

Pronouns and attraction in Sierra Zapotec

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1. How greedy are pronouns? Why do some pronouns regularly fail to surface in the same position as other arguments? In both object shift (1) and clitic doubling (2), a pronoun is displaced.

(1) Du husker **ham**₁ sikkert ikke t₁.
 you remember **him** probably not
 ‘You probably don’t remember him.’

Danish

(2) Tzxizh=**a**’₁ (**nada**’₁).
 laugh.CONT =**1SG** **1SG**
 ‘I am laughing.’

Santiago Laxopa Zapotec

One explanation for this widespread phenomenon attributes displacement to the needs of pronouns themselves. Clitics and other weak pronouns are greedy, in Chomsky’s (1993) terms, and must move for the derivation to converge (Cardinaletti & Starke 1999, a.o.). The view that movement is triggered only by properties of the moving constituent is not consistent, however, with other instances of movement, such as wh-movement, where a probe attracts a wh-goal (Chomsky 1995 and later work). We argue that the patterns of pronominal displacement and doubling in Santiago Laxopa Zapotec and other closely related Sierra varieties are best understood in terms of a theory of attraction, bringing pronoun movement into the fold with other movement phenomena. On this view, pronouns in Zapotec are attracted by a functional head, satisfying its needs (and possibly also their own in the process).

2. Pronouns in Santiago Laxopa Zapotec. The language has both independent and clitic pronouns (3). In the third person, these stand in a systematic morphological relationship: each independent pronoun is composed of the formative *lle* and a clitic, e.g. *lle* + *=ba*’ = *lleba*’ (cf. Marlett 2010).

(3)	Independent	Clitic
1sg.	<i>neda</i> ’	<i>=a</i> ’
2sg.	<i>le</i> ’	<i>=u</i> ’
3 elder/human/animal/inanimate	<i>lle</i> ’/ <i>lleba</i> ’/ <i>lleb</i> / <i>llen</i>	<i>=e</i> ’/ <i>=ba</i> ’/ <i>=b</i> / <i>=n</i>

We take this morphological parallel seriously. While there are two types of pronouns in the first and second person — independent and clitic pronouns — there are only clitic pronouns in the third person. The “independent” pronouns arise when some additional structure, realized as *lle*, is present.

3. Patterns of subject cliticization. With subjects in the first or second person, a clitic is obligatory on the verb. In neutral contexts, just this clitic appears, and an independent pronoun in argument position is impossible (4a). This becomes possible, though, when the subject bears narrow focus (e.g., in the answer to a question or in contrastive contexts) (4b).

(4)	a.	Tzxizh*(= a ’) (*neda ’). laugh.CONT = 1SG 1SG ‘I am laughing.’	b.	Tzxizh*(= a ’) neda ’. laugh.CONT= 1SG 1SG ‘I am laughing.’
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While the obligatory displacement of clitics onto the verb might appear to support their essential greediness, this requirement is lifted in the third person. In neutral contexts, only a clitic on the verb is possible (5a), just as for first and second person (4a). But, when a third person subject is focused, the clitic does not move (5b). Thus, a clitic can fail to move, and this is not consistent with greed.

(5)	a.	Ba bdell*(= ba ’) (*lle=ba ’) beku’. already hug.COMP= 3.HU =3.HU dog ‘S/he already hugged the dog.’
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- b. Ba bdell(*=**ba'**) lle=**ba'** beku'.
 already hug.COMP=**3.HU** =**3.HU** dog
 'S/he already hugged the dog.'

4. An attraction theory. We propose that a functional head (F) Agrees with all pronouns in its domain, triggering their movement to a position adjacent to the verb. This results in cliticization for both local (4a) and third (5a) persons in neutral contexts (6a).

- (6) a. V [_{FP} F=**cl**₁ t₁] 1st/2nd and 3rd
 b. V [_{FP} F=**cl**₁ [t₁ *pro*]] 1st/2nd

Preliminary evidence for this comes from the asymmetry between clitics and independent pronouns in first and second person: while a clitic can occur without an accompanying independent pronoun (6a), an independent pronoun is always accompanied by a clitic (6b). In both cases, the probe successfully attracts pronominal material: the clitic is the better goal, while the independent pronoun itself has no particular needs of its own. The opposite pattern, in which an independent pronoun occurs on its own and a clitic must always be accompanied by an independent pronoun, is excluded, since the requirements of the probe would not be met when only the independent pronoun is present.

The pattern for first and second person is consistent also with a requirement that the clitic moves (i.e., the clitic supports a greed account). The third person paradigm in (5b), however, shows that clitics do not have to move to F — they are not greedy. Whatever phonological requirements the clitic might have are satisfied by attaching to *lle*.

- (7) V [_{FP} F lle=**cl**] 3rd

What about the requirements of the probe? We suggest that focalization imposes requirements of its own, possibly phonological. These interfere with movement of the pronoun: a clitic cannot bear stress mandated by focus. The requirement for stress wins (cf. Cardinaletti & Starke 1999 on Structural Economy), and F is only able to Agree with the clitic. To summarize, then, F must enter into a relationship with a pronoun, a requirement satisfied by movement, if possible, otherwise by Agree.

5. Evidence from object cliticization. The same pronouns can also appear in object position. Then, cliticization is only permitted if the subject has also cliticized (8a). Regardless of person, an object cannot cliticize to an R-expression (8b) or across an R-expression (8c) subject.

- (8) a. Blen=**ba'**=**b**. b. *Blen Maria {=**a**, =**eb**}.
 hold.COMP=**3.HU**=**3.AN** hold.COMP Maria =**1SG**=**3.AN**
 'S/he (a human) held it (an animal).' 'Maria held {me, it}.'
 c. *Bdell {=**a**, =**eb**} Maria.
 hug.COMP =**1SG**=**3.AN** Maria
 Intended 'Maria hugged {me, it}.'

The pattern in (8a–c) resembles a typical locality effect: the object cannot be attracted before the subject has been attracted. Importantly, an independent subject pronoun does not intervene (9).

- (9) Betw=**a'**₁=**ba'**₂ [t₁ *neda'*] t₂.
 hit.COMP=**1SG**=**3.HU** **1SG**
 'I hit *her/him*.'

Under an attraction theory, object cliticization is correctly predicted to be possible here because, as we have already seen, the independent pronoun is inert for the probe's purposes.