

Distinguishing between explanatory accounts of the A/ \bar{A} -distinction

The view from Argentinian Spanish Clitic Doubling

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The A vs. \bar{A} distinction

- The A/ \bar{A} -distinction underpins case, agreement, and binding properties of moving DPs and determines possible movement paths (cf. Ban on Improper Movement).

(1) *Summary of the A/ \bar{A} -distinction*

| | A-mvt | \bar{A} -mvt |
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| a. Case can be assigned to landing site | ✓ | * |
| b. Can agree with T in landing site | ✓ | * |
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| d. Allows pied-piping | * | ✓ |
| e. Landing site can bind anaphors | ✓ | * |
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| g. Can induces weak crossover | * | ✓ |
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[Safir 2019]

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[Safir 2019]

Two proposals to derive the A vs. \bar{A} distinction

1. Featural definition of syntactic positions (Obata & Epstein 2011, Van Urk 2015).
 2. Free Merge + independent principles governing case and agreement (Safir 2019).
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- Goal: compare these two theories based on clitic doubling in Argentinian Spanish.

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1. Featural definition of syntactic positions

- Proposal: syntactic positions are not inherently A or \bar{A} .
- Rather, they are defined in terms of the features that create them:
 - ▶ A-positions: created by the valuation of φ -features.
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- **Upshot:** if a head has a hybrid set of φ -features and \bar{A} -features, the position created by the valuation of these features will display hybrid/composite A/ \bar{A} behavior.

(2) *Composite probes in Dinka*

Moc ebEn_k a-yii tieen-de_k lueel [CP e _ thEt].
man every 3s-HAB.OV woman-SG.3SG say.NF [c cook.SV]
'Every man, his wife says is cooking.'

[Van Urk: 2015]

- ▶ A-properties: agreement in the verb in V2 position and creation of new antecedents for binding.
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2. Free Merge + independent principles of case and agreement

- Safir (2019): an explicit attempt to derive the properties in (1) from independent principles of the grammar.
- The A vs. \bar{A} distinction is not a primitive. Rather, it falls out from independent principles that govern case and agreement.
- Ancillary proposal: **Insulation**, free merge of null PP on top of moving DP, preventing it from participating in further case and agreement operations.
 - ▶ Ancillary assumption: operations (e.g. Insulation) are not triggered, but free. The output of these operations is ruled out/in by interface conditions.

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- **Upshot:**

- ▶ “A-movement”: DP movement without Insulation.
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(3) Who did Mary praise?

a. *Without Insulation*

[TP T [vP **who** [v' Mary [v' v [VP praise **who**]]]]]

b. *With Insulation*

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Clitic Doubling in Argentinian Spanish

- Di Tullio et al. (2019) investigate CD, which is descriptively optional in Argentinian Spanish.

(4) Santos (la) miró a Rosa.
Santos (CL.3SG.FEM.ACC) look.at.PST.3SG DOM Rosa
'Santos looked at Rosa.'

[Di Tullio et al. 2019; (2a)]

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- If a clitic doubled DP it moves across a subject containing a pronoun coindexed with it, no WCO effect is induced (5a).
- In the absence of CD, a WCO violation arises (5b).

| | | | | | |
|-----|----|--------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| (5) | a. | A | MARÍA _k | la _k | criticó |
| | | DOM | María | CL.3SG.FEM.ACC | criticize.PST.3.SG |
| | | su _k | padre. | | |
| | | POSS.3SG | father | | |
| | | ‘Her father criticized MARÍA.’ | | | |
| | b. | *? A | MARÍA _k | criticó | su _k padre. |
| | | DOM | María | criticize.PST.3.SG | POSS.3SG father |

[Di Tullio et al. 2019; (31/51)]

- A clitic doubled DP does not reconstruct (6a).
- Without CD, reconstruction is possible (6b).

- (6) a. * A su HIJO_k lo
DOM POSS.3SG son CL.3SG.MASC.ACC
castigó cada padre_k.
punish.PST.3SG each father
- b. A su HIJO_k castigó cada padre_k.
DOM POSS.3SG son punish.PST.3SG each father
'Each father punished his (own) SON.'

[Di Tullio et al. 2019; (58)]

Analysis

- Di Tullio et al. propose that CD is Argentinian Spanish is triggered by a [PERSON] feature in *v*.
- Assumption: φ -features trigger A-movement.
 - Given the properties of A-movement, the absence of WCO effects (5a) and of reconstruction (6a) displayed by CD-ed DPs can thus be modeled as consequences of the fact that this nominal is undergoing A-movement.

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- Di Tullio et al. assume that the clitic in Argentinian Spanish CD is a morpheme introduced post-syntactically that expones the [PERSON] feature of an A-moved DP (7).

(7) $[_{vP} DO_{[\text{PERSON}]} [_{v'} \text{SUBJ} [_{v'} v [_{vP} V t_{DO}]]]]$

- In the absence of this feature, a clitic does not occur (8) and, furthermore, movement to Spec-vP is a type of \bar{A} -movement.

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Question

- It is commonly assumed that a phase edge like Spec-vP is inherently an \bar{A} -position.
- The proposal in (7), supported by the A-behavior of CD-ed DPs in Argentinian Spanish *wrt* WCO and reconstruction, challenges this assumption.
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- To recall: in this theory, there is no A-movement or \bar{A} -movement per se.
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- If Insulation applies to the moving CD-ed DP, T can successfully Agree with the subject across it. However, because the CD-ed DP is Insulated, it is expected to exhibit \bar{A} -properties, contrary to fact.

(9) $[_{\text{TP}} \text{T} [_{\nu\text{P}} [\text{PP} [_{\text{DP}} \text{a María}]] [_{\nu'} \text{su padre} [_{\nu'} \text{v} [_{\text{VP}} \text{criticó} \text{ } t]]]]]$.

A blue curved bracket labeled \bar{A} is positioned under the NP 'a María', indicating that this phrase is insulated from the verb 'criticó'.

- If Insulation does not apply, the CD-ed DP displays A-properties, as desired. However, this derivation crashes because T cannot Agree with the subject.

(10) $[_{\text{TP}} \text{T} [_{\nu\text{P}} [\text{DP} \text{a María}] [_{\nu'} \text{su padre} [_{\nu'} \text{v} [_{\text{VP}} \text{criticó} \text{ } t]]]]]$.

A blue curved bracket labeled A is positioned under the NP 'a María', indicating that this phrase is not insulated from the verb 'criticó'.

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Concluding remarks

- There have been some attempts to derive the otherwise elusive A/ \bar{A} -distinction.
- For the most part, they are equally able to account for the empirical basis of this distinction and to provide some flexibility in the definition of syntactic positions.
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Brigado!

For useful comments and discussion, I thank David Pesetsky. A special thank-you goes to Andrés Saab for sharing his work with me and for drawing my attention to the relevance of CD in Argentinian Spanish to the A/Ā-distinction!

References

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