Dahlem Lectures in Linguistics
24.01.2017

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Clitic Doubling as an interface phenomenon

As its name suggests, Clitic Doubling (CLD) involves the doubling of a verbal argument by a clitic pronoun inside the same propositional structure (1). From a generative perspective, it was initially investigated focusing on its properties as exhibited in those Romance languages where it is attested.

(1) **El** vam veure a ell. Cat
him saw to him.
'We saw him.'

Over the years, many factors have been discussed and held responsible for the occurrence and distribution of CLD. We find grammatical factors such as e.g. pronominal vs. non-pronominal, accusative vs. dative, the occurrence vs. non-occurrence of DOM, and semantic and pragmatic factors such as e.g. animacy, specificity, definiteness, partitivity.

Jaeggli (1982) who was the first to notice the theoretical importance of CLD, describes it for River Plate Spanish spoken in Argentina, Uruguay, and Paraguay, for a variety that has been in constant contact with other languages. Looking at the different Romance varieties that allow CLD now-a-days, e.g. Judeo-Spanish, Basque-Spanish, Catalan shows that language contact seems to favour the spread of clitic doubling to accusatives.

In this talk we will present new diachronic and synchronic data from from different Spanish varieties and Catalan, showing that the diachronic development and synchronic distribution of CLD can be analysed as a cyclic change. We will show that on the one hand CLD emerges as a consequence of a specific stage of object clitic w.r.t. the grammaticalisation path and the parametric specification of the verb-movement hierarchy (responsible for the information structure of a language). On the other hand, however, we will show that clitic doubling as an interface phenomenon is vulnerable in language contact situations.