

ROMANCE CLITICS & THE STRUCTURE OF AGRP*

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ABSTRACT

This paper proposes a development of the analysis in Kayne (1990), where clitic movement is related to the projection of an abstract INFL(ectional)-head, compatible with infinitive (i.e. non-tensed) clauses. It will be argued, on the basis of Romanian data, that this abstract INFL-head is present in tensed clauses as well, and that it can be defined as part of the Agreement Phrase (AGRP). This proposal is extended to other Romance languages leading to a uniform account of clitic movement to INFL.

INTRODUCTION

Clitic movement has been argued to be a process of Romance syntax involving verb-movement to INFL¹. The exact factors triggering clitic movement are as yet unclear. But recent studies (cf. Kayne 1989, 1990) indicate a relation between this process and the possibility of verb-movement to INFL. More specifically, according to Kayne (1990), the specification for clitic elements belongs to the set of INFL properties, and surfaces in two ways: it is either associated with a functional head or it replaces an inflectional function. For example, in tensed clauses, the specification for clitic elements is associated with AGR, the head receiving the verb raised to INFL. In non-tensed clauses, the same specification replaces the function of T[ense], which lacks inflectional features, and turns it into an abstract head, to which only clitics adjoin. Thus, the association between clitic movement and an I-head led, in Kayne (1990), to a principled account of differences in word order, e.g., verb-clitic in Italian vs. clitic-verb in French.

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¹The objective of this paper being to apply Kayne's (1990) analysis to Romanian data, I will also have to assume, along the lines of his paper, that object clitics move in the derivation of S-Structure. Parallel analyses contradict the thesis of movement, arguing for the base generation of these elements at a certain level of INFL. See, for instance, Moore (1992), who argues for such an analysis in terms of the Empty Category Principle (ECP). However, the mechanism responsible for the placement of clitics in INFL does not concern my analysis, the purpose of which is to comment on the nature of the inflectional head hosting these elements which could be either base-generated or moved to that level.

The proposal in Kayne (1990) is crucial for an understanding of the relation between clitic movement and verb movement in Romance. This paper will adopt the analysis in Kayne (1990) as theoretical background (section 1.1.) and will further investigate the properties of the abstract inflectional head (henceforth head) serving as target for clitic movement. Romanian grammar (not tested in Kayne (1990)) provides empirical data that will be used to support a new perspective in the characterization of the I-head (section 1.2.). As a result, the mechanism of clitic movement will receive a uniform description in Romance clauses, i.e., non-distinct according to the [+/- tense] feature (section 2.1.), and in a second step, this description will be generalized to other Romance languages (sections 2.2. and 2.3.).

1. A FUNCTIONAL HEAD FOR CLITICS

1.1. Kayne's (1990) proposal

Italian infinitive clauses present the order verb-clitics, although in tensed clauses clitics precede the verb, e.g.:

- (1) a. Parlargli sarebbe un errore.
 speak-to-him will be an error
 'Speaking to him would be an error.'
- b. Sarebbe assurdo che tu gli parlassi.
 would be absurd that you to-him speak
 'It would be absurd to speak to him.'

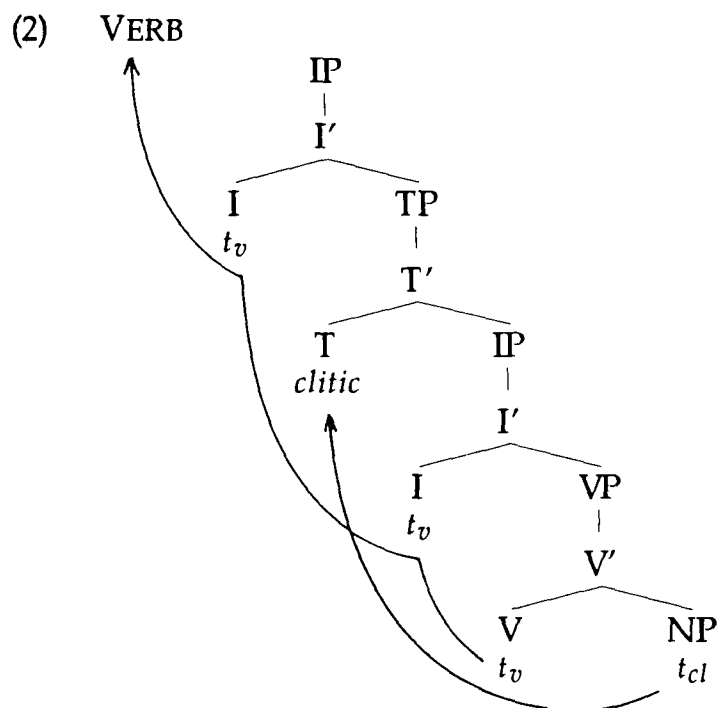
Kayne's (1990) account for the difference in word order illustrated in (1) relies on the following assumptions: (i) clitics adjoin² to an I-head; (ii) verb movement is to a position higher than the respective I-head in infinitive clauses, hence the order in (1a); (iii) in tensed clauses, clitics adjoin to the I-head containing the raised verb, giving the word order in (1b).

The properties of the I-head acquiring clitics in an infinitive clause can be summed up as follows:

- (i) This functional head does not carry inflectional features; for example, T[tense] is inert in Italian infinitives and it functions as a host for clitics. This lack of inflectional functions justifies the fact that the verb-movement

²Clitic adjunction to INFL is taken as a particular case of 'incorporation' into a head in Baker's (1988) terms.

process skips this head, without violating the Head Movement Constraint (HMC). The structure of an infinitive clause such as (1a) would be (2):



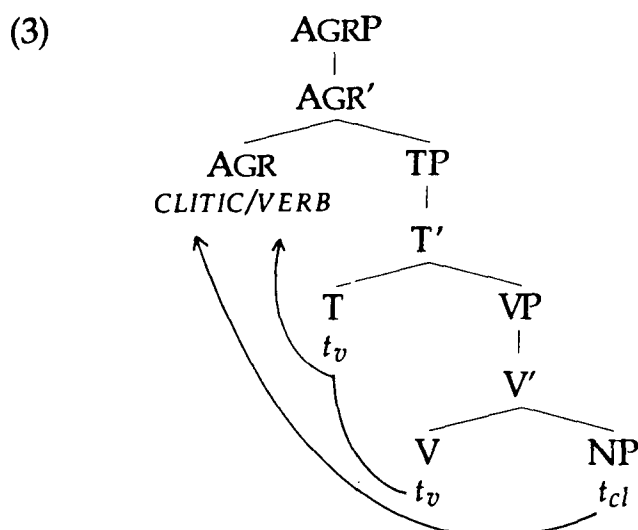
Clitic movement in the infinitive IP in Italian³

(ii) The representation in (2) implies a distributional property of I-heads with respect to clitic movement: clitics can adjoin only to an abstract I-head, like T in (2), but not to a trace I-head (reserved for verb-movement). In tensed clauses, where T has positive features, clitics will adjoin to a lexical (therefore, non-trace) head, i.e., the I-head containing the raised verb. Thus, the structure of a tensed clause such as (1b) would be (3).

Not all Romance languages display the verb-clitic order in infinitivals. For instance, French has clitic-verb order, contrasting with the pattern in (2). In earlier work, Kayne (1989) related the contrast in word order between Italian and French to the setting for the Null Subject Parameter (NSP): only in Null Subject Languages (NSLs) does the verbal morphology have the property of triggering verb-movement to the highest INFL-level, whereas non-NSLs, with a 'weaker' inflectional system, allow for a restrictive V to I movement, to a position that is lower than T. However, the other Romance languages, all NSLs, may behave either like Italian or French. Therefore, the relation between the NSP and the degree of V-movement does not consistently account for the data.

³The structures of (1a) and (1b) come in a bracketed form in Kayne (1990). I reproduce them as tree-form representations, for expository purposes. The hierarchy of IP adopted in this paper conforms to the proposal in Belletti (1989).

So far, no formal explanation has been provided for the differences between verb-movement in Italian vs. French types of languages, although empirical observations about systematic contrasts abound.



Clitic movement in the tensed IP in Italian

This paper does not attempt to answer that theoretical question, although it may contribute to the understanding of the relation between the degree of verb-movement and clitic placement on one hand, and the NSP on the other. This paper has as its purpose to apply Kayne's analysis to Romanian data. The outcome will be a generalization of the abstract I-head for clitics to all types of IP, finite or non-finite. In other words, the analysis will propose a uniform treatment of the structures in (2) and (3).

1.2. THE STRUCTURE OF IP IN ROMANIAN

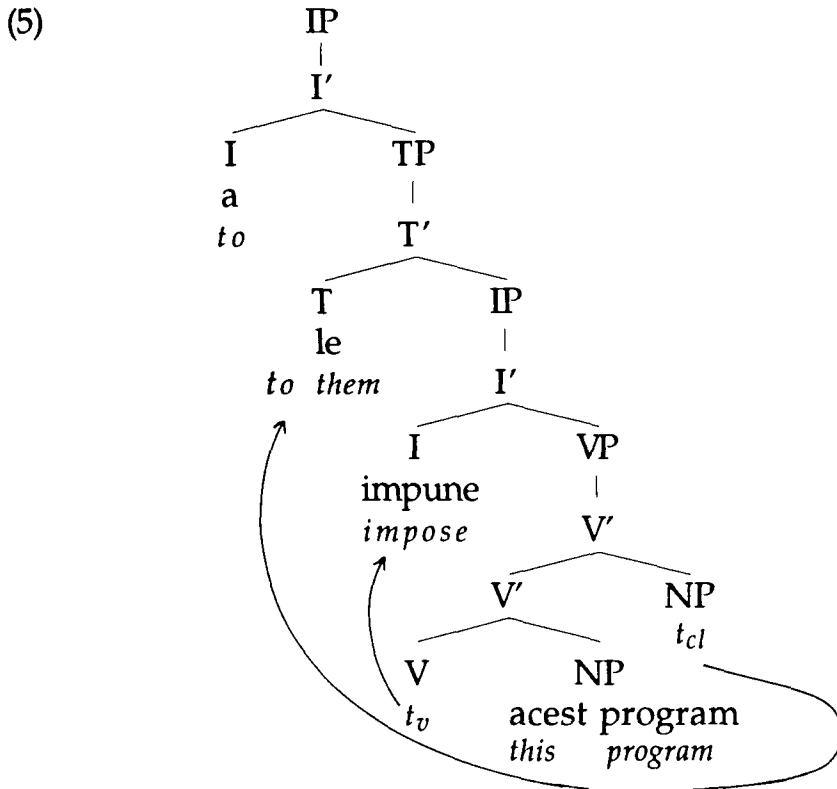
1.2.1. Infinitive clauses

Word order in a Romanian infinitive clause is clitic-verb, as in tensed clauses. From this point of view, Romanian contrasts with Italian, as in (4):

- (4) a. Parlargli sarebbe un errore.
 speak-to-him will be an error
 'Speaking to him would be an error.'
- b. A le impune acest program ar fi o pedeapsă.
 to to-them impose this program would be a punishment
 'It would be a punishment to impose this program on them.'

The contrast in word order between the infinitive clauses in (4a) and (4b) is easily explained through differences in the inflectional morphology: in

Romanian, the infinitive mood has a lexical marker *a* (functionally equivalent to English *to*), whereas in Italian this element does not appear. As a first step, let us suppose that (2) also underlies the infinitive structures in Romanian. In this case, the mood marker *a* must occupy the highest I-head, as proposed in (5):



Clitic and verb movement in Romanian infinitive clauses: provisional version

The presence of a lexical element in the highest I-head blocks verb-movement to that level or higher up. Note that *a*, like English *to*, is an unbound morpheme and cannot trigger verb-raising to the respective head. According to the analysis proposed for the Italian clause in (2), T[ense] is an abstract head functioning as a host for clitic movement. Under these conditions, the verb can move only to the lowest I-head⁴. The hierarchy in (5) is predictable under Kayne's (1990) analysis:

⁴Obligatory verb movement in Romanian infinitive clauses is confirmed by tests with VP-adjoined adverbs and Floating Quantifiers (FQ), e.g.:

- (i) Am început a nu-l mai invita așa des pe Ion.
(I) have begun to not-him more invite so often pe-John
'I began not to invite John so often.'
- (ii) Au început a-l invita toți pe Ion.
(They) have begun to him invite all pe-John
'They all began to invite John.'

in this language the verb does not move higher than T[ense], and the word order will be clitic-verb.

1.2.2. Tensed clauses

The structure in (3) represents the conditions allowing clitic movement : clauses where T[ense] has positive features and functions as an inflectional v abstract I-head. Because there is no abstract T, clitics will adjoin to a lexical head, i.e., the only non-trace I-head. This situation corresponds to the Italian sentence in (1b) and can be generalized to all the tensed contexts in Romance languages, where clitics always precede the verb.

Although this generalization captures an indisputable fact of Romance grammar, the representation in (3) does not attain descriptive adequacy when it comes to Romanian tensed clauses. The empirical problem arising in this language is that clitics and verb can be separated by a certain class of adverbs, as shown in (6):

- (6) a. Ion nu o mai invită *așa des* pe⁵ fata aceea.
John not her more invite *so often* pe-girl that
'John no longer invites that girl so often.'
- b. Ion nu o *prea* suportă pe Maria.
John not her *quite* stand pe-Mary
'John can barely stand Mary.'

The elements intervening between clitics and verb belong to the class of negative adverbs, presumably in an A-bar position within IP (but see the discussion in the following section). The word order in (6) displays the negation and the clitics at a higher level than the verb. If the clitic cluster adjoins to AGR, as in (3), the verb must occupy a lower I-head, because the adverb of negation precedes it.

It is obvious that the representation in (3) cannot capture the hierarchical difference noticed in (6). In this sense, an account of verb-movement in Romanian tensed clauses is in order. The status of the I-head acquiring clitics in this language will therefore be discussed.

In both examples, the italicized adverb or the FQ that are either adjoined to VP or in SPECVP (cf. Sportiche (1988)), follow the verb and precede the direct object. Hence, the verb must be higher than VP.

⁵Romanian displays the phenomenon of clitic doubling when the direct object is a [+human] NP. In (6a) the object clitic *o* 'doubles' the NP *fata aceea* 'that girl' and *absorbs the verbal case (Accusative)*. A dummy preposition *pe* is inserted as case assigner to the NP *fata aceea*. For more details on clitic doubling facts see Dobrovie-Sorin (1990).

2. THE RELEVANCE OF CLITIC PLACEMENT FOR V TO I MOVEMENT

2.1. V to I Movement in Romanian

In Romanian, the verb moves to INFL according to the pattern generally assumed for Romance languages since Belletti (1989). That is, the verb raises cyclically to T and AGR. This process is confirmed by the inflectional suffixes on the verb, marking distinctly the [tense] and [+agr] features, as in (7):

- (7) Infinitive *a face* 'to do'
 Indicative present *facem* = radical *face* + *-m* (1pl)
 Indicative imperfect *făceam* = radical *face* + *a* + *m* (1pl)

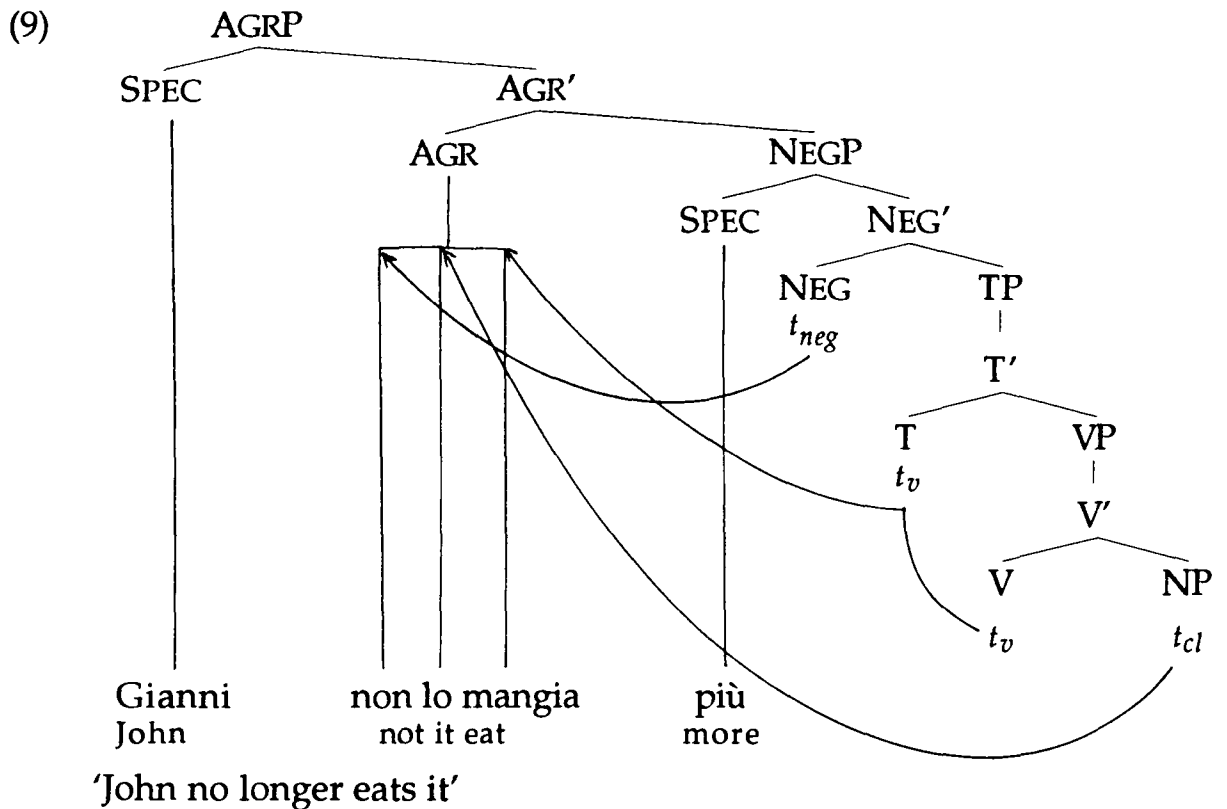
In (7) the forms of the present and imperfect indicative contrast through the presence vs. absence of the [tense] suffix *a*, visible between the radical of the verb and the marker for subject-agreement. The order of affixes shows that verb movement is to AGR in Romanian.

Although its inflectional morphology characterizes the verb-movement process in Romanian as similar to that of other Romance languages, empirical evidence presented in (6) indicates clear contrasts in hierarchical structure. In order to draw a comparison between the two types of structures I will give, first, the representation of a tensed IP in Romance, following Belletti (1990).

- (8) Gianni non lo mangia più.

The head AGR in (9) acquires two series of elements : the verb, moved by a substituting movement, and the clitic cluster, adjoined through an incorporation movement into a head. The group of clitic elements contains clitic pronouns and the negation. The negation follows the verb. Contrasting with the hierarchy of elements in (9), the word order in (6) shows the adverbs of negation *mai, prea* preceding the verb. This situation could be analysed in two ways: (i) the verb does not move to AGR, while clitics do; or (ii) the verb lands in AGR, while clitics do not.

The first possibility would violate several constraints, i.e., verbs raise obligatorily to INFL in Romanian (see footnote 3 and the word order in (6a)), and the verbal form displays marks for subject-agreement. Hence, the verb must pass through the AGR-head in Romanian too. Let us turn to the second possibility: the verb occupies AGR whereas clitics adjoin to a higher head. What would be the status of this I-head that does not trigger verb raising but allows for clitic movement?



The structure of IP in Italian

It is obvious that this functional head must not correspond to an inflectional specification which would attract the verb. In this case, it must be an abstract I-head of the same type as T in infinitive clauses, as discussed for (2). Note that in structures like (6) T has positive features, i.e., it is a trace-head and cannot function as a host for clitic movement. Therefore, the abstract I-head receiving the clitics in (6) cannot be labelled T.

Taking into consideration that in a tensed clause both clitic and verb-movement depend on the existence of an AGR-head⁶, the most natural direction to follow would be to relate these processes to properties of AGR, classifiable into two series: (i) verbal morphology; (ii) nominal features⁷. The verbal morphology has the function of defining the verb for mood, tense, person; the set of nominal features would mirror, at the level of INFL, the thematic relations generated within VP (or V_{max}). In this sense, we would expect that clitics in INFL cooccur with lexical NPs in argument position, as, for instance, in languages with clitic-doubling:

⁶The traditional assumption in the literature is that both clitic and verb movement occur in languages with a 'rich' AGR, e.g., in Romance languages, but not in English, with its 'weak' AGR (cf. Pollock (1989) amongst others).

⁷See also Borer (1989) for a characterization of AGR as a +N(ominal) element.

- (10) Maria *l_i-a* invitat pe Ion_i.
 Mary *him-has* invited pe-John
 'Mary invited John.'

In (10) the sole function of the object clitic adjoined to the auxiliary verb is to reflect the relation between verb and the object *Ion* 'John'. The same doubling process applies to indirect objects in Romanian. In other languages (e.g., Italian dialects), the clitic doubles a subject. However, the coexistence of clitics and the corresponding NP in the structure may be an option that depends on independent restrictions, according to the grammar in question. From this perspective, it is expected that there will be languages in which clitics can double only empty NPs⁸.

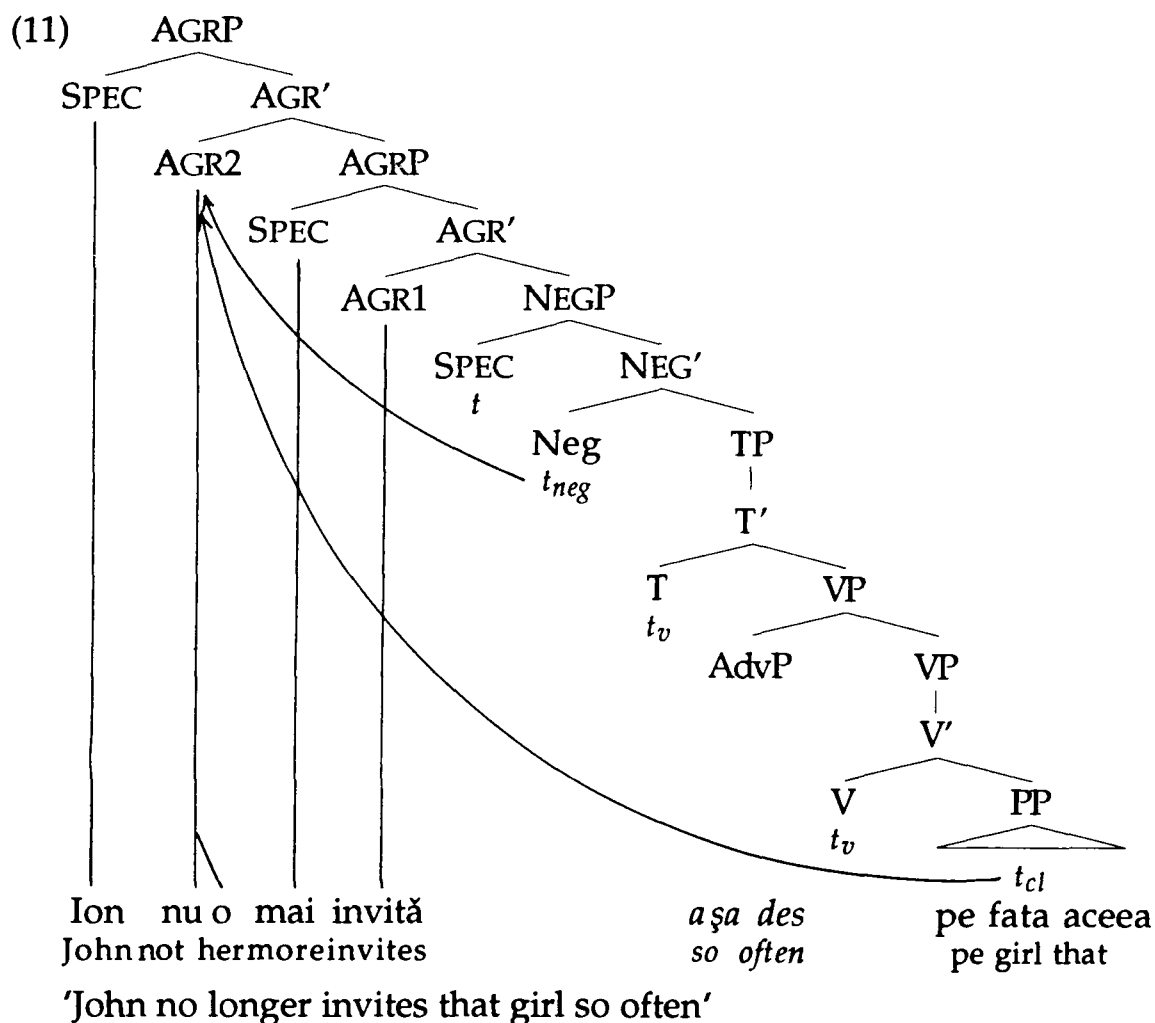
Let us then assume that in Romance languages the Inflectional Phrase has the property of reflecting the thematic relations through means of clitic elements. These clitics will occupy a specific I-head, projected in the structure to implement this function. Along these lines, I will propose a representation for the Romanian sentence in (6) so that the two sets of Inflectional features, i.e., for verbal morphology and clitics, can be distinguished at the level of AGRP.

However, before I implement this proposal, a remark is in order: the sentence under examination contains a negation, to be dealt with according to current work in the field (e.g., Belletti (1990) and Zanuttini (1990) and subsequent work). These analyses have in common the treatment of the negation (French *ne*, Italian *non*, Romanian *nu*) as a head-element projecting a phrasal structure, NEG_P. For reasons debated at length in Zanuttini (1989), NEG_P systematically selects a TP within the clause. With respect to the placement of Neg_P within IP and the syntactic status of the negation, I will follow Belletti (1991), who argues in favour of a characterization of *non* as a syntactic clitic which undergoes movement to the head hosting the clitic cluster at S-Structure. As far as the internal structure of NEG_P is concerned, SPECNEG_P may optionally contain adverbs, semantically compatible with negations. These adverbs acquire a negative interpretation through the agreement relation between SPECNEG_P and NEG.

The approach put forth in Belletti (1990) and (1991) achieved a uniform characterization of negative sentences in Romance languages: NEG_P, inserted between AGRP and TP, contains a negative adverb in SPECNEG_P; the negation moves to AGR at S-Structure, to join the clitic cluster, and gives a word order where the negation precedes the verb and the adverb, as illustrated in (9) above.

⁸Note that an analysis of clitics along these lines would rather favour approaches similar to Moore (1992), where the argument position contains a *PRO*.

However, there is room for word order variation, as data from Italian show that the negative adverb can be generated in other positions in the structure and acquires its negative interpretation through movement to SPECNEGP at the level of Logical Form (LF)⁹ For the representation in (11) I will take into consideration both general analyses of NEGP and cases of free placement of negative adverbs.



The structure of a tensed IP in Romanian.

The analysis proposed in (11) distinguishes between two levels of AGR: a higher head with the function of receiving clitic elements (negation counting as a syntactic clitic according to Belletti (1991)); a lower head, containing the morphology for subject-agreement, to which the verb moves through a head-to-head substituting movement. The empirical reason for this split comes from the position of the negative adverb *mai* in (6), between the clitic cluster and the

⁹The examples in Belletti (1990) contain the adverb *più* following the past participle in complex tenses; the author considers this adverb VP-adjoined then moved to SPECNEGP at LF. This movement must be obligatory, as the adverb does not have a negative value by itself (i.e., it can appear in positive versions).

inflected verb. According to (11), the negative adverb must have also moved from its base position SPECNEGP, to a higher SPEC, from which it can cliticize to the verb at the level of Phonetic Form (PF).

The status of *mai* as clitic at the phonological level, classified as a 'short' word in traditional grammar, has been already discussed in the literature (see Dobrovie-Sorin (1990)). In this case, it could be argued that *mai* adjoins to the verb in whatever position it happens to be, including the position the verb could share with the clitic cluster. However, certain restrictions on word order show that the placement of *mai* is not so arbitrary, but rather corresponds to a determined position in negative sentences. Consider the examples in (12):

- (12) a. Să nu mai fie chemat.
 (he) SA not more be called
 'Let him not be called any more'
- b. *Să nu fie mai chemat.

The contrast between (12a) and (12b) indicates that *mai* does not depend on the verb, but on a specific position within INFL. More precisely, it depends on a SPEC position related to the head that receives the verbal element inflected for subject-agreement – in (12a) the passive auxiliary *fie* 'be'.

The clitic property of 'short' negative adverbs in Romanian like *mai*, leading to their movement to SPECAGRP, makes it possible to distinguish between two I-heads at that level. The equivalent adverbs of other Romance languages have a full lexical status and do not move at S-Structure.¹⁰ In other words, although all Romance languages display the IP-structure in (11), the data did not provide the relevant evidence.

2.2. V to I Movement in Romance

Extending the representation in (11) to all Romance languages would confirm parallel analyses of a two-headed AGRP in this group of languages, for independent reasons. Thus, Roberts (1991) proposes a two-head AGR level to characterize a 'rich' verbal morphology in Old English, contrasting with the 'weak' one-head AGR in modern English.

Taking Roberts' analysis even further, Belletti (1990) proposes a complete split between the two levels of AGR, which would adequately account for the mechanism deriving complex tenses in Romance languages. More exactly, Belletti argues that auxiliaries, inflected for subject-agreement, do not move to the same I-head as lexical verbs do, but to a higher level. This analysis finds

¹⁰But see Martineau (1992) for arguments for a similar phenomenon in Old French.

support in Romanian, where 'short' negative adverbs follow the auxiliary, as shown in (13):

- (13) a. Maria nu l- a *mai* invitat pe Ion.
Mary not him-has more invited pe-Ion.
- b. *Maria nu-l *mai* a invitat pe Ion.
- c. Maria nu-l *mai* invită pe Ion.
'Mary no longer invites John.'

If *mai* moves to SPECAGRP of AGR1, the order in (13a) indicates that the auxiliary goes to a higher head, after receiving the agreement mark. The contrast between the level of verb movement in (13a), to AGR2, vs. (13c), to AGR1, finds its theoretical support in the inherent differences between auxiliaries (as morphological tools) and lexical verbs, which serves as evidence for structural differences.

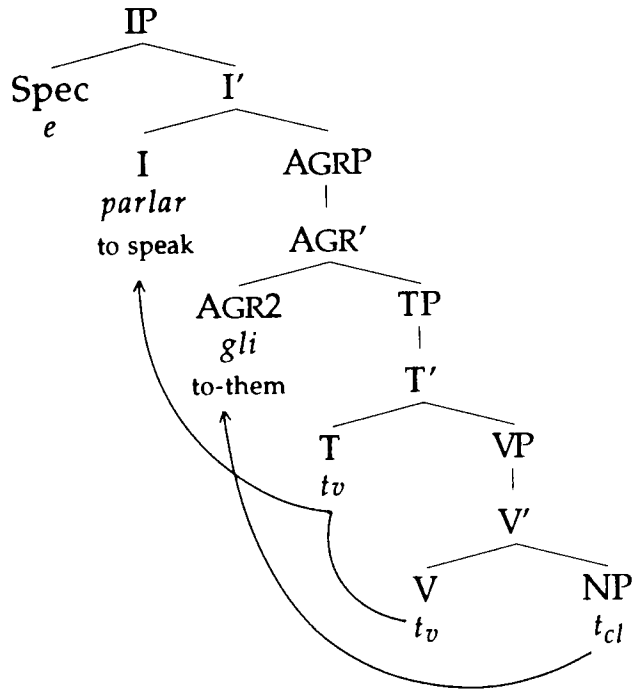
To sum up the discussion so far, I argued that clitics in Romanian occupy an I-head solely specified for this function. Thus, I dissociated clitic movement from inflectional morphology. Implicitly, I assume that the chains resulting from the types of movement, i.e., clitic vs. V to I, obey separate conditions and do not interfere with the ECP. Negation being a syntactic clitic, its movement to the clitic cluster (as in (11)) will also be independent of the conditions restricting the movement of the verb. In a second step, I extended the characterization of IP-structure in Romanian to other Romance languages, where clitics behave in the same way.

This new perspective on the placement of clitics within a tensed IP entails a reconsideration of the infinitive structures discussed in the first part of this paper. If clitic movement to INFL occurs independently of verbal inflection, it is expected that the same mechanism applies to infinitive structures. The prediction will be that the positive or negative value of an I-head, such as T, must be irrelevant for the process of clitic movement.

2.3. INFINITIVE CLAUSES REVISITED

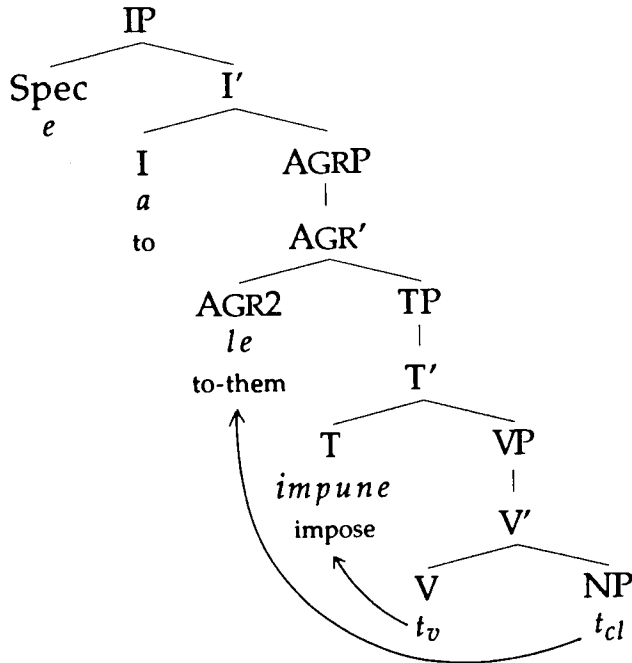
In most Romance languages infinitive clauses are non-finite: the verbal form does not display marks for subject-agreement. As a result, an AGRP would also be excluded from the structure of such a clause. However, the analysis of a split AGRP as proposed in (11) gives us the possibility of differentiating between the

(14) a. *parlargli*
to speak-to-them



The structure of the infinitive IP in Italian

(14) b. *a le impune*
to to-them impose



The structure of the infinitive IP in Romanian

morphology for verb-subject agreement and the nominal features of AGR. From this point of view, only AGR2 is compatible with the structure of infinitive clauses. The schemas in (14) adapt the representations in (2) and (5) to this analysis.

The status of T has been readjusted in (14), where this head functions as part of the inflectional chain (a trace-head). Such a description is more adequate to the empirical data in Romance, where infinitive clauses may have [+tense features]¹¹.

The structure of the infinitive clauses in (14) matches the hierarchy of tense clauses (e.g. (9), (11)) where AGR is higher than T. The function of AGR2 is also the same in finite and non-finite contexts: it is specified for clitic movement. Romanian data clearly indicate that the AGR compatible with infinitive INFL carries only the functions of AGR2 and therefore qualifies as an abstract I-head, independent of the inflectional chain. This analysis conveniently covers Italian¹² or any Romance infinitive clause¹³.

3. CONCLUSION

Clitic movement in Romance is a process of incorporation into an abstract I-head, (cf. Kayne (1990)) characterized in this paper as an instantiation of AGR. The abstract AGR is proper to structures where INFL triggers verb movement: the presence of an abstract AGR implies the existence of a lower AGR, carrying inflectional affixes. All Romance languages have this double headed AGRP. From this viewpoint, clitic and verb movement are distinct processes related to a common factor – the structural possibility of a 'rich' AGRP.

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¹¹The possibility of Nominative case lexical subjects in infinitive clauses has been related to the positive features of T. For Romanian see Dobrovie-Sorin (1990) and Motapanyan (1991).

¹²Determination of the exact level of verb movement in Italian clauses is not the purpose of this paper. It may be the highest I-head, corresponding to the level of the mood marker *a* in Romanian, or the movement may cross the clausal IP border in syntax (cf. Kayne 1990).

¹³Borer (1989) also argues, for independent reasons, for the existence of an AGRP in infinitive clauses.

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