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## THE PROPER FORMULATION OF THE SPURIOUS-SE RULE IN SPANISH\*

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0. Introduction

There is a set of oblique pronouns in Spanish which are clitics on the verb; that is, they are phonologically subordinate to the verb to which they are attached. The following examples illustrate the dative singular and accusative, masculine, singular, third person clitics:

- 1a. Lo pagué. 'I paid for it.'  
acc  
1b. Le pagué. 'I paid him.'  
dat

(1a-b) show that pagar can take a single clitic pronominal object, either dative or accusative. However, if both clitics appear and both are third person, then the dative may not appear as le but must appear as se. Thus, the expected forms (1c) are ungrammatical; instead (1d) is the correct form:

- 1c. \*Le lo pagué. ('I paid him for it.')  
\*Lo le pagué.  
1d. Se lo pagué. 'I paid him for it.'

In general, when third person dative and third person accusative clitics cooccur, the dative surfaces as se instead of its form in isolation le/les.<sup>1</sup>

Paradigms like (1) provide evidence for a rule which Perlmutter (1971:22) called the Spurious-se rule and formulated as follows:

2.  $\begin{bmatrix} \text{PRO} \\ \text{III} \\ \text{DAT} \end{bmatrix}$   $\begin{bmatrix} \text{PRO} \\ \text{III} \\ \text{ACC} \end{bmatrix}$   $\rightarrow$  se, 2  
1 2

On the basis of other facts, it has been more recently claimed that the spurious se morpheme may replace not only the dative in the sequence [3-DAT 3-ACC] but also the first accusative in the sequence [3-ACC 3-ACC] (see García, Roldán, Timberlake).<sup>2</sup> Thus, García would formulate the Spurious-se rule more generally as follows:

3.  $\begin{bmatrix} \text{PRO} \\ \text{III} \end{bmatrix}$   $\begin{bmatrix} \text{PRO} \\ \text{III} \\ \text{ACC} \end{bmatrix}$   $\rightarrow$  se, 2  
1 2

The immediate purpose of this paper is to argue conclusively

against the generalized formulation of the Spurious-se rule in (3). Of more general interest is the fact that this investigation exposes facts which are of considerable relevance to the development of a theory of clitics. In section 1 below, we present some facts about Spanish to facilitate understanding the examples. In section 2, we proceed with the argument.

## 1. Some Facts about Spanish

### 1.1 Subject Pronouns

Subject pronouns are omitted when serving no contrastive or emphatic function:

4a. Lo quiero yo, no él. 'I want it, not him.'  
                                   I                  he

b. Lo quiero ahora. 'I want it now.'

### 1.2 Personal a

Indirect objects are preceded by the preposition a. Certain direct objects also require a preceding preposition a. The conditions for the appearance of a are complex (see Isenberg 1968) but for our purposes it is sufficient to observe that definite, animate, direct objects require a:

5a. Vimos a Juan. 'We saw Juan.'  
 b. \*Vimos Juan.

The most straightforward way to determine the function of an a NP in a given S is by pronominalization, since dative and accusative pronouns are distinct.<sup>3</sup>

### 1.3 Clitics

We present here a chart of the clitics:

		non refl		refl	
		<u>acc</u>	<u>dat</u>	<u>acc</u>	<u>dat</u>
1 <sup>st</sup>	pers {	sing		me	
		plur		nos	
2 <sup>nd</sup>	pers {	sing		te	
		plur		os	
3 <sup>rd</sup>	pers {	sing {	masc	lo	le
		fem	la		
	plur {	masc	los		se
		fem	las	les	

### 1.4 Clitic Copies

NPs cooccur more or less obligatorily with a clitic copy in several environments:

1. Indirect objects obligatorily cooccur with a clitic.<sup>4</sup>
  - 6a. Le compré un saco a Marta. 'I bought Marta a coat.'
  - b. \*Compré un saco a Marta.
2. In Platense, the Spanish spoken in the Río de la Plata region of South America, there is a class of direct objects which obligatorily cooccur with a clitic copy. This is the class of definite, specific, animate, direct objects (see Roldán 1971 for some discussion). For example:
  - 7a. Las invitamos a las chicas. 'We invited the girls.'
  - b. \*Invitamos a las chicas.

(7b) is grammatical in dialects which do not require a clitic copy of the direct object.

### 1.5 Enclisis and Proclisis

A fact of Spanish morphology is that while clitic pronouns procliticize to finite verbs,<sup>5</sup> they encliticize to nonfinite verbs (infinitives, gerunds, affirmative imperatives). Orthographically, enclitics form a word with the verb; proclitics do not. For example:

- 8a. Lo quiero. 'I want it.'
- b. \*Quiérolo.
- c. Quiero verlo. 'I want to see it.'
- d. \*Quiero lo ver.

### 1.6 Clitic Climbing

There is a rule in Spanish, generally known as Clitic Climbing, which moves clitic(s) from a dependent infinitive to a higher verb:

- 9a. Quiero verlo. 'I want to see it.'
- b. Lo quiero ver. " "

Note that a clitic may climb to a verb higher than the immediately dominating verb:

- 10a. Quiero poder aprobarlo. 'I want to be able to pass it.'
- b. Quiero poderlo aprobar. " "
- c. Lo quiero poder aprobar. " "

If any clitic associated with an infinitive climbs, all clitics associated with that infinitive must climb:

- 11a. Quiero cosérmelo. 'I want to sew it for myself.'
- b. Me lo quiero coser. " "
- c. \*Me quiero coserlo.
- d. \*Lo quiero coserme.

We will speak of the embedded infinitive as releasing the clitic and of the matrix verb as attracting the clitic. Whether a verb releases or attracts clitics seems to be lexically governed,



## 3.2

In order to account for the alternation between dative and accusative in (14), it is necessary to look further. The crucial fact for our purposes is that this alternation correlates exactly with possible positions of the NP which is cross-referenced by the dative or accusative clitic. The following examples represent the Platense dialect in which datives and animate accusatives obligatorily cooccur with a clitic copy. We use this dialect because the form of the clitic reveals immediately the grammatical function of the NP (see section 1.4), but this analysis is intended to hold for all dialects:

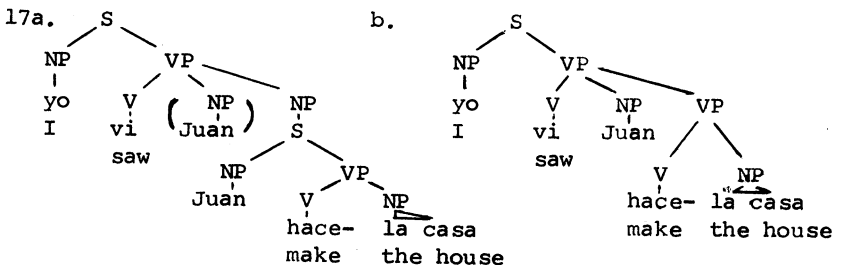
- 15a. Lo vi a Juan hacer la casa. 'I saw Juan make the house.'  
       acc  
 b. \*Lo vi hacer la casa a Juan.

In (15), a Juan is direct object. In this function, it must occur between vi and hacer. On the other hand, in the following Ss, a Juan is indirect object and occurs only after vi hacer:

- 16a. Le vi hacer la casa a Juan. 'I saw Juan make the house.'  
       dat  
 b. \*Le vi a Juan hacer la casa.

## 3.3

In (15a) a Juan functions as direct object of vi. We do not know at present whether (15a) is derived by a kind of Subject-to-Object Raising rule or by Equi-NP-Deletion. In the former case, a Juan would be raised to become object of vi. Thus it is accusative and occurs immediately after vi. If the Equi derivation is correct, a Juan would start out in its surface position. We will refer to this construction as the complement causative construction, a term which is intended to be neutral as to whether Raising or Equi is the crucial rule. We assume an underlying structure as in (17a) and a derived structure as in (17b):



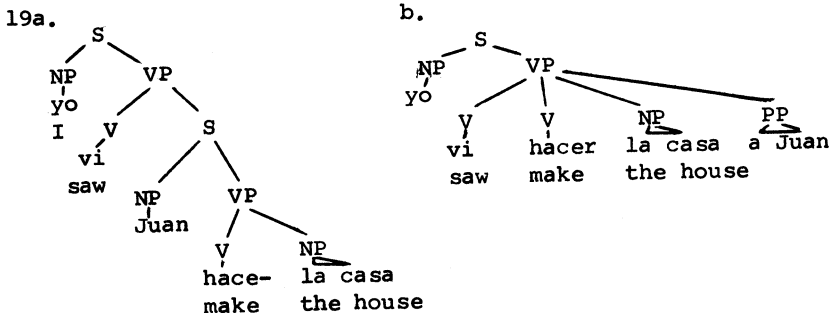
## 3.4

(16a), on the other hand, is the output of the rule of Verb Raising (see Aissen 1974a,b). While the formulation of this rule is not clear, the effect of the rule is to incorporate an entire embedded S into the matrix S resulting in a simplex-like structure.<sup>6</sup>

Verb Raising has the following effects in Spanish:

- 18a. the old embedded V appears in infinitival form to the immediate right of the matrix V.
- b. the old embedded direct object (if there was one) appears as accusative to the right of [V+infinitive].
- c. the old embedded subject appears as accusative if there is no embedded direct object, and as dative if there is. In either case, it stands to the right of [V+infinitive] relative order of accusative and dative being somewhat free.<sup>7</sup>

The input and output structures of Verb Raising may be represented as below:



### 3.5

Consider the paradigm in (13) again:

- 13a. Lo vi hacerla. 'I saw him make it.'  
acc acc
- b. \*Lo la vi hacer.  
\*La lo vi hacer.
- c. Se la vi hacer. 'I saw him make it.'

In these Ss both subject and object of the old embedded S are pronominal. (13a) is an instance of the complement causative construction; the old subject is accusative. Crucially (13c) can be derived by Verb Raising yielding the clitic sequence [3-DAT 3-ACC] -- a sequence which is then subject to the Spurious-se rule.

(13c), then, has an independently motivated derivation in which se la is derived from [DAT ACC]. Thus, these facts do not force a revision of the Spurious-se rule along the lines proposed by García. This, by itself, does not show that the proposed revision is wrong; it simply means that it is by no means forced by these facts.

#### 4. Verb Raising is a Necessary Derivation

In the previous section we pointed out that an independently motivated rule of Verb Raising exists which would provide a derivation



for Ss like 'se lo vi hacer', in which the se lo sequence could be derived from a [DAT ACC] sequence. In this section, we show that such Ss have properties that can only be accounted for if they are assumed to have a derivation by Verb Raising, and cannot be accounted for if they only have a derivation by Clitic Climbing and Spurious-se. It will remain open, until section 5, whether such Ss have both derivations.

## 4.1

Ss like the following show that Clitic Climbing may have the effect of joining two clitics which started out in different clauses: 8

- 20a. ?Le permití comprarlo. 'I permitted him to buy it.'  
 b. Se lo permití comprar.  
 21a. ?Le ordené comprarlo. 'I ordered him to buy it.'  
 b. Se lo ordené comprar.  
 22a. ?Le prometí comprarlo. 'I promised him to buy it.'  
 b. Se lo prometí comprar.

The following Ss show, in addition, that all the matrix verbs above (permitir, ordenar, prometer) all release their clitics to a higher clitic-attracting verb. 9

- 23a. Le debo permitir besarla. 'I must permit him to kiss her.'  
 b. Le debo ordenar besarla. 'I must order him to kiss her.'  
 c. Le debo prometer besarla. 'I must promise him to kiss her.'

## 4.2

However, a rather unexpected fact is that two clitics which are joined by an application of Clitic Climbing will not climb further:

- 24a. Debo permitirle manejarlo. 'I must permit him to drive it.'  
 b. Debo permitirse lo manejar. " "  
 c. \*Se lo debo permitir manejar. " "

Clitics which start out as clitics to the same verb underlyingly can climb together as shown by (25-26), which have the readings given (corresponding to underlying structures with both clitics in the same clause), and not the readings marked with '\*', corresponding to underlying structures with clitics originating in different clauses:

25. Se lo debo ordenar hacer. 'I must order PRO to do it for him.'  
 \*'I must order him to do it.'  
 26. Se lo debo prometer comprar. 'I must promise to buy it for him.'  
 \*'I must promise him to buy it.'

Thus it appears that we must impose the following constraint:

27. Clitics joined by Clitic Climbing may not climb further.





where I, II, III stand for first, second, and third person clitics. The filter is interpreted to exclude any sequence of clitics which does not conform to (39) where any element may be optionally included. This filter restricts the number of third person clitics (other than se) in a surface clitic sequence to one. While Perlmutter did not specifically justify allowing only one third person slot, there appear to be no occurrences in Spanish of more than one such clitic. Thus, we assume that (39) blocks the generation of the Ss in (38).

If the generalized Spurious-se rule were correct, however, we would expect the first of the accusative clitics to turn into se and to yield one of the following Ss:

- 40a. \*Se la obliqué a comprar.  
\*Se lo obliqué a comprar.
- b. \*Se la persuadí a comprar.  
\*Se lo persuadí a comprar.

### 5.3

If we can establish now that (37) can undergo Clitic Climbing then we will have our argument against the generalized Spurious-se rule since, if that rule were correct, such Ss should surface as (40a,b). The restricted Spurious-se rule would, on the other hand, only generate outputs like (38) which are disposed of as noted above.

It is clear that the demonstration that (37) can undergo Clitic Climbing will have to be done indirectly. We will argue as follows: we noted above that whether a matrix verb attracts clitics from an embedded infinitive is lexically governed. That is, some verbs accept clitics, others do not, and this government seems to be in part idiosyncratic. Thus, while the verbs permitir, prometer, ordenar attract clitics, the verbs sugerir, enseñar, and pedir do not:<sup>11</sup>

- 41a. Le sugerí romperla. 'I suggested to him that he break it.'
- b. \*Se la sugerí romper.
- 42a. Le enseñé a cantarlo. 'I taught him to sing it.'
- b. \*Se lo enseñé a cantar.
- 43a. Le pedí verlo. 'I asked him to see it.'
- b. \*Se lo pedí ver.

Since all of the (a) Ss above take a dative clitic, Clitic Climbing followed by the Spurious-se rule should result in possible clitic sequences. Since all of the (b) Ss are ungrammatical, we assume that Clitic Climbing is lexically blocked.

We will show that whether a verb allows Clitic Climbing or not correlates with one other syntactic property. We will then show that the verbs in (37), that is obligar and persuadir exhibit the behavior of a clitic climbing verb. We will conclude that obligar and persuadir are clitic climbing verbs and that Ss with obligar and persuadir may undergo Clitic Climbing. The fact that such Ss do not surface is evidence that the generalized Spurious-se rule is wrong.

## 5.4

Rivero (1970:640) posits a constraint which "allows only one negative particle no to appear as constituent of each simplex sentence in surface structure". She argues that Equi-NP-Deletion reduces a complex structure to a simplex one. Thus, while the (a) Ss below which have not undergone Equi are grammatical, the (b) Ss are ungrammatical:<sup>12</sup>

44a. No creo que yo no lo haga bien. 'I don't believe that I don't do it well.'

b. \*No creo no hacerlo bien.

45a. No quiero que no comas pescado. 'I don't want you not to eat fish.'

b. \*No quiero no comer pescado. ('I don't want not to eat fish.')

There are speakers of Spanish who accept (44b, 45b). These same speakers, however, do make distinctions in other infinitival constructions allowing double no's in some, but not in others.<sup>13,14</sup>

46. \*No le permití no salir. ('I didn't permit him not to leave.')

47. No le sugerí no salir. 'I didn't suggest to him not to leave.'

Furthermore, the possibility of two no's in an infinitival construction correlates with the impossibility of Clitic Climbing in that construction. Thus, if a matrix verb  $V_m$  does not allow the configuration [no  $V_m$  no V], it does accept clitics. On the other hand, if a matrix verb does allow this configuration, it does not accept clitics.<sup>15</sup> Corresponding to (46) and (47), then, we get (48) and (49) showing that permitir accepts clitics but not sugerir:

48. Se lo permití comprar. 'I permitted him to buy it.'

49. \*Se lo sugerí comprar. ('I suggested to him that he buy it')

The following Ss further exemplify this correlation. The (a) Ss show the possibility or impossibility of Clitic Climbing while the (b) Ss show the possibility or impossibility of double no's.<sup>16</sup>

50a. Se lo prohibí tocar. 'I forbade him to touch it.'

b. \*No le prohibí no tocarlo. ('I didn't forbid him not to touch it.')

51a. Se lo ordené comprar. 'I ordered him to buy it.'

b. \*No le ordené no tocarlo. ('I didn't order him not to touch it.')

52a. \*Se lo pedí tocar. ('I asked him to touch it.')

b. No le pedí no tocarlo. 'I didn't ask him not to touch it.'

53a. \*Se lo insistí en comprar. ('I insisted to him on my buying it.')

b. No le insistí en no tocarlo. 'I didn't insist to him on my not touching it.'

## 5.5

Thus, for some speakers there is a clear generalization that any verb which forbids double no's does allow Clitic Climbing. The crucial fact for our argument is that there are  $V_m$ 's of the structure [ACC-V V-ACC] which do not allow double no's. Such verbs are obligar and persuadir:<sup>17</sup>

- 54a. \*No lo obligué a no irse. ('I didn't force him not to go away.')
- b. \*No lo persuadí a no irse. ('I didn't persuade him not to go away.')

If this generalization is correct, it must be the case that obligar and persuadir are [+Clitic Climbing] verbs.<sup>18</sup>

Now if obligar and persuadir are [-Clitic Climbing], we must explain why Ss like (56) in which Clitic Climbing has applied to (55) never surface:

55. Lo obligué a comprarla. 'I made him buy it.'  
Lo persuadí a comprarla. 'I persuaded him to buy it.'
56. \*Se la obligué a comprar.  
 \*Se la persuadí a comprar.

The generalized Spurious-se rule predicts that (56) should be grammatical since the rule applies to the sequence [ACC ACC]. Thus, (56) counterexamples the generalized rule. The restricted version of the Spurious-se rule, however, only applies to the sequence [DAT ACC]. Thus, it will not apply to the output of Clitic Climbing on (55), and (56) are predicted to be ungrammatical. We conclude that the generalized Spurious-se rule is wrong.

6. Conclusion

We have established that the original formulation of the Spurious-se rule -- that is, the formulation in (2) -- is the correct formulation. The investigation which led to this conclusion has uncovered regularities in the behavior of clitics in infinitival constructions. These regularities are themselves of considerable interest and of potentially greater significance than the conclusion itself. However, they remain unexplained here. To reach a full understanding of them will clearly require much further investigation which will hopefully lead to the development of a theory of clitics.

## FOOTNOTES

\*We are indebted to Jorge Hankamer for his careful reading of an earlier version of this paper and to Eugenia Kálnay de Rivas for her help as an informant.

<sup>1</sup> se also serves as the dative third person reflexive:

(i) se pagó. 'He paid himself.' (not: He<sub>i</sub> paid him<sub>j</sub>.)

All gender and number distinctions are neutralized in se. Thus, (1d) is multiply ambiguous.

2 García (undated:14-16, 87-89) seems to be the first to argue for such a formulation. As her discussion proceeds, it becomes less clear how strongly she would want to defend this proposal. Roldán (1974:134) says nothing explicit about the formulation of the Spurious-se rule but it is clear from her discussion that she assumes a formulation like (3). Timberlake (1970:fn.11) is following García. We will refer to the proposal as García's. The proposal was made in an unpublished xerox and we do not know whether García would still wish to defend the proposal.

3 Dative and accusative clitics are distinct in Latin American Spanish (so-called loista dialects). In some dialects in Spain, (so-called leista dialects), le/les is used both for dative and animate, masculine, accusative forms. The forms cited in this paper all correspond to the loista dialect.

4 Perlmutter (1971:33) reports that there are some dialects for which this doubling is optional.

5 In non-colloquial speech, clitics may encliticize to finite verbs in certain situations. (8b) is starred in the text because in colloquial speech, the form is never used. However, Ss like (8b) are used in newspapers, speeches, etc.

6 In Spanish, this rule applies not only to structures with the matrix verb ver but also to other verbs of perception (oir 'to hear'), and to the causative verbs hacer 'to make' and dejar 'to let'. See Aissen (1974a,b) and Bordelois (1974) for discussions of this construction.

7 This rule of Verb Raising appears to have the effect that its output assumes the features of a simplex S; this accounts for the derived position of the infinitive (next to the matrix V) and the case marking and derived positions of the accusative and dative NPs on the basis of principles of word order and case marking in simplex Ss.

8 The (a) Ss below are not perfect. Inanimate clitics appear to prefer to climb rather than to remain with the infinitive.

9 The reader will note that we are using deber 'must' in the following examples as a clitic attracting verb rather than querer. The reason is that verbs form a hierarchy according to their power to attract clitics; querer is somewhat further down the hierarchy than deber, and in particular does not attract clitics in Ss like (23).

10 The preposition a alone does not block Clitic Climbing. For example: (i) Empecé a hacerlo. 'I began to do it.'

(ii) Lo empecé a hacer.

See Bordelois (1974) for a discussion of the construction in (37).

11 To the extent that Clitic Climbing is lexically governed, we expect to find that speakers may vary with respect to which verbs are [+Clitic Climbing] and which [-Clitic Climbing].

12 The judgments in (44) and (45b) are Rivero's. In her dialect, apparently, Equi applies optionally to creer and obligatorily to querer.

13 We are aware of the fact that there is some dialectal variation in the double no construction.

14 Contreras and Rojas (1972) make this observation. The facts presented by Contreras and Rojas and below suggest that for at least some speakers the constraint as formulated by Rivero is not correct.

15 This is true for matrix verbs which require a personal object, like the verbs we are considering here. The implication: "if a matrix verb  $V_m$  allows the configuration [no  $V_m$  no V], it does not accept clitics" is not true for verbs like querer which both accept clitics and allow double no's. Nonetheless, the implication "if a matrix verb does not allow this configuration, it does accept clitics" seems to be correct, and it is this implication that we need for the argument.

16 Note that the clitic does not climb in the (b) examples. Clitics may never climb over an intervening no. See Rivas (1974) for an explanation.

17 There are also verbs of structure [ACC-V V-ACC] which do allow double no's. For example:

- (i) No lo forcé a no irse. 'I didn't force him not to leave.'
- (ii) No lo impulsé a no casarse. 'I didn't force him not to get married.'

18 We are making an additional assumption here which is that all verbs which enter into infinitival complement structures are marked as either [+ Clitic Climbing] or [- Clitic Climbing] even if the effect of Clitic Climbing is never observed. We are aware that this assumption requires justification. We present justification in a forthcoming paper.

19 The ungrammaticality of Ss like (i) and (ii) below, which will be generated under our analysis must also be explained, for these Ss are not excluded by Perlmutter's surface filter:

- (i) \* $\overset{\text{acc}}{\text{Me}}$  lo obligó a comprar. ('He made me buy it.')
- (ii) \* $\overset{\text{acc}}{\text{Te}}$  lo obligó a comprar. ('He made you buy it.')

A more complicated filter than Perlmutter's, one which refers to case and blocks any clitic sequence containing more than one accusative clitic, must exist if our analysis is correct. The following filter was proposed by Dinnsen (1972) to operate in addition to Perlmutter's filter:

- (iii) Reflexive      Benefactive      Dative      Accusative

This filter is interpreted as outlined above for Perlmutter's filter. Dinnsen justifies the relative ordering of clitics dictated by this filter, but not the inclusion of only one slot for each case. That is, he does not, for example, argue against the filter in (iv):

- (iv) Reflexive      Benefactive      Dative      Accusative      Accusative

If our analysis is correct, (iv) must be wrong. Unfortunately, we cannot provide independent evidence for (iii) as against (iv). The



only source of two accusative clitics in Spanish that we know of is in Ss like (i) and (ii) above.

We can show that two dative clitics may not cooccur and this lends some plausibility, though nothing more, to the assumption that two accusative clitics are excluded. Two dative clitics arise by applying Clitic Climbing to the structure

[DAT-V V-DAT]. The output of Clitic Climbing, however, is  
+Cl.Cl.

ungrammatical:

(v) Te ordené pegarle. 'I ordered you to strike him.'  
dat dat

(vi) \*Te le ordené pegar.

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