

## CLITICS AND ISLAND-INSENSITIVE OBJECT DROP\*

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Null object constructions in many languages have been analyzed as involving movement of a null topic operator. This paper examines Greek, Bulgarian, Quitoño Spanish and Brazilian Portuguese, in which definite or indefinite object drop fails to show evidence of such movement. All four languages show gaps in their clitic pronoun paradigm and a certain “exceptional” form of clitic left dislocation corresponding to the type of objects, definite or indefinite, that may be dropped.

I argue that these languages show evidence of having phonetically null “clitic-like” pronominals, which make possible a unified, maximally simple account of the phenomena examined here.

### 1 Introduction

Since Huang’s (1984) analysis of null objects in Chinese, null object constructions in many languages have been analyzed as operator-variable constructions, in which a null topic operator raises to verb-complement position, leaving behind a trace that serves as the variable it binds. Raposo (1986) adopts Huang’s analysis for European Portuguese, also an object-drop language, and Campos (1986) proposes the same analysis for Spanish, in which only indefinite objects may be dropped. A major source of support for such analyses is the sensitivity of object drop to island effects.

However, a number of languages exhibit object drop that is insensitive to island constraints. (cf. Farrell (1990), Kato (1993) for Brazilian Portuguese, Suñer and Yépez (1988) for Quitoño Spanish). I will show below that indefinite object drop in modern Greek and Bulgarian is likewise insensitive to islands. In such cases a topic operator analysis is unmotivated (and is indeed rejected by the aforementioned authors).

In this squib, I argue that Greek and Bulgarian show evidence of having phonetically null indefinite “special” object pronominals (meaning null, clitic-like indefinite pronominals). This claim is motivated by the similarity of a number of constructions involving indefinites to certain constructions involving cliticized definites. As I will show, it provides a maximally simple account of island-insensitive indefinite object drop (which under this account is not object drop at all, but rather cliticization by a null clitic), and of certain constructions involving left-adjoined indefinite objects that I will refer to as “exceptional” *clitic-left-dislocation* (ECLLD). I will show that such an analysis is superior to a null topic analysis in the style of Huang (1984), or to an analysis stipulating that *pro* (or an equivalent empty category) can be licensed as an indefinite object.

An equivalent analysis is proposed for Brazilian Portuguese and Quitoño Span-

ish, which I analyze as having *definite* null special pronominals.<sup>1</sup> This analysis predicts a number of surprising properties of these two languages, although it fails to explain the apparent sensitivity of null definite objects to Principle C effects.

In the next section, I explain the typological assumptions that allow me to speak of null “clitic-like” elements. Section 2 is a summary of Dimitriadis (1994); it reviews briefly the pattern of ECLLD and IOD in Greek, from which it is concluded that ECLLD is demonstrably a subclass of CLLD, and that the null variable involved can only be a null special pronominal; and likewise that IOD in Greek (but not in all IOD languages) behaves as the indefinite counterpart of cliticization, rather than as a form of topicalization.

In section 3 I show that Bulgarian, which has island-insensitive IOD like Greek, also exhibits ECLLD, as expected if Bulgarian has null indefinite special pronominals.

The plausibility of this analysis is bolstered by its extension to cases of island-insensitive definite object drop, in particular to Brazilian Portuguese and Quitoño Spanish, discussed in the remaining sections. Both languages have gaps in their definite clitic paradigms that correspond to the types of objects that can be dropped; moreover, both languages allow *definite* objects to enter in ECLLD constructions, just as would be expected of languages with null definite “clitics.”

Thus we have evidence for the same cluster of properties in all cases:

- (1) a. A language allows a certain class of null objects (definite or indefinite) inside islands, rendering a null-topic analysis inappropriate.
- b. The language always turns out to lack clitic pronoun forms (overt special pronominals) that could be construed with the class of objects that can be dropped; hence there is a gap in the special pronominal paradigm, which can be occupied by the posed null clitics.
- c. The same class of objects can enter in ECLLD constructions.

The languages that have IOD in islands lack indefinite clitics and have ECLLD of indefinites, while the languages that have island-indefinite full object drop have lost the relevant definite object clitics and allow ECLLD of definite objects. The persistence of this pattern irrespective of the definiteness of the allowable null objects supports the contention that the phenomena in question are related.

## 1.1 Special clitics and special pronominals

Given the inherently phonological nature of clitics, the notion of a null counterpart to a clitic pronoun appears to be not only unprincipled, but a contradiction in terms. In this section I will attempt to address these objections and clarify the relation of null clitics to licensing mechanisms and to the empty category paradigm.

Part of the problem, I believe, is the use of the term “clitic” to describe a phonological as well as a syntactic notion. Within the class of clitics it is traditional to distinguish the class of “special clitics,” which are characterized, for example, by appearing in syntactically restricted positions, as opposed to “simple” clitics such as the cliticized pronouns in English. (cf. Wanner (1978)). I assume that (some) such clitics comprise a distinct grammatical category, for which I have coined the name “special pronominals.”

Traditional Greek grammar recognizes clitic pronouns as a distinct subclass of pronouns; elsewhere they are described as “non-tonic object pronouns.” I chose the term “special pronominals” as a typological generalization of the notion of special clitics, and I use it explicitly to refer to the syntactic properties of the class in question *without* reference to its phonological properties. Suppose one were studying Greek (or any Romance language) in its written form only, without any knowledge of its phonology: there would still be a clearly recognizable *syntactic* class of pronominals that must always immediately precede or follow a verb, can (in some languages) enter in doubling constructions, etc. It is this class, so construed, that I intend the term “special pronominals” to describe.<sup>2</sup> This is not a deep claim: I am merely providing a name for what I consider to be an obvious, and long recognized, natural syntactic class, whatever its formal status.

It is true that all known members of this class, however defined, are overt, and that they are obligatorily cliticized. But it does not follow that these are *necessary* properties of the class of special pronominals. Certainly they would be if the *overt* identification of a grammatical relation is taken to be an essential property of this class;<sup>3</sup> but this is a theory-internal matter, not a pretheoretical given, certainly not a matter that should be settled by definition.

For reasons of consistency with established usage, I will continue to refer to “clitic pronouns”, and sometimes even to “null clitics;” but it should be borne in mind that the null entities I propose belong to the paradigm of the syntactic class that contains pronominal clitics, and need not have all the properties associated with the term “clitic.”

## 2 Null pronominals in Modern Greek

### 2.1 Exceptional CLLD

Clitic Left Dislocation (CLLD), recently studied by Cinque (1990) and Iatridou (forthcoming), typically involves a left-dislocated element coindexed with a clitic, as in the following example from Greek.

- (2) To vivlio i Maria to efere.  
 the book/Acc the Maria/Nom CL brought  
 ‘Mary brought the book.’

Although CLLD superficially resembles the left dislocation of a clitic-doubled element, it has been established that it is a distinct phenomenon, present in languages that prohibit clitic doubling (such as Italian), and appropriate in contexts incompatible with left dislocation.

Iatridou (forthcoming) argues that the preposed object in (3b) is base-generated in that position, and presents several diagnostics that differentiate it from ordinary left dislocation (LD) of an object. The first diagnostic is that a CLLD’ed object is old information, and need not be stressed, while an ordinary left-dislocated object *must* be stressed. Thus (3b), but not (3c), is an appropriate (unstressed) answer to (3a).

- (3) a. Pios agorase to palto?  
 who bought the coat

- b. To palto o Costas to agorase. (CLLD)  
 the coat the Costas CL bought  
 ‘Costas bought the coat.’
- c. # **To palto** o Costas agorase. (LD)  
 the coat the Costas bought  
 ‘Costas bought **the coat.**’

By this diagnostic, (4b) must be a CLLD construction, since it is an appropriate answer to (4a): Left-adjoined indefinites in Greek can be interpreted like CLLD’ed definite NPs.

- (4) a. Pios agorase palto?  
 who bought coat  
 ‘Who bought a coat?’
- b. Palto o Costas agorase. (CLLD-like)  
 coat the Costas bought  
 ‘Costas bought a coat.’

We have here a left dislocation construction, in the absence of an overt clitic, in which the adjoined *nominal* element is old information. I examined this construction at some length in Dimitriadis (1994), concluding on the basis of several tests that it is indeed a form of CLLD. I call such “clitic-less nominal CLLD” constructions “exceptional CLLD,” or ECLLD; when necessary I will refer to CLLD with a visible clitic as “overt CLLD.” Although the presence of a clitic is not conceptually necessary to a CLLD construction,<sup>4</sup> I argued in Dimitriadis (1994) that the semantic variable involved in ECLLD has construal and distributional properties that are identical to those expected of an indefinite clitic pronoun (except for the fact that it lacks phonological content), and are incompatible with those expected of object *pro*.

The null special pronoun analysis, of course, claims that there is nothing “exceptional” about ECLLD, aside from involving a non-overt special pronominal instead of an overt one (i.e., instead of a clitic pronoun). As (3c) indicates, Greek only allows indefinites to appear in ECLLD constructions.<sup>5</sup>

## 2.2 Object Drop as Cliticization

In this section I examine Indefinite Object Drop (IOD) in Greek, which as noted is insensitive to islands. For this reason an analysis in the style of Huang (1984) must be rejected, while an analysis in terms of null special pronominals accounts for IOD by assimilating it to cliticization.

Greek does not in general allow direct objects to be dropped, although of course they may be omitted if a clitic is present.

- (5) Q: Foras to palto sou?  
 you-wear the coat your  
 ‘Are you wearing your coat?’
- a. \*(To) forao.  
 CL I-wear

However, an indefinite NP may be omitted without a (visible) clitic being present.

(In fact, a clitic may not in general appear in place of an indefinite).

- (6) Q: Foras palto?  
you-wear coat  
'Are you wearing a coat?'
- A: (\*To) forao.  
CL I-wear  
'I am wearing [one].'

If the indefinite sentences may contain an invisible counterpart to the clitic pronoun, then IOD is simply assimilated to cliticization, requiring no additional devices.

Campos (1986) presents five diagnostics demonstrating that indefinite object drop in Spanish obeys the constraints associated with movement. It is indicative of the differences in the superficially similar object drop paradigms of the two languages that Greek behaves differently from Spanish with respect to all five diagnostics. For example the sentences in (7), (8) show that in Greek, but not in Spanish, object drop is insensitive to the Sentential Subject Constraint, and the Adjunct Island Constraint, respectively. Both are otherwise present in both languages. (Spanish examples are from Campos (1986)).

- (7) a. Q: Pepe necesita gafas? (Sentential Subject)  
'Does Pepe need glasses?'
- A: \* Que necesita es obvio.  
'That he needs (them) is obvious.'
- b. Q: O Costas chriazete gialia?  
the Costas needs glasses
- A: To oti chriazete ine profanes.  
the that he-needs is obvious  
'That he needs (them) is obvious.'
- (8) a. Q: Encontraron entradas para la película? (Adjunct)  
'Did you find tickets for the movie?'
- A: \* Sí, pudimos entrar al cine porque encontramos.  
'Yes, we were able to go into the cinema because we found (some).'
- b. Q: Vrikate isitiria gia tin tenia?  
you-find tickets for the film?
- A: Ne, boresame ke bikame giati vrikame.  
yes, we-could and entered because we-found  
'Yes, we were able to enter because we found (some).'

On the basis of the sensitivity to islands of Spanish IOD, Campos (1986) argues for an analysis involving movement from verb-complement position of a null topic operator (cf. Huang (1984)). The insensitivity of Greek IOD to islands establishes that a similar analysis of Greek IOD would be inappropriate. The null-clitic analysis, on the other hand, naturally predicts that IOD would be insensitive to syntactic islands.

There is another benefit to this approach: It is not clear, under Campos's system, why Spanish only allows indefinite objects to be dropped; the restriction of the null topic operator to such objects must be stated independently. Since indefinite "clitics" are by their nature restricted to non-specific objects, an analysis along the lines I propose is automatically inapplicable to definite objects. Moreover, we would expect that the objects that can be dropped are exactly those that cannot be cliticized

by an overt clitic. As the following section establishes, this indeed appears to be the case in Greek.

### 2.3 The distribution of ECLLD and IOD

A prediction of the claim that null special pronominals are involved in IOD and ECLLD is that the distribution of the two constructions will be consistent, i.e., that all and only the objects that can object-drop should appear in ECLLD constructions. This is not logically necessary: CLLD has special properties that distinguish it from ordinary cliticization or clitic doubling. For example, Italian does not allow ordinary clitic doubling, but allows CLLD.

In Greek, nevertheless, the choice between the definite (overt) and indefinite (null) variant appears to be made on the basis of the same criteria for CLLD and ordinary cliticization. Those objects that can be dropped cannot be cliticized, and vice versa; and those objects that can undergo ECLLD cannot undergo overt CLLD, and vice versa. In fact one property determines the other, i.e., the objects that undergo IOD also undergo ECLLD, while those that can (and must) be cliticized must also be construed with an overt clitic in CLLD constructions.

This pattern is examined in some detail in Dimitriadis (1994). The following, which will serve to illustrate the general pattern, demonstrates that this complementarity of distribution extends to non-nominal complements.

- (9) Q: (To) kseris oti/pos ta skilia trone tiri? (overt clitic)  
 CL you-know that the dogs eat cheese  
 ‘Do you know that dogs eat cheese?’
- a. \*(To) ksero. (\* IOD)  
 CL I-know
- b. Oti ta skilia trone tiri \*(to) ksero. (\* ECLLD)  
 that the dogs eat cheese CL I-know  
 ‘I know that dogs eat cheese.’
- (10) Q: (\*To) Ipes efcharisto? (\* overt clitic)  
 CL you-said thanks  
 ‘Did you say thanks?’
- a. (\*To) ipa. (IOD)  
 CL I-said  
 ‘I said it.’
- b. Efcharisto (\*to) ipa. (ECLLD)  
 thanks CL I-said

## 3 IOD in Bulgarian

The languages of the Balkans are known to share many a subtle quirk of grammar. As mentioned above, Bulgarian has indefinite object drop and ECLLD which appear to be fully assimilable to the account given for Greek.

Consider first object drop. As in Greek, only indefinite objects can be dropped (examples (11,12)), and it is possible to do so inside islands (examples (13,14)).

- (11) Q: Nosiš li palto?  
you-wear Q coat  
‘Are you wearing a coat?’  
a. Nosja.  
I-wear  
b. \* Nosja go.  
I-wear CL
- (12) Q: Nosiš li si paltoto?  
you-wear Q *refl.* the-coat  
‘Are you wearing your coat?’  
a. \* Nosja.  
I-wear  
b. Nosja go.  
I-wear CL
- (13) Q: Koj donese bira na kupona?  
who brought beer at the-party  
‘Who brought beer to the party?’  
A: Čux će čovekât kojto e donesâl si e trâgnal.  
I-heard that the-person who is brought *refl.* is left  
‘I heard that the person who brought  $\phi$  has left.’
- (14) Q: Paulina šte donese li bira na kupona?  
Paulina will bring Q beer to the-party  
‘Will Paulina bring beer to the party?’  
A: Čux sluxâ će šte donese.  
heard the-rumour that will bring  
‘I heard the rumor that she will bring  $\phi$ .’

If we conclude, as I propose, that Bulgarian has null indefinite clitics (that is, null indefinite special pronominals), we expect that they should be utilized in CLLD, i.e., that Bulgarian also should have ECLLD of indefinites. Although this is in fact the case, the situation is obscured by an independent phenomenon (one not shared with Greek), the ability of Bulgarian to have unstressed topics that are old information (cf. Rudin (1986), Izvorski (1994)). Thus superficially, it appears as if Bulgarian has ECLLD of definites and indefinites alike.<sup>6</sup>

- (15) Q: Are you wearing a coat?  
a. Palto nosja prez zimata.  
coat I-wear during the-winter  
b. \* Palto go nosja (prez zimata).  
coat CL I-wear during the-winter
- (16) Q: Are you wearing your coat?  
a. Paltoto si go nosja.  
the-coat *refl.* CL I-wear  
‘I am wearing my coat.’  
b. Paltoto si nosja prez zimata.  
the-coat *refl.* I-wear during the-winter  
‘I wear my coat during the winter.’

It would in fact be more parsimonious to conclude that Bulgarian has no ECLLD at all, since sentences (16a) and (15a) can be generated by topicalization; let’s for now

refer to these constructions as “apparent ECLLD,” pending resolution of their true status.

Fortunately, topicalization is sensitive to syntactic islands, while CLLD, not being derived via movement, is not. Thus when an island intervenes, we expect it to interfere with topicalization only, allowing CLLD (overt or “exceptional”). As the following sentences show, definites cannot be topicalized across an island, although as expected they can undergo overt CLLD in such environments. But indefinites can be left-adjoined in the absence of a clitic; since sentence (18) cannot be derived by topicalization, it must be analyzed as ECLLD; moreover, since (17a) is ungrammatical we conclude that ECLLD is restricted to indefinites, as predicted by the null clitic analysis.

- (17) Q: Who brought the computer to the party?  
 a. \*Kompjutârâ čux če čovekât kojto e donesâl si e trâgnal.  
 the-computer I-heard that the-person who is brought *refl.* is left  
 ‘I heard that the person who brought the computer has left.’  
 b. Kompjutârâ čux če čovekât kojto go e donesâl si e  
 the-computer I-heard that the-person who CL is brought *refl.* is  
 trâgnal.  
 left  
 ‘I heard that the person who brought the computer has left.’
- (18) Q: Who brought beer to the party?  
 A: Bira, čux če čovekât kojto e donesâl si e trâgnal.  
 beer I-heard that the-person who is brought *refl.* is left  
 ‘I heard that the person who brought beer has left.’

Thus we have found in Bulgarian the cluster of properties expected of (indefinite) null special pronominals: indefinite object drop inside islands, ECLLD of indefinites, and the incompatibility of the overt (definite) clitic forms with the NPs that undergo IOD and ECLLD. In the next two sections I examine two languages that allow null definite objects inside islands. The null clitic analysis would predict that definites, in these languages, should show the cluster of effects associated with indefinites in Greek and Bulgarian. As the following sections will show, this indeed appears to be the case.

### 3.1 Quiteño Spanish

Quiteño Spanish, a dialect spoken in Quito, Ecuador, was studied by Suñer and Yépez (1988). All examples provided below are theirs. Quiteño is of interest because it allows definite object drop inside islands:

- (19) a. Yo le reconocí al hombre que trajo  $\phi$ .  
 I him recognized the man who brought  
 ‘I recognized the man who brought it [the package].’  
 b. La persona que mandó  $\phi$  escribió esta nota.  
 the person who sent wrote this note  
 ‘The person who sent them [the flowers] wrote this note.’



- c. Cuando entregue  $\phi$ , puede matricularse.  
 when you-hand in you-can register  
 ‘When you hand them [the documents] in, you can register.’

Thus the null element denoted by  $\phi$  cannot be a null topic operator as in Huang (1984). Could it be a form of null “clitic,” in this case definite? There are two observations that lend plausibility to such an analysis. The first is that the definite direct clitics (*lo(s)*, *la(s)*) have been almost completely lost; the indirect object clitic *le(s)* can be used in their place. But in sentences that also contain a cliticized indirect object, the direct object cannot be overtly represented by a clitic; ellipsis is nevertheless allowed (provided the object is inanimate), with a null where standard Spanish would use a direct object clitic:

- (20) a. Dámelo. (Standard Spanish)  
 give/2sg-me-it  
 ‘Give it to me.’  
 b. Dame $\phi$ . (Quiteño)
- (21) a. Bueno, yo te lo saco. (Standard Spanish)  
 well I from-you it remove  
 ‘Well, I’ll remove it from you.’  
 (*lo = el vestido* ‘the dress’)  
 b. Bueno, yo te  $\phi$  saco. (Quiteño)

Thus Quiteño has a gap in its clitic paradigm that can be “filled” by positing null definite accusative clitics; this is also motivated by the clear correspondence of the above sentences to cliticization in Standard Spanish.

Given such an analysis, we might also hope to see ECLLD of definite objects. Suñer and Yepez report that null object constructions are “favored by the existence of the referent of the  $\phi$  DO either in Left-Dislocated position or in the immediately preceding sentence,” noting that “these Left-Dislocated phrases are not in any way contrastive or emphatic.” The relevant examples can be recognized as clear cases of ECLLD of definites:

- (22) a. Las elecciones yo nunca entendí  $\phi$ .  
 the elections I never understood  
 ‘The elections, I have never understood them.’  
 b. La leche vendían  $\phi$  a \$1.20.  
 the milk they-sold for \$1.20  
 ‘The milk, they used to sell it for \$1.20.’  
 c. Las de allá, cerraron  $\phi$ .  
 the ones from there they-closed  
 ‘The ones from there, they closed them.’

Thus in Quiteño, we see associated with definite objects the same cluster of properties that we found in the indefinites of Greek and Bulgarian. The recurrence, *mutatis mutandis*, of these phenomena in connection with definite objects is strong evidence that ECLLD and island-insensitive object drop are related. It does not, to be sure, show that null “clitics” are necessarily responsible: if Quiteño has a different way to license a null object that does not involve movement, it is plausible that the null entity involved can also function as a CLLD variable. The gap in the clitic

paradigm, which as we will see in the next section is repeated in Brazilian Portuguese, provides more specific, if weaker, evidence for the null-clitic analysis.

Against this evidence we must balance a serious complication that I have not yet addressed: it appears that the null entity is subject to Principle C of the binding theory, a property that distinguishes it from overt clitic pronouns.

- (23) Mi carro<sub>i</sub> necesita que le<sub>i</sub>/<sup>\*</sup>ϕ<sub>i</sub> lave.  
 my car needs that CL I-wash  
 ‘My car needs that I wash it.’

On the basis of such data Suárez and Yépez (1988) rule out *pro* as well as “null resumptive pronouns” as the empty element in question. One possible approach is to concede that the null clitics of Quitoño are not functionally identical to the overt clitics of Standard Spanish, possibly being subject to Principle C. This raises the issue of the binding principle that governs the null clitics of Greek and Bulgarian. Note that a clitic, overt or null, might be subject to different binding conditions when used as a variable (in CLLD) rather than as a pronoun.

Another possibility is to attribute the ungrammaticality of (23) to independent principles governing the choice between *le* and *ϕ* as the direct object clitic; it is conceivable that these principles force the overt variant to be used when it is c-commanded by a coindexed antecedent. Apparent principle C effects also arise in connection with object drop in Brazilian Portuguese, discussed in the next section. Farrell (1990) argues that these are in fact an artifact of an independent restriction on anaphora; if his analysis is correct, it may also be relevant to the Quitoño data.

### 3.2 Brazilian Portuguese

Brazilian Portuguese is another language with island-insensitive definite object drop, which has been studied among others by Tarallo (1983), Kato (1993) and Farrell (1990). Object drop is most acceptable with inanimate third-person objects, while overt forms are “generally preferred and often required” for animate third person objects. First and second objects must be overt, as example (24a) shows; third-person null objects are possible inside islands, as in (24b) (both examples from Farrell (1990)).

- (24) a. Coitado do João/ \*de mim/ \*de você. O chefe mandou ϕ embora.  
 poor of the João of me of you the boss sent away  
 ‘Poor João<sub>i</sub>/me<sub>i</sub>/you<sub>i</sub>. The boss fired ϕ<sub>i</sub>.’  
 b. Eu vou beber a cerveja antes de brigar com a pessoa que deixou ϕ  
 I go drink the beer before of fight with the person that left  
 fora da geladeira.  
 out of the refrigerator  
 ‘I’m going to drink the beer<sub>i</sub> before fighting with the person that left ϕ<sub>i</sub>  
 out of the refrigerator.’

Again, we find that the clitic paradigm of Brazilian Portuguese contains a gap corresponding to the null elements posited by the null special pronominals analysis. Spoken Brazilian Portuguese has lost third person accusative clitics; with inanimate objects, even full pronouns are marginal.

Like Quiteño, Brazilian Portuguese has ECLLD of definites (Nunes, p.c.). Example (25a), from Kato (1993), involves a left-adjoined antecedent that is old information. Example (25b), from Farrell (1990), shows ECLLD in an embedded clause. (Neither author identifies these examples as analogues of CLLD).

- (25) a. Q: E quanto ao bolo?  
 and as for the cake  
 ‘What about the cake?’  
 A: (O bolo,) o rapaz que  $\phi$  trouxe saiu agora.  
 the cake the boy who bought just left  
 ‘The cake<sub>i</sub>, the boy who bought  $\phi_i$  just left.’
- b. Ouvi falar que o bolo todo o mundo  $\phi$  adorou.  
 I-heard say that the cake everybody adored  
 ‘I heard that everybody loved the cake.’

As Farrell notes, (25b) is not readily analyzed as topicalization, particularly since the left-adjoined NP here follows the complementizer; but it is perfectly regular as an instance of CLLD. Compare the following Greek examples:<sup>7</sup>

- (26) a. O Yanis nomize oti tin Maria o Kostas tin ide. (CLLD)  
 the Yanis thought that the Mary/Acc the Kostas CL saw  
 ‘Yanis thought that Kostas saw Maria.’
- b. O Yanis nomize oti kersasia o Kostas efage. (ECLLD)  
 the Yanis thought that cherries/Acc the Kostas ate  
 ‘Yanis thought that Kostas ate cherries.’

Object drop in Brazilian Portuguese appears to be constrained by Binding Condition C: a null object contained in a complement clause cannot be coindexed with a matrix argument.

- (27) \* O João<sub>i</sub> falou que o Pedro viu  $\phi_i$ .  
 João said that Pedro saw  
 ‘João<sub>i</sub> said that Pedro saw  $\phi_i$ .’

Farrell (1990) argues that such apparent principle C violations are in fact caused by an independently attested restriction that prohibits an empty object from being coindexed, intra- or inter-sententially, with the subject of a verb that takes a sentential complement. He concludes from this that empty objects in Brazilian Portuguese belong to the category *pro*, but his argument serves just as well in support of null third person clitics.

Farrell proposes a licensing mechanism under which object *pro* is exceptionally identified by the verb as long as *pro* carries “intrinsic” third-person features. The motivation for this mechanism appears to be restricted to the theory-internal need to somehow identify object *pro*, plus the observation that only third-person objects may be dropped. Assuming Farrell’s reanalysis of the binding facts is correct, an analysis positing a null third person form for the definite clitic (that is, special pronominal) is better motivated than his intrinsic specification account.

The historical change that Brazilian Portuguese has undergone can then be said to involve, rather than the complete loss of third person accusative clitics, the replacement of overt forms with with phonologically null substitutes. Null clitic con-

structions appear to be supplementing, and perhaps replacing, the preexisting topic-operator mechanism of object drop that European Portuguese still has. Bianchi and Figueiredo Silva (1993) found that Brazilian Portuguese has separate animate and inanimate paradigms of object drop; the animate paradigm obeys islands like OD in European Portuguese, while the inanimate paradigm is insensitive to islands. That would make a null clitics analysis appropriate to the inanimate paradigm only.

Kato (1993) has previously (and independently) analyzed object drop in Brazilian Portuguese by means of a null third person accusative clitic; the proposals made here are fully compatible with her analysis. Kato accepts the presence of Principle C effects on object drop; she accommodates these effects as follows: to the classification of Sportiche (1986), which divides elements that enter into binding relations according to whether *c*-command is required or optional (and whether a locality or an antilocality condition is in effect), she adds a third column specifying that “anti-*c*-command” is required, and assigns null clitics to it. Although this step accommodates the behavior of Brazilian object drop, it is clear that it does so by in effect stipulating that null clitics are subject to Binding Condition C; thus the question still awaits a more illuminating explanation.

The presence of Principle C effects with null, but not with overt, definite special pronominals raises a conceptual problem: contrary to the simplest hypothesis about special pronominals, it implies that they differ from overt clitics in more than phonological content. A possible explanation of the origin of such differences (although not of the Principle C effects themselves) is suggested by the work of Nunes (1992). He notes that in written Brazilian Portuguese, which still has third-person accusative clitics, the distribution of such clitics is different from the distribution of dative and first and second person accusative clitics: for example, with auxiliary + participial main verb constructions, third person accusative clitics must appear before the auxiliary, while other clitics favor proclisis to the participle.

- (28) a. João tinha lhe-dado um livro.  
       Joao had to-him given a book  
       b. ?? João lhe-tinha dado um livro.
- (29) a. \* João tinha o-visto.  
       Joao had him seen  
       b. João o-tinha visto.

In constructions of the form auxiliary + infinitival verb, third person accusative clitics favor enclisis to the infinitive, while other clitics favor proclisis to it. Nunes argues that as a result of a historical change from enclisis in Old Portuguese to the strongly proclitic modern Brazilian Portuguese system, the phonological licensing of the syllable onset of third-person accusative clitics became impossible; this led to reanalysis giving rise, among other things, to the null object construction of Brazilian Portuguese.

Although Nunes is agnostic about the proper analysis of the null object construction, his account provides on the one hand an explanation of how null elements could be introduced to the system of special pronominals, and on the other evidence that the loss of overt third person clitics is associated with changes in their pattern of movement, and conceivably with reanalysis introducing properties not shared by overt special pronominals.

## 4 Conclusion

The preceding sections have established that island-insensitive object drop, cliticization and “exceptional” CLLD are distributionally related in a variety of languages, motivating the conclusion that the same mechanism is involved; the presence of ECLLD of definite objects in Quiteño, and Brazilian, which have definite object drop, directly parallels the ECLLD of indefinites in the IOD languages Greek and Bulgarian. In each case we also find gaps in the clitic paradigm corresponding to the proposed null counterparts.

The presence of null “clitics” would explain the cluster of observed phenomena in a maximally simple way, requiring no additional stipulations for the IOD languages Greek and Bulgarian. The pattern of apparent Binding Condition C restrictions associated with definite object drop remains to be reconciled with this analysis. Since an account of object drop in terms of a topic operator, in the style of Huang (1984), is problematic for these languages because it predicts that object drop should be sensitive to islands, the null clitic analysis nevertheless appears to be the best way to account for island-insensitive object drop. At any rate the principle C effects are also problematic for alternative analyses, since a null anaphor would not a priori be expected to behave like a referential entity.

The data discussed establishes that the same null element serves as the variable in ECLLD and island-insensitive object drop. The claim that this null element is indeed similar to a pronominal clitic is somewhat more open to question, but in my opinion sufficiently well-motivated by the presence of appropriate paradigmatic gaps in the overt clitic paradigm of each language and the correspondence in the construal characteristics of the constructions in question.

I based the notion of null “clitics,” more properly *null special pronominals*, on a typological generalization of the syntactic category of which pronominal “special clitics” are members. Although the syntactic status and properties of clitics remain mysterious, the empirical coverage achieved in this paper can be taken as evidence against accounts that make overtness an essential property of pronominal clitics.

### NOTES

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<sup>1</sup> Kato (1993) has also proposed that object drop in Brazilian Portuguese involves a null clitic. Her analysis is discussed in section 3.2.

<sup>2</sup> Special pronominals are thus distinct from “weak pronouns,” another phonologically defined class.

<sup>3</sup> If for example we consider clitics to be “the overt spelling out of a *wh*-trace,” then the null counterpart to clitics would be the *wh*-trace. This is obviously incompatible with my proposal; cf. Cinque (1990, p. 61) for a discussion of the problems that CLLD raises for this conception of clitics.

<sup>4</sup> For example, Iatridou (forthcoming) discusses *subject CLLD*, in which a subject NP is left-adjoined; in this case, subject *pro* functions as CLLD variable.

<sup>5</sup> The precise class of NPs that can undergo ECLLD in Greek is difficult to determine, but appears to be coextensive with the class of NPs that (under a given interpretation) cannot be cliticized.

<sup>6</sup> Sentences (15a) and (16b) are degraded if an adverbial (such as “during the winter”), or an overt subject that is new information, is not present.

<sup>7</sup> In Greek, the left-adjoined NP and the complementizer can appear in either order, as noted by Iatridou (forthcoming), whence example (26a).

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