

At the interface of syntax and pragmatics: Chipaya focus-marking enclitics

In this paper, I will discuss focus-marking enclitics of Chipaya, an endangered isolate of highland Bolivia (Adelaar 2007:19).

Chipaya has a set of enclitics that establish a focus relation between the subject of the clause and the constituent carrying the enclitic (see also Cerrón-Palomino 2006:172). The focus-marking enclitics are co-referential with the subject of a clause but are not obligatory and long stretches of discourse as well as entire texts can occur without the focus-marking enclitics. Three main types of clitic constructions are attested: (1) a single enclitic without an overtly realised subject pronoun (only with first- and second person subject referents); (2) anaphoric doubling, where a first- or second person subject pronoun co-occurs with the corresponding enclitic; (3) lexical doubling, where a lexical third person subject noun phrase and the co-referential enclitic occur in the same clause (for the terms of anaphoric and lexical doubling, see Belloro 2007:117). According to whether the enclitics are co-referential with a first-, second or third person subject referent, they occupy different syntactic positions within a clause (bold face marks regular syntactic positions; (X) marks occasional syntactic positions).

Enclitics co-referential with	Subject	Direct object	Indirect object	Modifiers	Negation
1st and 2nd subject	---	X	(X)	(X)	X
3rd subject	X	(X)	---	(X)	X

Table 1: Syntactic positions of Chipaya focus-marking enclitics

I suggest that the syntactic positions of the focus-marking enclitics follow from their pragmatic functions. The focus-marking enclitics of Chipaya have three main functions of which the most frequent one is to add new information about the subject referent of the clause and/or to establish a new relation between the subject and the object referent. Related to this is the second function of the focus-marking enclitics which is to introduce a new referent to the discourse or else to re-introduce a referent from a previous part of the discourse. Lastly, the enclitics may express some pragmatically interpreted contrast (see e.g. Matic & Wedgwood 2013, for an overview of the functions of focus).

These functions determine the syntactic position of the focus-marking Chipaya enclitics. First- and second person subject referents are speech act participants and as such are necessarily presupposed. In clauses with a first- or second person subject referent the focus-marking enclitic cannot go onto the presupposed and hence topical subject pronoun but instead attaches to the direct object (and occasionally to the indirect object or modifiers) that either provides new information about the presupposed subject referent, establishes a new relation between the subject and the object

referent or introduces a new object referent to the discourse. In clauses where a third person subject referent is newly introduced (or else re-activated from a previous part of the discourse) the focus-marking enclitic usually attaches directly to the lexical third person subject noun phrase. This becomes explicable if we take into consideration that (i) a third person referent is cognitively less salient than a first- or second person referent; (ii) that subjects tend to be presupposed but a (re-)introduced third person subject is non-presupposed and thus runs counter the expectation that subjects are presupposed and hence topical (Siewierska 2004:46). (Re-)introduced third person subject referents are thus doubly marked and therefore regularly receive focus-marking. Only if a third person subject referent is already established in the discourse and thus presupposed can the focus-marking enclitic attach to another constituent, mostly a direct object argument. In negative clauses, however, all focus-marking enclitics regularly (though not obligatorily) attach to the negation particle as this provides the greatest information update with respect to the subject referent (for an overview of the notion of presupposition, see e.g. Lambrecht 1994:51–65, 206–218).

The different types of clitic constructions mentioned above; i.e. single enclitics, anaphoric and lexical doubling, are largely determined by the activation status of the subject referent (Chafe 1976; Lambrecht 1994). The more active a referent is, the less marking is used (e.g. a single enclitic instead of anaphoric doubling). However, competing referents may prompt clitic doubling.

Thus, the Chipaya focus-marking enclitics index the intricate interplay of presupposed and non-presupposed discourse referents and their relationship with each other.

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