On atypical behaviour of pronominal clitics in Serbian
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INTRODUCTION Presentative constructions (presentatives) in Serbian (1-2) pose two puzzles. The first one is part of a wider debate in the literature over the structure of presentatives cross-linguistically (Morin 1983, Joseph 1994, Bergen 2001, Zanuttini 2015, Kandel 2015). Presentatives can be informally defined as constructions that introduce an NP/DP into discourse; they consist of a presentative particle (e.g. *evo/eto/eno* in Serbian (1)) and an NP/DP. The second puzzle is the occurrence of the traditionally called pronominal clitic and the co-indexed NP in the same construction (1), given that Serbian is not a clitic doubling (CD) language. In this talk, I will concentrate on the latter puzzle. Namely, I will first show that pronominal clitics in these constructions act as functional elements (i.e. do not have any lexical content), and consequently argue that the analysis of clitics as a spell-out of agreement is the most fitting one, accounting for the widest range of syntactic phenomena.

(1) Evo ga ter vaj. (2) Evo tramvaja.
Evo CL.3.sg.m_GEN / ACC tram. m NOM
‘Here’s the tram.’
Evo tram. m NOM
‘Here’s a tram.’

BACKGROUND Following Zanuttini (2015), I will assume that at the core of presentatives is an inert vP. This has an important implication – even though the NP is in the theme position it cannot be assigned accusative (Burzio’s generalization). In addition, I follow Belletti (1988) and assume that an inert v0 can assign partitive case (morphological genitive in Serbian), while nominative case is assigned by some higher F0 (e.g. T° in English).

ANALYSIS Any analysis of (1) should answer two basic questions: (a) why there is no redundancy effect (provided that both the clitic and NP have lexical content) and (b) what the role of the clitics in these constructions is. The analysis of (1) as a CD construction is not a fruitful option because [a] Serbian is not a CD language, [b] (1) patterns neither syntactically nor pragmatically with CD constructions in CD languages (Kallulli 2000, Kramer 2014). I will thus argue that the CL+NP pattern can be derived through the standard process of agreement relationship between NP NOM and an FP that is in charge of agreement. Examples (3-6) show that the crucial difference between (1) and (2) is in the case that the NPs carry. Apart from the difference in interpretation, NP NOM and NP GEN also syntactically pattern differently. Firstly, only NP NOM can be a proper correlate in the replacive constructions (3-4) and sluicing (5-6). Secondly, the clitic and NP GEN are in complementary distribution (7), while the clitic is obligatory with NP NOM (1). Furthermore, the relationship between the clitic and NP is asymmetric in that the NP NOM may be elided but the clitic cannot (9). All this indicates that there is a syntactic relationship between NP NOM and an FP where the clitic is generated, as well as, that NP GEN is exempt from that relationship.

(3) Eno je Milica, a ne Milena.
Eno CL. GEN/ACC Milica NOM, but not Milena NOM
‘There’s Milica, not Milena.’

(4) *Eno Milice, a ne Milene.
Eno Milica GEN, but not Milena GEN
‘There’s Milica, not Milena.’

(5) Eno ga neko, ali ne znam ko.
Eno CL. GEN/ACC someone NOM, but not know-I who NOM
‘There’s someone, but I don’t know who.’

(6) *Eno nekoga, ali ne znam koga.
Eno someone GEN, but not know-I who GEN
‘There’s someone, but I don’t know who.’
Furthermore, in short questions, the case of the wh-operator does not match with the case of the clitic (9-10). (10) is surprising if we assume that the clitic is just the pro-form for NP\text{GEN}. However, (10) is expected if the underlying structure of (9) is (11a), i.e. NP\text{NOM} in (9) has been elided. Note that the clitic and the NP agree in φ-features but differ in case (1), as well as, that the clitic cannot be substituted with anything else (e.g. pronoun cf. (8)). It shows that the clitic is just the bundle of the relevant features [φ+case] and nothing else, which is the answer to the question why there is no redundancy – because only NP\text{NOM} has lexical content; the clitic is rather the product of syntactic operations than an item merged from the numeration.

(9) A: Evo ga.
   Evo CL.3.sg.m\text{GEN}/\text{ACC} tram\text{GEN}
   ‘Here he is.’
(10) B: Ko? *Koga?
    who\text{NOM} *who\text{GEN}/\text{ACC}
    (11) a) √Evo CL NP\text{NOM}.
    b)*Evo CL [CL=NP\text{GEN}].

Now the question is what syntactic operation produces the clitic and why (7) is ungrammatical. Serbian is a nominative-accusative language, meaning that only NP\text{NOM} can enter into an agreement relationship with an FP (Marantz 2000, Bobaljik 2008). Thus, if there is some F\text{O} requiring agreement, NP\text{GEN} is not a proper goal so it can never share its φ-features with F\text{O} (12b). The consequence of this is that these features are not checked and accordingly not assigned morphological representation (Guasti & Rizzi 1999). Accompanying this independent principle with the assumption that the inert ψ\text{O} can assign partitive case, but some other F\text{O} assigns nominative case (e.g. T\text{O} in English) offers the desired outcome. If we assume that the relationship between NP\text{NOM} and the clitic is that of agreement (i.e. the clitic is the spell-out of agreement), than we can account for (7) straightforwardly. (7) is ruled out because NP\text{GEN} has shared its φ-features with F\text{O}, which is not possible.


Another phenomenon that clitics in presentatives and (participle) agreement have in common is the pattern of agreement with conjoined phrases. Namely, the clitic can agree either with the whole &P (13), or with the closest conjunct only (14), which is characteristic of participle agreement in Slavic (Bošković 2009, Marušić 2015). Since this phenomenon is exclusive to agreement, it supports the analysis in which clitics spell-out agreement.

(13) Evo \text{ih} učiteljica i učenici.
    Evo CL.pl teacher. sg.f\text{NOM} and students.pl\text{NOM}
    ‘Here’re the teacher and the students.’
(14) Evo \text{je} učiteljica i učenici.
    Evo CL.sg.f teacher. sg.f\text{NOM} and students. pl\text{NOM}
    ‘Here’re the teacher and the students.’

CONCLUSION I have shown how a seemingly exceptional case of CL+NP pattern can be derived through basic syntactic operations. Firstly, I have shown that there is a difference between NP\text{NOM} and NP\text{GEN}, in regard to syntactic behaviour and interpretation, as well as, that the clitic behaves as a functional element and not as a simple pro-form (9-10). Having established that the clitic and NP\text{NOM} are in some kind of syntactic relationship, I have proposed that this relationship is agreement on the bases of the obligatoriness of agreement with NP\text{NOM} in Serbian and closest conjunct agreement phenomena. Selected references: Belletti, A. 1988. The Case of Unaccusatives. Linguistic Inquiry 19-1. Kramer, R. 2014. Clitic doubling or object agreement: The view from Amharic. Natural Language & Linguistic Theory 32. Zanutti, R. 2015. Ecco un enigma: The structure of presentatives. In: Abstracts Booklet of 41st Incontro di Grammatica Generativa.