One phenomenon, two (unsatisfactory) approaches: the puzzle of clitic reduplication in Chilean Spanish

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1. Introduction

Clitic reduplication (CR) is a grammatical phenomenon in which pronominal clitics surface in more than one position within a sentence: one is proclitic to a functional verb while the other appears attached to a lexical verb.

(1) A **m**   sun fò-**me**   in fazing.
     I= to.myself= am done=to.myself a cake
     'I baked me a cake.'   *Piedmontese (Pescarini 2021: 90)*

The construction is very productive in the (substandard) speech of Santiago de Chile (e.g., Kany 1945, Oroz 1966, Silva-Corvalán 2001). The pattern is attested with periphrastic verbs (2) and in restructuring contexts (3).

(2) Yo **te**   voy a ayudar-**te**.
     I you= go to help=you
     'I will help you.'

(3) **Le**   quieren pegar-**le**.
     him= want   hit=him
     'They want to hit him.'

In principle, there are two potential ways of analyzing this phenomenon:

➥ by positing that the clitics are overt links in the same movement chain
➥ by positing that one of the clitics is an agreement marker rather than a pronoun

Chilean Spanish data shows that both alternatives face significant empirical and theoretical issues that warrant immediate rejection.

3. CR as a form of agreement

Mann (2012) conjectures that CR is a phenomenon parallel to *clitic doubling* under the assumption that clitics in the latter are agreement markers (e.g., Suñer 1988).

(4) **Lo** vimos **a** **Jorge**.
     him= saw   DOM Jorge
     'We saw Jorge.'

(5) [XP lo [TP vimos ... [VP V DP]]]
                    φ

The contrast between (22) and (23) supports this approach, as it resembles *closest conjunct agreement* patterns (Demonte & Pérez-Jiménez 2012, Nevins & Weisser 2019).

(6) **una** fuerte **lluvia** y   viento
     a.F strong rain.F and wind.M
     'a strong rain and wind'

(7) * **un** fuerte lluvia y **viento**
       a.M strong rain.F and wind.M
       'a strong rain and wind'

In fact, Paparounas & Salzmann (2023a,b) argue that analogous patterns in Modern Greek demonstrate that clitic doubling involves agreement rather than movement.

(8) **Ton** iða   **to Jani** ke ti Maria.
     him saw.1SG the John and the Mary
     'I saw John and Mary on the same day.'

(9) * **Tin** iða   to Jani ke **ti Maria**.
       her saw.1SG the John and the Mary

The problem with this line of analysis for CR is that the phenomenon is also attested with clitic elements that cannot be analyzed as agreement markers under standard assumptions, i.e., reflexives, e.g., (10), or anticausative markers, e.g., (11).

(10) Él **se**   va a peinar=**se**.
      he himself go to comb=himself
      'He will comb himself.'

(11) **Se** va a hundir=**se** el bote.
      SE go to sink=SE   the boat
      'The boat will sink.'

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2. CR as multiple copy pronunciation

CR is a phenomenon recurrently brought up in relation to *clitic climbing*.

(12) Yo voy a ayudar-**te**.
      I go to help=you
      'I will help you.'

(13) Yo **te**   voy a ayudar.
      I you= go to help
      'I will help you.'

Nunes (2004) and Bošković & Nunes (2007) argue that both patterns share the same syntactic derivation, but reduplication further involves *multiple copy pronunciation*.

(14) a. [XP X [TP voy a ... [VP ayudar **te**]]]   *base structure (12)*
      b. [XP **te** [X' X [TP voy a ... [VP ayudar t̶e̶]]]]   *clitic climbing (13)*
      c. [XP **te** [X' X [TP voy a ... [VP ayudar **te**]]]]   *clitic reduplication (2)*

In this system, pronunciation of a low copy α follows from α undergoing morphological reanalysis with its attracting head through *Fusion* (Halle & Marantz 1993). Deletion of α in this scenario becomes unnecessary, as α is "invisible" for the LCA (Kayne 1994).

➥ Fusion is an operation that applies to syntactic terminals.
➥ Therefore, clitic reduplication should apply only to single clitics.

In principle, this is not borne out for Chilean Spanish, as the dialect allows reduplication of entire clitic clusters.

(15) **Te la** voy a dar=**te**=**la**.
      you it go to give=you=it
      'I will give it to you.'

(16) **Se las** hizo pagár=**se**=**las**.
      him them made pay=him=them
      'She/he made him pay for them.'

Perhaps each clitic in (15) and (16) undergoes movement and multiple copy pronunciation independently as single elements. However, it seems that reduplication cannot be "partial", i.e., it needs to target all the elements in the clitic cluster.

(17) * **Te la** voy a dar=**te**.
        you it go to give=you

(18) * **Te** voy a dar=**te**=**la**.
        you go to give=you=it

(19) * **Te la** voy a dar=**la**.
        you it go to give=it

(20) * **La** voy a dar=**te**=**la**.
        it go to give=you=it

Clitic reduplication displays locality conditions that are different from those observed with clitic climbing: while clitic climbing respects the Coordinate Structure Constraint (CSC), e.g., (21), clitic reduplication is acceptable in an analogous context, e.g., (22).

(21) * Ella **lo** quiere probar y   comprar=lo.
        she it wants try   and buy=it
        'She wants to try it and buy it.'

(22) Ella **lo** quiere probar=**lo** y   comprar la weá.
      she it wants try=it   and buy   the damned.thing
      'She wants to try it and buy the damned thing.'

The circumvention of this locality constraint exhibits an additional property: it is only possible if the reduplication pattern is established with the first coordinated conjunct. If the reduplicated clitic appears in the second conjunct, unacceptability arises, e.g., (23).

(23) * Ella **lo** quiere probar la weá   y   comprar=**lo**.
        she it wants try   the damned.thing and buy=it
        'She wants to try the damned thing and buy it.'

4. A PF alternative

The linear sensitivity of the patterns in (22) and (23) points towards an analysis based on PF primitives: clitic reduplication might be a product of *phonological copying* in the sense of Müller (2021), i.e., a string of segments copied into a prosodic node ρ.

(24) [TP ρ–T ... [VP V **cl**]]   ⟶   [TP **cl**–T ... [VP V **cl**]]

Evidence for this line of analysis comes from exceptions to the identity condition exemplified in (17) to (20). The relevant examples involve DP direct objects headed by a determiner that is homophonous to their corresponding accusative clitic.

(25) **Te la** voy a dar-**te**(-**la**) la weá.
      you it go to give=you=it the damned.thing
      'I will give you the damned thing.'

In this context, the accusative clitic becomes optional, just as if the determiner was able to "replace it" based on its surface form, i.e., the string *te la* in (25) gets pronounced no matter the clitic *la* is not part of the clitic cluster.

➥ This suggests that reduplication does not target a grammatical constituent but a phonological string exhibiting a certain shape.