The make-up of clitic clusters in the history of (Gallo-)Romance

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Several Romance languages underwent a change reversing the internal order of clitic sequences. In Italian and French, for instance, clusters containing a 1/2p dative clitic nowadays exhibit the order dative > accusative, but in origin they were characterised by the opposite order: accusative > dative.

(1)　a.　Je **le te** comande　　　　　　　　　　　　　(o.Fr. Foulet 1919:149)
　　　b.　Je **te le** comande　　　　　　　　　　　　　(m.Fr.)

Descriptively, such languages evolve from a stage in which clitic pronouns display the same order of the corresponding arguments/adjuncts to a stage in which the order of the former is the mirror image – in Baker's sense – of the order of the latter.

Arguably, the trigger of this change was the evolution from weak to clitic pronouns, which allowed clitics (namely, X°) to left-adjoin one to the other. Building on Kayne's *Linear Correspondence Axiom* (Kayne 1994:19-21), I therefore argue that the evolution from (1a) to (1b) results from a change in the syntactic configuration of the cluster: in origin, clitic sequences were *split* (i.e. clitics occupy different, though adjacent, positions), while nowadays they are *true clusters*, i.e. a single complex head:

(2)　a.　[le [te　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　(o.Fr., split)
　　　b.　[te le […　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　(m.Fr., cluster)

The evolution from (2a) to (2b) did not take place simultaneously in all the Romance varieties, but nowadays the mirror order is found in almost all the Romance varieties. With sequences of 3p clitics, things are a bit more complicated, as in modern Romance their ordering is subject to cross-linguistic variation and, moreover, their morphology is subject to puzzling alterations. In Ibero-Romance and modern Italian, for instance, these clusters exhibit the mirror order (hence, dative > accusative), but the resulting combination ends up being morphologically opaque. In general, the inflected form of the 3p dative clitic, e.g. Sp. *le(s)*, is not accepted in cluster-initial position, where it is replaced by an invariable exponent (i.e. a clitic that does not exhibit agreement or case morphology):

(3)　a.　se/*le lo da　　　　'He/she gives it to him/her/them'　(Sp.)
　　　b.　bi/*li lu dana　　　　"　　"　　"　　"　　(Log. Sard., Jones 1993)
　　　c.　glie/*le lo dà　　　　"　　"　　"　　"　　(It.)

French departs from the other Romance languages as clusters of 3p clitics are accusative > dative (they therefore retain the archaic order) and display no synchronic irregularity. Diachronically, however, it is worth noting that the 3sg dative clitic *li* turned to the modern exponent *lui*, which, in origin, was a strong form.

(4)　a.　Et cil le **li** dïent　　'and they tell it to him'　　(o.Fr)
　　　b.　Et ils le **lui** dient　　"　　"　　"　　　(m.Fr)

My talk addresses the following questions: i. why do 1/2p clitics (and the 3p reflexive clitic) change first, while 3p clitics tend to maintain the original order? ii. why are sequences of 3p clitics morphologically opaque (while 1/2p clitics are not)? iii. why does such opacity arise in

languages like Italo- and Ibero-Romance, which display the mirror order, while it is not found in French? iv. why did the Fr. clitic *li* turn to *lui*?

First, the 3p dative clitic, unlike its 1/2p counterparts, is a bimorphemic clitic, i.e. it can be analysed as a root $\sqrt{l}$- followed by an agreement marker (cf. Kayne 2000). In light of this distinction, I argue that opacity follows because true clusters are formed via a process of *root incorporation* targeting a subcomponent of the dative clitic, i.e. the root expressing Person features ($\sqrt{\{P\}}$). Once incorporated, $\sqrt{\{P\}}$ can no longer trigger the insertion of *l*- (which must be followed by a proper agreement marker) and, as a last resort, a dummy clitic like *bi* or *se* is inserted, as shown in (5). 1/2p datives, on the contrary, are monomorphemic elements and, as such, they incorporate without giving rise to opacity effects.

(5)   [$\sqrt{\{P\}}$ + D°   [(t$_{\sqrt{\{P\}}}$)
           | |
        *l-→bi/se   lo
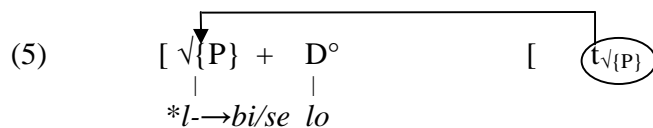
Following the same analysis, I argue that, in French, clusters of 3p clitics have kept the archaic order because they are still split. In other words, while in the other romance languages the dative clitic becomes 'syntactically deficient' (in the sense of Cardinaletti and Starke 1999) and is therefore forced to incorporate onto the accusative one, in French it does not becomes a fully-fledged clitic and, consequently, it is expressed by a weak exponent (*lui*) in a split position. This amounts to say that modern French displays two types of clitic combinations: true clusters, where 1/2p dative clitics have incorporated onto the accusative one giving rise to the mirror order in (6a), and split sequences, in (6b), which have kept the archaic syntactic structure in which the dative pronoun stands in a separate position and is therefore spelled out as a weak pronoun (noticeably, the same conclusion is reached in the synchronic study of Laenzlinger 1993):

(6)   a.   [me le […   (cluster)   b.   [le [lui   (split)

Moreover, the hypothesis of two different syntactic configurations can account for the morpho-phonology of enclitic combinations (Laenzlinger 1994, Rooryck 1992), which exhibit the following possible combinations (the standard ones are those in (7a) and (7b')):

(7)   a.   Parle-**m'en**!   a'.   Donne-**me-le**!   (m.Fr.)
        b.   Parle[z]-**en-moi**!   b'.   Donne-**le-moi**!   (m.Fr.)
        c.   Parle-**moi**[z]**en**!   c'.   Donne-**moi-le**!   (m.Fr.)
              'talk to me about it'   'give it to me'

I argue that the pattern in (7) follow from the co-existence of true clusters, (7a/a'), and split sequences, (the others). The difference between the split configurations may lie on the fact that in (7b/b') the clitic *en/le* moves with the verb crossing the weak pronoun *moi*, while in (7c/c') the verb moves past the whole pronominal (split) sequence.

References: Cardinaletti, A./Starke M. (1999). 'The typology of structural deficiency: A case study of the three classes of pronouns', in H. van Riemsdijk (ed.), *Clitics in the languages of Europe*. Berlin and New York:145-233 ♦ Foulet, L. (1919). *Petite syntaxe de l'ancien francais*. Paris: Champion. ♦ Jones, M. (1993). *Sardinian Syntax*. London: Routledge. ♦ Kayne, R. (1994). *The Antisymmetry of Syntax*. Cambridge (Mass.): MIT Press. ♦ Kayne, R.. (2000). *Parameters and Universals*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. ♦ Laenzlinger, C. (1993) 'A syntactic view of Romance pronominal sequences' *Probus* 5.3: 242-270. ♦ Laenzlinger, C. (1994) 'Enclitic clustering: The case of French positive imperatives'. *Rivista di Grammatica Generativa* 19, 71-104. ♦ Rooryck, J. (1992). 'Romance enclitic ordering and Universal Grammar'. *The Linguistic Review* 9.3: 219-250.