

## ***When syntax meets pragmatics: one clitic is not enough.***

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In this paper I will examine a doubling phenomenon concerning enclitic elements in the Northern Italian dialect of Carmignano di Brenta (= Carm). The term 'doubling' is to be intended here in a general sense, as the double occurrence of something (in this specific case an item or a syntactic operation).

In main interrogatives this dialect shows the canonical Subject Clitic Inversion (see Poletto 2000); furthermore, it disposes of two particular structures: the Two-Subject-Clitics Pattern (= 2-Scl, (1a)) and the Two-Object-Clitics Pattern (= 2-Ocl, (1b)); the two patterns show that in Carm we have two subject (or object) clitics co-occurring in the same sentence, one in proclitic position, one in enclitic position<sup>1</sup>:

- (1) a. **I a magne-*i*, a minestra, i putei?** ---> 2-Scl  
*they* (m.) *it* (f.s.) eat-*they* (m.), the soup, the children  
“Are the children eating the soup?”
- b. **E compre-*e*, e scarpe, to sorea?** ---> 2-Ocl  
*them* (f.) buy-*them* (f.), the shoes, your sister  
“Is your sister buying the shoes?”

The structures in (1) are possible only when there is morphological identity (or strong affinity) between the proclitic element and the enclitic one. On the other hand, an important restriction concerning 2-Scl and 2-Ocl in Carm concerns the fact that they can't co-occur in the same interrogative, i.e. we can't have both the doubling of subject clitics and that of object clitics, as shown in (2):

- (2) a. \* **I a magne-*a-i*, a minestra, i putei?** ---> \*2-Ocl+2-Scl  
*they* (m.) *it* (f.s.) eat-*it* (f)-*they* (m.), the soup, the children  
“Are the children eating the soup?”
- b. \* **I a magne-*i-a*, a minestra, i putei?** ---> \*2-Scl+2-Ocl  
*they* (m.) *it* (f.s.) eat-*they* (m.)-*it* (f), the soup, the children  
“Are the children eating the soup?”

The ban shown in (2) on the co-occurrence of a subject clitic with an object clitic in enclitic position may bring one to conclude that there exists only one position for enclitic elements: however, in the same dialect we find evidence that the verb can host two enclitic elements as long as they convey different features.

The crucial data concern the clitic inversion of the clitic *-i*, which is the interrogative enclitic subject in Carm for 1<sup>st</sup> person singular and plural. Subject Clitic Inversion (= SCI) with 1<sup>st</sup> person plural is optional; when *-i* is present, it may add to the question a particular pragmatic mark, something like “impatience” on the part of the speaker (3):

- (3) (Ma a<sup>l</sup>ora), cossa femo-*i* desso? “Well, what are we going to do now?”  
(but then) what do-*we* now

The *-i* clitic can co-occur in enclitic position with the 2<sup>nd</sup> singular enclitic subject (4), obligatorily assigning to the question the pragmatic flavour mentioned above; the structure is far more natural when the inflected verb is an auxiliary (4a), than with simple tenses (4b):

- (4) a. (Ma a<sup>l</sup>ora), ghe-**to-i** finio niancora el to lavoro ?  
(but then), have-*you-i* finished yet the your job  
“Well, haven't you finished your job yet?”

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1 A similar phenomenon – though displaying different conditions – has been described by Parry (1997, 1998) also for Piedmontese dialects:

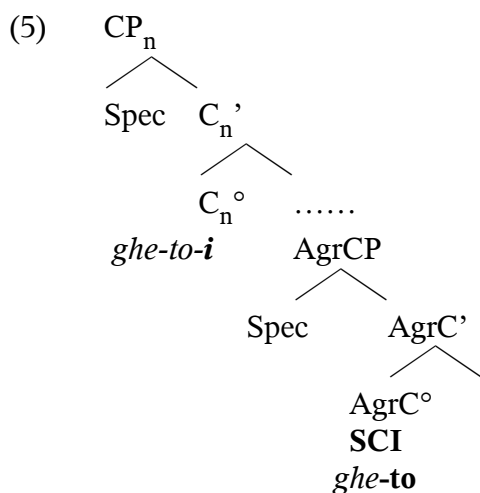
(i) Còs **o** ra-**lo** fat? (Mondovì, in Parry 1997: 92)  
what *he* has-*he* done?

- b. ?\* (Ma a<sup>1</sup>ora), quando finissi-**to-i** sto lavoro?  
 (but then), when finish-*you-i* this job  
 “Well, when are you finishing this job?”

The data seen in (4) show that we can have two positions for enclitics, as long as they are occupied by clitics with different functions: my hypothesis is that there is an enclitic position for argumental clitics (the canonical SCI, done in AgrC, see Poletto 2000) and one for what we can label *pragmatic clitics*. The hypothesis is that the clitic *-i* loses all its person features following a path as those outlined in Benincà/Poletto (2004); *-i* becomes then free to perform a pragmatic function.

To explain why the pattern is more natural with auxiliaries than with lexical verbs, I suggest that the projections involved in the formation of ‘special’ (= non-neutral) interrogatives are very high in the CP area and can be reached only by auxiliaries and not by lexical verbs. As for the fact that the presence of enclitic pragmatic *-i* is restricted only to 2<sup>nd</sup> person singular clitic subjects, I hypothesise that special interrogatives involve more naturally the Addressee (= 2<sup>nd</sup> person singular) than other persons of the paradigm; but this idea is to be explored further<sup>2</sup>.

I conclude then that in Carm agreement and pragmatic features are checked through the doubling of the same syntactic operation, i.e. Verb movement; the agreement-SCI with the 2<sup>nd</sup> singular clitic is done in AgrC, then the V with the enclitic climbs higher to encliticise also the pragmatic marker *-i*.



The facts here described on double enclisis suggest that doubling in syntax is not to be seen as a purely mechanic effect of syntactic processes and as such not conveying any meaning. On the contrary, in our case it is exploited when more features (e.g. pragmatic meanings) have to be checked.

### References

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<sup>2</sup> However, we will show also data from other dialects of the Paduan area, where the clitic *-i* is extending also to other persons of the paradigm.