

## Mesoclisism and enclisis of object clitics in some Northern Italian dialects: for a syntactic treatment of morphology

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**Abstract.** In some north-eastern Piedmontese dialects, the OCIs, unlike their usual distribution in the Romance varieties, are found in enclisis not only on the imperative and the infinitive, but also on declarative forms. Moreover, these dialects show mesoclisism in the verb and enclisis on locative or modal adverbial elements associated with the verb. These data lead us to rethink the analysis of enclisis and mesoclisism in terms of the ability of the inflected verb to realize phasal domains. We assume that morphology is part of syntactic computation and that morphemic elements, endowed with interpretable content, are introduced by the operation of Merge. In keeping with this framework, enclisis seems to imply that OCIs are merged to the verb as part of its morphological complex.

### 1. Enclisis vs proclisis

Romance varieties present a paradigm of object clitics (OCIs) that generally occurs in proclisis<sup>1</sup>, except imperative and infinitival contexts where they are usually inserted in enclisis, as illustrated in (1) for the Piedmontese dialect of Fara Novarese. They precede the inflected verb in (1a), possibly forming a string where the dative precedes the accusative, as in (1b); OCIs follow the imperative in (1c) and the infinitive in (1d). In most Piedmontese dialects<sup>2</sup>, OCIs occur in enclisis on the participle, as in (2a). Generally, with the subset of participles that preserve the agreement ending, as in (2b), enclisis of the OCI is excluded. In other words, inflection and enclisis are in complementary distribution<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> In addition to data of Spanish studied by Halle and Marantz (1994), enclisis and mesoclisism have been analyzed by Manzini and Savoia (2011, 2018), Baldi and Savoia (2020) with reference to the imperative in North-Calabrian varieties, and, by comparison, in Albanian. Unlike those, the Piedmontese dialects show enclisis generalized to all verbal forms, recalling the most well-known type of enclisis and mesoclisism in the Romance varieties, i.e. that regarding European Portuguese, where mesoclisism characterizes future and conditional in which the infinitive and a special type of inflection are combined (Vigário 1999).

<sup>2</sup> For the use of auxiliaries and their interaction with clitics, see Baldi and Savoia (2022).

<sup>3</sup> In the examples, NM = Negative Marker, PP = Past Participle, Inf = Infinitive inflection, PREP = preposition, DAT = dative, OBL = oblique, LOC = locative element. The datum in Cf. shows the non-enclitic form of the verb; obviously, 1SG = 1<sup>st</sup> singular, 2SG = 2<sup>nd</sup> singular, 3MSG = 3<sup>rd</sup> masculine singular, 3-FSG = 3<sup>rd</sup> feminine singular, PL = plural, etc.

- (1) a. lyi/lei a m / t / l-u / l-a / j-u vɛk  
 he/she SCI.3SG 1SG / 2SG / 3-MSG / 3-FSG / 3-PL see.3SG  
 ‘he/she sees me/ you/ him/ her/ them’
- b. i g / m l-u / l-a / j-u dɛŋ  
 SCI.3PL to.him/her / to.me 3-MSG / 3-FSG / 3PL give.3PL  
 ‘they give it/them to him/her/me’
- c. tʃam- l-u nu:t  
 call 3-MSG NM  
 ‘do not call him’
- d. l ε mei tʃa'm-ε- l-u (nu:t)  
 SCI.3SG be.3SG better call-INF 3-MSG NM  
 ‘it is better not to call him’
- (2) a. (a)l ε tʃa'm-a- mi / l-u / l-a / i  
 SCI.3SG be.3SG called-PP 1SG / 3-MSG / 3-FSG / 3PL  
 ‘(s)he has called me/ him/ her/ them’
- b. i l ø vist / vist-a / vist-i  
 SCI.1SG OCl have.1SG seen.M / seen-FSG / seen-FPL  
 ‘I have seen him/ her/ them’

Fara Novarese

In the north-eastern Piedmontese dialects that we examine, the OCl is inserted in enclisis also on the inflected verb, as in the case of Borgomanero, studied in Tortora (2002). We will focus on other partially similar dialects and, in particular, on the dialect of Trecate in (3) and the dialect of Galliate in (4). In the examples in (3a) and (4a) we provide the forms with enclisis of one clitic, in those in (3b) and (4b) the forms with enclisis of a complex clitic string. For the sake of completeness, (3c,d) and (4c,d) illustrate the imperative and the infinitive contexts; finally (3e,e') and (4e,e') show the enclisis of a simple clitic or a cluster on the participle. The inflected forms of the verb can be subject to morpho-phonological modifications, such as in (3a) and (4a), where the vowel ending is deleted when followed by the enclitic; (3a') and (4a') show the same form with the inflection in simple contexts. Finally, we remind that negation in these varieties is realized by a negative minimizer (NM), such as *mia* in (3) or *mea* in (4), which follows the inflected verb (Zanutini 1997, Manzini and Savoia 2005, Baldi and Savoia 2021).

- (3) a. a tʃam(-a)- ma / ta / na / va / r-u / r-a / ja (mia)  
 SCl.3SG call-3SG- 1SG / 2SG / 1PL / 2PL / 3-MSG / 3-FSG / 3PL NM  
 ‘(s)he calls/does not call me/ you/ us/ you/ him/ her/ them’
- a’. a tʃam-a- i sə ma'tɛ  
 SCl.3SG call-3SG- ART.PL her/his children  
 ‘(s)he calls her/his children’
- b. a da- m- r-u (mia)  
 SCl.3SG give.3SG to.me- 3-MSG NM  
 ‘(s)he does not give/ gives it to me’
- c. tʃam-a- r-u / r-a (mia)  
 call-2SG- 3-MSG / 3-FSG NM  
 ‘(do not) call him/her’
- d. i ɔ di-ta da mia tʃa'm-ɛ-r  
 SCl have.1SG tell.PP-2SG PREP NM call-INF-3MSG  
 ‘I have told you not to call him’
- e. l ɛ (mia) tʃa'm-a- ma / -r / -r-a  
 SCl be.3SG NM called-PP 1SG / 3MSG / 3-FSG  
 ‘(s)he has (not) called me/ him/ her’
- e’. l ɛ (mia) daja- m- r-u  
 SCl be.3SG NM given to.me- 3-MSG  
 ‘(s)he has (not) given it to me’

Trecate

- (4) a. a vød- r-u / r-a / ti  
 SCl.3SG see.3SG 3-MSG / 3-FSG / 2SG  
 ‘(s)he sees him/her/you’
- a’. a vød-a  
 SCl.3SG see-3SG  
 ‘(s)he sees’
- b. i da- t- r-u  
 SCl.1SG give.1SG to.you 3-MSG  
 ‘I give it to you’

- c.    tʃam- r-u    /    tʃam-a        mei- r-u  
       call    3MSG /        call-2SG        NM    3-MSG  
       ‘call him/ don’t call him’
- d.    l            i        py        sɛ        miu    a        (mea) tʃa'm-ɛ-        r-u  
       SCI.3SG        be.3SG more    much    better    PREP    NM    call-INF        3MSG  
       ‘It’s much better (not) to call him’
- e.    l            a                    (mea) tʃa'm-a-        mi / r-u  
       SCI.3SG        have.3SG        NM    called-TV/PP    1SG / 3-MSG  
       ‘(s)he has (not) called me / him’

Galliate

Crucially, in the varieties with enclisis the clitic can be optionally placed on a nominal element (i.e. a negative or locative expression) subcategorized by the verb. These varieties are divided into two subsets, depending on whether or not the enclisis is applied to the negative elements. The dialect of Trecate in (3) only allows the enclisis on locative expressions, as in (5a,b,c), but not on negative words like *mia* NM, *py* ‘no-longer’. (5a’) illustrates the alternative solution, with enclisis on the verb followed by the locative element.

- (5) a.    i            byt-a            (mia) suta-    v-            r-u  
       SCI.1SG        put-1SG        NM    below    3DAT/LOC        3-MSG  
       ‘I (don’t) put it below it’
- a’.    i            byt-a-            v-            r-u        mia        suta  
       SCI.1SG        put-1SG        3DAT/LOC        3-MSG NM        below  
       ‘I don’t put it below it’
- b.    i            byt-u            (mia) dɔs-    av-            r-u  
       SCI.3PL        put-3PL        NM    on        3DAT/LOC        3-MSG  
       ‘they (don’t) put it on his/her’
- c.    a            pɔrt-a            (a)    ka-        ma / ta  
       SCI-3SG        bring.3SG        PREP    home    1SG / 2SG  
       ‘(s)he brings me/you home’

Trecate

Other dialects, including that of Borgomanero (Tortora 2002), also admit the enclisis on negative words. The data from Galliate illustrate this distribution, (6a) for the enclisis on a

locative, (6a') for the enclisis on the verb in the context of a locative element, and, finally, (6b) for the enclisis on the negative word.

- (6) a. i bøt-a kilɔ- r-u  
 SCl.1SG put-1SG there- 3-MSG  
 'I put it there'
- a'. i bøt- r-u kilɔ  
 SCl.1SG put 3-MSG there  
 'I put it there'
- b. a vød-a mei- r-u / mɛi- r-u  
 SCl.3SG see-3SG NM 3-MSG / never 3-MSG  
 '(s)he does not see it / (s)he never sees it'

Galliate

Summing up, we have the following main points:

- In Romance varieties OClS are usually inserted in proclisis on the inflected verb, except in imperative and infinitival contexts, where they follow the verb in most Romance varieties.
- In some Piedmontese varieties OClS occur in enclisis also on the inflected verb and, with some differences, on the modal or locative word that modifies the verb.
- Within this group of dialects, a further split separates the dialects that allow the enclisis on the negative marker and the dialects that exclude this context.

This picture raises some interesting questions for the syntactic model if the aim is to individuate a univocal position for OClS in the verbal string and justify the different occurrences of OClS.

## 2. The structural position of clitics and the relation between syntax and morphology

The wide literature on clitics assumes that subject clitics (SClS), present in northern Italian dialects, including those of Piedmont, are inserted in their preverbal position where they substantially realize the  $\phi$ -features associated with the subject (see the discussion in Poletto 2000, Manzini and Savoia 2005, 2007). OClS, according to many authors, move from their basic

position within VP to functional heads in the domain of Infl, where they have specialized positions (Kayne 1991, Uriagereka 1995, Tortora 2002). The enclisis of OCl in imperatives and in infinitival contexts has been connected with the high position of the verb in a modal position in the C-field (Rivero 1994, Rivero and Terzi 1995), as in (7).

(7) [Imp verb [C ... [T/Infl t<sub>i</sub> [VP t<sub>i</sub> OCl

Nevertheless, reordering is not obligatory in all varieties, and we find some variability between the high and low position of OCl with infinitives and imperatives<sup>4</sup>. Needless to say, the movement of the verb to C or Infl leaves the clitic behind anyway, whether we think it in a high or low position. The result is that the positioning of the OCl is uncertain in many cases, thus making the model too powerful and over-generating.

Analogously, the inverted position of SCl in interrogative contexts has been connected to the movement of the verb in C, in order to satisfy the interrogative properties of the sentence, as in (8) (Poletto 2000, Manzini and Savoia 2005).

(8) [C verb<sub>i</sub> ... [Infl SCl [Infl t<sub>i</sub> ...

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<sup>4</sup> In Romance studies a known case is that of French, in which proclisis characterizes infinitival and negative imperative contexts, as in (i) and (ii).

- (i) J'ai t'ai dit de le lire  
 SCl you have told to it read  
 'I told you to read it'
- (ii) Ne le mange pas!  
 neg it eat neg  
 'don't eat it!'

However, proclisis in imperative is attested in old Italian, as in (iii), and in Romansh, as exemplified by the Engadine variety of Zernez in (iv) (cf. Manzini and Savoia 2005: 425); in (v) the proclisis on infinitive in Zernez is illustrated.

- (iii) *la priega* [...] Gianni Alfani, II, v.7  
 her beg!  
 'beg her!'
- (iv) til klama!  
 him call  
 'call him!'
- (v) eu t na dit da til kla'mar  
 I you have told to him call  
 'I told you to call him'

Proclisis in infinitives is possible in many Italian Central and Southern varieties (cf. Manzini and Savoia, chapter 7).

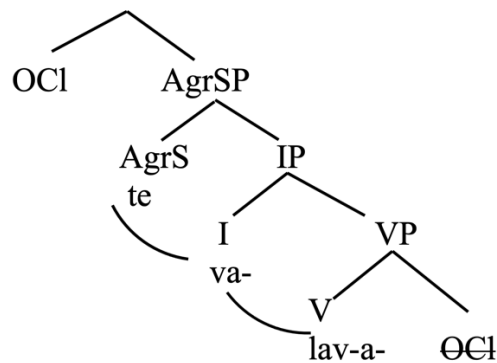
If we shift to the enclisis of OCl's in declarative sentences, as in the case of the north-eastern Piedmontese dialects that we consider, the whole picture becomes a little opaque. In fact, it is unclear why we should assume the raising of the verb to C in modal contexts if enclisis is structurally possible anyway. This possibility weakens the theory of movement: the OCl can remain in its original position, thus determining any type of enclisis. It is not accidental if Tortora (2002) observes:

Unfortunately, I can offer no insight as to why the Borgomanerese clitic moves to the lower Z head, while the Italian object clitic moves to the higher T head [...], and the French object clitic moves to the intermediate  $\text{Infn}^0$  head [...]. The idea that object clitics move to different functional heads in different Romance languages may seem unmotivated and without explanation. (Tortora 2002: 742)

The only possibility to account for this is to assume that OCl's have a position in the adverbial string and the verb, raising to a higher inflection position, leaves all this material on its right. However, OCl's in our dialects can do more, i.e. they can be enclitic to a locative or modal word to the right of the verb. Moreover, OCl's in some of these varieties can be inserted in mesoclisia between the verbal root and the inflection, as discussed in pf. 4. This possibility calls for a rethinking of the nature of the clitics and their distribution in relation to the inflectional exponents of the verb.

In the syntactic framework, the best-known generalization concerning the distribution of inflectional morphemes is Baker's (1988) Mirror Principle, whereby the verb moves to combine with the closest suffix: V attaches to T, and then T+V moves to AgrS, that closes the complex word, as in (9), representing the 2<sup>nd</sup> plural of the Italian imperfect *lava-va-te* 'you(pl) washed'. We inserted the OCl, which, as proposed by Tortora (2002), would move into a position in the inflectional domain of the verb.

(9)



This proposal substantially translates into syntactic operations the idea, traditional in generative grammar, that the composition of complex words is an ordered cyclic mechanism. At once, it associates the treatment of inflection with syntax. All in all, if morphemes are combined by head raising, we could expect that some type of mesoclysis or reordering between inflections and clitics, which are in turn subject to raising, can be attested. Nevertheless, a current morphological model such as DM identifies morphology as an autonomous component, which conceives sub-word elements (affixes and clitics) as ‘dissociated morphemes’. They convey information ‘separated from the original locus of that information in the phrase marker’ (Embick and Noyer 2001: 557) and involve post-syntactic rules of linear adjacency (Local dislocation) (Embick and Noyer 2001) to which is connected that and the use of Late Insertion. Thus, agreement and case morphemes are not represented in syntax, but they are added post-syntactically ‘during Morphology’. One undesirable result of this model is that there may be morphological elements devoid of any syntactic and interpretive import, as in the case of the thematic vowels of Romance languages (Embick 2010). Morphological rules may have the effect of modifying or deleting  $\phi$ -features relevant to syntax. So, morphology would contribute to obscuring syntax!

We apply a different approach to morphology, whereby morphology is part of the syntactic computation and there is no specialized component for the morphological structure of words (Manzini and Savoia 2017, 2011a, Manzini et al. 2020, Savoia et al. 2018) – a line of research that is now pursued also by other authors, such as Collins and Kayne (2020). Lexical elements, including morphemes, are fully interpretable and contribute to realizing the syntactic structure. This excludes late insertion and other adjustments provided by Distributed Morphology, such as impoverishment, fusion and fission of  $\phi$ -features, i.e. ad hoc



manipulations of terminal nodes.<sup>5</sup> Finally, agreement, the property traditionally triggering head-raising, is understood as the result of the Minimal Search of (bundles of) features able to identify the same referent.

The formation of complex words is due to the Merge operation that takes roots and affixes, i.e. sub-word elements, and combines them, in the same way it combines other lexical or syntactic objects. This procedure includes ‘head raising’, that is the classic movement of the head, i.e. the mechanism by which verbal (and nominal) heads are joined to affixes and positioned in the cartographic structure. Chomsky sees in pair-merge the way of treating head raising:

It’s always described incorrectly. If a verb raises to inflection, say to T, it’s always described as if the T-V complex becomes a T; but it’s not, it’s a V-the outcome of the adjunction is really verbal, not inflectional. (Chomsky 2020: 55)

In the more recent production of Chomsky, ‘head raising’ is seen as a problematic case insofar as it does not entail semantic effects and, structurally, it is counter-cyclic.

[...] head raising has properties that cross syntax and phonology. So, it’s almost entirely like phonological processes in that it doesn’t have semantic consequences. Consider Jean-Yves Pollock’s analysis of French and English verb-raising, obligatory in French in cases where it is barred in English. Whether the verb raises or not, the semantic interpretation is the same. (Chomsky 2020: 55)

Along this line, Chomsky (2021) speaks of the illegitimate nature of head movement by observing that V-to-T raising is unjustified because ‘interpretation is the same whether a verb raises to INFL or stays in-situ’. He assumes that Merge can create the combination of morphemes in complex words:

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<sup>5</sup> Late Insertion is a costly descriptive tool to which that of Late Merge (Stepanov 2001) is connected. Chomsky (2019: 267) highlights the spurious nature of the latter, as ‘a complex operation of substitution of the newly Merged element in exactly in the place where it originally appeared [...] it’s completely unacceptable, because it involves operations that are complex, unmotivated, [...]’

The first step in a derivation must select two items from the lexicon, presumably a root *R* and a categorizer *CT*, forming {*CT*, *R*}, which undergoes amalgamation under externalization, possibly inducing ordering effects [...]. With head-movement eliminated, *v* need no longer be at the edge of the *vP* phase, but can be within the domains of PIC and Transfer, which can be unified. E[xternal]A[rgument] is interpreted at the next phase'. (Chomsky 2021: 30 and 36 ff.)

The amalgamation gives rise to complex forms like [INFL [*v*, Root]], subject to externalization. Now, the external argument is interpreted in the phase of *T* by the inflected form of the verb, and *v* is not involved in the procedure. In keeping with this approach, we conceptualize categorizers such as *v*, *n*, as the bundles of  $\varphi$ -features that characterize the functional content of words entering into the agreement operations (Manzini 2021, Baldi and Savoia 2021). As it is well known also from a typological perspective, inflection, for instance of tense or agreement, is sufficient to create a verb from a nominal root or, conversely, a noun from a verb.

In fact, taking into account the characterization of head-raising in Chomsky (2021), movement of OCl appears to be a case of head-movement, and we are induced to treat it in terms of amalgamation, not much different from that of inflectional heads. This solution agrees with what is, however, a traditional intuition, i.e. that clitics are morphological elements very similar to inflectional morphemes. For instance, Roberts (2010, 2018) identifies Romance Cls with agreement heads, OCl of *v* and SCl of *T*. However, differently from Roberts, we assume that they are morphemes endowed with interpretable content, so that their superficial distribution in the sentence corresponds to their insertion procedure.

Our idea is that enclitics are amalgamated with the root, possibly followed by the inflectional exponent. The amalgamation procedure yields a complex verbal form including the enclitic element in final position. The same procedure applies to locative or modal words subcategorized by the verb.

### **3. Enclisis on the verb and on locative/modal words**

Consider first the proclisis on the verb, as in *a l-u vek* 'SCl I.see it' in (1a). Here, the verb is merged with the OCl, yielding the amalgam in (10a), which realizes the features of the I[nternal]A[rgument] associated to *v*. The amalgam is merged with the SCl *a*, in (10b), and the string *a l-u vek* satisfies the realization of EA and IA in *T*, as in (10c).

- (10) a.  $\langle l\text{-}u_{3\text{msg}}, [v \text{v}\epsilon k] \rangle \rightarrow [{}_{\varphi} l\text{-}u [v \text{v}\epsilon k]]$
- b.  $\langle a_{\varphi}, [{}_{\varphi} l\text{-}u [v \text{v}\epsilon k]] \rangle \rightarrow [{}_{T/\varphi} a [{}_{\varphi} l\text{-}u [v \text{v}\epsilon k]]]$
- c.         C                     T                     v                 V<sub>R</sub>  
              *a*<sub>3SG</sub> *l-u* *vεk*

Naturally, morphological elements are combined according to selectional restrictions like (11), which are acquired by the speaker and become part of her/ his linguistic knowledge.

- (11)  $l\text{-}u \leftrightarrow \_ [{}_{T/v}]$

We can think that proclisis implies External Merging whereby the inflected verb and the OCl combine yielding the string *OCl+verb*, that realizes the features of T.

As for the enclisis on the participle, in illustrating (2a,b), we have observed that enclisis and participial agreement inflection are in complementary distribution. This suggests that the enclitic and the inflectional exponent are realizations of the same syntactic content. This conclusion is reinforced by the observation that in these dialects the enclitic is joined directly to the verbal root enlarged by the Thematic Vowel<sup>6</sup> (TV; cf. Savoia and Baldi 2022), i.e. in the usual place of the inflection. If that’s the case, the enclitic element in the sentence in (12a) is merged to the past participle in (12b), joining to the TV, as a component of the complex participial form. The amalgam is now able to realize the interpretive properties of *v* in the domain of PIC and Transfer, as in (12c). Taking into account the enclisis on the participle, we conclude that the selectional restriction on OCIs includes two possible contexts, as suggested in (12d).

- (12) a.         (a)l                     ε             tʃa'm-a-         l-a/  
               SCL.3SG             be.3SG call-TV         3-FSG  
               ‘(s)he has called her’

<sup>6</sup> In accordance with Manzini and Savoia (2005, 2007, 2011a), we identify TV with a nominal element, more precisely a variable ‘x’, whose value is fixed by the subject. In other words, TVs are inflections making the verbal root a nominal form available to combine with the aspectual/modal head (see the discussion in Savoia and Baldi 2022).



stem, in (14a), and the enclitic is merged to this amalgam, in (14b). The cluster of referential features associated with the participial word *lav-a-i-εi* ‘washed (FPL)’ realizes v.

- (14) a.  $\langle [_{\text{FPL}} \text{lav-}\epsilon], i_{\text{FPL}} \rangle \rightarrow [_{\text{FPL}} \text{lav}\epsilon\text{-}i]$   
 b.  $\langle [_{\text{FPL}} \text{lav-}\epsilon\text{-}i], \text{v}i_{\text{FPL}} \rangle \rightarrow [_{\phi} \text{lav-}\epsilon\text{-}i\text{-}\text{v}i]$

The proposal we are pursuing is that enclitics are treated as sub-word elements, like inflectional exponents, with which they are merged: in the terms of Marantz (2007), Phases can be recognized ‘within words’. This hypothesis allows us to account for the difference between proclisis and enclisis on inflected verb forms in declarative sentences.

Sticking to this line of reasoning, in the dialects in (3)-(4), the enclitic element is amalgamated with the inflectional element with which it forms a cluster in turn combined with the verb, as in the case of the sentence *a tfam(-a)-r-u* ‘(s)he calls him’(cf. (2a)) of the Trecate’s dialect, in (15). The inflected verb is formed by merging the enclitic element to the amalgam including the root and the inflection ending, in (15a); the complex word is available to realize in T the agreement properties associated with IA and EA, and to agree with the SCl, as in (15b).

- (15) a.  $\langle [_{\text{R}} \text{tfam}] a_{3\text{SG}}, r\text{-}u_{3\text{MSG}} \rangle \rightarrow [_{\text{T}/\phi} \text{tfam-a-r-u}]$   
 b. C  $\quad$  T<sub>3SG/3MSG</sub>  $\quad$  v<sub>φ</sub>  $\quad$  V<sub>R</sub>  
 $\quad$   $a_{3\text{SG}}$   $\quad$  *tfam(-a)-r-u*

The analysis we propose is corroborated by the fact that in this group of dialects the combination *verb-inflection-enclitic* shows in many cases some type of morphological accommodation in the internal structure of the verb. Consider the different contexts. In the case of the specialized inflections *um-a* of the 1<sup>st</sup> plural and the stressed exponent *-ε/i* of the 2<sup>nd</sup> plural, coinciding with the TV, the inflectional morpheme is preserved, as in (16a,a’). In the other forms, such as those in (16a), for Trecate, the inflectional exponent *-a* of the singular persons of the present and imperfect, may not be realized, as in (16b) for the present and (16b’) for the imperfect; (16b’’) illustrates the form of the imperfect in isolation. Similarly, in Galliate’s dialect, the inflectional exponent can be left out, giving rise to synthetic forms, as in (16b,b’,b’). Similar types of assimilation also appear in the locative contexts, as in (16c) for the dialect of Trecate, where the enclisis of *-ru* to *f̄ra* ‘out’ gives *f̄r-ru* ‘out-it’ with the deletion of the element *-a*.

- (16) a. i tʃam- um-(a)- ru / ra  
 SCl call 1PL 3MSG / 3FSG  
 ‘we call him/ her’
- a’. i tʃa'm-ε- r-u / na  
 SCl call 3MSG / 1PL  
 ‘you call him/ us’
- b. a tʃam- ma / ta / r-u / r-a  
 SCl call 1SG / 2SG / 3MSG / 3FSG  
 ‘(s)he calls me / you / him / her’
- b’. a tʃam- ε- v(a)- ma / r-u / r-a  
 SCl call TV IMPERF 1SG / 3MSG / 3FSG  
 ‘(s)he called me/ him/her’
- b’’. i/ te/ a tʃam- ε- v- a  
 SCl call TV IMPERF 3SG  
 ‘I/ you/ (s)he called’

Trecate

- c. i vøð-a  
 SCl see-1SG  
 ‘I see’
- c’. i vøð-ru  
 SCl see-3MSG  
 ‘I see him / it’
- c’’. i vø- tti  
 SCl see- 2SG  
 ‘I see you’

Galliate

- d. pørt-a fòr-ru  
 bring-2SG outside-3MSG  
 ‘Bring it outside!’

Trecate

The deletion of the singular inflection in the present and the imperfect suggests that in these contexts, the enclitic is merged to the root or the tense/mood exponent, as the inflectional

exponents. In other words, enclisis can be expressed as the amalgamation of OCIs with the root in the present, in (17a), or the tense/mood inflected form in (17b).

- (17) a.  $\langle \text{tʃam}_R, \text{ru}_{3\text{MSG}} \rangle \rightarrow [\text{T}/\varphi \text{tʃam-ru}]$   
 b.  $\langle [[ [\text{tʃam}_R] \text{e}_{\text{TV}}] \text{v}_{\text{Imp}}], \text{ru}_{3\text{MSG}} \rangle \rightarrow [\text{T}/\varphi [ \text{tʃam-e-v} ] \text{ru}]$

Trecate

In this line, the vocalic element *-a-* that variably appears between the root and the enclitic, can be treated as an epenthetic element. This conclusion is supported by the fact that it may occur also in contexts where the original inflectional element is not *-a-*. Thus, in the 1<sup>st</sup> plural imperfect, *i tʃamev-u* ‘you called’, *-a-* may be introduced between *-v* and the enclitic, as in *i tʃamev-(a)-ru* ‘you called him’. So, the amalgamation is triggered by the selectional restriction in (18).

- (18)  $r\text{-u}/r\text{-a}$ , etc.  $\leftrightarrow [\text{R}/\text{TV}/\text{Infl}] \text{ \_\_\_}$

We come now to the ability of the clitics to position themselves on the locatives selected by the verb. Insofar as they can be treated as inflectional elements, there is no syntactic constraint that interacts with their position, as in the classic approach of Tortora (2002) and related work. In these dialects locatives subcategorized by the verb, i.e. specifying aspect of the event, can subsume enclitics. In *i byt-a suta-v-ru* ‘I put it on it’ in (19a,a’) (from (4a)) for Trecate, where the enclitic of 3<sup>rd</sup> person *-v* is merged to the locative word, as in (19a), yielding a sequence with which *-ru* is merged, in (19a’). We can see in *suta-v-ru* the realization of (a set of) properties of the Phase *v*, as in (19b). Again, we must assume that the insertion of enclitics depends on a restriction of the type in (19c), also including adverbial elements selected by the verb.

- (19) a.  $\langle [\text{Loc suta}], -\text{v}(\text{a})_{\text{OBL}} \rangle \rightarrow [\text{Loc}/\varphi \text{suta-v}(\text{a})_{\text{OBL}}]$   
 a’.  $\langle [\text{Loc}/\varphi \text{suta-v}(\text{a})_{\text{OBL}}], \text{ru}_{3\text{MSG}} \rangle \leftrightarrow [[\text{Loc}/\varphi \text{suta-v}(\text{a})_{\text{OBL}}], \text{ru}_{3\text{MSG}}]$

- b. C                      T<sub>1SG</sub>    v<sub>φ</sub>                      V<sub>R</sub>  
                                  *i*<sub>1SG</sub>    *byt-a suta-v-ru*

- c.  $r\text{-u}/r\text{-a}$ , etc.  $\leftrightarrow [\text{R}/\text{head}/\varphi] \text{ \_\_\_}$ , where R encompasses the Root of verbs or locative words, and head<sub>φ</sub> encompasses functional elements.

As we have seen, there are dialects, such as that of Galliate in (4), which have the enclisis also on the negative marker, while others, for example Trecate in (3), exclude this possibility. Thus, the contextual selection of enclitics is limited in relation to different sub-sets of lexical elements. Enclisis is generally applied only on a locative expanding a movement verb; modal particles subcategorized by the context of the verb can subsume enclitic elements in turn.

A question apart is the order of (en)clitic pronouns in clusters. Although this topic goes beyond the purposes of this article, we note that the order generally applied in Italian varieties, including those examined here, is *Oblique (Dative/Locative) – Object*. As discussed in Manzini and Savoia (2017), we can hypothesize the role of interpretive constraints, which could favor this order. A possible insight is that the first position of the Dative/Locative element is related of its scope properties over the object.

#### 4. Mesoclis

A proof in favor of the analysis we propose, is provided by the mesoclis shown by the dialect of Trecate in the forms ending in *-u*, i.e. the 3<sup>rd</sup> plural of the present and the three plural forms of the imperfect indicative. In these forms, the clitic is inserted between the root and the inflectional exponent *-u*.as illustrated in (20). An effect of mesoclis is that the vocalic endings of enclitics are assimilated to the final *-u*; in particular, the distinction between the form of 3<sup>rd</sup>singularfeminine *-r-a* and singular masculine *r-u* is lost. (20a,a') exemplifies mesoclis in the present and the imperfect. (20b), from (2a), reports for comparison the usual enclitic forms; (20c) shows the 3<sup>rd</sup> plural person in contexts without OCIs.

- (20) a.     i           'tʃam-(a)-     m / t / n / r / i                                 -u  
           SCI    call                1SG / 2SG / 1PL / 3SG / 3PL        3PL  
           'They call me/ you/ him/ her/ them'
- a'.    i           tʃamev(-a)-     r / i                                 -u  
           SCI    call                3SG / 3PL        PL  
           'we called him/ her'
- b.    a                 tʃam(-a)-        ma / ta/ na/ va/ r-u / r-a / ja  
           SCI.3SG        call-3SG        1SG / 2SG/ 1PL / 2PL / 3-MSG / 3-FSG / 3PL  
           '(s)he calls call me / you / us / you / him / her / them'



- c.     i       tʃam-u       a       tto     fra'de  
        SCI   call-3PL       the     your   brother  
        ‘They call your brother’

Mesocclisis can be explained as a type of amalgamation of clitics and inflectional exponents, where the 3<sup>rd</sup> plural inflection is merged to enclitic elements in the final position. In (21a), the enclitic *-m(a)*-is merged to the Root. In (21b) the inflection of 3<sup>rd</sup> plural *-u* is amalgamated to this sequence yielding the complex inflected form, incorporating both the agreement features with the internal argument realized by *-m-*, and those with the subject, realized by the 3<sup>rd</sup> plural inflection *-u-*. This word realizes the properties of T in (21c).

- (21) a.     <[tʃam<sub>R</sub>], m(a)<sub>1SG</sub>>   →     [<sub>φ</sub>tʃam-m(a)]  
        b.     <[tʃam-m(a)], -u<sub>3PL</sub>>   →     [<sub>v/T</sub>tʃam-m-u]  
        c.     C                    T<sub>φ</sub>                v<sub>φ</sub>        V<sub>R</sub>  
               i<sub>φ</sub>        tʃam-m-u  
               ‘they call me’

We can wonder why mesocclisis is limited to the 3<sup>rd</sup> plural inflection *-u* (in these dialects the inflectional paradigm is reduced). Specifically, in the Trecate dialect, we find in the present the pattern in (22a) and in the imperfect that in (22b). In the imperfect *-u* is the inflection of all the plural persons, while in the present *-u* characterizes 3PL, and in the other persons *um-a* occurs in the 1<sup>st</sup> plural and *-ε* in the 2<sup>nd</sup> plural (cf. Savoia and Baldi 2022). We see that the plural inflection is systematically realized also when enclitics follow, as in (22c,c') for the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> person of the present and (22d) for the imperfect. We conclude that plural inflection *-u* retains its position to the right of the sequence of inflectional elements fixing the scope of the event.

- (22) a.     i   tʃam-a                                b.     i   tʃam-e-v-a  
           te tʃam-a                                te tʃam-e-v-a  
           a tʃam-a                                a tʃam-e-v-a  
           i tʃam-um-a                            i tʃam-e-v-u  
           i tʃa'm-ε                               i tʃam-e-v-u  
           i tʃam-u                                i tʃam-e-v-u

- c.     i       tʃam-uma-r-u / a  
 SCl    call-1PL-3MSG / 3FSG  
 ‘we call him / her’
- c’.    i       tʃa'm-ε-r-a  
 SCl    call-2PL-3FSG  
 ‘you call her’
- d.     i       tʃam-e-v-     r-u  
 SCl    call-TV-IMPF  3SG-3PL  
 ‘they called him / her’

The phenomenon of plural suffixes which occur to the right of other inflectional elements was studied by Halle and Marantz (1994) in mesoclysis in Caribbean Spanish. In this Spanish variety, in 2<sup>nd</sup> plural of imperative object clitics can be inserted between the stem and the plural *-n* inflection as in *de-me-lo-n* ‘give-me-it-2pl’. The analysis of Halle and Marantz is based on the DM model, whereby the reordering of clitics and inflectional exponent is derived by means of a post-syntactic rule that has the effect to re-establish ‘the usual order of affixes in inflected words, with the plural suffix to the right of other feature complexes’ (Halle and Marantz 1994: 287). Again, the principle in question is the need for plural specifications of the verb to be preserved and recognizable.

What can we say about other contexts of mesoclysis in Italian varieties? Mesoclysis in the imperative in Italian dialects has been studied by Manzini and Savoia (2005, 2011) and Baldi and Savoia (2020). Our idea is that the mesoclysis on the imperative may be related to the same analysis that we propose for the Piedmontese dialects. The data from Morano (Calabria) in (23) exemplify this type of mesoclysis. (23a) shows the usual enclisis in contexts of simple clitics, (23b) and (23c) show mesoclysis, whereby in clitic clusters the 1<sup>st</sup> person or dative clitic is inserted in-between the root (enlarged by TV) and the 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> plural inflection followed by the accusative clitic.

- (23) a.     rɔ'n-a-ti-       mi / -li       kwissu  
           give-TV-2PL  to.me / to.3SG this  
           ‘give this to me / him / her’
- b.     rɔn-a-           n'ni-           mu-    lu  
           give-TV       him/her       1PL   it



Manzini and Savoia 2005). We encounter numerous cases in which the enclitic subject is inserted between the root and the inflection. The examples below illustrate the inversion of the 3<sup>rd</sup> plural SCI in the Romansh variety of Donat in (25a), in the Lombard-Alpine variety of Casaccia in (25b), in the Piedmontese variety of Mombercelli in (25c) and in the North-Tuscan variety of Dalli in(25d).

(25)	a.	i	dorm-ən	vs.	dorm-i-n?	
			SCI sleep-3PL		sleep-SCI-3PL	
			‘they sleep’	vs.	‘do they sleep?’	
						Donat
	b.	l-a	dorm-aŋ	vs.	dorm-la-ŋ?	
			SCI sleep-3PL		sleep-SCI-3PL	
			‘hey sleep?’	vs.	‘do they sleep?’	
						Casaccia
	c.	i	drøm-u	vs.	i drøm-l-u?	
			SCI sleep-3PL		SCI sleep-SCI-3PL	
			‘they sleep’	vs.	‘do they sleep?’	
						Mombercelli
	d.	a	m'maŋŋ-ənə	vs.	maŋ'ŋ- iλλə-nə?	
			SCI eat-3PL		eat-SCI-3PL	
			‘they eat’	vs.	‘do they eat?’	
						Dalli

Again, mesoclysis suggests that the enclitic is inserted as part of the inflection. Thus, the verbal word contains the properties relevant for Phases, as in the derivation in (26) for *i drøm-l-u* ‘do they sleep?’ (from (25c)), where the amalgamation of enclitic elements with the verbal root, (26a) and (26b), yields the complex word realizing T, in (26c).

(26)	a.	< drøm <sub>R</sub> , l <sub>3PS</sub> >	→	[ <sub>φ</sub> drøm-l]	
	b.	< [ <sub>φ</sub> drøm-l], u <sub>3PL</sub> >	→	[ <sub>T/φ</sub> [drøm-l]-u]	
	c.	C	T	v	V <sub>R</sub>
		<i>i</i> <sub>φ</sub>	<i>drøm-l-u</i> <sub>φ</sub>		

In other words, the enclitic form of the SCl represents the inflection of the interrogative form.

## 5. Concluding remarks

The idea pursued in the previous discussion is that we can explain a set of phenomena regarding the distribution of clitics, particularly OCIs, without resorting to the movement of the verb or the clitic in pre-determined positions. In fact, a cartographic analysis is characterized by an intrinsic vagueness as regards the reciprocal positioning of the verb and the clitic, and requires some kind of Late Merge for the insertion of object clitics and inflections. We followed an approach based on the idea that morphology is part of syntax and that complex words are formed by applying Merge to head elements, in order to create amalgams combining the root with inflectional affixes which satisfy the interpretive content of T. The latter are included, in turn, in the lexicon as items endowed with semantic content.

Enclitics, unlike proclitics, have been treated as affixes merged to the root or to the root plus inflectional elements. In other words, they contribute to the amalgamation of the verbal word. This allows to unify in a single explanation the various phenomena that accompany enclitic structures and to overcome the question regarding the position of enclitics. We have also reported other data that propose further instances of the close relationship between enclitics and inflections, bringing evidence in favor of the analysis discussed here.

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