

# Neither agreement nor pronouns. Clitic doubling and Weak Crossover in Rioplatense Spanish.

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## Abstract

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Baker & Kramer (2018) suggests that the distribution of clitic doubling in Spanish follows from Weak Crossover. Thus, the fact that in accusative clitic doubling bare *wh*-phrases cannot be doubled (e.g., *\*A quién lo viste?* ‘Who did you see?’) is explained by the same reason that explains a standard WCO violation (e.g., *A quién vio su madre?* ‘Who did her mother see?’). If this is on the right track, then, accusative doubling clitics must be considered plain pronouns. The fact that the distribution of dative clitic doubling is wider than accusative clitic doubling, allowing, for instance, the doubling of bare *wh*-phrases (e.g., *A quién le diste un libro?* ‘Who did you give a book?’), is, consequently, taken by Baker & Kramer as evidence that dative doubling clitics cannot be pronouns, but mere agreement markers. In this reply, I show, mainly based on data from Rioplatense Spanish, that both conclusions are incorrect. Baker & Kramer’s suggestion regarding accusative doubling both overgenerates and undergenerates. What regulates the distribution of doubling clitics in Rioplatense Spanish and beyond is the inflectional makeup of objects. Concretely, direct objects are doubled whenever they bear a [person] feature (Di Tullio et al 2019), whereas

indirect objects are doubled by the mere presence of a D-feature (Pujalte & Saab 2018). Yet, despite this difference, both are probes for A-movement and predicate-makers at LF, i.e., neither plain pronouns nor mere agreement markers.

**Keywords:** clitic doubling, Weak Crossover, pronouns, probes, agreement, A-movement, Rioplatense Spanish

## 1. Introduction

Doubling clitics in the languages of the world have been conceived of under, essentially, two main analytical options: agreement markers or pronominal variables. Baker & Kramer (2018) have constructed an argument to the effect of showing that in Amharic, and arguably in Spanish and other Indo-European languages, clitics or object markers must be considered plain pronouns. In their own words,

“Our central claim is that the OM [= Object Marker] is a D(P) merged into the structure at the  $\nu$ P level, and as a D(P) it itself is interpreted as a pronoun at LF, distinct from the doubled DP.”

[Baker & Kramer 2018: 1037]

The argument is based on the following observation. Pure agreement markers do not use to be sensitive to the formal makeup of the agreement controller. For instance, in Spanish, subject agreement applies to any type of subjects (definite, indefinite, bare, and so on) and does not care about the internal properties of subjects. Yet, accusative clitic doubling in, say, Rioplatense Spanish is highly restricted to certain type of objects but not to others. For instance, a proper name in object position can be optionally doubled (the favored option) but quantificational or interrogative ones cannot:

- (1) a. Ana ( la ) desaprobó a Paula.  
 Ana CL.ACC.F.3SG failed DOM Paula  
 ‘Ana failed Paula.’
- b. Ana (\* la ) desaprobó a cada  
 Ana CL.ACC.F.3SG failed DOM each  
 estudiante.  
 student  
 ‘Ana failed each student.’
- c. Ana no (\* lo ) desaprobó a nadie.  
 Ana not CL.ACC.M.3SG failed DOM nobody  
 ‘Ana failed nobody.’
- d. A quién (\* lo ) desaprobó Ana?  
 DOM who CL.ACC.M.3SG failed Ana  
 ‘Who did Ana failed?’

According to Baker & Kramer this is unexpected for an agreement marker, but it is fully derivable as a Weak Crossover Effect (WCO) if the doubling clitic is a plain pronoun. Compare the paradigm in (1) with a classic WCO paradigm, like the one in

(2) for English, in which any attempt to make the direct object coreferential with the possessive pronoun fails (coreference is indicated underlining the referential dependency):

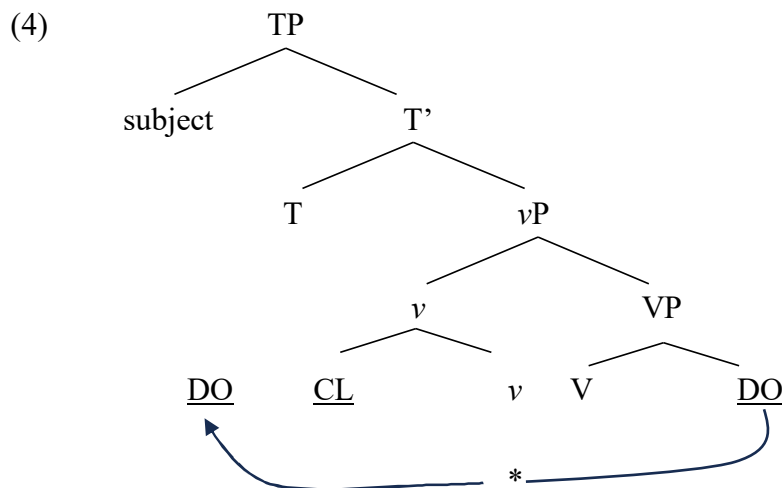
- (2) a. His mother loves John.  
 b. ?\*His mother loves everyone.  
 c. ?\*His mother loves nobody.  
 d. ?\*Who does his mother love?

[Baker and Kramer 2018: 154, ex. (32)]

Descriptively, WCO arises whenever an operator overtly or non-overtly moves across a coreferential pronoun:

- (3) ?\* OP [his mother] t
- 

Assume, then, as Baker & Kramer do for Amharic, that accusative clitics are merged with the head *v* as pronouns. If this is the case, then the conditions for a WCO situation are met, and any attempt to cross the direct object in the syntax or at LF will cause a WCO violation in the relevant situations:



Now, as in many other Spanish dialects, dative doubling in Rioplatense Spanish is not equally restricted. Compare the paradigm in (1) with the dative doubling pattern in (5), in which all the doublings are licit regardless the referential nature of the doubled indirect objects:

- (5) a. Ana le entregó el premio a Paula.  
 Ana CL.DAT.3SG gave the prize to Paula  
 'Ana gave the prize to Paula.'  
 b. Ana le entregó el premio a  
 Ana CL.DAT.3SG gave the prize to  
 cada estudiante.  
 each student  
 'Ana gave the prize to each student.'

- c. Ana no le entregó el premio  
 Ana not CL.DAT.3SG gave the prize  
 a nadie.  
 to nobody  
 ‘Ana gave the prize to nobody.’
- d. A quién le entregó el premio Ana?  
 to who CL.DAT.3SG gave the prize Ana  
 ‘To whom did Ana give the prize?’

Even when Baker & Kramer’s proposal is based on Amharic, they are aware of this pattern in Spanish and suggest the following:

“Many I-E [Indo-European] languages with clitic doubling differ from Amharic in this respect: for example, in Spanish, dative clitics can double any kind of IO without restrictions, as emphasized by Suñer (1988) and Gutiérrez-Rexach (1999), among others. But Spanish is significantly different from Amharic also in that it distinguishes a set of dative clitics from a set of accusative clitics (with some overlap, and different details in different dialects). It is thus not unnatural to say for Spanish that accusative clitics are true pronominal elements while dative clitics are pure agreement markers.”

[Baker & Kramer 2018: 1058, my underlying]

The goal of this article is to demonstrate that this claim is incorrect. Despite initial appearances, the attested patterns of accusative clitic doubling cannot be derived from WCO. First, because the extension of the phenomenon in Rioplatense Spanish and other Spanish dialects is not as it would be predicted by a putative WCO effect. For instance, in Peninsular Spanish pronominal objects are doubled, but non-pronominal ones are not, an unexpected pattern under Baker & Kramer’s approach. Second, there are cases in which the presence of a clitic repairs an otherwise WCO violation (Hurtado 1984, Di Tullio et al 2019, among others), showing, again, that doubling clitics cannot be considered plain pronouns. Now, this conclusion does not force us to claim that, therefore, doubling clitics are agreement markers. They are not. The problem with Baker & Kramer’s point of view is that they, as all mainstream approaches to clitic doubling, reduce the analytical space to only two options: either clitics are agreement markers or plain pronouns. However, clitics can also be probes for A-movement in the syntax and abstractors at LF. If this is on the right track, Baker & Kramer’s observation regarding the restricted distribution of clitic doubling is naturally accounted for in terms of feature attraction. As I will show, both dative and accusative doublings behave alike with respect to A-movement tests (i.e., they both trigger A-movement) but are distinguished in terms of the relevant feature that induces the A-movement: (i) [person] in the case of accusative doubling, and (ii) [D] in the case of dative doubling.

The paper is structured as follows. In the next section, I first show that the distribution of accusative clitic doubling in Rioplatense Spanish and other dialects does not fit the distribution predicted by the WCO theory and then, I discuss an additional undergeneration problem for Baker & Kramer that involves licit instances of clitic doubling, which, on their account, should be ruled out as WCO violations. In section 3, I introduce the basic ingredients of a new theory of clitic doubling in Rioplatense Spanish, based on previous work by Di Tullio et al (2019) and AUTHOR. The theory

conceives a tripartite typology of clitics: (i) pronouns, (ii) probes for A-movement, and (iii) mere agreement markers. I demonstrate that both accusative and dative doubling clitics are probes for A-movement, not pronouns or mere agreement markers. The different distribution the two types of doublings have follows from the formal makeup of direct and indirect objects. Essentially, accusative doubling is triggered by [person] features, whereas dative doubling by D-features. Rioplatense Spanish is special only in that it allows for accusative doubling to also target non-pronominal objects. As argued by Di Tullio et al (2019), this is the byproduct of a microparameter that says that Rioplatense Spanish can optionally add a pronominal [3 person] feature to non-pronominal direct objects. In the final section, I conjecture that if Baker & Kramer are right at least in their analysis for Amharic, then, there must be diachronic and parametric reasons setting apart both types of languages. Taking for granted their analysis for Amharic and my analysis for Rioplatense Spanish here, then the Clitic Doubling Parameter must include a critical difference among languages that allow for plain pronouns to participate in true doubling configurations and languages that do not.

## 2. The distribution of accusative Clitic Doubling in Rioplatense Spanish

In this section, I show that accusative clitic doubling in Spanish does not behave as predicted by Baker & Kramer's theory. As we will see, the paradigm in (1), repeated below, is only a partial representation of the extension of clitic doubling in Rioplatense Spanish.

- (6)
- |    |                            |       |              |              |           |           |        |        |
|----|----------------------------|-------|--------------|--------------|-----------|-----------|--------|--------|
| a. | Ana                        | (     | la           | )            | desaprobó | a         | Paula. |        |
|    | Ana                        |       | CL.ACC.F.3SG |              | failed    | DOM       | Paula  |        |
|    | 'Ana failed Paula.'        |       |              |              |           |           |        |        |
| b. | Ana                        | (*    | la           | )            | desaprobó | a         | cada   |        |
|    | Ana                        |       | CL.ACC.F.3SG |              | failed    | DOM       | each   |        |
|    | estudiante.                |       |              |              |           |           |        |        |
|    | student                    |       |              |              |           |           |        |        |
|    | 'Ana failed each student.' |       |              |              |           |           |        |        |
| c. | Ana                        | no    | (*           | lo           | )         | desaprobó | a      | nadie. |
|    | Ana                        | not   |              | CL.ACC.M.3SG | failed    | DOM       | nobody |        |
|    | 'Ana failed nobody.'       |       |              |              |           |           |        |        |
| d. | A                          | quién | (*           | lo           | )         | desaprobó | Ana?   |        |
|    | DOM                        | who   |              | CL.ACC.M.3SG | failed    |           | Ana    |        |
|    | 'Who did Ana failed?'      |       |              |              |           |           |        |        |

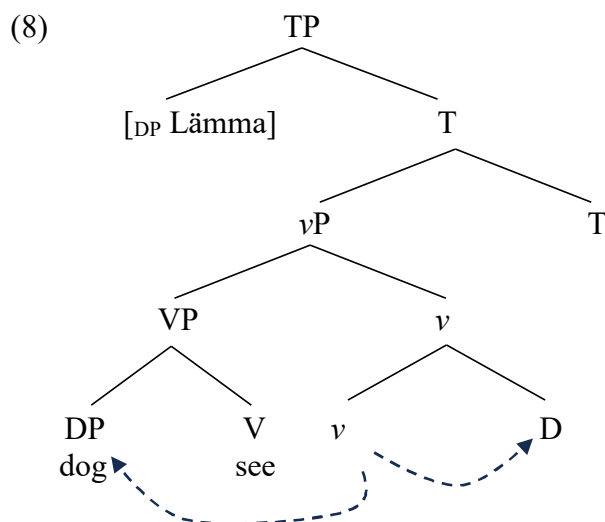
But before advancing in the Rioplatense patterns, let's introduce some details of Baker & Kramer's approach, which will be relevant for later discussion. In the concrete implementation they propose, a clitic or an object marker is merged with the *v* head, by definition, a non-argumental position. Consider their analysis for Amharic, which is the focus of their study. As (7) illustrates, in this language, an optional object marker can be added to the verbal base whenever the direct object has the correct referential properties. Like in Spanish, the doubling marker in (7c), *w*, is the same used in cases

in which there is no doubling and the marker itself is interpreted as the direct object (7b):

- (7)
- |    |                      |                       |                       |
|----|----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| a. | Lämma                | wiŋŋa-w-in            | ayy-ä.                |
|    | Lemma.M              | dog-DEF.M-ACC         | see.PFV-3MSG.S        |
|    | ‘Lemma saw the dog.’ |                       |                       |
| b. | Lämma                | ayy-ä-w.              |                       |
|    | Lemma.M              | see.PFV-3MSG.S-3MSG.O |                       |
|    | ‘Lemma saw it/him.’  |                       |                       |
| c. | Lämma                | wiŋŋa-w-in            | ayy-ä-w.              |
|    | Lemma.M              | dog-DEF.M-ACC         | see.PFV-3MSG.S-3MSG.O |
|    | ‘Lemma saw the dog.’ |                       |                       |

[Baker & Kramer 2018: 1036]

The analysis for a case like (7c) is provided below:



[Baker & Kramer 2018: 1048]

The D head in *v* is the abstract representation for the object marker *w* in (7c). The arrows indicate *Agree* relations. Empirically, a D head in non-thematic position is not interpretable at LF; it is just an expletive. Compare with the English pronoun *it*, which is interpreted as a referential pronoun only when occurring in thematic position (see Jaeggli 1986):

- (9)
- |    |                   |
|----|-------------------|
| a. | <i>It</i> rains.  |
| b. | I saw <i>it</i> . |

To make an expletive interpretable at LF some referential link must be stipulated between the non-interpretable pronoun and the associated DP. Baker & Kramer make the follow stipulation:<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A mechanism like (10) should also account for the referential dependency in true case of expletive-associate cases, as the well-known English expletive construction in (i):

- (10) A D adjoined to head H is referentially dependent on the DP it agrees with via H.

[Baker & Kramer 2018: 1049]

Now, similarly to what we observed in Rioplatense Spanish, the doubling of nonreferential *wh*-phrases or quantifiers gives rise to ungrammatical results if the object marker is introduced:

- (11) a. Almaz            mann-in            sam-ätʃtʃ?            (\*sam-ätʃtʃ-iw)  
           Almaz.F            who.M-ACC            kiss.PFV-3FSG.S            kiss.PFV-3FSG.S.3MSG.O  
           ‘Who (in the world) did Almaz kiss?’  
       b. Tigist            hullu-n-imm            mäs’haf            gäzz-ätʃtʃ.  
           Tigist.F            every-ACC-FOC            book.M            buy.PFV-3FSG.S  
           (\*gäzz-ätʃtʃ-iw)  
           ‘Tigist bought every book.’  
       c. Lamma            mann-in-imm            al-ayy-ä-mm.  
           Lemma.M            one.ACC.FOC            NEG.see-PFV.3MSG.S-FOC  
           (\*al-ayy-ä-w-imm)  
           NEG.see-PFV.3MSG.S- 3MSG.O-FOC  
           ‘Lemma saw nobody; Lemma didn’t see anybody.’

[Baker & Kramer 2018: 1054, ex. (31)]

Baker & Kramer propose to explain the badness of the examples in (11) in terms of the Crossover Condition stated below, which heavily relies on Safir’s (2004) independence theory:

- (12) The Crossover Condition:  
 X can be interpreted as dependent on a quantified antecedent Y only if  
 (i) X is a q-variable of Y, or  
 (ii) there is no q-variable of Y, or  
 (iii) X is dependent on a variable of Y *that no constituent containing X c-commands*.  
 Associated definition: X is a q-variable if X is in an A-position and X replaces the deleted copy of an operator.

[Baker & Kramer 2018: 1057]

Consider a simplified representation of the sentence in (11b), adapted from Baker & Kramer (2018: 1057):

- (i) There seems to be many guests in the party.

Yet, a sentence like (i), which contains a quantifier DP as associate, is perfectly licit and does not trigger any WCO effect. Thus, I doubt that the mechanism of referential dependency they propose is the correct way to capture the putative pronominal behavior of object markers or doubling clitics, but in what follows, I will assume their analysis and show that, even taken for granted, it cannot account for the distribution of clitic doubling in Rioplatense Spanish and other dialects.

- (13) [TP every book [TP Tigist T [VP [it – v ] [VP bought <every book\*> ] ] ] ]

As is clear, the pronoun *it* cannot be interpreted as dependent on the quantified antecedent *every book*. First, it is not a q-variable, so clause (i) is not met. Second, there is indeed a q-variable of the raised quantifier, namely, its deleted copy <*every book\**>, so clause (ii) does not apply either. Finally, clause (iii) is not met either, since, although the pronoun *it* is referentially dependent on the q-variable (by (10)), it is also the case that a constituent containing the pronoun, the complex head [it – v], fatally c-commands the q-variable.

## 2.1. A first set of challenges for Baker & Kramer

Rioplatense Spanish is a language with productive clitic doubling of accusative direct objects. As all Spanish dialects, it has mandatory clitic doubling of pronominal objects:<sup>2</sup>

- (14) a. Ana me vio a mí.  
 Ana CL.ACC.1SG saw DOM me  
 ‘Ana saw me.’  
 b. Ana te vio a vos.  
 Ana CL.ACC.2SG saw DOM you  
 ‘Ana saw you.’  
 c. Ana lo/la vio a él/ella.  
 Ana CL.ACC.M.3SG / CL.ACC.F.3SG saw DOM he/she  
 ‘Ana saw him/her.’  
 d. Ana nos vio a nosotros/nosotras.  
 Ana CL.ACC.1PL saw DOM we.M/we.F  
 ‘Ana saw us.’  
 f. Ana los/las vio a ustedes.  
 Ana CL.ACC.M.3PL/CL.ACC.F.3PL saw DOM you  
 ‘Ana saw you.’  
 g. Ana los/las vio a ellos/ellas.  
 Ana CL.ACC.M.3PL/CL.ACC.F.3PL saw DOM they.M/they.F  
 ‘Ana saw them.’

Now, unlike many other dialects, Rioplatense Spanish also permits optional doubling of non-pronominal direct objects whenever those objects are differentially marked through the marker *a* ‘to’ (Jaeggli 1982):

<sup>2</sup> The most salient differences of the Rioplatense pronominal pattern in (14), compared to standard Peninsular dialects, are (i) the well-known absence of a distinguished second person plural (e.g., as most American dialects, Rioplatense has lost the form *vosotros* ‘you<sub>2PL</sub>’), (ii) the absence of any form of *leísmo* (i.e., Rioplatense Spanish distinguishes masculine and feminine third person pronouns both in the singular and in the plural), and (iii) the use of *vos* in the slot for the second person singular (i.e., Rioplatense use *vos* ‘you<sub>2SG</sub>’ instead of the more common *tú*).



- (15) a. Ana ( la ) vio a Paula.  
 Ana CL.ACC.F.3SG saw DOM Paula  
 ‘Ana saw Paula.’
- b. Ana ( lo ) desaprobó a su  
 Ana CL.ACC.M.3SG failed DOM her  
 estudiante preferido.  
 student preferred  
 ‘Ana failed her preferred student.’

However, non-DOM objects cannot be doubled (*pace* Suñer 1988, see Di Tullio et al 2019):

- (16) a. Ana (\* lo ) leyó el libro.  
 Ana CL.ACC.M.3SG read.PST the book  
 ‘Ana read the book.’
- b. Ana (\* la ) trajo la perra.  
 Ana CL.ACC.F.3SG brought the dog.FEM  
 ‘Ana brought the dog.’

The case in (16b) is particularly interesting because, being an animate object, it also allows for the DOM marker, in which case the doubling is perfect:

- (17) Ana ( la ) trajo a la perra.  
 Ana CL.ACC.F.3SG brought DOM the dog.FEM  
 ‘Ana brought the dog.’

Evidently, this contrast between DOM and non-DOM direct objects cast immediate doubts on the interaction between WCO and the availability for clitic doubling. Indeed, the dialectological distribution of the phenomenon in general casts doubt on Baker & Kramer’s idea. For instance, the fact that in several Peninsular dialects, clitic doubling is mandatory with accusative pronouns but impossible with accusative non-pronominal objects cannot be reduced to WCO. But note now that, even in dialects without productive clitic doubling of non-pronominal accusative objects, non-pronominal doubling of third person direct objects is allowed whenever the clitic mismatches the person features of the direct object. Thus, the doubling in (18a) is licit in Peninsular dialects that, otherwise, do not allow for accusative doubling:

- (18) a. Nos vieron a los estudiantes.  
 CL.ACC.1PL saw.PST.3PL DOM the students  
 ‘They saw us students.’
- b. \* Les vieron a los estudiantes.  
 CL.DAT.3PL saw.PST.3PL DOM the students  
 ‘They saw the students.’
- [Fernández-Soriano 1999, 1250 (141e)]

As Leonetti (2008: 46, footnote 17) has observed “this absence of matching in person features (1p/2p in the clitic, 3p in the DP) produces the only case of CD with lexical DPs that is perfectly acceptable in all Spanish dialects, including Standard European

Spanish.” Again, this is unexpected under the WCO account of Baker & Kramer, since there is no reason for non-pronominal doubling to be permitted under unagreement but not under regular agreement in those dialects that do not license non-pronominal doubling.

Another intriguing fact, when looked at from Baker & Kramer’s perspective, involves doubling with the quantifier *todos/todas* ‘ALL.M.PL/ALL.F.PL’, which takes definite DPs as complement. In Rioplatense Spanish, the three doublings illustrated below are perfectly good:

- (19) a. (Los) vi a todos los estudiantes.  
 CL.ACC.M.3PL saw.1SG DOM all.M.PL the.M.PL students  
 ‘I saw all the students.’  
 b. Los vi a todos ellos.  
 CL.ACC.M.3PL saw.1SG DOM all.M.PL them.M.3PL  
 ‘I saw all them.’  
 c. Los vi a todos.  
 CL.ACC.M.3PL saw.1SG DOM all.M.PL  
 ‘I saw all.’

Yet, in Peninsular Spanish dialects that have only the pronominal doubling option, the doublings with the bare quantifier and the pronominal complement are licensed, but the doubling with the full non-pronominal DP is ungrammatical.<sup>3</sup>

- (20) a. \* Les vi a todos los estudiantes.  
 CL.DAT.3PL saw.1SG DOM all.M.PL the.M.PL students  
 ‘I saw all the students.’  
 b. Les vi a todos ellos.  
 CL.DAT.3PL saw.1SG DOM all.M.PL them.M.3PL  
 ‘I saw all them.’  
 c. Les vi a todos.  
 CL.DAT.F.3PL saw.1SG DOM all.M.PL  
 ‘I saw all.’

Any reasonable theory of clitic doubling must account for this contrast. The intuition is that the explanation must exploit the formal makeup of direct objects (i.e., their featural constitution). WCO looks irrelevant here.

Finally, let’s discuss a final piece of evidence against the attempt to extend Baker & Kramer’s theory to Rioplatense Spanish. Concretely, Baker & Kramer’s approach incorrectly rules out the bound variable reading for a case like (21), which, against their expectations, perfectly allows for the possessive pronoun to co-vary with the antecedent quantifier:

<sup>3</sup> Thanks to Olga Fernández Soriano for pointing out to me this contrast in her *leísta* Spanish and Francisco Ordóñez for additional judgments. Ormazabal & Romero (2013: 318, 327) claim that the doubling in (20b) is grammatical in Basque *leísta* Spanish but not in Central Peninsular *leísta* Spanish.

- (21) Cada hombre la ama a su madre.  
 each man CL.ACC.F.3SG loves DOM POSS mother  
 ‘Every/each man loves his mother.’  
 Ok under the reading that “every person  $x$  loves  $x$ ’s own mother.”  
 [Rioplatense Spanish]

Indeed, Baker & Kramer provide the same example and claim that is ungrammatical under the relevant bound reading in Spanish, although acknowledging some controversy in footnote (see Baker & Kramer 2018: 1977, ex. (76) and footnote 43). According to them, the impossibility of a bound variable reading for those speakers or dialects (they are unclear with respect to this point) that consider (21) out in the relevant reading follows from the same reason that explains why adding the object marker in (22) in Amharic also blocks the bound variable reading for the possessive pronoun.

- (22) Hullu säw lidɜ-u-n.  
 every person child.M-his-ACC  
 yi-wädd-ä-#w)-all.  
 3MSG.S-love.IPFV-3MGS.S-(3MSG.O)-AUX.3MSG.S  
 ‘Everyone loves his child.’  
 (Bad with OM as ‘every person  $x$  loves  $x$ ’s own child’)  
 [Baker & Kramer 2018: 1065, ex. (57a)]

As they show, the Crossover Condition in (12), repeated below, straightforwardly accounts for this fact in Amharic and Spanish as a sort of WCO violation.

- (23) The Crossover Condition:  
 X can be interpreted as dependent on a quantified antecedent Y only if  
 (i) X is a q-variable of Y, or  
 (ii) there is no q-variable of Y, or  
 (iii) X is dependent on a variable of Y *that no constituent containing X c-commands*.  
 Associated definition: X is a q-variable if X is in an A-position and X replaces the deleted copy of an operator.  
 [Baker & Kramer 2018: 1057]

The problem is that the clitic *la* in Spanish or the object marker *w* in Amharic is dependent on a variable for the quantifier (the possessive pronoun in both languages), which is *c-commanded* by a constituent containing *la* or *w*, namely, the complex head [D-*v*]. Consequently, both examples constitute flagrant deviations from the Crossover Condition.

In summary, the distribution of accusative clitic doubling in Rioplatense Spanish and other Spanish dialects shows that WCO cannot be the reason of such a distribution. Here is a list of the problems discussed:

- (24)
- a. the pronominal vs. non-pronominal division that set apart Rioplatense Spanish from, say, Standard Peninsular Spanish (exs. (14) and (15)),
  - b. the DOM vs. non-DOM distinction that rules out clitic doubling of non-DOM objects in Rioplatense Spanish (exs. (16b) and (17)),
  - c. the unagreement facts in all Spanish dialects, i.e., the fact that non-pronominal doubling is allowed in all Spanish dialect provided that the doubling clitic does not match the  $\phi$ -features of the direct object (ex. (18)),
  - d. the distribution of clitic doubling with the quantifier *todos/as* in Peninsular dialects and other pronominal doubling dialects that shows that the quantifier can be doubled only if it is bare or have a pronoun as complement (ex. (20)),
  - e. the compatibility between accusative doubling and quantifier binding of the doubled object by the subject (ex. (21))

Of course, it could be argued that more than one factor accounts for the distribution of clitic doubling across Spanish dialects. For instance, clitic doubling could be restricted by WCO and by other factors perhaps related to certain accessibility to a hierarchy of formal features. From this perspective, the contrasts in (1), repeated below, would be accounted for by WCO, but the facts listed in (24) would be accounted for by other factors.

- (25)
- a. Ana ( la ) desaprobó a Paula.  
 Ana CL.ACC.F.3SG failed DOM Paula  
 ‘Ana failed Paula.’
  - b. Ana (\* la ) desaprobó a cada  
 Ana CL.ACC.F.3SG failed DOM each  
 estudiante.  
 student  
 ‘Ana failed each student.’
  - c. Ana no (\* lo ) desaprobó a nadie.  
 Ana not CL.ACC.M.3SG failed DOM nobody  
 ‘Ana failed nobody.’
  - d. A quién (\* lo ) desaprobó Ana?  
 DOM who CL.ACC.M.3SG failed Ana  
 ‘Who did Ana failed?’

However, there are other reasons to suspect that WCO would be the cause that accounts for the facts in (25). As we will see, there are typical WCO scenarios in Spanish that are totally insensitive to clitic doubling, pointing out to the conclusion that the distribution of clitic doubling cannot be explained in WCO terms.

## 2.2. WCO vs. Clitic Doubling

A clear piece of evidence against the assimilation of doubling clitics with plain pronouns comes from focus fronting. In Spanish, focus operators trigger WCO:<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> See footnote 6 for a discussion regarding the interaction between WCO and focus *in situ*, a possibility not discussed in the main text.

- (26) \*? A ANA criticó su madre.  
 DOM Ana criticized her mother  
 Intended: ‘Her mother criticized ANA.’

Now, focus fronting admits optional accusative doubling as the following example illustrates:

- (27) A ANA ( la ) criticó Paula.  
 DOM Ana CL.ACC.F.3SG criticized Paula  
 ‘Paula criticized ANA.’

However, unlike (25), in this case the coreference is perfectly licit, contradicting Baker & Kramer’s expectations. Put differently, Baker & Kramer’s account undergenerates (27), leaving the contrast between (26) and (27) unexplained.

Another undergeneration scenario involves clitic doubling with indefinites. As noticed by Suñer (1988), accusative doubling is extending to indefinite objects:

- (28) Diariamente, *la* escuchaba  
 daily CL.ACC.F.3SG listened.3SG  
*a una mujer que cantaba tangos.*  
 DOM a woman that sing.PST.3G tangos  
 ‘Daily, she listened a woman who used to sing tangos.’  
 [Suñer 1988: 396, ex. (7b)]

According to Suñer, licit instances of indefinite doubling require the indefinite to be interpreted as specific. Yet, I think this is more a tendency than a robust generalization. There are corpus examples in which the indefinite does not need to be specific. Here is a clear case in which the indefinite is non-specific but clitic doubled:

- (29) Así lo confirmó el comisario Sergio Soria,  
 thus CL.ACC.3SG confirmed the commissioner Sergio Soria  
 que dos personas [...] la asaltaron a  
una mujer [...]  
 that two persons CL.ACC.F.3SG assaulted DOM a  
 woman

‘In this way, the commissioner Sergio Soria, confirmed that two persons assaulted a woman.’

[<http://www.acontecercalchaqui.com.ar/tag/novedades/page/5/>: last access in 2017]

According to Baker & Kramer’s theory, the example should be ungrammatical, since non-specific indefinites are WCO triggers, but it is not. Additionally, we can construct examples like the focus fronting ones in (26) and (27). In effect, like in (26), WCO is active in the relevant indefinite scenarios, i.e., with the quantifier overtly crossing the subject that contains the possessive pronoun:

- (30) \*?A TRES CHICOS criticó su madre.  
 DOM three kids criticized their mother  
 Intended: ‘Their mother criticized three kids.’

Yet, indefinite doubling is insensitive to WCO:

- (31) A TRES CHICOS los criticó Ana.  
 DOM three kids CL.ACC.M.3PL criticized Ana.  
 Intended: ‘Ana criticized three kids.’

In sum, Baker & Kramer’s theory of clitic doubling undergenerates crucial examples that involve putative WCO violations.

### 3. Accounting for the distribution of accusative doubling

In this section, I present the main ingredients for a theory of clitic doubling, according to which (i) doubling clitics are sensitive to the featural makeup of objects, and (ii) doubling clitics are triggers for A-movement in the syntax and predicate-makers at LF. The first ingredient accounts for their distribution in a given language or dialect, but also for attested cross-dialectal extensions. The second ingredient explains why accusative and dative clitic doubling repairs WCO effects, a fact that it is at the heart of the tripartite taxonomy of clitics to be proposed here.

#### 3.1. The Person Condition

Accusative doubling can be captured through the following condition (Di Tullio et al 2019):

- (32) *The Person Condition*: direct objects encoding a [person] feature must be clitic doubled.

The Person Condition in Spanish is just another instance of the Person Licensing Condition, as stated by Preminger (2019) ( $\pi$  = person):

- (33) *The Person Licensing Condition (PLC)*: A  $\pi$ -feature on a DP that is canonical agreement target must participate in a valuation relation.<sup>5</sup>  
 [adapted from Preminger 2019: 7]

Now, the particular distribution of clitic doubling in Rioplatense Spanish can be accounted for in a unified way through the following microparameter:

- (34) *Microparameter*: Lexical DPs in Argentinean Spanish are optionally assigned with a [3Person] feature in the syntax.

<sup>5</sup> “A given DP  $x$  is a canonical  $\phi$ -agreement target for a given probe  $y$  iff (i)  $x$  and  $y$  are clause-mates and (ii)  $x$  meets the case-discrimination requirements of  $y$ ”.

[Preminger 2019: 7]

[Di Tullio et al 2019: 234]

In the general case, non-pronominal DPs are third person by default, but Rioplatense Spanish licenses, perhaps redundantly, an explicit [person] feature in those DPs. Given that person features trigger clitic doubling in all Spanish dialects, it follows that, in addition to the pronominal doublings in (14), Rioplatense Spanish also has optional clitic doubling with non-pronominal direct objects. Consider the examples in (15), repeated below:

- (35) a. Ana ( la ) vio a Paula.  
 Ana CL.ACC.F.3SG saw DOM Paula  
 ‘Ana saw Paula.’
- b. Ana ( lo ) desaprobó a su  
 Ana CL.ACC.M.3SG failed DOM her  
 estudiante preferido.  
 student preferred  
 ‘Ana failed her preferred student.’

On Di Tullio et al’s approach, the occurrence of the clitic is an indubitable indication of the presence of a [person] feature on the direct object. To put another way, non-pronominal DPs can be pronominalized through the addition of [3 person] feature. This is enough to explain the distribution of clitic doubling in Rioplatense Spanish and other dialects. Referential DOM objects, even the non-pronominal ones, can have a [person] feature. As shown in the previous section, the relevant set of objects that can be [person]-bearers also includes some indefinites. And recall that even in dialects in which non-pronominal doubling is not allowed, the doubling is licensed whenever there is a person mismatch between the doubling clitic and the direct object:

- (36) Nos vieron a los estudiantes.  
 CL.ACC.1PL saw.PST.3PL DOM the students  
 ‘They saw us students.’

[Fernández-Soriano 1999, 1250, ex. (141e)]

According to Saab (2008, 2013), unagreement a phenomenon attested in all Spanish dialects, arises whenever the relevant third person DP contains a [1/2 person] feature. Simplifying, for a case like (37a), a definite D head that contains an abstract [1 person] feature triggers first person agreement with the verb, even when the definite D head is impoverished for person features in Spanish and is realized as *-l* uniformly.

- (37) a. Los estudiantes trabajamos.  
 the students work.1PL  
 ‘We students work.’
- b. [DP [D definite, 1pl] estudiantes]

If this is on right track, a case like (36), in which there is doubling of a full DP even in dialects that prohibit doubling of non-pronominal objects, is directly explained by the

Person Condition, since that the direct object in (36) has, in fact, an underlying [person] feature and must be doubled.

The Peninsular Spanish facts in (20), repeated below, also follow from the Person Condition, if the bare quantifier in (38b) is a *pro*, i.e., a plain pronoun:

- (38) a. \* Les vi a todos los estudiantes.  
 CL.DAT.3PL saw.1SG DOM all.M.PL the.M.PL students  
 ‘I saw all the students.’  
 b. Les vi a todos ellos<sub>[person]</sub>.  
 CL.DAT.3PL saw.1SG DOM all.M.PL them.M.3PL  
 ‘I saw all them.’  
 c. Les vi a todos *pro*<sub>[person]</sub>.  
 CL.DAT.F.3PL saw.1SG DOM all.M.PL  
 ‘I saw all.’

As we have already observed, in Rioplatense Spanish, all the doublings are possible, with the difference in the mandatory or optional nature of the relevant [person] feature, a fact that, again, follows from the Person Condition and the Microparameter in (34):

- (39) a. (Los) vi a todos  
 CL.ACC.M.3PL saw.1SG DOM all.M.PL  
 [los estudiantes]<sub>[(person)]</sub>.  
 the.M.PL students  
 ‘I saw all the students.’  
 b. Los vi a todos ellos<sub>[person]</sub>.  
 CL.ACC.M.3PL saw.1SG DOM all.M.PL them.M.3PL  
 ‘I saw all them.’  
 c. Los vi a todos *pro*<sub>[person]</sub>.  
 CL.ACC.M.3PL saw.1SG DOM all.M.PL  
 ‘I saw all.’

The Person Condition approach to clitic doubling in Rioplatense Spanish also explains why the clitic doubling sentence in (21), also repeated here, is licit even if the quantifier *cada* binds the possessive pronoun. Affecting the formal makeup of the direct object by adding a redundant [person] feature should not interfere with the possibility for the quantifier to bind the possessive pronoun.

- (40) Cada hombre la ama a su madre.  
 each man CL.ACC.F.3SG loves DOM POSS mother  
 ‘Every/each man loves his mother.’

Ok under the reading that “every person *x* loves *x*’s own mother.”

[Rioplatense Spanish]

For the reasons just adduced, the initial facts in (1)/(25) should be derived from the Person Condition, as well. Put differently, the ungrammatical doublings are explained if non-referential bare *wh*-phrases or quantifiers cannot be [person] bearers. In sum, despite initial appearances, the distribution of accusative clitic doubling in dialects of



Spanish cannot be explained by WCO. The available evidence forces to conclude that the explanatory force is in the *Agree* system that connects valued and unvalued features in well-defined syntactic configurations (those defined by the *Agree* theory). As we will see, this does not imply that doubling clitics must be considered pure agreement markers. Indeed, they are not.

### 3.2. Doubling clitics as probes for A-movement

I assume, then, that accusative clitic doubling is the surface reflex of an underlying *Agree* relation between the clitic and the direct object. This follows from the *PLC* as stated in (33). In Di Tullio et al, the (more or less implicit) assumption is that the clitic must be considered an agreement marker and not a pronoun. Yet, such a conclusion is not forced; it depends on the typology of clitics one takes as valid. I think that the binary distinction agreement marker vs. pronoun is too simplistic. Under closer inspection, doubling clitics behave as syntactic probes for A-movement and predicate-makers at LF. To implement the idea formally, let's assume that doubling clitics, like pronouns, are mere indexes in the lexicon. Now, what distinguishes a true pronoun from a syntactic probe is its merge position. An index merged in argument position is a trigger for an assignment function, whereas an index merged in non-argumental position is a semantic abstractor. This straightforwardly follows from well-known assumptions about indexes in contemporary formal semantics. Consider first an index denoting in individuals (type *e*), i.e., a pronoun in argument position. Semantically, it is interpreted via an assignment function *g*, which takes an index as argument and gives an individual as value:

$$(41) \quad \llbracket \text{index} \rrbracket^g = g(\text{index})$$

In terms of an example, suppose that the clitic *la*, which is just the realization of a semantic index and a set of  $\phi$ -features, is merged in object position.

$$(42) \quad \begin{array}{llll} \text{Ana} & la_1 & & \text{vio.} \\ \text{Ana} & \text{CL.ACC.F.3SG} & \text{saw} & \\ & \text{'Ana saw her.'} & & \end{array}$$

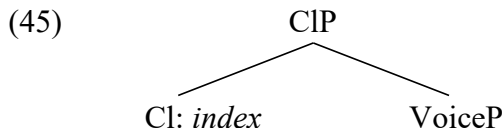
And suppose, in addition, that the context of utterance provides the following assignment function:

$$(43) \quad g = [1 \rightarrow \text{Paula}]$$

Then, the pronoun *la* in object position has the individual Paula as semantic value:

$$(44) \quad \llbracket la_1 \rrbracket^g = g(1) = \text{Paula}$$

Now, pronouns can also be merged in non-argumental position. Let's assume that in some languages, clitics can be merged as sisters of the Voice head:



In this position, a clitic triggers predicate abstraction:

- (46) Predicate abstraction:  
 Let  $\alpha$  a branching node with daughters  $\beta$  and  $\gamma$ , where  $\beta$  dominates only a numeric index  $i$ . Then, for any variable assignment  $\gamma$ ,  $\llbracket \alpha \rrbracket^g = \lambda x. \llbracket \gamma \rrbracket^{g[i \rightarrow x]}$ .  
 [Heim & Kratzer 1998: 186]

This is the case of doubling clitics. Consider, again, a basic clitic doubling example in Rioplatense Spanish:

- (47) Ana    la                    vio    a       Paula.  
       Ana    CL.ACC.F.3SG   saw    DOM   Paula  
       ‘Ana saw her.’

Before the relevant head and phrasal movements that give rise to the final word ordering, there is a step of the derivation that looks roughly as follows:

- (48) [TP [CIP *la* [VoiceP Ana [VP ver [DP[3 person] a Paula] ] ] ] ]

The direct object, which encodes a [3 person] feature, agrees with the clitic, which, by assumption, has a set of unvalued  $\phi$ -features. Now, the clitic also bears an EPP feature and attracts the direct object, which moves, then, to the Spec,CIP position:

- (49) Syntax: [TP [CIP a Paula *la* [VoiceP Ana [VP ver [DP[3 person] *t<sub>a</sub> Paula*] ] ] ] ]

Finally, at LF, the direct object saturates the individual argument that the open predicate has as a byproduct of the clitic doubling configuration.

- (50) LF:  $\llbracket [\lambda x. \text{Ana ver } x] \rrbracket (\llbracket [\text{Paula}] \rrbracket)$

According to this view, the doubling clitic it is not a pronoun, although it has some semantic import at LF, i.e., it is a  $\lambda$ -abstractor. This makes them different from pronouns, but also from pure agreement markers, which are conceived of as pure set of unvalued  $\phi$ -features, without any detectable import at LF. We have, then, a tripartite division of clitics or, more generally, of  $\phi$ -marker elements.

- (51) The typology of clitics/ $\phi$ -markers
- |  |   |                                   |
|--|---|-----------------------------------|
| a. pronoun:                            | b. probe:                                     | c. agreement                      |
| [ <sub>D</sub> $\phi$ : valued, index] | [ <sub>D</sub> $\phi$ : unvalued, index, EPP] | [ <sub>D</sub> $\phi$ : unvalued] |

The next question is how to detect a probe/abstractor and to distinguish it from the other elements in the typology. In the next subsection, we will see that true WCO effects is a powerful diagnostic tool in this respect.

### 3.3. Weak crossover again

In Di Tullio et al (2019), WCO effects are used as key factor to this end, but in a way clearly different from the use Baker & Kramer make. Recall that focus fronting in Rioplatense Spanish triggers WCO:

- (52) \*? A ANA criticó su madre.  
 DOM Ana criticized her mother  
 Intended: ‘Her mother criticized ANA.’ [cf. (26)]

As Hurtado (1984) shows, although with another set of data, clitic doubling repairs this WCO effect (see also Suñer 1988, Di Tullio et al 2019 and AUTHOR).<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Hurtado (1984) also provides examples with focus *in situ*, like (i):

- (i) Su cómplice ??( lo ) acusó a JUAN.  
 his accomplice CL.ACC.M.3PL accused DOM Juan  
 ‘His accomplice accused JUAN.’ [Hurtado 1984: 127, ex. (18c)]

Like Di Tullio et al (2019), I prefer to use focus fronting examples as a way to avoid possible confounding factors having to do with linear ordering. For all consulted speakers, although it is true that clitic doubling improves WCO effects both with focus *in situ* and with focus fronting, the fronting cases make the contrast with the non-doubled examples sharper. The situation changes when the object is an indefinite (see below in the main text). In this case, it seems that only focus fronting repairs WCO. Consider the following pair:

- (ii) a. A UN VECINO ?\*( lo ) denunció su  
 DOM a neighbor CL.ACC.M.3PL denounced his  
 madre.  
 mother  
 b. ?\* Su madre ( lo ) denunció  
 his mother CL.ACC.M.3PL denounced  
A UN VECINO.  
 DOM a neighbor  
 Intended: ‘His mother denounced a neighbor.’

The doubled version of (iib) sharply contrasts with the doubled version of the proper name in (i). Here, it seems impossible to understand that we are talking about the neighbor’s mother. Therefore, the badness of (iib) seems to be something deeper than a mere linear effect. As we will see, on my analysis, doubling clitics trigger an intermediate step of A-movement to Spec,CIP, which, as is well-known, is the responsible for the WCO repairment. Further reordering related to verbal and subject movement opaques this intermediate step of movement, but the fact that (i) repairs WCO even with the focus *in situ* shows that the theory is on the right track at least for the case of definite doubling. As for indefinite doublings, the facts seem to be more complicated, first, because the phenomenon is not fully generalized to all Rioplatense speakers (and even for those who accept indefinite accusative doubling, the doubling is not preferred as is the case with definite objects). And second, the WCO facts in (ii) suggests that WCO is repaired only when there is overt focus movement. This could mean

- (53) A ANA la criticó su madre.  
 DOM Ana CL.ACC.F.3SG criticized her mother  
 ‘Her mother criticized ANA.’

As observed in section 2.2, the contrast between sentences (26) and (27) presents a clear challenge to Baker & Kramer’s suggestion that the distribution of accusative clitic doubling can be explained if clitics are pronouns. Of course, the sentence in (53), which is a combination of (26) and (27), is problematic for such an approach, as well. Now, if doubling clitics are probes for A-movement, then the contrast between (52) and (53) can be straightforwardly derived from the scope theory of WCO (Sauerland 1998, Ruys 2000, and van Urk 2015). To see the idea, consider first a classic WCO minimal pair in English:

- (54) a. Who<sub>i</sub> fed his<sub>i</sub> dog? [Wasow 1972: 135]  
 b. \*?Who<sub>i</sub> was his<sub>i</sub> dog fed by?  
 (55) a. Which boy<sub>i</sub> received a postcard from his<sub>i</sub> sister?  
 b. ??Which boy<sub>i</sub> did his<sub>i</sub> sister send a postcard to?  
 [Sauerland 1998: 264, examples (45) and (46)]

The examples in (54a) and (55a) involve no WCO effect. In this case, the subject moves by, first, A-movement and then, by A’-movement. In the examples in (54b) and (55b), instead, the coreference (indicated by Sauerland by subindexes) is banned. According to Sauerland (1998), *Q*-raising, a variety of A’-movement, abstracts over choice functions and leaves the restrictor of the *wh*-element *in situ*. This amounts to abstraction over higher semantic types (choice functions are  $\langle\langle e, t \rangle, e\rangle$ , i.e., functions that take a set as input and gives an individual as value) and has as a crucial consequence that the choice function abstractor that *Q*-raising introduces cannot bind the possessive pronoun, which denotes over *e* types. The essential analysis for (55b) is given in (56), in which the semantic mismatch between the possessive and the  $\lambda$ -abstractor is illustrated with the *f* and *x* subscripts:

- (56) ??[Which boy]  $\lambda f$  did his<sub>i</sub> sister send a postcard to [*f*, boy]  
 [Sauerland 1998: 265, ex. (47)]

Now, the examples in (54a) and (55a) also involve *Q*-raising, but crucially preceded by subject movement to Spec,TP, i.e., there is a step of A-movement preceding *Q*-raising, a type of movement which is insensitive to WCO, as illustrated in the following example:

- (57) Which girl<sub>i</sub> seemed to her<sub>i</sub> brother to be a good player.  
 [Sauerland 1998: 265, ex. (48)]

---

that the clitic position is an A-position available for intermediate steps of movement, but also that the same position does *not* force the A-movement of the doubled indefinite object. I will leave further inquiry into the nature of indefinite doubling for another occasion.

Under the scope theory of WCO, the reason for the absence of WCO in (57) and in the (a) examples in (54) and (55) is that, in these cases, A-movement uniformly abstracts over individuals. To illustrate the theory, consider the analysis for (57) in (58), in which subject movement opens the possibility for the possessive pronoun to be bound by the individual abstractor:

(58) [TP Which girl<sub>i</sub>  $\lambda x$  [seemed to her<sub>i</sub> brother *t<sub>which girl</sub>* to be a good player]]

As shown in AUTHOR, this analysis easily generalizes to the contrast in (52) and (53). Assuming that focus movement also abstracts over choice functions, as proposed by Reich (2004), then a partial (and simplified) representation for (52) would be as in (59), where the pronoun cannot be bound by the  $\lambda$ -operator, because of a type mismatch:

(59) \*?[<sub>FocP</sub> A PAULA  $\lambda f$  [TP [<sub>VoiceP</sub> [*su<sub>x</sub>* madre] [<sub>VP</sub> ver *t<sub>f</sub>* ] ] ] ]

In the clitic doubling case, like in the case of subject movement in English, there is a previous step of A-movement, which triggers abstraction over individuals licensing the binding of the possessive:

(60) [TP [<sub>CIP</sub> a Paula  $\lambda x$  [<sub>VoiceP</sub> [*su<sub>x</sub>* madre] [<sub>VP</sub> ver [<sub>DP</sub>[3 person] *t<sub>x</sub>* ] ] ] ]

I take this type of WCO facts as a clear indication that clitics are probes, not mere agreement markers or pronouns. Now, as we have already observed, dative clitic doubling in Spanish in general has a wider distribution than accusative doubling. Recall the patterns in (5) again:

- (61)
- |    |                                       |             |            |         |          |             |
|----|---------------------------------------|-------------|------------|---------|----------|-------------|
| a. | Ana                                   | le          | entregó    | el      | premio a |             |
|    | Ana                                   | CL.DAT.3SG  | gave       | the     | prize to |             |
|    | Paula.                                |             |            |         |          |             |
|    | Paula                                 |             |            |         |          |             |
|    | 'Ana gave the prize to Paula.'        |             |            |         |          |             |
| b. | Ana                                   | le          | entregó    | el      | premio a |             |
|    | Ana                                   | CL.DAT.3SG  | gave       | the     | prize to |             |
|    | cada                                  | estudiante. |            |         |          |             |
|    | each                                  | student     |            |         |          |             |
|    | 'Ana gave the prize to each student.' |             |            |         |          |             |
| c. | Ana                                   | no          | le         | entregó | el       | premio      |
|    | Ana                                   | not         | CL.DAT.3SG | gave    | the      | prize       |
|    | a                                     | nadie.      |            |         |          |             |
|    | to                                    | nobody      |            |         |          |             |
|    | 'Ana gave the prize to nobody.'       |             |            |         |          |             |
| d. | A                                     | quién       | le         | entregó | el       | premio Ana? |
|    | to                                    | who         | CL.DAT.3SG | gave    | the      | prize Ana   |
|    | 'To whom did Ana give the prize?'     |             |            |         |          |             |



- (66) a. Ana la vio.  
 Ana CL.ACC.F.3SG saw  
 ‘Ana saw her.’
- b. Ana le dio un libro.  
 Ana CL.DAT.3SG gave a book  
 ‘Ana gave him/her a book.’
- (67) a. A Paula, Ana la vio.  
 DOM Paula Ana CL.ACC.F.3SG saw  
 ‘Paula, Ana saw her.’
- b. A Paula, Ana le dio un libro.  
 to Paula Ana CL.DAT.3SG gave a book  
 ‘Paula, Ana gave him/her a book.’

In sum, there is no evidence for treating accusative or dative doubling clitics as plain pronouns (i.e., triggers of assignment functions at LF) or as mere agreement markers (i.e., mere bearers of  $\phi$ -features). The WCO data discussed in this section show that they are, indeed, involved in the *Agree* system, but unlike mere  $\phi$ -bearers, they also induce the A-movement of the doubled objects and have, consequently, some semantic import at LF (opaqued by the truth-conditional calculus).

#### 4. Final diachronic and dialectological remarks

In this paper, I have given reasons to reject Baker & Kramer’s suggestion that Spanish clitic doubling can be characterized in terms of their theory for Amharic clitic doubling. Despite initial evidence in favor of deriving patterns of clitic doubling in Spanish through WCO, I have shown, following previous proposals, that the distribution of clitic doubling is sensitive to the formal features of direct and indirect objects (person and D, respectively). Doubling clitics serve two basic functions in the clause: (i) they trigger an instance of syntactic *Agree* with the doubled DP, and (ii) they attract the doubled DPs via A-movement. Yet, they are not semantically innocuous, although truth-conditionally a sentence with clitic doubling is extensionally identical to a sentence without clitic doubling. The difference is that the clitic opens its sister node at LF, creating a predicate that is saturated by the doubled object. This is the crucial difference with a pure agreement marker, which is totally vacuous at LF. Formally, such a difference can be captured if pure agreement markers are mere  $\phi$ -ornaments without any index in their internal representation. The typology of clitics behind the main claims made here contains at least the three elements in (51), repeated below:

- (68) The typology of clitics/ $\phi$ -markers
- |  |   |                                   |
|--|---|-----------------------------------|
| a. pronoun:                            | b. probe:                                     | c. agreement                      |
| [ <sub>D</sub> $\phi$ : valued, index] | [ <sub>D</sub> $\phi$ : unvalued, index, EPP] | [ <sub>D</sub> $\phi$ : unvalued] |

As far as I can tell, Rioplatense clitics instantiate (68a) and (68b), but not (68c), which is, instead, instantiated by subject agreement markers. In effect, a quick look at

subject-verb agreement properties in typical null subject languages like Spanish, in which absence of A-movement properties in overt subjects is widely attested (see, among others, Barbosa 1995, Ordóñez 1997 and Alexiadou & Anagnostopoulou 1998), seems to give some initial plausibility to the hypothesis that subject agreement is purely ornamental in this case, instantiating a true case of (68c).

I would like to conclude this paper adding some general diachronic and parametric remarks, which could provide some further insights to understand the situation of Rioplatense Spanish and beyond. Crucially, the preceding discussion does not invalidate Baker & Kramer's theory for clitic doubling in Amharic, since, as we will see, it is perfectly conceivable that Amharic and (Rioplatense) Spanish instantiate different stages of the Clitic Doubling Cycle and, consequently, trigger different parametric properties.

#### 4.1. The Clitic Doubling Cycle

Doubling clitics are not pronouns but, undoubtedly, they diachronically derived from pronouns. The important empirical observation is that all Spanish varieties have clitics but not all Spanish varieties have clitic doubling of the Rioplatense type. For instance, most dialects, if not all, have clitic left dislocation. Therefore, it must be the case that, diachronically, non-doubling configurations precede doubling ones. For evidence corroborating this path of change in the history of Spanish and other Romance languages, see Fischer & Rinke (2013) Gabriel & Rinke (2010) and, more recently, Fischer et al (2019). In this last study, the authors propose the Clitic Doubling Cycle in (69) with the aim to explain the systematic patterns of language change in the realm of clitic doubling in Romance.<sup>8</sup>

##### (69) The Clitic Doubling Cycle

- Stage I → no CD (Latin/Protoromance)
- Stage II → optional CD with full pronouns (Old Spanish / Old Catalan)
- Stage III
  - obligatory CD with full pronouns
  - obligatory CD with indirect nominal objects [+animate, +definite, +specific]

Early Modern Spanish/ Decadència Catalan / Spanish / Catalan

##### **Stage IV**

- obligatory CD with full pronouns,
- obligatory CD with indirect nominal objects,
- spread of CD to direct nominal objects [+animate, +definite, +specific]

(Rioplatense Spanish, Judeo-Spanish)

- Stage V → generalized CD (with all objects, even inanimates)

(Lima, Andean Spanish)  
[Fischer et al 2019: 60]

<sup>8</sup> See also Rinke et al (2019) and Rinke et al (2023) for recent corpus and judgment studies comparing Peninsular and Rioplatense Spanish. The results are consistent with the Clitic Doubling Change.



According to Fischer et al. (2019), Rioplatense Spanish is in a stage in which accusative clitic doubling is not fully grammaticalized as an agreement marker, which is the case in Lima and Andean Spanish, dialects in which clitic doubling generalized to almost any type of object. In the most advanced stages, Stage V for instance, the doubling clitic does not agree with the  $\phi$ -features of the doubled object:

- (70) a. lo vendo toditos los carros.  
 CL.ACC.M.SG sell.1SG all.DIM the cars  
 ‘I sell all the cars.’  
 b. Eso también lo mata las plantas.  
 that too CL.ACC.M.SG kills the plants  
 ‘That too kills the plants.’  
 [Andean Spanish, Zdrojewski and Sánchez 2014 *apud* Fischer et al 2019: 60]

According to Fischer et al, there is, then, a path of grammaticalization that can be expressed as follows:

- Grammaticalization path of the clitic:  
 (71) Clitic > Clitic > Clitic  
 DPs D-heads  $\phi$ -features  
 [Fischer et al 2019: 60]

Therefore, the path of change can be characterized as a process in which the referential properties of clitics and their formal makeup is eroded until the final stage in which they become mere agreement markers. In my terms here, in the first stages we have plain pronouns, i.e., indexes in argument position subject to assignment functions. In the intermediate step, the abovementioned erosion is concretely expressed in the lexicon of a language by the presence of indexes ornamented with unvalued  $\phi$ -features, i.e., formal probes. Finally, the index is lost, and the relevant item only expresses  $\phi$ -features. Yet, I don’t think that the  $\phi$ -impoverishment attested at Stage V is, really, a crucial factor. Put differently, the facts in (70) cannot be taken as compelling evidence that the index has been lost. To show that some clitic became a mere agreement marker, it must be shown, first, that the clitic at hand is not a syntactic probe for A-movement and predicate-maker at LF. As we have seen, dative clitic doubling, even when it substantially differs from accusative doubling and tends to be characterized as being closer to a pure agreement marker, still triggers A-movement of the indirect object.

Coming back to the contrast between Rioplatense Spanish and Amharic, one could speculate that both languages are at different evolutionary stages. It seems clear that Rioplatense Spanish is at Stage IV. Arguably, Amharic is in a previous stage, with their object markers still in a pronominal stage (Stage II?).

## 4.2. The Clitic Doubling Parameter

Now, this brief remark on the Clitic Doubling Cycle directly bears on the question of how to characterize the so-called Clitic Doubling Parameter properly (see

Anagnostopoulou 2014 for an overview). In effect, the stages described by the Clitic Doubling Cycle in (69) also characterize important linguistic differences among different Romance and non-Romance languages regarding clitic doubling. A first obvious division can be made among languages with and without clitic doubling (e.g., Standard Italian vs. Spanish). For instance, Standard Italian, a non-clitic doubling language, lacks the subset of impoverished probes Spanish has. Its object pronoun set contains indexes ornamented with valued  $\phi$ -features, which can only occur in argument position read off as variables at LF.

- (72) a. Maria conosce Gianni.  
 Maria knows Gianni  
 ‘Maria knows Gianni.’  
 b. \* Maria lo conosce Gianni.  
 Maria CL.ACC.M.3SG knows Gianni  
 ‘Maria knows Gianni.’
- (73) a. Maria conosce lui.  
 Maria knows him  
 ‘Maria knows him.’  
 b. \* Maria lo conosce lui.  
 Maria CL.ACC.M.3SG knows him  
 ‘Maria knows Gianni.’

[Verdecchia 2022: 293]

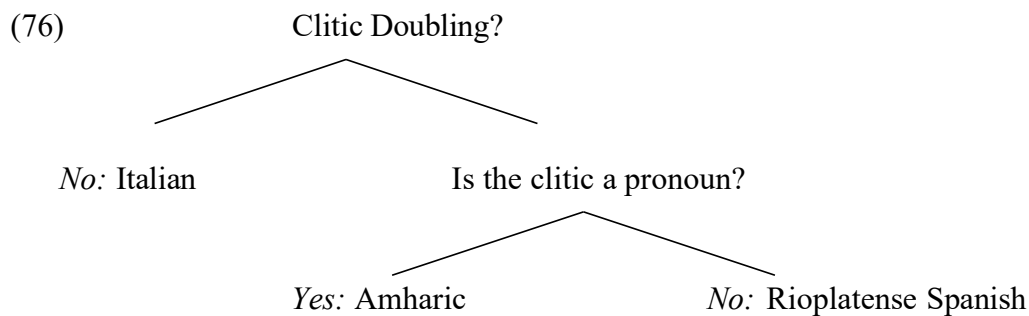
This pattern extends to reflexive constructions. In effect, as is well known, in Standard Italian, the reflexive pronoun *si* does not allow for reflexive doubling. This is in sharp contrast with Spanish, a language in which reflexive anaphora are obligatory doubled in object position.

- (74) a. Gianni difende se stesso.  
 Gianni defends himself  
 b. Gianni si difende.  
 Gianni REFL defends  
 ‘Gianni defends himself.’  
 c. \* Gianni si difende se stesso.  
 Gianni REFL defends himself
- (75) Ana \*( se ) critica a sí misma.  
 Ana REFL criticizes DOM herself

Like in transitive environments, absence of reflexive doubling in Italian is expected if *si* is still a variable in argument position. Therefore, diachronically, pronouns and anaphora did not evolve as probes in the language and clitic doubling is ruled out for well-known reasons having to do with thematic theory, namely, sentences with identical thematic arguments are excluded.

But of course, attested variation in the clitic doubling terrain across languages is much more than absence vs. presence of a set of impoverished clitics. Many other factors regarding the presence vs. absence of differential object marking, the activity

of the *PLC* (see (33)) and the option of allowing  $\pi$ -encoding on full DPs, among other factors, should lead us to a proper characterization of the Clitic Doubling Parameter consistent with the general proposal in this paper. Thanks to the vast contributions to the theory of clitic doubling in the last five decades, we already know where Rioplatense Spanish is regarding the attested range of variation in the clitic doubling realm. Concretely, Rioplatense Spanish is placed then in that parametric space in which: (i) the object clitic system evolved as stated in (69), (ii) the DOM system produces Kayne's Generalization effects (i.e., doubling restricted to DOM objects), and (iii) the formal makeup of direct objects allows for encoding  $\pi$ -information on full DPs. In this sense, on top of the many clitic constructions that this Spanish variety shares with most dialects (clitic dislocation constructions, for instance), the language also has at its disposal a subset of impoverished clitics serving as probes for A-movement.<sup>9</sup> Now, these parametric considerations do not contemplate languages as Amharic. If both Baker & Kramer and I are right, then the theory must introduce finer distinctions regarding the nature of the clitic itself. For instance, given a licit instance of clitic doubling (not to be confused with clitic dislocations), we must know whether the clitic is still pronominal in the sense favored by Baker & Kramer.



I think that the plausibility of introducing this type of parametric division largely depends on the theoretical validity of Baker & Kramer's claim that there are indeed licit instances of clitic doubling in the languages of the world that allow for syntactic pronouns to be merged in non-argumental positions without ceasing of being true semantic pronouns at LF.

## Acknowledgments

To be added

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<sup>9</sup> Rinke & Fischer (2013: 468) propose a parametric hierarchy that introduces finer distinctions. For instance, it seems that clitic doubling of non-pronominal indirect objects is a precondition for clitic doubling of non-pronominal direct objects.

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