

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
a. Case can be assigned to landing site	✓	*
b. Can agree with T in landing site	✓	*
c. Bypasses intervening subjects	*	✓
d. Allows pied-piping	*	✓
e. Landing site can bind anaphors	✓	*
f. Licenses parasitic gaps	*	✓
g. Can induce weak crossover	*	✓
h. Must reconstruct	*	✓

[Safir 2019]

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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).
- 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.
 - ▶ \bar{A} -positions: created by the valuation of features like *Wh*, *Foc*, etc.
- The properties used to distinguish between A- and \bar{A} -positions (1) fall out from:
 - ▶ The properties of the features that trigger each movement, and
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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 tiien-**de_k** lueeel [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.
- ▶ \bar{A} -properties: long-distance movement and skipping over of higher DPs.

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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.
- ▶ “ \bar{A} -movement”: DP movement *with* Insulation.

(3) Who did Mary praise?

a. *Without Insulation*

[_{TP} T [_{VP} **who** [_{V'} Mary [_{V'} v [_{VP} praise **who**]]]]]

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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 (1a) miró a Rosa.
Santos (CL.3SG.FEM.ACC) look.at.PST.3SG DOM Rosa
'Santos looked at Rosa.'

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

- They observe that the presence or absence of the clitic is correlated with A- and \bar{A} -properties, respectively, of the CD-ed DP.

- 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)]

- Di Tullio et al. propose that CD in 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) $[_{VP} DO_{[PERSON]} [_{V'} SUBJ [_{V'} v [_{VP} V t_{DO}]]]]$

- 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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- The proposal in (7), supported by the A-behavior of CD-ed DPs in Argentinian Spanish *wrt* WCO and reconstruction, challenges this assumption.
- Which view of the A/ \bar{A} -distinction could explain it?

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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) [TP T [_{VP} [PP [_{DP} a María]] [_{V'} su padre [_{V'} v [_{VP} criticó t]]]]].

- 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.

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Concluding remarks

- There have been some attempts to derive the otherwise elusive A/\bar{A} -distinction.
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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/ \bar{A} -distinction!

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