TWO PUZZLES FOR MOVEMENT-BASED APPROACHES TO DISLOCATION: “le-for-les” AND “unexpected DOM”

1. GOAL. This paper considers two puzzles posed by clitic left dislocation (CLD) of (in)direct objects (IO, DO) in Romance languages. In particular, we focus on the fact that dislocated XPs (dXPs) manifest unexpected behavior ex-situ vis-a-vis their in situ option. We concentrate on Spanish so-called le-for-les (cf. Ausin & Fernandez-Rubiera 2014) and Catalan DOM (cf. Escande-Vidal 2007, 2009, Khouja 2015) and argue that this evidence reinforces the possibility that, unlike other A-bar processes, CLD involves a biclausal analysis (cf. Ott 2014).

2. BACKGROUND DATA. Romance IOs show an agreement asymmetry involving CLD. In particular, the dative clitic obligatorily agrees with its double only in CLD scenarios: If in situ, the clitic and the double may fail to agree (in number). Consider the following Spanish data:

(1) a. (Le / Les) tengo miedo a los políticos cl.sg / cl.pl have fear to the politicians
   ‘I fear politicians’
   b. A los políticos, (*le / les) tengo miedo to the politicians cl.sg / cl.pl have fear
   ‘Politicians, I fear (them)’

The facts are not expected under a movement-based account of CLD (cf. Lopez 2009, 2016 Rubio 2014, for discussion), especially so if it also adopts Chomsky’s (2000, 2001) Probe-Goal framework. In a derivation where (1a) and (1b) have the same origin, the clitic and its double are generated together, as a “big DP” (cf. Uriagereka 1995), and they split later on. Given that the dXP and the clitic can be clausemates with a number mismatch, it is not immediately obvious how movement makes full agreement mandatory.

The same happens in some varieties of Catalan, which show a similar behaviour. In particular, Escande-Vidal (2007, 2009) shows that Balearic Catalan (Catalan spoken in the islands of Ibiza, Mallorca, and Menorca) unexpectedly displays the differential accusative Case marker (so-called COM) under CLD, which is not possible if the relevant dependents remain in situ. Consider the following data from Balearic Catalan:

(2) a. No estima (*a) na Maria DO in situ b. A na Maria, no l’ estima DO ex situ
   not love ACC the Maria, no I’ estima
   ‘He does not love Maria’
   ‘Maria, he does not love her’

What these two pieces of evidence show is that CLD may morphologically alter a given XP. This, however, is unexpected, especially under analysis where CLD involves movement, assuming this transformation does not add or remove morphological information (which would also be odd, given inclusiveness).

3. TWO DIFFERENT APPROACHES, AND WHY THEY FAIL. A way to go about the puzzles in (1) and (2) is to take the presence of “le-for-les” and “uDOM” to be related to topicalization: The dXP moves to the specifier of a dedicated topic projection, and the relevant morphology appears as a consequence of some sort of Spec-Head agreement (cf. Rizzi 1997 and ff.). This would seemingly fit with Kayne’s (1989) influential analysis of past participial agreement, whereby a dXP triggers agreement upon hitting on the specifier of the relevant functional projection (AggrP, in Kayne’s original formulation). As the examples in (3) show, displacement of an internal argument triggers agreement on the participle in Romance languages like Catalan and French (and Italian too):

(3) a. Les cadires, les he pintades una altra vegada (Catalan)
   the chairs CL have painted.fem.pl one other time
   ‘The chairs, I painted them again’
   b. Les chaises que Paul a repeintes (French)
   the chairs that Paul has repainted.fem.pl
   ‘The chairs, I painted them again’
   c. Combien de tables Paul a repeintes? (French)
   how-many of tables Paul has repainted?
   ‘How many tables has Paul repainted?’
   d. Le abbiamo salutato (Italian)
   them.fem.pl have-1.PL greeted.fem.pl
   ‘We have greeted them’

There are different reasons to be skeptical about this derivation, at least for the cases under consideration. As is well-known, Spanish lacks participial agreement with internal arguments (except, of course, for passives):

(4) Las sillas, las he pintado (o / *as) de nuevo (Spanish)
   the chairs CL have painted.mas.sg / fem.pl of new
   ‘The chairs, I painted them again’

One could still argue that it is the clitic that matters, not the participle, in the “le-for-les” configuration. Plausible as this is, dative clitics do not agree under other bona fide A-bar transformations, like relativization or wh-movement. Thus, compare (1b) with the data in (4):
(5) a. A qué cosas (le / les) tienes miedo? b. Las cosas a las que (le / les) tengo miedo
   to what things cl.sg / cl.pl have fear the things to which cl.sg / cl.pl have fear
   ‘What things are you afraid of?’ ‘The things that I am afraid of’

Given the lack of agreement in (5) (recall, the clitic may agree, but it does not have to, as in in-situ scenarios), it is unlikely that a derivation à la Kayne (1989) is responsible for obligatory number agreement in (1b).

4. A BICLASSAL ANALYSIS: Here we argue that the puzzles in (1) and (2) can be handled if one assumes that the in-situ and ex-situ structures have different sources. Consider (1) in more detail. Whereas (1a) contains a simple sentence with a dative marked DP and its clitic (which may fail to agree in number, a trait of Spanish datives; cf. Cuervo 2003, Suñer 1988, Ebepare 2006, among others), (1b) involves two paratactic clauses, one with a (resumptive) clitic pronoun, the other one with an XP (the dislocated XP, or dXP) that is the remnant of ellipsis. This, we assume that the CLD construction in (1b) is not derived via movement. More precisely, we argue that dXPs are the remnants of clausal ellipsis, as argued for by Ott (2014). This author suggests that a sentence like German *Den Peter, habe ich gesehen (Eng. ‘I have seen Peter’) is derived from an underlying biclausal configuration, shown in (6):

(6) [CP1 [den Peter] [habe ich t gesehen]] [CP2 dem, habe ich t gesehen]
   ↑________________________|________________________↓
   [from Ott 2014:270]

In (6) we see that, on the one hand, the dXP den Peter A-bar moves within CP1, and, on the other, the pronoun den A-moves within CP2. Ott (2014) argues that, in the transit to the PF wing of the grammar, CP1 is reduced by deletion of the sister of dXP, which yields (7):

(7) [CP1 [den Peter] [habe ich t gesehen]] [CP2 dem, habe ich t gesehen]
   [from Ott 2014:269]

This analysis does not explain the lack of agreement of (1a), but it is clearly consistent with such an asymmetry the moment it poses an alternative source for the structure in which the IO appears ex-situ. Plausibly, the fact that the dXPs and the clitic fully agree obeys some discourse principle requiring for non-local dependents to show the same feature specification in cases where this is possible. Consider the data in (8), which are analogous to (1) in the sense that they involve parataxis: Here los políticos (Eng. ‘the politicians’) and the resumptive clitics must agree in number,

(8) a. No me gustan los políticos. De hecho, (‘le / les) tengo miedo not cl like the politicians of fact cl-pl have fear ‘I don’t like politicians. In fact, I fear them’

(b. Las cosas a las que (le / les) tengo miedo not cl-acc love ACC the Maria
   ‘He does not love Maria’

We are not claiming we know what (8) follows from, but a derivational explanation looks far-fetched.

5. ADVANTAGES AND QUESTIONS: Our approach to “le-for-les” has a way to explain the data discussed by Escandell-Vidal (2007, 2009) and Khouja (2015) without invoking the privileged status of topics—thus departing from a construction-based (unexplanatory) solution. For that, we have to assume that uDOMs related to the same factor that triggers it in in situ contexts: the presence of a clitic. Nevertheless, this raises questions. One of them is the fact that clitic doubling is in fact impossible in the cases we are considering. In other words, (8a) is ruled out, and (9b) is too:

(9) a. *No estima a la María (Balearic Catalan) b. *No lo estima a la María (Balearic Catalan)
   not love ACC the Maria not cl-acc love ACC the Maria
   ‘He does not love Maria’ ‘He does not love Maria’

To tackle (9b), we conjecture that this is precisely where ellipsis kicks in. Actually, if we are correct, the fact that ellipsis is forced is because it is a repair-strategy (cf. Lansik 2003, Merchant 2001), just like it is in (10):

(10) I believe [np the claim that he bit someone], but they don’t know who (*I believe the claim that he bit)

6. CONCLUSIONS: This paper has explored two different phenomena that display an unexpected behavior, under the assumption that dislocation, in and of itself, does not morphologically manipulate XPs in Romance. We have argued that the presence of Case markers or full agreement in dXPs does not follow from dislocation as such (Spec-Head agreement; cf. Rizzi 1997, 2004). We have suggested an ellipsis-based account (Ott 2014 for both cases, although in the case of DOM, the presence of a doubling clitic is also mandatory, raising questions that concern the possibility that ellipsis may act as a repair strategy under certain occasions.