

## SPANISH CLITIC CLUSTERS: THREE OF A PERFECT PAIR

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**ABSTRACT.** This paper deals with a small set of data from clusters of three clitics in Spanish that questions the empirical adequacy and scope of previous analyses of clitic clusters in Romance. It is shown that the output of the Spurious *se* Rule is not identical to genuine *se*, at some level that is relevant for linearization of clitics within a cluster. A proposal is presented to capture the neglected data, and this is done in a way that illuminates the debate on the division of labour in clitic phenomena between phonology, morphology and syntax. Central questions in morphology, such as ordering of operations, syncretisms, linearization principles and consequences of lexical insertion are addressed and re-examined.

**Keywords.** clitic clusters; linearization; spurious *se*; Spanish; impoverishment; syncretism

**RESUMEN.** A partir del análisis de grupos de tres clíticos en castellano, este trabajo cuestiona la adecuación y el alcance empíricos de estudios previos sobre grupos de clíticos en lenguas romances. Se demuestra que el resultado de la aplicación de la regla de *se* espurio no es idéntico al pronombre *se* 'genuino' sino que estos elementos contrastan a un nivel que es crucial para la linealización de los clíticos dentro de un grupo. Se presenta una propuesta que da cuenta de los datos, de un modo que ilumina el debate acerca de la división del trabajo entre la fonología, la morfología y la sintaxis en la determinación de las construcciones de clíticos. Se discuten y reexaminan cuestiones centrales de morfología, incluyendo el orden de aplicación de ciertas operaciones, los sincretismos, los principios de linealización y las consecuencias de la inserción léxica.

**Palabras clave.** grupos de clíticos; linealización; *se* espurio; español, empobrecimiento; sincretismo

‘Once all the compounds and derivatives have been taken away, (...) all the languages in the world are equally inexpressive.’  
J. L. Borges: *The Analytical Language of John Wilkins*

### 1. Introduction

Clitics raise several kinds of issues for the different modules of grammar. In spite of having been the focus of extensive research, most questions are still open. Does their behaviour follow from phonological, morphological or syntactic properties? How is their position in a sentence determined? Why do they appear in the orders—and the phonological form—they do when they form clusters? What is behind the co-occurrence restrictions they display? How are syncretisms better captured?

Romance pronominal clitics have received quite a lot of attention within generative grammar. In the early seventies, Perlmutter (1971) argued, in a careful and extensive work, that the ordering of clitics in Spanish, and presumably in all languages, cannot be accounted for in syntactic terms. He proposed that clitic sequences are subject to surface or output constraints that should be expressed in terms of a set of slots in a template.

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A well-known fact about Spanish clitics is the realization of the third person dative clitic as *le(s)* in isolation, but as *se* in the presence of a third person accusative clitic.<sup>1</sup>

- (1) a. El premio, **lo** dieron a Pedro ayer  
*the prize, 3SG.ACC.M gave.3 PL to Pedro yesterday*  
 ‘The prize, they gave it to Pedro yesterday’
- b. A Pedro, **le** dieron el premio ayer  
*to Pedro 3SG.DAT gave.3 PL the prize yesterday*  
 ‘To Pedro, they gave the prize yesterday’
- c. A Pedro, el premio, **se lo** dieron ayer (\**le lo/\*lo le*)  
*to Pedro the prize SPUR 3SG.ACC.M gave.3 PL yesterday*  
 ‘To Pedro, the prize, they gave it to him yesterday’ (Bonet 1995)<sup>2</sup>

Perlmutter (1971) formulated a rule, the Spurious *se* Rule, to account for the opaque form *se* of the third person dative clitic *le* in the context of a third accusative clitic (1c). Strozer (1976) develops a morpho-syntactic account of clitic position in the sentence, ordering in clusters and co-occurrence restrictions. Bonet (1991, 1995) redefines clitics as hierarchical structures of features and presents a detailed analysis of the operations and structures responsible for the morphological and phonological output of clitics. After some post-syntactic morphological operations have applied, clitic sequencing is obtained by mapping to a template. As in Harris (1994 and subsequent work), the Spurious *se* Rule is treated as a morphological rule of impoverishment (i.e., a rule of delinking of morphological features), within the framework of Distributed Morphology (Halle & Marantz 1993). In Bonet’s work, the previously ‘unexpected’ opaque forms clitics get in the presence of other clitics fall naturally from the morphological operations on clitic structures. Beyond her templatic approach to linearization, one of the crucial aspects of Bonet’s theory is the attempt to capture the syncretisms in the clitic paradigms, the co-occurrence restrictions in clusters and the emergence of opaque forms.

The idea of a template, however, has not remained unchallenged. Harris (1995) captures ordering facts through a general principle that makes reference to the ‘structural weight’ or number of contrasts a lexical item expresses. Within an Optimality Theory framework, sequencing of clitics is accounted for in terms of constraints on alignment of features or of lexical items (Grimshaw 1997; Legendre 1997). Heap (2005) expresses Harris’s complexity principle as a constraint that applies on hierarchical morphological structures. There have also been approaches to ordering within clusters based on syntactic movement and position (Ordóñez 2002; Desouvrey 2005). Richard’s (2001, 2010) linearization restrictions could be the underlying principle behind clitic sequences in Spanish, including opaque forms.

In spite of their differences, all previous approaches to clitic sequencing and spurious *se* share the idea (explicitly or implicitly) that the application of the spurious

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<sup>1</sup> In Medieval Spanish the opaque form for *le* was the allomorph *ge*, which in time became spurious *se*, therefore acquiring the same form as the existing reflexive clitic. Although the analyses discussed and presented here are synchronic, the historical origin of spurious *se* can shed light on its current morphological structure and, in turn, the synchronic analyses can have consequences for the analysis of the change from *ge* to *se*. See §5 for a brief discussion of the relation between the origins of spurious *se* and the analysis developed here. For the historical origin of spurious *se* see Enrique-Arias (2006) and references therein.

<sup>2</sup> Here, as in other examples, glosses and translations have been adapted for consistency. Spurious *se* is glossed as SPUR.

*se* rule has two tightly related consequences, one with respect to the phonological form (the spell-out) of the clitic, the other with respect to the positioning of spurious *se* within a clitic cluster.

- (2) Spell-out:  
The third person dative clitic is spelled-out as (the reflexive clitic) *se*
- (3) Linearization:  
This third person clitic is linearized as the reflexive clitic *se*.

A central issue of this work is that while the first consequence, (2), is (obviously) true, the generally assumed (3) is empirically false. The unproblematic acceptance of (3) derives from previous work having focused on data with only two-clitic clusters. Sequences of three clitics that have a genuine ‘reflexive’ *se* (a clitic associated with the nominative argument) followed by a second person clitic *te* (a possessor dative) and a third person accusative (4) contrast in acceptability with the same surface sequence when the *se* corresponds to a third person dative clitic (spurious *se*) and the second person clitic is reflexive.<sup>3</sup>

- (4) ¿En serio **se te lo** llevó?  
*In seriousness, 3SG.REF 2SG.DAT 3SG.ACC.M took.3SG*  
'It really took it away from you?'
- (5) \*¿En serio **se te lo** llevaste?  
*In seriousness, SPUR 2SG.REF 3SG.ACC.M took.2SG*  
'You really took it away from him?'

Previous work on the Spurious *se* does not predict the sharp contrast in grammaticality of identical sequences of clitics involving spurious *se* like the one illustrated in (4)-(5). This small set of data from clusters of three clitics in Spanish has quite broad consequences, and questions the empirical adequacy and scope of previous analyses. In particular, it is shown that only analyses which make fine distinctions between the features vocabulary items express and the set of features of the nodes in which they are inserted are able to accommodate these data. Ordering of clitics is sensitive to the feature composition of clitics as terminal nodes; linearization cannot be a process performed on clitics as vocabulary items.

In section 2, I present an application to Spanish of Bonet’s work on clitic structures, opaque forms and the template (since her work deals mainly with Barceloní Catalan). It is shown her approach makes the wrong predictions for clusters of three clitics which contain spurious *se*. In section 3, I present an alternative proposal—within Bonet’s spirit—to account for the spurious *se* data which is empirically broader and informs central issues of content and ordering of morphological processes such as lexical insertion and linearization. Several empirical and theoretical problems of templatic approaches are discussed in Section 4, along with a review of non-templatic approaches to clitic sequencing and to spurious *se* in particular. I show that these approaches are also problematic because they all share the assumptions (2) and (3) with respect to the consequences of the application of the

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<sup>3</sup> Sentence (4) can be uttered in a case where somebody just told the speaker that the tow-truck has taken his/her car. Sentence (5) would be appropriate in a context where the speaker has just been told that the interlocutor has taken somebody's car with his/her.

Spurious *se* Rule. In particular, I discuss why Harris's (1994, 1995) proposal or Optimality Theory approaches do not have the tools to deal with these data. Only an approach that combines a feature geometry for clitics and a view of linearization as applying to structures, such as Heap's (2005), can accommodate the problematic data. Section 5 presents the concluding comments.

## 2. The templatic approach

In this section, I review Perlmutter's approach to clitic ordering and I make Bonet's work on Romance clitics explicit for Spanish. This approach to clitic sequencing—where most of the burden of linearization is taken up by a template—and its treatment of the opaque form *se* are discussed and evaluated in terms of the predictions they make for the linearization of the clitic pronoun *se* that is the output of the Spurious *se* Rule.

It is generally assumed that pronominal clitics are composed of a set, or bundle, of features, which include specifications for number, person, gender, case, etc. The complete paradigm of the etymological system, with all the features that Spanish clitics express is the following (from Harris 1995:174):<sup>4</sup>

(6) The 11 forms in the Spanish clitic system

		3 pers		2 pers		1 pers	
		m	f	m	f	m	f
<b>ACC</b>	SG	<i>lo</i>	<i>la</i>	<i>te</i>		<i>me</i>	
	PL	<i>los</i>	<i>las</i>	<i>os</i>		<i>nos</i>	
<b>DAT</b>	SG	<i>le</i>		<i>te</i>		<i>me</i>	
	PL	<i>les</i>		<i>os</i>		<i>nos</i>	
<b>REF</b>	SG	<i>se</i>		<i>te</i>		<i>me</i>	
	PL	<i>se</i>		<i>os</i>		<i>nos</i>	

Perlmutter (1971) observed that several sequences of clitics that correspond to well-formed syntactic structures are nevertheless ungrammatical. He argued that these restrictions could only be accounted for in terms of surface constraints. He claimed that the possible sequences of clitics in Spanish are obtained by mapping of the clitics to slots in a template. The slots are linearly ordered and each is designed for the mapping of a certain clitic—or set of clitics—but not others. Perlmutter claimed that the slots in the template are defined in terms of person.

(7) Perlmutter's template for Spanish

*se*    II    I    III

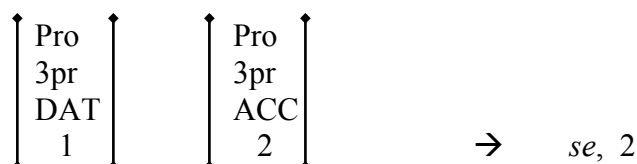
Mapping to this template accounts for the ungrammaticality of sequences such as *\*me te*, *\*me se*, *\*te se*, *\*le me*, *\*le se*, *\*lo te*, *\*las se*, etc., all of which are unacceptable irrespectively of the syntactic function of the argument associated with

<sup>4</sup> Etymological system is the widespread system based on case (as evidenced in non-reflexive third person clitics which distinguish, first, between dative and accusative, and then, within accusative, distinguish between feminine and masculine). There are several other systems, particularly based on animacy and/or gender (e.g., *laísmo*, *leísmo*), but also on the count/mass distinctions (e.g., *loísmo*). In general terms, however, the differences in systems do not affect the analysis of spurious *se*. See Fernández-Ordóñez (1999) for a thorough description of existing systems; Heap (2002) for a morphological analysis.

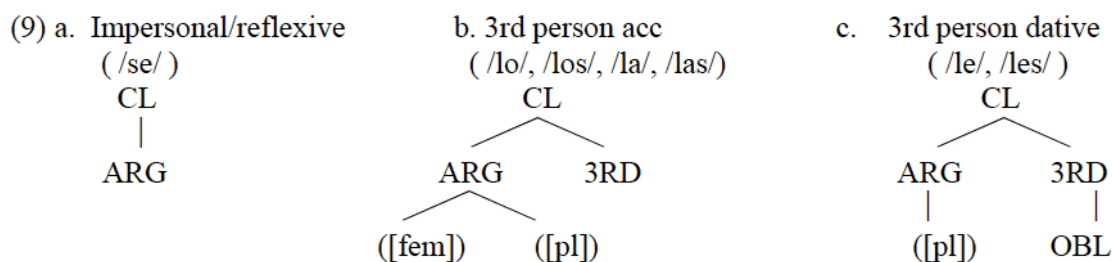
the clitic.<sup>5</sup> The template also accounts for the ungrammaticality of sequences composed of two clitics that map onto the same slot, such as *\*se se*, *\*me me*, *\*te te*, *\*nos nos*, and *\*me nos* and *\*nos me*.

In order to account for the output of the cluster of two third person clitics—a dative and an accusative—he proposed a rule that transforms the dative clitic into *se*. Crucially, the Spurious *se* Rule applies before the mapping to the template, and therefore avoids the potential conflict.

(8) The Spurious *se* Rule (Perlmutter, 1971)



In her seminal work, Bonet (1991, 1995) has argued that clitics are sets of features organized in hierarchical structures. The “fully specified syntactic feature matrices of pronominal clitics are mapped onto morphological structures ... in the Morphological Component” (Bonet, 1995:618). Not every feature that comes from the syntax is mapped into the morphological hierarchical structures, thus producing syncretisms, as clearly observed in (6). In what follows, I will work with Bonet’s 1995 structures, from which the following morphological structures for the relevant Spanish pronominal clitics are obtained:

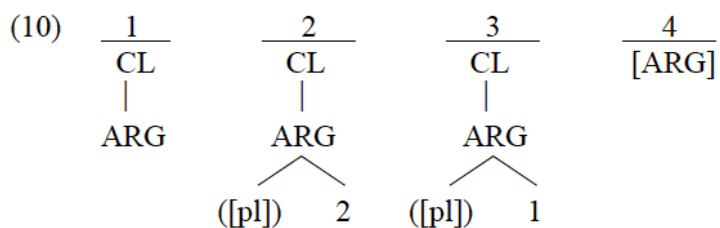


Bonet’s proposal of hierarchical structure accounts for syncretism on the inventory of clitics. The node OBL(ique) (9c), for instance, is dependent on 3RD(person); if there is no third person node, then, there will be no different form for the clitic (i.e., first and second person, and no-person clitics will not have a special form for dative).

Exploiting the idea that clitic features are organized hierarchically, Bonet presents a detailed proposal of the nature of the template for Barceloní Catalan and how it accounts for sequencing and opaque forms of clitic clusters. Leaving several details aside, the template for Spanish in light of Bonet’s analysis for Barceloní is as in (10).<sup>6</sup>

<sup>5</sup> In many dialects, however, the sequences *me se* and *te se* alternate in proclitic position with the standard *se me* and *se te*, respectively. See § 4.4 for details.

<sup>6</sup> Bonet argues for the feature OBL(ique) to be assigned to a separate slot in Barceloní. That the dative clitic is split into two slots (the branch ARG maps to slot 4 and the branch OBL maps to slot 6) receives empirical support from a split spell-out of each branch when there is a genitive clitic mapped to the middle slot 5. Such evidence is not available for Spanish, so I will keep a conservative approach here and suggest only one slot corresponding to Perlmutter’s III person slot. The template and the feature hierarchies are further discussed in § 3. From now on, OBL is replaced by DAT(ive), since Spanish lacks non-dative oblique clitics.

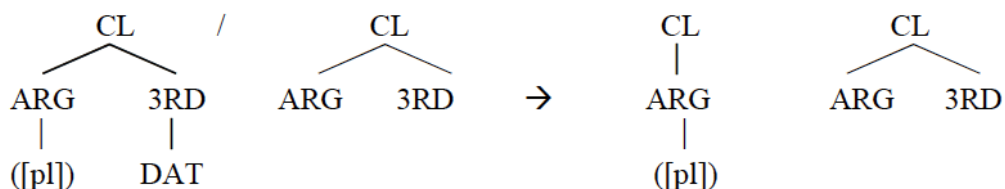


The template in (10) accounts for possible clusters *se te*, *se nos*, *me le*, *se te las*, *se les*, *te los*, etc., and impossible clusters *\*nos se*, *\*me se*, *\*nos se*, *\*los se*, *\*les te*.

What is the prediction for cases of two third person clitic structures? If slot 4 corresponds to Bonet's "type b slot" (a slot reserved for only a terminal node, the most specific defining feature of the structure), then, by definition, there would "be no restriction on the number of instances of a given feature that can be assigned" to it (Bonet: 1995), although only one will be spelled-out. The claim for slot 4 being type b should be based on cases of two clitics mapped to them that emerge as one. Since it is not possible to have two accusative arguments, the only two structures which could be generated potentially involving two third person clitics would be the combination of an accusative with a dative, and the combination of two datives (an ethical dative and a recipient or source dative, for instance).<sup>7</sup>

With respect to accusative-dative, this is the context where the Spurious *se* Rule is triggered. Bonet presents the Spurious *se* Rule as a process of delinking of the features 3RD and DAT from the third person dative clitic. As a result of this impoverishment, the dative clitic has the same structure as the reflexive and impersonal *se*. This approach in terms of impoverishment rules allows Bonet to account for the fact that opaque forms of clitics in clusters systematically coincide with the form of an existing clitic in the language, rather than being expressed by an arbitrary phonological sequence.

(11) The Spurious *se* Rule (Bonet, 1995)



Within Distributed Morphology, these morphological rules—delinking and insertion rules—apply to morphological structures before linearization and vocabulary insertion take place. For Spanish clitics, there seems to be only one such rule, responsible for the one opaque clitic, the "spurious *se*".

### 2.1 Predictions of the Spurious *se* Rule and the template combined

The application of the spurious *se* rule has consequences for both the mapping of the impoverished clitic onto the template and for its phonological spell out. In Perlmutter's and Bonet's work it is assumed, unproblematically, that once the structure corresponding to a third person dative clitic has undergone the spurious *se*

<sup>7</sup> Bonet's system—as interpreted for Spanish in (10)—predicts, contrary to fact, that in the case of two third person dative arguments either the sequence *le le* would be acceptable or that only one clitic would emerge, the clitic being ambiguous between corresponding to one or the other dative. For reasons of space, this issue will not be discussed further here.

rule (losing its person and case feature), the output structure is linearized by mapping to slot 1—the one corresponding to genuine *se*. In Perlmutter, the rule directly provides the output form *se*; in Bonet, the output of the rule is a structure that is mapped onto slot 1 which, when vocabulary insertion takes place, is spelled-out as *se*.

The data presented in (4)-(5), discussed below, and (12) show, however, that while the output of the Spurious *se* Rule, after being mapped to the template, is indeed spelled-out by *se* (the same lexical item of genuine *se*), the output of the Spurious *se* Rule cannot be mapped as the structure of genuine *se*, to slot 1. Put more generally, the output of the Spurious *se* Rule cannot be identical to genuine *se*; the two *se* must be distinct at some level that is relevant for linearization of clitics within a cluster.

- (12) a. \*Nosotros **se** **nos** **lo** comimos.  
*we SPUR 1PL.REF 3SG.ACC.M ate.1PL*  
 ‘We ate it up on her.’  
 b. \*Tú **se** **te** **lo** comiste (a ella).<sup>8</sup>  
*you SPUR 2SG.REF 3SG.ACC.M ate.2SG (on her)*  
 ‘You ate it up on her’ (Strozer 1976: 171)

In order to clearly test the predictions of the Spurious *se* Rule we should compare two apparently identical strings of three clitics one of which contains genuine *se* and the other contains spurious *se*. This comparison will allow us to check whether the output of the Spurious *se* Rule is mapped onto slot 1. In (13b) we can see three clitics: reflexive *se*, dative second person clitic *te* and third person accusative *lo*.

- (13) a. La grúa **se** **me** llevó el auto.  
*The tow truck 3SG.REF 1SG.DAT took.3SG. the car*  
 ‘The tow truck took (with it) the car from me’. (My car has been towed).  
 b. ¿En serio **se** **te** **lo** llevó?  
*In seriousness, 3SG.REF 2SG.DAT 3SG.ACC.M took.3SG*  
 ‘It really took it away from you?’

Now, let’s consider a similar situation, but where, in the answer, the dative argument is third person rather than second, and the subject and reflexive clitic are second person:

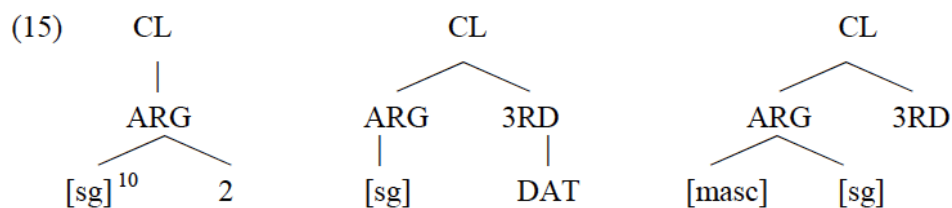
- (14) Me **le** **llevé** el auto (a Emilio).<sup>9</sup>  
*1SG.REF 3SG.DAT took.1SG. the car Emilio.DAT*  
 ‘I took the car from him for myself/with me’ (I took away Emilio’s car)

<sup>8</sup> The reflexive clitics in these examples (*nos*, *te*) correspond to “aspectual *se*” which in combination with the consumption verb *comer* ‘eat’ can be translated as ‘eat up’ (see also example (20)). Spurious *se* in (12a,b) and (13b,e) correspond either to a possessor dative (the possessor of the object eaten) or an ethical or affected dative. The ungrammaticality of (12b) should be considered in the light of the data below.

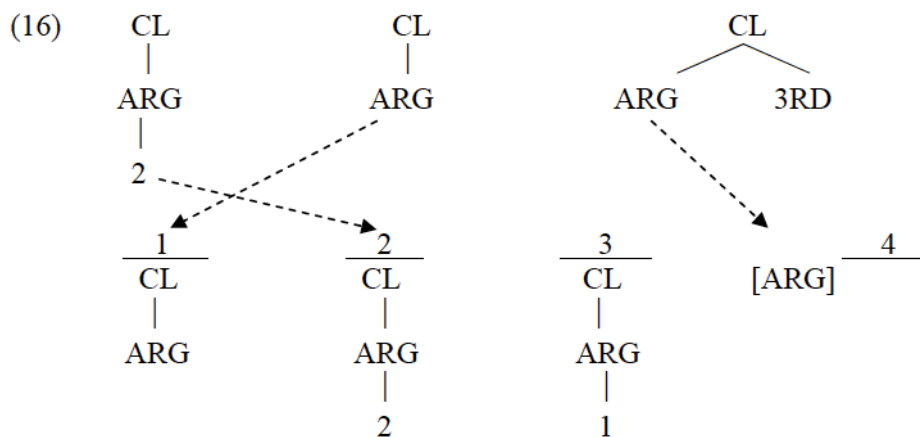
- (i) a. Le comiste el sandwich. ‘You ate her sandwich’/‘You ate the sandwich on her’  
 b. Se lo comiste. ‘You ate it (on her)’  
 c. Te lo comiste. ‘You ate it up’  
 d. Te le comiste el sandwich. ‘You ate the sandwich up (on her)’  
 e. \*Se te lo comiste. ‘You ate it up (on her)’

<sup>9</sup> As a reviewer notes, the co-occurrence of the dative clitic with the full DP in this construction is not acceptable in all dialects of Spanish.

We can imagine a response to (14) parallel to (13b), with the following (non-linearized) input to the morphological rules:<sup>10</sup>



In the morphological component, the spurious *se* rule will apply, delinking the right branch of the structure of the dative clitic. The resulting structures are mapped into the template as in (16). The terminal feature ARG of the ‘accusative’ clitic is mapped to slot 4. The structure of the former third person dative clitic is identical to the structure for which slot 1 is reserved. Therefore it will be mapped to slot 1. There is only one feature mapped to slot 4.



After the mapping has been done, if there have not been any clashes, the spell-out rules provide each morphological structure with phonological content, yielding *se te lo*. In this case, the response to (14) should be (17). However, (17) is ungrammatical.<sup>11</sup>

- (17) \*¿En serio            **se**    **te**    **lo**            llevaste?  
*In seriousness, SPUR 2SG.REF 3SG.ACC.M took.ISG*  
‘You really you took it from him for yourself?’

It is not the case that these facts have not been observed before. Strozer 1976 deals with all combinations of clitics in Spanish. She recognizes the different status of the spurious *se* and also presents sentences that are ungrammatical because of the position of spurious *se* within a cluster, as those in (12). In Strozer’s analysis, it is the phonology that differentiates spurious *se* from *le*, and she proposes a filter that makes

<sup>10</sup> In some views, this feature should not be represented, since singular is absence of (privative feature) plural, and masculine absence of (privative feature) feminine. I include them here for expository purposes, without committing to a privative analysis or an analysis in terms of + or – specifications of a feature.

<sup>11</sup> The ungrammaticality of (17) emerges irrespective of the type of dative related to spurious *se*, be it an ethical dative (a high dative or applicative) or a double-object dative (a low dative or applicative, as (18)).



reference to *se* as a lexical item. Within current theory the relevant difference between *le* and spurious *se* is not phonological but morphological. The ungrammaticality of combinations like (16) is also noted in Bonet 1991. She acknowledges that these facts cannot be accounted for in her proposal, under which a sentence like (18) should be perfectly fine.

- (18) \*A Juan, el juguete, ¡no **se me lo** quites!  
*Juan.DAT, the toy.ACC, not SPUR 1SG.DAT<sub>ETHICAL</sub> 3SG.ACC.M take.2SG*  
 ‘Don’t take Juan’s toy (on me)!’ (Bonet 1991:172)

Bonet claims that the problem in (18) should be a violation of an adjacency requirement that applies to the target and trigger of the Spurious *se* Rule. However, it is very difficult to imagine how such an adjacency requirement for just this case could be represented within her morphological theory. The issue is left for further research and is not addressed in Bonet 1995. Pescarini (2011) also proposes that the problem in cases such as (18) is the intervention of a third clitic which breaks the adjacency of clitics corresponding to internal arguments. Although attractive, this analysis predicts, contrary to fact, a contrast between a spurious *se* corresponding to an argumental dative as opposed to an ethical dative (see footnote 11).

It is important to note a related fact which has been overlooked. If the order of the reflexive and the spurious *se* is inverted, as in (19), the sentence sounds somewhat deviant, but contrasts with decisively ungrammatical (17). In fact, these kind of examples (a sequence of reflexive *te* followed by spurious *se* and an accusative third person clitic) are not difficult to find in Spanish websites, as illustrated in (20)-(21).

- (19) ? ¿En serio **te se lo** llevaste?  
*In seriousness, 2SG.REF SPUR 3SG.ACC.M took.1SG*  
 ‘You really you took it from him for yourself?’
- (20) Le sacaste el hielo de sus manos y **te se lo** colocaste a Zac  
*you.took the ice from his hands and 2SG.REF SPUR 3SG.ACC put Zac.ACC*  
 en el labio.<sup>12</sup>  
*on the lip*  
 ‘You took the ice away from his hands and placed it on Zac’s lip.’  
<http://myjustin.com/es/15702/si-vos-te-atreves-te-prometo-que-sigo-cap-15-y-16/>
- (21) Si la vacuna **te se la** aplicaron gratis...<sup>13</sup>  
*If the vaccine 2SG.REF SPUR 3SG.ACC.F applied free*  
 ‘If the vaccine, they gave it to her on you for free.’  
<http://www.planetamama.com.ar/foro/sabin-y-pentavalente-t77301.html>

The occurrence of sentences such as the ones above suggest that Bonet (1991) may be correct in that there is an adjacency requirement between target and trigger of the Spurious *se* rule. The phenomenon of translation of plurality in the context of the

<sup>12</sup> In (20) *te* is a reflexive clitic probably corresponding to a so called ‘aspectual *se*’, which is co-referential with the subject argument and highlights the subject’s involvement in the action or its unusualness (for simplicity I do not provide an English translation here). Spurious *se* is co-referential with the possessor dative phrase *a Zac*, and *lo* refers to the ice.

<sup>13</sup> This sentence is natural uttered to a parent referring to a vaccine applied to his/her daughter: *te* is a non-reflexive ethical dative referring to the parent-hearer, spurious *se* refers to the daughter and accusative *la* refers to the vaccine.

rule—the spell-out of a plural dative via a plural morpheme on the accusative clitic *les lo* → *se los*—points in the same direction.<sup>14</sup> This does not mean, however, that in (17) the problem is that the impoverished clitic gets linearized (in the first slot) as genuine *se*. I pursue in the next section an alternative account keeping close to Bonet’s theory and the idea that both the spurious *se* rule and linearization of clitics are performed in the morphological component.

### 3. A proposal

The crucial contrast between ungrammatical (17) and grammatical (12b), repeated as (22), is that *se* in (22) is genuine *se* rather than the spurious *se*, and the verb agrees with the external argument (which agrees in  $\phi$ -features with the ‘reflexive’ clitic, even when, being third person in this case, agreement does not show).

- (22) ¿En serio        **se**        **te**        **lo**        llevó?  
*In seriousness, 3SG.REF 2SG.DAT 3SG.ACC.M took.3SG*  
 'It really took it away from you?'

What do (17)-(22) teach us? I believe that what the data shows is that the *se* output of the Spurious *se* Rule is not the same as the ‘genuine’ reflexive or impersonal *se*. Previous approaches have all analyzed the two *se* as identical, taking for granted that the phonological identity follows from—or implicates— morphological identity, and then they have asked —if at all— why there is a problem in the mapping of spurious *se*. Here I propose to question the total identity, therefore opening the possibility of accounting for the facts in (17)-(22) as a natural consequence of the difference between genuine and spurious *se*, rather than be forced to employ some special mechanism.

The question that should be addressed, then, is in what sense the two *se* are different?

#### 3.1 *The two se: syntax or morphology?*

How can we account for the data in (12)-(21) while still supporting the claim that opaque forms are always the consequence of morphological manipulations on feature hierarchies that yield a structure that corresponds to that of an existing clitic in the language?

One possibility would be to let syntax do the work of differentiating between the ‘genuine’ *se* and the spurious *se* on the basis of syntactic position or syntactic status of *se* as opposed to *le*. Something along these lines might be on the right track. Challenges for such an approach arise, however, from the fact that, on the one hand, the type of dative argument (high or low) has no bearing on these facts (recall footnote 11) and, on the other, that the kind of “genuine” *se* has no bearing on its obligatory initial position within a cluster.

Additionally, a morphological account of the third dative clitic appearing as *se* in the presence of a third accusative clitic would still be necessary. That is, we need a morphological account of the opaque form if we do not want to go back (to pre-Bonet’s times) to the need of a stipulation to obtain *se* rather than any other well-formed phonological string like *ta* or *fe*. I will therefore explore another possibility that

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<sup>14</sup> For discussion of this phenomenon see, *i.a.*, Bonet (1991), Harris (1994, 1995), Grimshaw (1997).

keeps the burden of clitic cluster ordering within morphology. I will do so within the spirit and resources of Distributed Morphology, staying close to Bonet's analysis.<sup>15</sup>

### 3.2 *Modification on the feature structure of clitics in Spanish*

The Spurious *se* Rule is triggered in the presence of a third person accusative clitic. The feature accusative is arguably a feature with syntactic and morphological consequences, and does not seem to be a default in spell-out rules. Third person accusative clitics mark the most contrasts within the system of Spanish clitics. It is only the accusative clitics that mark gender: it would be desirable, then, to express this by having the privative feature [feminine] be dependent on the accusative feature.<sup>16</sup> I will therefore include the feature ACC in the corresponding clitic structures (the third person clitics spelled-out as *lo* or *la*).

With respect to person and case features, I would like to propose, like Bonet (1995), that third person is present in the structure, but, unlike Bonet, that 3RD is a sister of the case feature. The only clitic without person feature is *se*.<sup>17</sup> Any person clitic is singular or plural; the privative feature [plural], then, will be a daughter of the person feature 1ST, 2ND or 3RD.<sup>18</sup> The structures of clitics in Spanish will be considered, for the moment, to be those in (23). In this analysis third person clitics are singled out as the most specified (the ones which express the most contrasts).

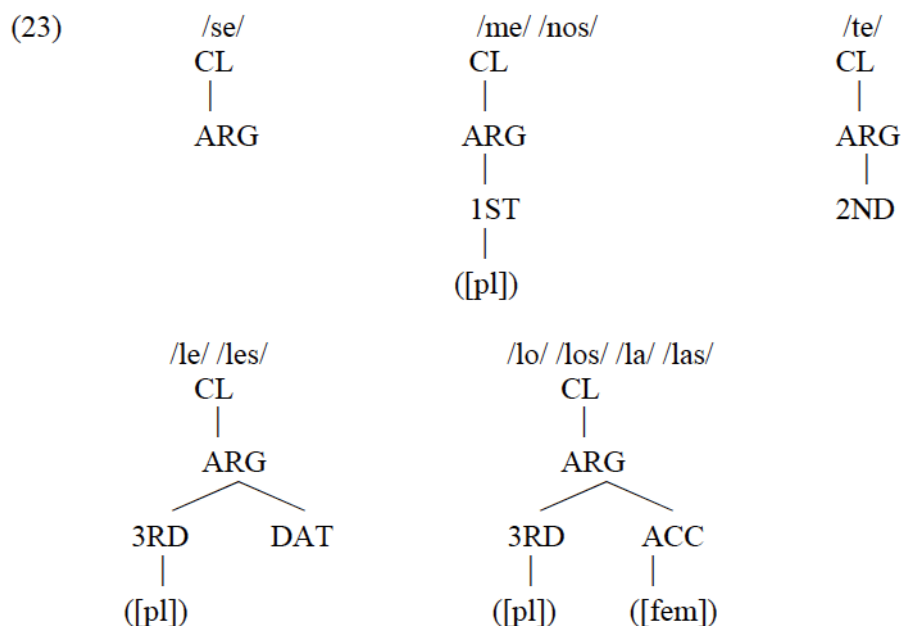
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<sup>15</sup> Another proposal could derive the spurious *se* directly as a consequence of the mapping to the template rather than from a morphological rule. Spanish dative and accusative third person clitics could be more like Barceloní, where when two structures are mapped onto the same slot, an opaque form arises. This would capture the idea that transmission of plurality is only possible in a very local environment, as well as accounting for the ungrammaticality of (17). In light of the general problems of templatic approaches discussed in §4, I do not argue for such an analysis. Manzini & Savoia (2004) present an analysis along these lines but based on syntactic positions rather than slots on a morphological template.

<sup>16</sup> I am abstracting away from dialectal variation on the clitic systems (such as *leísmo* and *laísmo*).

<sup>17</sup> *Se* is the only clitic which, if it is to have reference at all, is necessarily anaphoric (reflexive); see Bruhn de Garavito, Heap and Lamarche (2003) for discussion. See Bonet (1995) for arguments that third person must be present in the structure of Romance clitics.

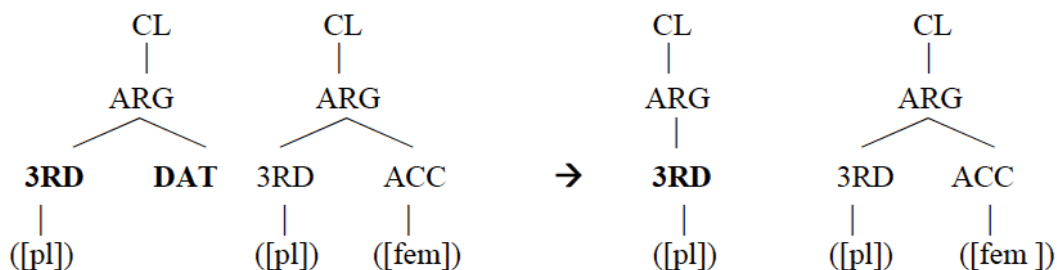
<sup>18</sup> Much more could be said here with respect to the feature hierarchies of Spanish clitics. If we take a contrastive approach to the hierarchies, case features should be dependent on the feature 3RD. We could also consider that dative, accusative feminine and accusative masculine are all forms of the same feature (a three-way distinction of gender-case). I leave the discussion of these important issues for future work.



### 3.3 Spurious *se*

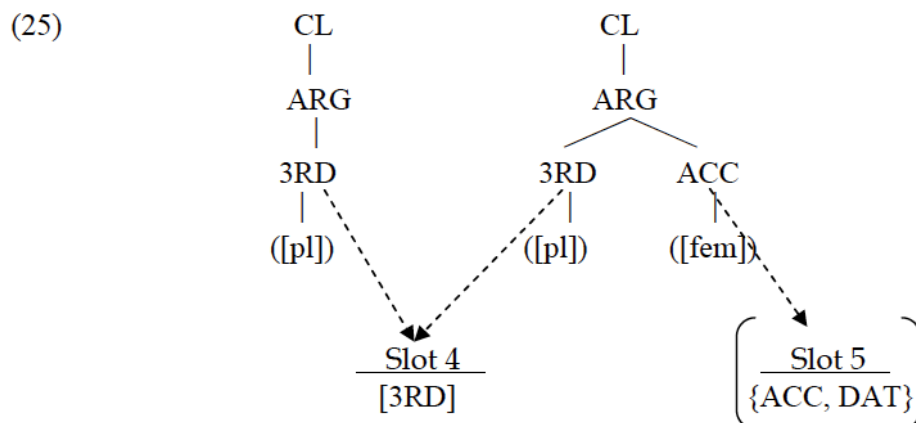
In order to express the idea that genuine *se* and spurious *se* are distinct in terms of their respective morphological structure, a different rule is needed. The new Spurious *se* Rule is modified in how much of the structure of the dative clitic is “chopped off”. It is crucial for this analysis that only the case feature be delinked in the presence of a third person accusative.

#### (24) Alternative Spurious *se* Rule



### 3.4 Linearization

Let’s continue to assume for the moment that linearization of clitic structures is obtained by mapping to the template. The mapping in (25) assumes a fourth slot designed to receive morphological structures specified as third person. Alternatively, a fifth slot could be reserved for mapping of either ACC or DAT associated with a third person feature, much like the slot for OBL proposed by Bonet for Barceloní. ACC and DAT mapping to one and the same slot would express the fact that there are never two third person clitics marked for case (*\*le lo*, *\*le le*). The characteristics of slot 4 (or 4 and 5) are not very clear, however, and it is difficult to evaluate whether a slot where two terminal nodes are mapped is problematic or not. For the system to work, more than one feature should be able to map onto 3RD but only one onto ACC or DAT.



### 3.5 Spell-out rules

Leaving aside for the moment the mechanisms responsible for linearization, after the structures have been linearized, they are spelled-out by the available vocabulary items. Lexical insertion proceeds in accordance to the Paninian principle, as argued for in Distributed Morphology, whereby the most specified vocabulary item that does not contradict the input structure is inserted. Let's assume the relevant part of the spell-out rules to be those in (26).<sup>19</sup>

(26)	[CL, ARG, 1, pl]	↔	nos
	[CL, ARG, 1]	↔	me
	[CL, ARG, 2]	↔	te
	[CL, ARG, 3, ACC, fem]	↔	la
	[CL, ARG, 3, ACC]	↔	lo
	[CL, ARG, 3, DAT]	↔	le
	[CL, ARG]	↔	se

The accusative clitic is spelled-out as usual, according to [ACC, (fem)] → l-o/a. The 'ex-dative' has the features CL – ARG – 3RD. There is no vocabulary item with those three features. Then, it will be spelled-out as the phonological string associated with a subset of those features. There is a vocabulary item that has two of the features, [CL, ARG], and that is as much as can be expressed of the set of features of the impoverished 'le'. Given (26), then, we obtain (27).

(27)	[CL, ARG, 3RD]	→	se
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In this analysis, then, spurious *se* is the result of the interaction of both impoverishment (deletion of features) and underspecification (insertion of a form that is specified for less features than the morphological structure where it is inserted).

### 3.6 How much do we gain?

The alternative proposed in the previous section has some advantages over previous accounts, without losing any of their important attractiveness. It covers a broader set of data and, most importantly, captures the intuition that the third person dative clitic, even after impoverishment, does not linearize as genuine *se*. In terms of

<sup>19</sup> I will not argue for these particular spell-out rules. This would work as well with rules that assign a vowel –the class marker– to the clitic according to (inflectional) form class, as proposed by Harris (1994). Additionally, I leave aside the issue of plural –s for third person clitics and first person *nos*.

a template, spurious *se* still ‘belongs’ to a rather final slot. In this analysis the clitic loses the person feature later, as a consequence of vocabulary insertion rather than as the consequence of a morphological rule. By ‘delaying’ this impoverishment we avoid ‘promoting’ the clitic to a first position in the sequence, which is an illusion of analyzing only pairs of clitics. It also reflects that the template or ordering is indeed established on the basis of person, from the “no-person” *se* to the third person clitics, in the order 0, II, I and III.

The restriction on the number of features that can be mapped to slot 5 also accounts for the unacceptability of sequences of two third person datives *le(s) le(s)*, as noted in footnote 4.

The proposal just presented crucially relies in a less impoverished structure feeding linearization and then lexical insertion. In turn, linearization is done on the basis of a template. The claim that linearization takes place before lexical insertion is a controversial matter, however; and so is the existence of a template. There are several theories that explicitly or implicitly assume that linearization is not the result of mapping to a template but rather follows from properties or features of lexical items (Grimshaw 1997, 1999; Harris 1994; Legendre 1997, 1999; Manzini & Savoia 2004). There are other theories that argue that linearization applies to syntactic or morphological structures, before lexical insertion takes place, but do not rely on templates (Harris 1995; Richards 2010). How would theories that do not recourse to a template for linearization bear on the problematic data of three clitic-clusters? Do the data presented here pose a problem for non-templatic approaches too or, on the contrary, can they provide a framework where the facts on spurious *se* can be naturally captured? This is the topic of next section.

#### 4. Non-templatic Approaches

Two central questions on clitic clusters that have to be answered refer, on the one hand, to the relative order of clitics and, on the other, to why problematic situations are sometimes unrecoverable but in other cases they are saved by an alternative operation.

With respect to the first issue, the templatic approach attempts to account for both possible and ungrammatical orderings by proposing slots in a template as a linearization device. With respect to conflicting situations, we have seen that Bonet recourses to different kinds of slots. In the case of slots defined for a whole structure, if two clitic structures compete for the same slot, there is no possible resolution and the derivation crashes. In the case of slots designed for terminal nodes, more than one clitic structure can be mapped there, but an opaque form may arise. In other cases, potential conflicts are solved by some morphological operation that affects the structure before it is mapped onto the template (the case of the Spurious *se* Rule).

A similar approach is taken in Pescarini (2010), who argues for a third possibility of conflict resolution (besides impoverishment and deletion): the insertion of an elsewhere form. For him, however, morphological operations such as feature manipulation and insertion of the elsewhere clitic take place as conflict resolution mechanisms during Vocabulary Insertion. It is implied therefore, that ordering via a template is performed *before* rules such as the Spurious *se* Rule apply (Pescarini 2010:430). This would predict, correctly, that the dative clitic is not linearized to the far left as genuine *se*. Unfortunately, other problems arise from this approach, since it would require a template that includes slots for both *le* and *lo* (*se* > *te* > *me/nos* >

*le > lo*) even if the *le lo* sequence can never surface.<sup>20</sup> It also predicts that the sequence *te se<sub>spur</sub> lo* in (19) should be fully acceptable (see §5).

One general problem for templatic approaches lies in the very nature of the slots. First, slots in a template have no independent justification, and are in a sense just a description of the surface order we find in clusters—as impressive as the description might be. In our case, there are four (or five) slots in the template, but there could be more, or less, and in principle they could be in any order. It might turn out that this is somehow desirable, anyway, if languages were to differ in relative ordering of slots, other things being equal. Spanish differs from Italian and Pashto, for example, in the relative ordering of first and second person clitics: in the latter languages first person clitics always linearly precede second person. However, even within a language, why are things the way they are, and why isn't the template in Spanish, for example, [1/2 PL > 3DAT > 2SG > 1SG > 3ACC]?

Second, as noted by Harris (1995), a four-slot template predicts—or at least creates the expectation—that clusters of four clitics will be as possible and acceptable as a cluster of two. This does not seem to be the case. While every Spanish speaker accepts clusters of two clitics, and three clitic clusters are common enough, very few speakers would accept clusters of four. This would require grammars to have some other restriction to account for this unacceptability; a restriction which should be language-dependent, given crosslinguistic variation in the number of possible clitics in a cluster.

Third, as observed by Marantz (p.c.), in a templatic system, competition for a slot is symmetric. That is, when two clitic structures compete for a slot, only one can be mapped, but the template cannot decide which. However, this is not the case. Whenever two third person dative clitics compete, it is the ethical dative that is prevented from being realized. A parallel case arises for a configuration where two 'se' are generated—an impersonal and a reflexive. The sequence *se-se* is ungrammatical, since there is only one slot.<sup>21</sup>

- (28) \*Se se lava  
       IMP REF washes  
       'One washes oneself'

The template predicts that a sentence like (28) would be acceptable if either of the clitics appears as *se* while the other one is spelled out in some other way. The following example shows that the prediction is wrong, since only the sentence where the impersonal is expressed in an alternative way and the reflexive is expressed by *se* is acceptable (24a); when *se* spells out the impersonal and the reflexive is expressed as a reflexive DP, the result is ungrammatical (24b).<sup>22</sup>

- (29) a. Uno /la gente se lava  
       one/people REF washes  
       b. \*Se lava a uno mismo.  
       IMP washes one self

<sup>20</sup> In fact, as a reviewer notes, we cannot exclude the possibility that the *le* that will become spurious *se* is actually linearized as *le > lo*. In turn, this implies that the problem with *\*le lo* has nothing to do with linearization of syntactic or morphological nodes, but is a conflict of clitic forms.

<sup>21</sup> The case of *se se* will also be discussed in § 4.3.1, with the problems it raises for OT approaches.

<sup>22</sup> It is interesting to note that the facts are reversed for Barceloní, as presented by Bonet (1991:104-107).

Moreover, in the case of the Spurious *se* Rule, the asymmetric competition for slots makes it more problematic to relate the triggering of the rule to linearization. If the problem of linearizing two third person clitics is that there is only one slot, then why is it the accusative that ‘wins’ and the dative that has to be impoverished, instead of the other way around?

In the case of competition of two first or second person clitic structures, let’s say *nos* and *me*, it is also predicted that either clitic could merge, as long as it is only one. However, what output is grammatical seems to depend on the syntactic role of the clitics. In the case of an ethical dative and an accusative or dative (30a), it is the ethical dative that has to ‘disappear’ (30b), its meaning not being obtained. (See Pescarini 2010 for discussion of deletion of the elsewhere clitic.)

- (30) a. \*Julia ya            **me**                    **nos**       llama    mamá y    papá  
*Julia already 1SG.DAT<sub>ETHICAL</sub> 1PL.ACC call.3SG mommy and daddy*  
 Intended: ‘Julia already calls us mommy and daddy on me’
- b. Julia ya            **nos**                    llama    mamá y    papá.  
*Julia already 1PL.ACC call.3SG mommy and daddy*  
 ‘Julia already calls us mommy and daddy’
- c. \*Julia ya            **me**                    llama    mamá y    papá  
*Julia already 1SG.DAT<sub>ETHICAL</sub> call.3SG mommy and daddy*  
 Intended: ‘Julia already calls us mommy and daddy on me’  
 (Grammatical with the meaning: ‘Julia already calls me mommy and daddy’)

With respect to what the slots are based on, Perlmutter’s template for Spanish was based on person (from the no-person *se* to third person); but Bonet’s template for the rich system of clitics in Barceloní has also slots for non-person clitics defined by case, in the slots of type b (those reserved for the most specific node in a structure). Can the fact that the slots in the template (and clitics) are ordered according to person —if true—be derived from some principle? If we find a principle, would we still need a template?<sup>23</sup>

An additional, very general problem concerns the nature of the ordering principle behind the template: even in theories in which clitics are morphological structures, and slots are reserved for structures rather than surface forms, the slots are reserved only for the type of structures that are directly expressed by vocabulary insertion. In Spanish, for instance, there are no slots proposed for an accusative first person clitic as opposed to a dative or reflexive first person; which exactly corresponds to the fact that first person clitics do not mark case contrasts. Many clitic sequences, however, are restricted according to features which are *not* expressed as contrastive by the clitic system of the language; the template falls short of accounting for this type of cluster phenomena. This is the case of the well studied person case constraints (PCCs), such as \**me<sub>ACC</sub> le* in Spanish.

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<sup>23</sup> It has been proposed that first and second person can occupy different —higher—positions in the syntax. In the case of clitics, for instance, Ordóñez (2002) proposes that in some Romance languages /dialects, first and second person clitics adjoin to a higher head. As Heap (2005) notes, however, the evidence seems to be restricted to singular forms *me* and *te*, which makes syntactic approaches more problematic.



Let's turn now, then, to works that address these questions but do not base their approach on a template. I begin with work done by Harris (1995) and then to work carried out within the framework of Optimality Theory (OT). Again, the focus is on the predictions and the insights the theories offer in connection with the output of the Spurious *se*.

#### 4.1 Harris

Harris (1995) develops a general theory of Spanish clitics concentrating on their morphological properties. He argues, like Bonet, for the existence of an autonomous morphological component in the grammar where some post-syntactic operations are performed before the derivation is 'shipped' to the phonological interface (Distributed Morphology). The relevant operations have to do with modifying the syntactic terminals by deletion of features that are not relevant for morphology or phonology. Linearization and lexical insertion are the other two most important operations performed in the morphological component.

Harris argues that sequencing of clitics in clusters is not the product of a template, but rather the effect of "several separate morphological and lexical factors" (Harris 1995: 171). Actually, he claims that sequencing is "entirely morphological".

Harris argues that at the end of the syntactic derivation, terminal elements are unordered and fully-specified. At entering the morphological component, terminals where clitics will be inserted are dramatically purged of everything that is not relevant for morphological and phonological processes. In the case of Spanish, this impoverishment has the effect of purging from the clitic structures all features but those that are the minimal specifications required to identify the output forms of Spanish clitics—and therefore allow for felicitous lexical insertion. Impoverishment processes take the form of operations that target some features in the context of others. These operations express the systematicity in the syncretisms of the 11 existing clitic forms (see the 'paradigm' in § 2.1). For instance, the rule in (31) expresses the fact that if a clitic expresses a person feature, then it does not show gender distinctions.

- (31) [  $\alpha$  person, f ]  
           ↓  
            $\emptyset$  (Harris 1995: 177)

In Harris, then, there is no redundancy in the specifications of clitics as lexical items. For him, in contrast with Perlmutter and Bonet, third person is not present as a feature in clitic structures. "The clitic *se* is no less third person than the items that occur in the leftmost position, which must exclude *se*" (Harris 1995:170). Even when the feature is not present in purged representations, he considers that what distinguishes *se* from the other third person—non-person—clitics is a case-like property, which he labels *reflexive* (but covers the distinct syntactic/semantic roles genuine *se* can perform).

After the morphological rules have applied, clitic terminals are ready for lexical insertion and linearization. Clitic terminals are ordered, according to Harris, on the basis of a principle and a stipulation, as below.

- (32) Syncretism precedes contrast  
 (33) 2person precedes 1person

Principle (32)—or ‘slogan’ as Harris calls it—makes sure that a clitic terminal that “manifests an overt contrast with respect to a certain morphological property (number, gender, case) can be preceded in a cluster only by a terminal that shows no overt contrast for that property” (Harris, 1995: 189). As expressed in (31), clitics are for Harris bundles of features, not hierarchical structures. He points out, however, that this is not crucial for his approach, and that the linearization principle could have a hierarchical tree-like interpretation (we will see that this is Heap’s (2005) interpretation). The content of (33) is a stipulation on the ordering of clitics that show person contrast (i.e., only 1 and 2 for Harris) that works as a filter of otherwise well-formed clusters *me-te*.

As it is expressed in Harris (1995), it seems that linearization is an operation performed on structures, and not on lexical items. In Harris (1994), however, the operation can be interpreted as performed on the basis of properties of the clitics as lexical items. Whether lexical insertion precedes or follows linearization, however, does not change the predictions of Harris’s theory with respect to the ordering of the spurious *se*. This is because the proposed morphological structures match one-to-one the inventory of Spanish clitics. In other words, the morphological impoverishment rules account so neatly for the systematic syncretisms that we are left with no possibility of having a structure smaller—more impoverished—than the one corresponding to *le* but more specified than the unspecified structure for *se*. This can be illustrated by Harris’s Spurious *se* Rule below.

(34) Harris’s Spurious *se* Rule

$$\begin{array}{c} [\text{acc}] \wedge [\text{dat}] \\ \downarrow \\ \emptyset \end{array}$$

As a result, the impoverished dative [  $\emptyset$  ] will be linearized to the first position—the position of the most syncretic, least leafy clitic—and vocabulary insertion will insert the default *se* in the corresponding terminal. Harris predicts, wrongly, that the structure in (35a), which corresponds to sentence (16), \*¿En serio se te lo llevaste?, will be unproblematically linearized according to principle (32) into (35b), and together with vocabulary insertion, the result will be (35c).

(35) a. [2pers]  $\wedge$  [acc]  $\wedge$  [ ]  
 b. [ ] > [2pers] > [acc]  
       ↓       ↓       ↓  
 c.   *se*    *te*    *lo*

In sum, Harris’s all-morphological and all-ruled-based-impoverishment theory cannot account for the data of three clitic clusters containing spurious *se*.

#### 4.2 Richards

There is a more recent approach to linearization phenomena that is worth investigating. Richards (2001, 2010) proposes that linearization processes are subject to a requirement on structures, the Distinctiveness requirement. The process of linearization performed on syntactic structures at the point of Spell-out cannot make use of sub-indices nor structural information nor reference to the lexical items—

which have not been inserted yet—that might help identify the different phrases in the tree. Linearization statements cannot differentiate between minimal and maximal projections either. As a result, whenever a configuration contains two phrases (or two heads) with identical node labels, a problem arises. He presents an analysis of several configurations in several languages where this kind of problem emerges. He also presents the different strategies a language can opt for to ‘rescue’ the problematic structures. Of relevance here is the option of deletion of one or more features in one of the offending members in a pair. In his approach, the Person-Case restrictions found in weak pronouns and verbal agreement—the *\*me-lui* constraint (Perlmutter 1971; Kayne 1975; Bonet 1991; Ormazabal & Romero 2007; among many others)—can be viewed as the result of structures that are too similar to be linearized.

In principle, then, Richards offers a framework to address the question of the source of the Spurious *se* Rule, which might, in turn, give an insight on its formulation and consequences.<sup>24</sup> The major attractiveness lies in its potential to unify restrictions on clitic combinations that have been dealt with in separate modules of the grammar, or have been considered consequences of separate operations. We can look for a unified answer to the problematic status of combinations like *\*se se*, *\*le le*, *\*nos me*, *\*me<sub>Acc</sub> le*, *\*le lo*, etc. On a closer inspection, however, the same old problems of asymmetric deletion arise. If the structures for *le lo* are too similar and then deletion of features apply, why is it that the features that are deleted are those of the dative, rather than those in the accusative? Why in the clash of *\*me<sub>Acc</sub> le*—the *\*me lui* constraint—it is the dative, again, that is alternatively expressed as a full pronominal DP, and not the accusative? Why is it that there is deletion of some features in one case (*le* → *se* in [le lo]) but full deletion in others (*\*le* → *se* in [le le])?

More serious problems arise for the approach if we assume that linearization applies before the morphological component does its job of (massive) impoverishment, that is, at a point where clitic structures are fully specified. For there should be no relevant difference in the structure—or its size and label—between, for instance, *me<sub>Dat</sub>-lo* and *me<sub>Ref</sub>-le<sub>Dat</sub>* *\*me<sub>Acc</sub>-le*. Even if some impoverishment were to take place before linearization applies, what is wrong with *\*me<sub>Acc</sub>-le* as opposed to *me<sub>Dat</sub> lo*?

Even if the Distinctness requirement on linearization could be at work for clusters of clitic structures,<sup>25</sup> at this point it does not provide an answer to the questions we have been pursuing: the mechanisms responsible for internal ordering of clitics and the output of the Spurious *se* Rule.

### 4.3 Optimal clitics

In order to review the treatment of the issues at hand developed in an OT approach, the work which are most relevant are Grimshaw (1997) on Italian and Spanish clitics, and work on clitic clusters done by Legendre (1997, 1999) on Macedonian and Bulgarian. Finally, I discuss work done by Heap (2005) which combines elements

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<sup>24</sup> In a different type of syntax-based approach to clitic cluster phenomena, Manzini & Savoia (2004) propose that clitics are inserted directly in different syntactic positions according to their denotational properties. For them the problem with *\*le lo* is the competition for insertion in the same node. This conflict is solved by the dative being inserted in another position, the position of reflexive and impersonal *se*. This approach, therefore, shares the claim that spurious *se* is linearized as genuine *se*.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. with Adger, Béjar & Harbour (2001), who present linearization phenomena that require, they argue, an approach where lexical items (affixes) are specified for their positioning, linearization being underdetermined by the structure.

from Harris's and Bonet's insights and adds some OT tools in order to account for language internal variation.

#### 4.3.1 The best available clitic

Grimshaw (1997) presents an OT approach to Spanish and Italian clitics. She deals with a subset of the data presented in Bonet 1995. In particular, Grimshaw presents an OT analysis of the opaque forms *ci* in Italian and the Spanish spurious *se*. She also shows how transmission of plurality in the cluster spurious-*se+lo* can be accommodated by ranking of constraints.

Fully specified clitics constitute the input to be evaluated by the relevant constraints. The grammar, expressed in OT as a certain ranking of universal constraints on outputs, will select the best option among several candidates. Constraints fall in two broad groups: markedness and faithfulness constraints. Markedness constraints penalize marked structures. In the case of clitics, every feature that is expressed by the output (gender, case, person) violates some markedness constraint. Of course, these constraints can be violated, and the consequences of the violation will depend on the relative ranking of the constraint in question with respect to the corresponding Faithfulness constraints. Faithfulness constraints pull on the other direction: they require that the output be faithful to the input. Faithfulness comprehends two aspects: the features of the input must be present in the output (Parse constraints), and the features of the output must be present in the input (the Fill constraints). We will see below, for instance, that Parse R requires that the specification for reflexivity of the input be preserved, and Fill R will penalize an output where there is a specification for reflexivity that contradicts the input.

Grimshaw presents a clitic lexicon where each clitic has five feature specifications. Romance clitics have specifications for reflexivity (R), person (P), number (N), case (C) and gender (G). These features may or may not be specified, as below.

#### (36) Clitic lexicon

<i>se</i>	(R) (P) (N) (C) (G)
<i>me</i>	(R) (1) (sg) (C) (G)
<i>te</i>	(R) (2) (sg) (C) (G)
<i>nos</i>	(R) (1) (pl) (C) (G)
<i>os</i>	(R) (2) (pl) (C) (G)
<i>lo/s</i>	(-R) (P) (sg/pl) (acc) (masc)
<i>la/s</i>	(-R) (P) (sg/pl) (acc) (fem)
<i>le/s</i>	(-R) (P) (sg/pl) (dat) (G)

As in Bonet's work, the clitic *se* is the least specified: "it is a clitic which has no properties". Crucially, however, Grimshaw claims that clitics are potentially underspecified bundles of morpho-syntactic features; that is, in contrast with Bonet's theory, features are not structured into hierarchies. The generalizations on the distribution of features and syncretisms in the clitic system cannot be expressed by Grimshaw's approach, and are just stipulated or disregarded. According to Grimshaw's system, one can expect to find a language or dialect where, let's say, first person clitics are marked for case and gender, but second and third person are not. Moreover, without hierarchies of features, the Universal Markedness Hierarchies for person and case features presented by Grimshaw (37) do not correlate with anything internal to the clitic system itself, and are therefore stipulations whose universality—if true—is unexpected.

## (37) Grimshaw's Universal Markedness Hierarchies

\*2 &gt;&gt; \*1 &gt;&gt; \*3

\*Dat &gt;&gt; \*Acc

In spite of these general problems of the approach, it is worthy to review her account of opaque forms and evaluate whether it can account for the form and ordering of Spurious *se*. As Grimshaw observes, any account of the opaque *se* should provide an answer to the following three questions:

- i) What is wrong with *le lo* ?
- ii) Why is it *le* that changes and not the accusative?
- iii) Why does *le* emerge as *se*, rather than as some other clitic?

Grimshaw bases the answer to i) on some version of the Obligatory Contour Principle, a general constraint against duplication. The OCP in this case is presented as the constraint \*XX, since it is not obvious what is identical between *le* and *lo/la*.

## (38) Grimshaw's \*XX constraint

Sequences of identical functional heads are ill-formed.

It is clear that *le* and *lo* are not phonological identical (see Harris 1995 for evidence that the problem cannot be phonological). The identity must lie somewhere else. The crucial identity seems to be morphological. According to the clitic lexicon in (36), what is identical is the feature for reflexivity, specified for both as -R (notice that P is unspecified), and that is what Grimshaw assumes to be the trigger of the opaque form.<sup>26</sup> The constraint in (38) does not make reference to the specification of the other features of the -R clitics in competition; in fact it just makes reference to any two features that are the same. Therefore, the question of why it is *le* that changes to *se* and not *lo* is a separate question from what triggers the change. Grimshaw's \*XX constraint makes predictions for *le lo*, but also for *le le* and *se se*. We will see that in combination with her answer to ii), the system makes the wrong prediction for the output of *le le*, and in combination to her answer to iii), it makes the wrong prediction for *se se* combinations.

In order to account for it being *le* that changes and not *lo*, Grimshaw (1997) relies on the universal markedness constraint on case \*Dat >> \*Acc, since it is the case specification that distinguishes the two clitics. The combinations *se lo* and *le se* violate—and fail to violate—all the same constraints, except for the relatively lower case constraints. Grimshaw's Tableau (26) appears below as (39).

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<sup>26</sup> Grimshaw actually discusses the possibility that two third person clitics are forbidden because they would compete for the same slot in a templatic approach like those of Perlmutter's and Bonet's. However, we have seen that this is not Bonet's account of Spurious *se*, which emerges from a rule that applies *before* mapping to the template.

(39) input: &lt;[-R 3 sg dat] [-R 3 sg acc]&gt;

Candidates	*XX	Parse R	Fill R	Parse Pers	Fill Pers	Parse Num	Fill Num	*Dat	*Acc
a. <i>se</i> + <i>lo</i> (R)(P)(N)(C) + -R (P) sg acc		*		*		*			*
b. <i>le</i> + <i>se</i> -R (P) sg dat + (R)(P)(N)(C)		*		*		*		*!	

The input in Tableau (39) are two sets of fully specified clitics (gender should also be specified, but is left out for abbreviation).<sup>27</sup> It shows the evaluation of two output candidates (lexical items with their respective feature specifications) *se lo* and *le se*. Each violation of a constraint by either of the clitics is marked by a star \*. We can see that Parse Reflexivity is violated once by each candidate: *se* is not specified for reflexivity (*se* can be reflexive or not) so it fails to parse the -R specification of the input. Violations of Parse Person and Parse Number are also caused by *se* in each candidate.<sup>28</sup> The constraint that decides between the two options is a markedness constraint on case. Both the expression of Accusative and Dative is penalized, but, according to the universal ranking of these two constraints, expressing Dative is worse than expressing accusative. In both candidates a. and b., *se* fulfills the constraint since it is not specified for case; it is *le* in b. that violates the higher constraint on Dative, while *lo* in a. violates the lower markedness of Accusative.

The constraints in the given ranking account for the grammatical output *se lo*. This system also covers the cases where two -R dative clitics compete. Remember that two dative clitics can appear in Spanish, for example, when there is an ethical dative (expressible only by a clitic and not by an overt DP) and a possessive or goal dative. In the case of an input such as (40)—other things being equal—the output would be *se le*.

(40) input: &lt;[-R 3 sg dat] [-R 3 sg dat]&gt;

<sup>27</sup> There is a problem in most –if not all– Grimshaw’s tableaux that I will leave aside, and not correct in the tableaux: both *se lo* and *le se* violate the faithfulness constraint Parse Person twice (since neither *se* nor *le* or *lo* are specified for person); that is, the third person clitics always implicate a violation of Parse Person. While this is not a problem in tableaux (39), the ranking Grimshaw presents would yield *me lo* as the best output for the ‘le lo’ input, as can be seen in tableau (41). Even if the ranking were to be fixed by ranking Fill Person above Parse Person, there persists a puzzling result: in the case of a non-reflexive 1st or 2nd person dative clitic as input, the best candidate will never be *me* or *te* but *le*, since Parse Reflexivity is crucially ranked above Parse Person, as the tableau shows:

input: &lt;[-R 1 sg dat] &gt;

Candidates	*XX	Parse R	Fill R	Fill Pers	Parse Pers	Parse Num	Parse CL	*Dat	*Acc
a. <i>le</i> -R (P) sg dat					*			*	
b. <i>me</i> (R) 1 sg (C)		*!							

<sup>28</sup> No reference is made to Parse Case, but it is crucial that it be ranked low, at least lower than \*Dat in order to predict *se lo* as the best candidate.

The fact is, however, that *se le*, although a possible combination, cannot be the output form of *\*le le*. The input in (40) cannot make it to the surface in any form. Only one *le* can emerge—the true dative argument—and the ethical dative cannot be expressed. The question of how to account for this ‘deletion’ takes us to the third question: why does *le* appear as *se* rather than as some other clitic, or why doesn’t it delete?

When Grimshaw treats spurious *se*, she does not explicitly evaluate the possibility of deletion of *le*. She claims that a null clitic can be a candidate, and therefore we should consider it as well. If we do, however, we cannot decide between the candidate *se lo* and *lo*. The OT approach does provide the tools to account for why *se lo* is better than *lo*. Spanish *se* (and Italian *si*) is not specified for any feature. As a result, *se* will never violate Fill constraints (will never contradict the input), but it will always violate all the Parse constraints. The same applies to the ‘null candidate’. Why is *se* better than the null candidate, then? Grimshaw argues that there must be a constraint that expresses the preference for any clitic over not parsing at all: “The proper analysis of *si* must be that it does parse the feature CL(itic), even though it parses nothing else” (Grimshaw 1997:177). She introduces the constraint Parse Clitic. This constraint, ranked anywhere among the other relevant constraints, will select *se* over the null candidate.

When different outputs compete as outputs for *le lo*, all -R clitics violate the high-ranked \*XX; all clitics specified for person violate Fill Person; the null candidate violates everything *se* does, with the addition of Parse Clitic. *Se (se lo)* is therefore the ‘best clitic’ given the input, as illustrated below.

(41) input: <[-R 3 sg dat] [-R 3 sg acc]>

Candidates	*XX	Parse R	Fill R	Parse Pers	Fill Pers	Parse Num	Parse CL	*Dat	*Acc
<b>a. le + lo</b> -R (P) sg dat + -R (P) sg acc	*!							*	*
<b>b. me + lo</b> (R) 1 sg (C) + -R (P) sg acc		*		*	*!			**	
<b>c. se + lo</b> (R)(P)(N)(C) + -R (P) sg acc		*		*		*			*
<b>d. lo</b> -R (P) sg acc		*		*		*	*!		*
<b>e. le + se</b> -R (P) sg dat + (R)(P)(N)(C)		*		*		*		*!	

Explicitly including the Parse Clitic constraint yields the desired result. This is problematic for Grimshaw’s own treatment of *\*se se*, however. The constraints that account for the output of an input where there is an impersonal *se* and a reflexive *se* are basically the constraints on identical elements (\*XX) and the two faithfulness constraints (Fill Person and Parse Clitic).

In Italian, *si si* surfaces as *ci si*, obtained by the crucial ranking of \*XX and Parse Clitic >> Fill Person. The surface form *si si* of the Italian dialect Coregliano is

accounted for by Grimshaw with the alternative ranking Parse Clitic, Fill Person >> \*XX. Grimshaw claims that another logical possibility, the ranking \*XX, Fill Person >> Parse Clitic is instantiated in some dialects of Spanish, where *se se* emerges as just *se*.

- (42) a. \*Se se lava  
           ‘One washes oneself’  
       b. Se lava (Grimshaw 1997:182)

As it turns out, however, there is no evidence that such dialects of Spanish exist. The belief in their existence must have been the product of miscommunication, since Bakovic—the only source of the dialects Grimshaw 1997 cites—cannot provide data to confirm sentence (42b).<sup>29,30</sup>

Although the OT approach predicts them, we are left with no cases of an input *se* whose best output is the null clitic (but see Pescarini (2010). Now the ungrammatical sequence \**se se* and \**le le*—which are otherwise syntactically and semantically reasonable—can be treated together, as the expression of the same phenomenon: a combination of clitics which is impossible. Grimshaw herself acknowledges that this challenges the theory as a whole (Grimshaw 1997:195).<sup>31</sup>

#### 4.3.2 Implications for the ordering of OT’s spurious *se*

In spite of the claim that systematicity in choice of clitic is “best explicated in terms of the notion of optimization” (Grimshaw 1997:195), we have seen so far that Grimshaw’s analysis has many flaws while it provides no new insights. Some of the problems can possibly be fixed with new and different formulations of constraints. Others, however, seem to depend directly on the very tools and assumptions of the theory, and cannot be solved without changing the theory itself.

In the 1997 article, Grimshaw does not present a proposal for the ordering of clitics in the cluster, but does raise the questions of whether the OT account can extend to cover generalizations in ordering. Other work, such as Legendre (1997, 1999) and Grimshaw (1999), present explicit accounts of ordering facts in terms of alignment constraints.

Legendre works on the two aspects of positioning of clitics: the position with respect to the host, and the relative order of the clitics in a cluster. With respect to the latter, she argues that clitics cluster because “they compete for a single position” (Legendre 1997:5). The intuition is that clitics compete to be aligned with the edge of a particular domain. Specifically, it is some relevant feature of the clitic, such as Dative or Accusative, that competes for the edge. Thus, we have constraints like EDGEMOST(Dat) and EDGEMOST (Acc) that account for the ordering Dat-Acc or Acc-

<sup>29</sup> Both Bakovic and Heap (p.c.) reminded me that *se se* → *se* appears in Perlmutter 1971, but has since then been challenged on empirical grounds. The linguists and dialectologists consulted, including Eric Bakovic, Eulalia Bonet, David Heap and Inés Fernández-Ordóñez, have all denied speaking or having heard of such a dialect, and doubt its existence.

<sup>30</sup> Bonet (1991) shows that the same holds for Barceloní: the sentence with one clitic *se* cannot mean the same as the (ungrammatical) sentence with two *se* would.

(i) Es renta  
       /s/ washes  
       \*‘one washes oneself’

<sup>31</sup> She points to two lines of solution (such as the evaluation of full DPs as output candidates), both of which are highly problematic. Reasons of space prevent me from further discussion.



Dat, depending on their relative ranking. In Grimshaw 1999, similar constraints are at work, such as PERSONRIGHT and PERSONLEFT, which account for the ordering of *se te* and *se me* in Spanish.

With respect to the ordering of spurious *se*, an OT approach seems to offer no solution at all. Since there is no morphology and no derivation, it is either the input or the output features that get linearized. There is no ‘intermediate’ configuration or ‘history’ that could feed the ordering constraints. Of the two possibilities, it is the output feature bundles that get linearized. As a consequence, OT alignment constraints have the same effect as ordering lexical items which, I have shown, cannot be the correct approach.<sup>32</sup>

#### 4.4 Heap

Heap (2005) analyzes data of variable clitic ordering in certain dialects of Spanish, and deals with them by combining the tools and insights from different approaches to clitic phenomena and grammar. The crucial data concerns dialects where *se me* and *se te* can appear as *me se* and *te se*. In order to account for this variability within one grammar, he claims it is best to work within a framework that uses ranked violable constraints (OT being one current instantiation). He argues, however, that OT is too unconstrained and fails to capture generalizations on the specification of features and markedness constraints. He proposes a feature geometry for Spanish clitics —i.e., a hierarchical morphological structure—that is a “hybrid of Bonet’s (1991, 1995) feature geometry for clitics and Harley & Ritter’s (1998) feature geometry for number and gender paradigms.” Co-occurrence restrictions and possible ordering of clitics in a cluster are expressed on the basis of these structures. He criticizes both the templatic and the OT approaches to linearization of clitics and proposes a constraint in the spirit of Harris’s principle.

- (43) Heap’s Least Leafy to the Left (LLL)  
 Arrange clitics from the morphologically least specified to the most specified

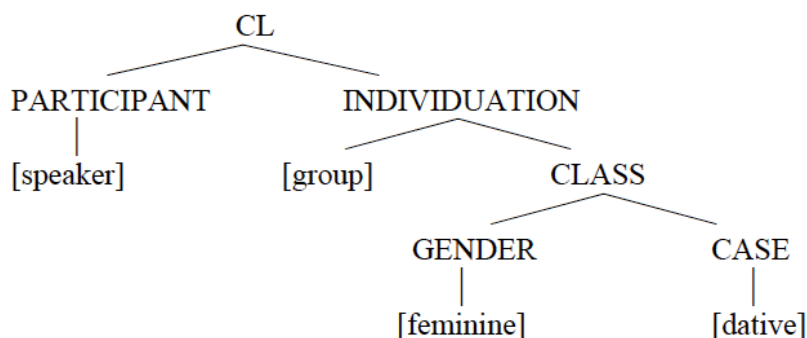
It is the feature geometry of the clitic inventory in combination with the LLL principle that accounts for relative ordering of clitics, and the variation he analyses.<sup>33</sup> Heap’s approach, as the proposal presented here, has all the elements to express and accommodate the problematic ordering of spurious *se* in three-clitic clusters. Let’s begin with the structure of clitics.

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<sup>32</sup> An additional problem is, as we noted for templatic approaches with the order of the slots not deriving from any principles of grammar, that the ranking of alignment constraints is by definition variable and free across languages. Both kinds of approaches overpredict sequences obtained by varying the order of the slots or ranking of constraints, and the features that are relevant (person, case, number, etc.) In fact, as Heap (2005) notes, “such an approach radically overpredicts ... and thus, in effect, makes no prediction at all”.

<sup>33</sup> Heap calls the LLL a constraint, not a principle. In fact, the name ‘constraint’ of the LLL is the only ‘element of OT’ that remains in Heap’s account.

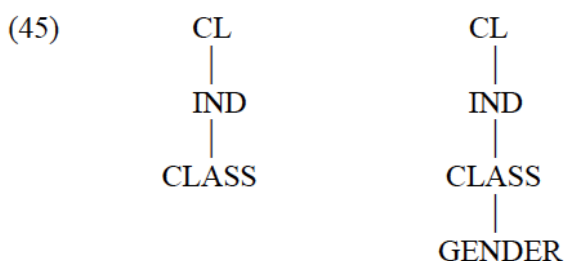
## (44) Heap's Feature Geometry for Spanish clitics



In this geometry, not every clitic has the same number of specifications. Non-specification of a feature is represented here as absence of the feature. The geometry also expresses syncretisms in the clitic paradigm. Thus, only a clitic with INDIVIDUATION and CLASS can have gender or case. There is no feature reflexive, and whether a clitic can be anaphoric depends on the INDIVIDUATION node and the structure it dominates. The clitic *se*, as in other approaches, is the least specified clitic; that is, it has the least morphological structure, which consists of the node CL(itic) alone.

It is interesting that Heap's account of variation in the order of *se me* and *te se*—but not *se nos* and *se os*—relies on the possibility of *se* of being variably underspecified. He argues that “although not strictly required by the anaphoric clitic, [other features] are nonetheless compatible with it.” The idea has something in common with the idea of a ‘less impoverished *se*’ proposed in §3: the lexical item *se* can be the spell-out of something more than just the node CL. The morphological structure is larger than CL, but it is not specified enough as to be spelled out by any other of the available clitics.

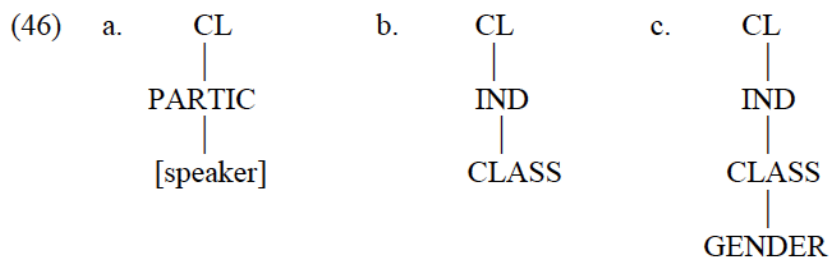
The alternative Spurious *se* Rule introduced in §3.3 can be expressed in Heap's system as delinking the CASE feature, yielding the following structure for the impoverished *se lo* (the feature [group] is omitted for simplicity).<sup>34</sup>



If linearization is a process performed on structures rather than on lexical items, when a first or second person clitic is also present, the LLL principle might have problems to decide which is less leafy between a. (*me*) and b. (spurious *se*) in (46). If linearization is performed on lexical items instead, and it does not see the structures they spell-out, there does not seem to be a way out of predicting the acceptability of

<sup>34</sup> I have modified Heap's geometry with respect to the representation of Gender and Case in the third person clitics. In Heap, the 3rd accusative clitic *lo* has both nodes Gender and Case but they do not dominate anything; 3rd dative contains them both too, and Case dominates [dative]. Since Gender and Case are complementary, I found this alternative representation better, especially in order to account for the context that triggers the Spurious *se* Rule.

the order *se te lo* for all cases, including when *se* is spurious *se*, contrary to fact.



In summary, I have reviewed several approaches to clitic clusters that are the alternative to the templatic theory. We have seen that, except for Heap's approach, unfortunately none of them can provide an account of the problematic data of *\*se<sub>Spur</sub> te lo*. It seems impossible for non-hierarchical approaches to clitics to accommodate the data of three clitic clusters.

## 5. Conclusions

I have offered an analysis of Spanish clitics in terms of the morphological account developed by Bonet for Romance clitics, within the framework of Distributed Morphology. Data from sequences of three clitics show that the opaque form *se*, output of the Spurious *se* Rule, is not linearized as genuine *se* is. It was argued that the difference in linearization is the consequence of a morphological difference. Specifically, it was proposed that genuine *se* has less structure than spurious *se*. The syncretism between the two types of *se* is the result of two steps: first, impoverishing the third person dative clitic through the Spurious *se* Rule—which delinks the case feature of the third person dative clitic structure—and second, underspecification and the rules for vocabulary insertion—which, since there is no vocabulary item for the output structure, spell it out with the less specified item *se*. As an anonymous reviewer notes, in previous analyses, spurious *se* is the result of either impoverishment (e.g., Bonet, Harris), or under-specification (e.g., Pescarini), but not the conspiracy of both.

This approach allows us to speculate about the historical change from *ge lo* to *se lo*. Since the opaque form *ge* was an allomorph of *le* that was not syncretic with the reflexive *se*, it could not be the result of the “standard” Spurious *se* Rule. At some point in the history of the change, then, when the phonological origins of *ge* were arguably not part of the synchronic grammar, *ge lo* could be obtained with the revised morphological rule proposed here, still active in current Spanish. Further change from *ge* to spurious *se* would be the loss of the lexical item *ge* and the expression of its morphological structure via the less specified lexical item *se* (rather than a change in the Spurious *se* Rule).

Although presented as a possibility, the proposal is not committed to a templatic approach. In fact, several theoretical and empirical problems of templatic approaches were discussed. I have also reviewed alternative syntactic and morphological theories, and the approach developed within Optimality Theory. I have shown why none of these accounts fares well with respect to the data of spurious *se*, and other cases of conflicting clitic structures. In the case of OT, it was revealed that the very tools of the approach prevent a comprehensive account of clitic structures and the clusters they form.

The problem of spurious *se* and its solution relied in a crucial fashion on the idea that linearization and lexical insertion are separate processes; and that what is linearized within clitic clusters are structures and not lexical items. The data presented

here, therefore, constitute compelling evidence against theories that do not distinguish between structures and lexical items for linearization, and support a treatment of clitics as hierarchical structures of features. The only viable alternative seems to be that clitics are linearized according to syntactic position of the arguments (and assume that reflexives are higher than dative and accusative clitics) as reflexive-dative-accusative and that the sequence *me se<sub>spur</sub> lo* is not completely acceptable due to some other reason. Additionally, an independent (non-linearization related) motivation for the triggering of the spurious *se* rule is needed in this case (see Desouvrey 2005).

Another advantage of the view of clitics as features structured in a hierarchy or geometry is that it allows us to look for a specific and principled trigger of the spurious *se* Rule, as opposed to a more vague and general restriction on similar elements. The offending feature in *\*le lo* I take it to be that there are two contrastive features in the context of third person: gender and case. This, in turn, allows us to speculate on some generalizations surrounding spurious *se*. First, spurious *se* could be another instance of the pervasive person-case constraints: rather than the ‘usual’ contrastive person conflicting with contrastive case, what we have in *\*le lo* is contrastive case conflicting with contrastive gender (i.e., a gender-case constraint). That is, the cluster cannot contain both a distinction of case (dative) and gender (masculine-feminine in the second clitic). Second, feature geometries allow us to speculate that spurious *se* is a neutralization process of sorts equivalent to the ones found as syncretisms in the different Spanish varieties for third person clitics: if a form specifies case (dative *le*) it does not make a gender distinction (as in the etymological system illustrated in this paper); if the primary distinction of a form is masculine gender (as in the animate *leísta* system) there is no case distinction (*le* is good for both animate dative and accusative); if the primary distinction is feminine gender (animate *laísta* system) there is no (dative) case distinction.<sup>35</sup> Within this analysis, therefore, it is possible to unify the restrictions on feature combinations that apply to a single form (syncretisms) with those that apply to clitic clusters, restrictions understood in both cases as constraints on the complexity of morphological structures (Béjar 2000).

Within this perspective, the problem with *\*le lo* is not that there are two third person clitics, and the solution is not the deletion of one third person feature. If this were the case, the same problem would be the source of the ungrammaticality of the *\*le le* sequence, and one would therefore expect, contrary to fact, the same resolution as *se le* via the spurious *se* rule. Thus the alternative analysis of spurious *se* not only accounts for the output of the rule but also redefines the triggering context: a gender distinction in the second clitic, not (accusative) case.

What emerges as a possible generalization covering spurious *se* phenomena, person case constraints and other restrictions on clitic clusters is that ordering within a cluster of clitics (and even between clitics and verbal affixes) seem to be sensitive to more features than those expressed by vocabulary items. This can be interpreted as an indication that linearization precedes lexical insertion. Under the standard assumption that linearization applies at the end of the syntactic derivation, this implies that syntactic operations are performed on nodes devoid of lexical items and phonological content, as argued for in Distributed Morphology.

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<sup>35</sup> This is basically the same type of approach to variation between the etymological system and the referential systems (*leísmo*, *laísmo*, *loísmo*) developed by Heap’s (2002) work within a Feature Geometry.

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