěřit* 'entrust' → ACC > DAT but *opravit* 'repair' → DAT > ACC.
  → Clitics have only one order within the cluster.
- Object controllers can be DAT, (15), or ACC, (16), as can the objects of the embedded infinitives.
  → the accusative embedded object may climb, but not the dative one (Lenertova 2004, Dotlačil 2004, Rezac 2005)

(15) Matka mu   ji   nedovolila [navštívit].
     mother him.DAT her.ACC NEG.allowed visit.INF
     'Mother didn't allow him to visit her.'   (Lenertova 2004: fn 24)

(16) * Matka mu   ji   přinutila [pomoct].
       mother him.DAT her.ACC forced   help.INF
       'Mother forced her to help him.'   (Lenertova 2004: fn 24)

- When the two clitics come from different clauses, the lower one can climb into a slot below the higher one. However, the basic order may *not* be flipped:
  → a clitic from a lower clause cannot climb across one from a higher clause!

Not everything is different

- clitic doubling seems possible also from inside an embedded non-finite clause

(17) Peter ga   je hotel njega   poklicat.
     Peter him.CL.ACC AUX wanted him.ACC call.INF
     'Peter wanted to call him.'

- clitics from non-finite clauses also form clitic contractions with the matrix auxiliary

(18) ... gaj   pozabu ruknt ___ .
         it.ACC+AUX forgot knock.INF
         'He forgot to knock it.'   (www)

- If clitic climbing is a different type of movement, how come things like contractions are possible?

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