The Copy Theory of Movement: Novel Evidence from Spanish Clitic Climbing

I provide evidence from Spanish in support of the overarching Copy Theory of Movement (CTM), first proposed by Chomsky (1993/1995) and pursued in numerous works in the minimalist framework ever since (e.g. Bobaljik 2002, Bošković 2001 *et seq.*, Franks 1998, Nunes 2004, Ortega-Santos 2006, Pesetsky 1997, Reglero 2004, Stjepanović 1999).

The cornerstone of Chomsky's CTM is the assumption that movement is a composite operation involving two suboperations of copying and deletion. Therefore, regarding *wh*-movement, (1a) receives the simplified derivation in (1b), where the lowest copy of the moved constituent *where* is deleted in P(honological)F(form), with the result that only the highest copy is pronounced, i.e., visible in PF. Following Franks (1998) and Bobaljik (2002), *i.a.*, I assume that all movement is overt, the choice of copy to pronounce being motivated by PF considerations.

(1) a. Where is ASU?
b. Where$_i$ is ASU ~~where$_i$~~?

Bošković (2002) provides strong support for the CTM on the basis of Romanian questions:

(2) a. *Cine* *ce* precede?
who what precedes
'Who precedes what?'
b. **Ce* *ce* precede?
what what precedes
c. *Ce* precede *ce*?
what precedes what
'What precedes what?'

Romanian is a quintessentially multiple-*wh*-fronting language in which all *wh*-phrases must be fronted (cf. (2a)). Yet, there is a constraint barring contiguous homophonous forms (cf. (2b)). In order to avoid the ensuing PF violation in such cases (**ce ce*), the low copy of the *wh*-item is favored in PF, as in (2c), in line with Franks' (1998) suggestion that a lower copy of a non-trivial chain can be pronounced provided that convergence so demands.

I offer a similar argument from Spanish (causative) clitic-climbing (CC) constructions, which I argue involve clitic movement (Nunes 2004, Boeckx and Gallego 2008, *i.a.*). Consider (3), which features a causative verb with a dative clitic. In such contexts, the accusative clitic that is an argument of the low verb –the infinitive– can optionally be a proclitic of the causative verb, as shown by the alternation in (3a)/(3b) (cf. (3a')-(3b')).

(3) a. Me *la* hicieron lavar a.' [me la V inf. ~~la~~]
cl. cl. made wash
b. Me hicieron lavar*la* b.' [me ~~la~~ V inf. la]
cl. made wash+cl.
Both: 'They made me wash it$_{fem.}$'

Nevertheless, there are cases in which the two clitics cannot be adjacent to each other, as in (4a), where homophony also seems to play a role (**me me*). Here, CC is not an option, unlike in (3a); the clitic must obligatorily remain low (cf. (4b)) (see González López 2008:152 for additional evidence). This state of affairs is now recast as a case where pronouncing the highest copy of the clitic leads to a PF crash (cf. (4a-a')), in much the same way as in Romanian (2b); instead, the low copy of the clitic is chosen in PF in order to circumvent the violation *à la* Franks (1998) (cf. (4b-b')). I show that Person-Case Constraint violations can be avoided in the same way. Note also that the data argue for a movement analysis of clitics in CC contexts; it would be rather difficult to argue that CC does not occur in (4b) in order to prevent a PF violation, since this would pose a serious look-ahead problem for the theory.

(4)	a.	*Me	*me*	hicieron	lavar	a.'	[me	me	V	inf.	~~me~~]
		cl.	cl.	made	wash						
	b.	Me		hicieron	lavar*me*	b.'	[me	~~me~~	V	inf.	me]
		cl.		made	wash+cl.						

Both: 'They made me wash myself.'

In sum, examples (2c) and (4b) illustrate the intricate interplay between morphophonology and syntax, with the need to satisfy a PF requirement overriding the need to satisfy a syntactic requirement (Bošković and Nunes 2007). Such cases also provide strong crosslinguistic support for the rather successful CTM.

Selected References

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