

Non-verbal predication and clitics in Aromanian*

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This paper discusses predicational structures in some Aromanian varieties which involve PP or AP predicates combining with the copula BE. In these structures the THEME subject of BE is cross-referenced by an accusative clitic, as long as the THEME is 3rd person and a topic. However, Individual-Level (IL) APs typically resist cliticisation. We propose that the clitic is the spell-out of topic and gender/number features available in Stage-Level predicates (SLPs) only (a spatio-temporal argument à la Kratzer 1995), with which the THEME agrees, before agreeing with T. We argue that this structural property captures the restriction to SLP subject topics, the person restriction, and also that the clitic behaves like a direct object clitic morpho-syntactically.

Keywords: nonverbal predication, clitics, Stage Level Predicates, Individual Level Predicates, topic subjects, split-person ergative marking, Aromanian, Romance

1. Introduction

Some Aromanian varieties spoken in North-Western Greece have the structure exemplified in (1). This construction involves some lexical predicate (the PP *aoa'* in (1)), the copula BE, and a clitic (henceforth, THEME-clitic) which cross-references the THEME subject of the predicate (the DP *fra'tslji ame'i* in (1)) and has the same form as the direct object/accusative clitic.

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- (1) AOA' lji si'ntu fra'tslji ame'i
 here 3pl.masc.cl ARE brothers.the mine
 'HERE are my brothers.'

The main properties of the construction are summarised in (2):

- (2) a. The THEME-clitic is only attested with PP and (some) AP predicates (such as SL APs) (but not with NP or VP predicates);
 b. The THEME-clitic can only be 3rd person (sg/pl);
 c. The THEME-clitic is possible with a tensed or untensed BE;
 d. The THEME-clitic may only cross-reference a (definite/specific or **D-linked**) topic THEME subject, on a par with direct object clitics.

The following research questions arise: (i) Is the THEME-clitic a (direct) object clitic, and, if yes, why does it cross-reference a subject?; (ii) What accounts for its restricted distribution (cf. (2))?; (iii) What are the wider implications for the morpho-syntax of predicational structures in Aromanian and beyond? In what follows we argue that the THEME-clitic spells-out features contained in the functional structure located above PredP (where the THEME is generated), and below the copula BE:

- (3) [TP...T_[+phi]...[copP BE [FP [F' F_[+top]] [FP [F' F_[+g/n]] [PredP ...THEME...]]]]]]]]

In (3), the F head(s) contain gender and number features, as well as a topic feature, all of which agree with the THEME (see also Jiménez-Fernández & Spyropoulos 2013 for small clauses). The THEME-clitic is the reflex of this agreement. The THEME further agrees with T, triggering (subject) agreement on BE. The content and location of the F structure accounts, in our view, for the person restriction and the object properties of the THEME-clitic (cf. 2b-d). We further propose (following Kratzer 1995; Ramchand 1997; Jiménez-Fernández 2012; Gallego & Uriagereka 2016, among others) that the F structure in (3) instantiates the (spatio-temporal) event-argument of Pred. Since only SLPs (cf. Carlson 1977) have such an argument, this explains why the THEME-clitic is only found with SLPs, namely Ps and SL As (Ns and IL As lack it, and VPs are not selected by BE). Moreover, it correctly predicts that SLPs make available more structural positions for (subject) topics, in comparison to ILPs (Diesing 1992; Hallmann 2004) (section 4). This paper is of descriptive, typological, and theoretical importance: At a descriptive level, it presents a predicational construction not reported in the Romance literature, which resembles the *estar/ser* construction in Spanish. In this respect, in addition to enhancing our understanding of how predication is encoded in Aromanian, it opens up the possibility for cross-linguistic comparison with predicational constructions in other languages. At a typological level, it complements the inventory of split-person marking constructions attested cross-linguistically, and it illustrates how structurally conditioned ergativity (see (2-3)) is possible within a non-ergative language

(cf. D’Alessandro and Ledgeway 2010 for Abruzzese). The fact that this particular instance of split-person marking is consistent with two typological tendencies (discussed in section 4) only adds to the importance. Finally, at a theoretical level, the THEME-clitic phenomenon supports the idea that predicational BE structures share some, but not all, of their underlying properties, their differences being reducible to the functional structure distinct predicate types (Ps or As vs. Ns or Vs) may project, and to the selection properties of the copula (Roy 2013). The structure of the paper is as follows: section 2 offers the socio-linguistic background and methodology, section 3 presents the phenomenon, section 4 offers the analysis, and section 5 concludes.

2. Socio-linguistic background and methodology

Aromanian is an Eastern Romance variety spoken in the Balkans. In Greece, Aromanian is an oral variety used by bilingual speakers fluent in both Greek (the dominant variety) and Aromanian (the non-dominant variety). Currently, it is considered to be endangered (Bakalis & Galani 2012). Moreover, it is heavily influenced by Greek, due to language contact. The data reported in this paper were collected via fieldwork *in loco* in the Metsovo municipality, Epirus, North-Western Greece. Tasks used included sentence translation (from Greek to Aromanian) and (informal) acceptability judgments. 4 speakers were interviewed (mean age: 82). All speakers are fluent bilinguals

who have resided in their village all their life. All tasks were administered orally and recorded using a digital recording device. Data were (broadly) transcribed following the IPA standard. Unless otherwise specified, all speakers concurred with the reported data.

3. The phenomenon and its distribution

3.1 The general picture

Consider the following sentence, which repeats the phenomenon at hand:

- (4) ku'mu imna' vidzu' kə u'sha u era' disclji'sə
while walked.impf.3sg saw.3sg that door.the 3sg.fem.cl WAS open.fem
'While he was walking, he saw that the door was open.'

In (4), the clitic *u* cross-references the topic subject *u'sha* in the embedded *kə*-clause. *U* is homophonous with the accusative/direct object clitic (5):

- (5) u disclji'se u'sha ftshior'lu
3fem.sg.cl opened.3sg door.the child.the.nom
'The child opened (it) the door.'

‘That one, her mother combed her.’

b. **atse'lu** (*u) aru'kə nsu'su ngio'su

that.one.masc (*3sg.fem.cl) jumps up down

‘That one jumps (*her) up and down.’

(ii) Both object clitics (8a-b) and THEME-clitics (9a-b) cannot co-occur with *sə* in the future tense, although they can co-occur with the subjunctive *sə*:

(8) a. va (*sə) **lu** spila'tsi **atse'lu**

fut (*subj) 3sg.masc.cl wash.2pl that.one

‘You will wash him, that one.’

b. (voi) z- **lu** spila'tsi **atse'lu**

(want.1sg) subj 3sg.masc.cl wash.2pl that.one

‘(I want that) you wash him, that one!’

(9) a. mi'ne **trei mulje'ri masha'te tse kuno'scu**

tomorrow three women beautiful that know.1sg

va (*sə) **le** hi'bə aoa'tse

fut (*subj) 3pl.fem.cl BE.subj.3pl over.here

‘Tomorrow, three beautiful women I know will be over here’.

b. maka'ri **mari'a** sə **u** hi'bə aoa' di to'tuna

wish.adv Maria.the subj 3sg.fem.cl BE.subj.3sg here of always

‘I wish Maria were here forever.’

(iii) Finally, there is no other environment reported within Aromanian where the accusative clitic form cross-references a (deep or surface) subject. If the THEME-clitic were a true nominative clitic cross-referencing a nominative DP subject, this would be surprising.

The properties in (i-iii) lend support to the hypothesis that the THEME-clitic cross-references an object (position) *despite the fact that the cross-referenced THEME is certainly (also) a subject (as it triggers nominative agreement on BE)*. This somewhat paradoxical conclusion will be further supported by the observation that THEME-clitics do not seem to involve any co-occurrence restrictions with structural heads located within the TP-CP domain, which suggests that any checking involves lower portions of the clause. An account for this paradox is offered in section 4.

3.2 Environments in which the THEME-clitic is found

The distribution of the THEME-clitic is in fact highly restricted:

(i) the clitic only appears with the copula *hiu* ‘I am’ (10a)¹. It is not possible with other intransitives (including unaccusatives (10b-c), *other copulas*

¹ The present tense paradigm for *hiu* is as follows: *hiu* (1sg), *hii* (2sg), *easte/i(-e)* (3sg), *himu* (1pl), *hitsi* (2pl), *sin(t)u* (3pl). See Dinas & Katsanis (1990) for details.

(10d), raising verbs (10e), or unergatives (10f)). It is also impossible with transitives (10g) (unless the clitic cross-references the object):

(10) a. i'u lu ea'ste atse'lu kushu'gu?

where 3sg.masc.cl IS that cupboard

‘Where is that cupboard?’

b. atsea' (*u) vi'ne votono'shu

that (*3sg.fem.cl) came.3sg votonosi

‘That woman came to Votonosi.’

c. pja'tulu (*lu) s- fri'mpse (aoa')

dish.the (*3sg.masc.cl) SE- broke.3sg (here)

‘The dish broke here.’

d. atse'lu (*lu) s- adrə' mare

that.one (*3sg.masc.cl) SE made.3sg big

‘That one became big.’

e. atse'lu nji (*lu) z -vea'de apostusi'tu

that.one 1sg.dat.cl (*3sg.masc.cl) SE-sees tired.masc

‘That one seems to me tired.’

f. atsea' muljea're; (*u_i) lukra' /imna' dzu'a tu'tə

that woman (*3sg.fem.cl) was.working/walking day.the all

‘This woman was working/walking all day.’

- g. **atsea' muljea're_i u^{*i/j} minkə' gɨlji'na_j**
 this woman 3sg.fem.cl ate.3sg chicken.the-acc
 'That woman ate (it) the chicken.'

(ii) the clitic is possible only with *certain* instances of the copula verb *hiu*, namely with a predicational *hiu* that c-selects a PP or an AP predicate (mainly participles of unaccusatives and transitives; see also section 4.2):

- (11) a. **muljea'rea ata'eə u era' aklo' / nhoa'rə**
 wife.the-nom yours 3sg.fem.cl WAS there / in.village
 'Your wife she was there/in the village.'
- b. **atse'lu birba'tu lu era' fudzi'tu di mu'ltu ciro'**
 that man 3sg.masc.cl WAS gone.masc of much time
 'That man had been gone for a long time.'
- c. **le'na u era' neciptina'tə di sor' -sa**
 Lena.the 3sg.fem.cl WAS uncombed.fem of sister.the-her.cl
 'Lena was uncombed (because of/by her sister).'
- d. **ma'ia amea' u ea'ste mu'ltu ađi'natə**
 grandmother.the mine 3sg.fem.cl IS very thin.fem
 'My grandmother is (indeed) very thin.'

Standardly, speakers reject the clitic when the predicate is an NP:

- (12) **ta'ta -nji (?*lu)** ea'ste bu'nu o'mu // γia'tru
 father.the -mine.cl (?*3sg.masc.cl) IS good man // doctor
 ‘My father is a good man// a doctor.’

(iii) Non-predicational uses of *hiu* are incompatible with the clitic:

- (13) a. **pre'ftulu di hoa'rə (*lu)** ea'ste γa'ni
 priest.the of village (*3sg.masc.cl) IS Jani
 ‘Priest of the village is John.’ [specificational be]
- b. **nəu'ntru nka'sə (*lu)** ea'ste **u'nu o'mu**
 inside in.house (*3sg.masc.cl) IS a man
 ‘There is a man inside the house.’² [existential be]

(iv) The clitic can be 3rd person (sg or plural) only (split person-marking):

- (14) a. **eu (*me)** hi'u anal'tu stə po'mu
 I (*1sg.cl) BE.1sg tall.masc on tree
 ‘I am high up on the tree.’

² Note that a preverbal subject would render (13b) grammatical, albeit without the existential reading – see [ftn. 8](#) (as preverbal subjects typically receive a strong reading – see [3.3](#)).

b. **ti'ni** (*te) hi'i anal'tu stə po'mu

you (*2sg.cl) BE.2sg high.masc on tree

'You are high up on the tree.'

c. **atse'lu lu** ea'ste anal'tu stə po'mu

that.one 3sg.masc.cl IS high.masc on tree

'That one is high up on the tree.'

(v) Finally, the clitic does not seem to interact with other heads within the TP - CP domain in any informative way. In particular, the clitic may appear with all the available tense forms for *hiu*:

(15) **atse'lu lu** ea'ste /era' ||va **lu** hi'bə γa'nə

that.one 3sg.masc.cl IS/WAS ||fut 3sg.masc.cl BE.subj.3sg Janena

'That one is/was/will be in Janena.'

Obligatory controlled clauses, which are typically considered to be tenseless in Balkan languages (see Landau 2004), also license the clitic:

(16) ae'ri **ko'sta** s -agərshì'

yesterday Kosta SE-forgot.3sg

z - lu hi'bə tu plate'i (*a'staz)

subj 3sg.masc.cl BE.3sg to square (*today)

‘Yesterday, Kostas forgot to be at the square (*today).’

The THEME-clitic may also co-occur with preverbal modality markers (such as the subjunctive *sə* and the future *va* (*sə*), both of which presumably reside above T, as they precede auxiliaries), and with the negative particle *nu*:

(17) a. **atse'lu o'mu va lu** hi'bə ɣa'nə (mi'ne)

that man fut 3sg.masc.cl BE.3sg janena (tomorrow)

‘That man is going to be at Janena (tomorrow).’

b. **atse'lu o'mu prin'de sə lu** hi'bə aoa'tse

that man must subj 3sg.masc.cl BE.3sg over.here

‘That man must be over here.’

c. **atse'lu nu lu** era' aklo'

that.one neg 3sg.masc.cl WAS there

‘That one was not there.’

Finally, the THEME-clitic is found with various complementisers:

- (18) a. **mari'a** vidzu' tu yi'su kə u era' ta u'nə liva'de
 Maria.the saw.3sg in dream that 3sg.fem.cl WAS in a pasture
 'Maria dreamed that she was in a green pasture.' [factive]
- b. **birba'tulu** tse **lu** ea'ste aoa' nji si spa're kə ea'ste bu'nu
 man.the that 3sg.masc.cl is here me.cl SE seems that IS good
 'The man that is here seems to me to be a good man.' [relative]
- c. **ko'la**, və'ru nu shtea' i'u **lu** era'
 kola, noone not knew.3sg.impf where 3sg.masc.cl WAS
 'Kola, no one knew where he was.' [wh-embedded]

These properties show two things: (a) the THEME-clitic does not contain features which correlate with features located in the TP - CP domain. This could indicate that the features relevant for the clitic are generated lower, even though the clitic ends up pronounced in T; (b) the position of the clitic mirrors the position of direct object clitics, which must also follow the preverbal markers but immediately precede the AGR-finite T³. The null hypothesis, then, is that the THEME-clitic is an object clitic. This is corroborated by the same morpho-syntactic distribution shared between THEME-clitics and true direct object clitics (see 3.1 above). One prediction this hypothesis makes is that THEME-clitics and direct object clitic doubling/left dislocation

³ Note that the varieties under investigation do not have gerunds or (true) infinitives. As a result, it is impossible to test whether the absence of AGR would force enclisis.

should share the same semantico-pragmatic restrictions (as the clitic cross-references a deep THEME in both cases). [In the following section, we argue that this prediction is borne out⁴. Restrictions \(i-iv\) are taken up in section 4.](#)

3.3 Further restrictions: the DP THEME is a topic

In this section, we show that the THEME-clitic may only cross-reference definite/specific subjects that are interpreted as topics. This distribution is similar to direct object clitic doubling/left dislocation. Consider (19):

- (19) a. - *What's up?*
- (*lu) ea'ste **ja'ni** nka'sə
- (*3sg.masc.cl) IS John at.home
- ‘John is at home.’
- b. - *What about John?*
- ja'ni** *(lu) ea'ste nka'sə
- John *(3sg.masc.cl) IS at.home
- ‘John is at home.’

The sentences in (19) illustrate that the presence of the THEME-clitic is not optional. Rather, it is related to information structure, in particular to whe-

⁴ In this respect, note that subject agreement does not impose a topic or specificity related restriction on the subject, unlike object clitics (see examples in main text).

ther the THEME is a topic or not. In addition, the interpretation of the THEME as a topic correlates with its position before or after the copula. That the THEME-clitic can cross-reference overt or covert topics is shown below (see [Frascarelli 2007 for a typology of topics](#)):

- (20) a. **ni'klu, (atse'lu) lu** ea'ste fudzi'tu
 Nick.the, (that one) 3sg.masc.cl IS gone.masc
 ‘Nick, he/that one is gone.’ [hanging topic]
- b. - *What about Kola?*
ko'la lu era' anal'tu stə po'mu sh kidzu'
 Kola, 3sg.masc.cl WAS high.masc on tree and fell.3sg
 ‘Kola, he was high on the tree and fell.’ [aboutness topic]
- c. **mari'a** vidzu' tu yi'su kə **pro u** era' tə u'nə liva'di
 Maria.the saw.3sg in dream that pro 3sg.fem.cl WAS in a pasture
 ‘Maria dreamed that she was in a green pasture.’ [pro topic]
- d. **ko'la lu** ea'ste aoa', **mari'a** o'mos
 Kola 3sg.masc.cl IS here, Maria.the but
u ea'ste na'parte
 3sg.fem.cl IS over.there
 ‘Kola, he is here, but Maria, she is over there.’ [contrastive topic]

On the other hand, the THEME-clitic cannot cross-reference a non-topic THEME.

This includes, among others, foci (21), wh- (22) and negative operators (23):

- (21) a. - *Who was further away?*

KO'la (*lu) era'

KOla (*3sg.masc.cl) WAS [narrow focus]

'It was COLA who was further away.'

- b. **NI'klu** (*lu) ea'ste fudzi'tu, o'xi ko'la

NICK.the (*3sg.masc) IS gone.masc, not Kola

'NICK is gone, not Kola.' [contrastive focus]

- c. - *What is happening?*

(*lu) ea'ste **atse'lu o'mu** anal'tu stə po'mu

(*3sg.masc.cl) IS that man high.masc on tree

'That man is high on the tree.' [broad focus]

- (22) a. **ka're** [numise'shti kə] (*lu) era' aoa'?

who [think.2sg that] (*3sg.masc.cl) WAS here

'Who [do you think] was here?' [Wh-subject]

- b. ??/***ka're** **oa'spe** [numise'shti kə] **lu** era' aclo'?⁵

⁵ Cliticised D-linked THEMES are only allowed by those speakers who also accept cliticisation of D-linked direct object/accusative operators. This lends further support to the proposal that THEME-clitics pattern like direct object clitics morpho-syntactically.

which friend [think.2sg that] 3sg.masc.cl WAS here

‘Which friend do you think was here? [D-linked Wh-subject]

(23) (və'ru) nu (*lu) era' (və'ru) aoa'

anyone not (*3sg.masc.cl) was (anyone) here

‘No one was here.’ [non-referential quantifier subject]

If it is true that the THEME-clitic only cross-references topic THEMES, it is expected that these will be definite and/or specific, as definite/specific DPs have strong/referential readings (and hence qualify as topics *par excellence*)⁶. This prediction is borne out: as shown in (24-27) below, the THEME-clitic may only cross-reference specific and/or definite subjects. In fact, doubling of a bare THEME or of a THEME with a non-referential quantifier leads to ungrammaticality (*unless* D-linking applies – see e.g. 22b above, or 25c below).

⁶ Although the syntactico-semantic properties of a ‘doubled’ THEME restrict whether it can be ‘doubled’ or not, the presence or absence of the clitic ultimately depends on information structure (note that the same applies in Modern Greek - see Mavrogiorgos 2010 and references therein). This is illustrated below, where a definite QP may remain ‘undoubled’ even in preverbal position, if used in a broad focus context:

(i) – *What about the three women? // Are the three women gone?*
tre'ile mulje'ri li sin'tu fudzi'te
three.the women 3pl.fem.cl ARE gone.fem.pl
‘The three women are (indeed) gone.’

(ii) – *What is happening? // (What is happening to the three women?)*
tre'ile mulje'ri (li) si'ntu fudzi'te
three.the women (3pl.fem.cl) ARE gone.fem.pl
‘The three women are gone.’

(24) - What about that man? // Is that man back in Metsovo?

atse'lu lu ea'ste turna'tu amin'tshu

that.one 3sg.masc.cl IS returned.masc metsovo

'That one is (indeed) back in Metsovo.' [definite THEME]

(25) a. - *What is happening?*

(***li**) si'ntu **trei mulje'ri** nəu'ntru tu bisea'rikə

(*3pl.fem.cl) ARE three women inside at church

'There are three women inside the church.' [non-specific THEME]

b. - *I am looking for 3 women around here.*

trei mulje'ri li si'ntu nəu'ntru tu bisea'rikə

three women 3pl.fem.cl ARE inside at church

'Three specific women are inside the church.' [specific THEME]

c. - *Some (specific) women are not inside the church*

Li si'ntu **naski'nte mulje'ri** nəu'ntru tu bisea'rikə

3pl.fem.cl ARE some women inside at church

'There ARE some women inside the church.' [D-linked THEME]

(26) sə nu (***lji**) hi'bə **kse'nji** aoa'tse a'nda mɪnkə'mu

subj not(*3pl.masc.cl) BE.subj.3pl unknowns over.here when eat.1pl

'Unknowns should not be over here when we eat.' [bare noun THEME]

(27) sə nu (***lu**) hi'bə və'ru kse'nu aoa'tse

subj not (*3sg.masc.cl) BE.subj. 3sg any unknown.person over.here

‘Noone unknown should be over here (when we eat).’

[non-specific non-referential THEME]

Exactly the same patterns apply to Clitic Left Dislocated (CLLDed) and Clitic Doubled (CDed) accusative/direct objects:

(28) - *What is happening?*

a. # (**u'nu birbatu**) lu vidzu'i (**u'nu birba'tu**) tu plate'i

(a man) 3sg.masc.cl saw.1sg (a man) at square

‘I saw a certain man at the square.’

b. vidzu'i **u'nu birba'tu** tu plate'i

saw.1sg a man at square

‘I saw a man at the square.’

(29) - *I am looking for a man. Have you seen him?*

a. (**u'nu birba'tu**) lu vidzu'i (**u'nu birba'tu**) tu plate'i

b. # vidzu'i u'nu birba'tu tu plate'i

- (30) a. (*lu) vidzu'i **birba'tu** tu plate'i
 (*3sg.masc.cl) saw.1sg man at square
 ‘*I saw him man at the square.’ (uttered in a village with no men)
- b. nu (*lu) vidzu'i və'ru (**birba'tu**) tu plate'i
 neg (*3sg.masc.cl) saw.1sg any (man) at square
 ‘*I did not see him any man at the square.’

Summing up, the distribution of the THEME-clitic is restricted by properties of the cross-referenced/doubled THEME: the latter can only be definite/specific (a syntactico-semantic requirement) and a topic (a syntactico-pragmatic requirement). In addition, the same distribution is found with direct object clitics. This fact supports the hypothesis that the THEME-clitic is a direct object clitic.

4. The analysis

4.1 The structural properties of THEME-clitics

This section presents our analysis. We propose that the THEME-clitic spells-out features in the functional structure sandwiched between PredP and BE. The features involved include [topic] and [number/gender], though crucially not

a) Restriction of THEME-clitics to PPs and APs (cf. ii, section 3.2): only Ps and As project the required functional suprastructure (being SLPs). Ns do not have such structure (alternatively, accessibility to it is independently blocked (e.g. by a more complex structure, specific to Ns)). Vs are not selected by BE in Aromanian (cf. that no such structures are ever attested);

b) Restriction to predicational BE (cf. i & iii, section 3.2): The impossibility of a clitic in the case of other unaccusative/intransitive verbs (including other copulas) is related to the fact that the latter involve roots embedded under a VP structure. Presumably, VPs proper do not contain Asp/Top information, while higher unaccusative v heads lack such features (which captures the preverbal position of topic THEMES, as they agree with a higher CP/TP topic head). As for non-predicational instances of BE, it is not clear to us why they never allow a THEME-clitic. A detailed analysis cannot be provided here for space reasons. However, it is worth mentioning that our account predicts the relevant factor should be related to the fact that these structures involve different types of predicates (typically, DPs), compared to predicational BE structures which only involve Ps and As. This hypothesis needs to be tested independently⁸.

c) Restriction to 3rd person (cf. iv, section 3.2): the 3rd person restriction follows from the fact that Asp lacks person. This entails that THEMES of all persons are compatible with the predicational BE-structure: they can check [number] and [gender] against Asp, then check [person] against T. However, it is

⁸ A reviewer points out that this may be connected to the fact that non-predicational predication has no topic interpretation (see also fn. 2). We add here that, for specificational BE, one could argue that the predicate is the topic, which cannot be spelled-out by a D clitic.

only 3rd person clitics that can spell-out the Asp head, since they are the only morphemes that lack [person] in their morphological specification. If this true, then we expect preverbal 1st and 2nd person strong pronouns to also allow for a topic interpretation in predicational BE-structures, even if they do not allow for cliticisation. This, in fact, is borne out:

- | | | | |
|---------|-----------------------|----|-----------------------|
| (32) a. | –And what about you? | b. | – What’s new? |
| | (eo) hiu tu platei | | hiu (eo) tu platei |
| | (I) AM at square | | AM (I) at square |
| | ‘I am at the square.’ | | ‘I am at the square.’ |

According to this analysis, then, the 3rd person restriction is the result of multiple checking of a single DP (=the THEME) against two heads (Asp & T), combined with the fact that the lower head lacks a person feature.

d) Restriction to definite/specific topic THEMES (cf. 3.3): this follows from the presence of the Top head, which contains topic features. These may only be checked by a definite and/or specific (**D-linked**) THEME (whether this a semantic or a purely morphosyntactic issue is orthogonal to the current discussion);

e) Case: regarding the abstract case features assigned to the THEME-clitic, as we have already said, Aromanian has nominative-accusative case syncretism. Therefore, morphology cannot help us in this regard. Theoretically, there are two possibilities: (i) the clitic cannot receive accusative case by Asp, as the latter does not contain a full set of phi-features (see Chomsky 2001). As a re-

sult, the clitic (and the coreferential THEME) receive nominative from T (which contains a full set of phi-features); (ii) the second possibility is that Asp *does* assign accusative. As a result, the clitic (and the coreferential THEME) receive two cases, an unwelcome result⁹. Alternatively, the clitic receives accusative case, while the coreferential THEME receives nominative, also an unwelcome result, as Aromanian does not allow case mismatches in clitic dependency chains (cf. e.g. doubled datives). For these reasons, we will assume here that the clitic-THEME dependency has nominative. However, the overall morpho-syntactic behavior of the clitic is that of a direct object clitic. This is so, because it is the spell-out of features located in the functional periphery of PredP, and not of features in TP - CP. This is hardly surprising, as case marking does not necessarily correlate with theta-marking (see Marantz 1991).

4.2 Implications

The proposed analysis has a number of implications and predictions:

i) It captures, in structural terms, the typological observation that 3rd person arguments are more likely to be marked when interpreted as topics, compared to 1st and 2nd person arguments. This is so, as 1st and 2nd persons are deictic, as opposed to 3rd person, and deictic persons are more readily interpreted as topics (see also discussion around (32)). Here, this observation applies to a partic-

⁹ Note that it is unlikely that the accusative is inherent here, as inherent cases do not normally correlate with strong-only readings (cf. e.g. de Hoop 1992; Ramchand 1997).

- c. **atse'lu** (?***lu**) ea'ste anal'tu / bu'nu / e'ksipno
 that.one (?*3sg.masc.cl) IS tall.masc/good.masc/smart.masc
- d. **atse'lu lu** era' anal'tu / bu'nu / e'ksipno
 that.one 3.sg.masc.cl WAS tall.masc / good.masc / smart.acc
 ‘That one is//was tall / good / smart.’ [IL As]

These sentences show that although SL As freely allow for a THEME-clitic, provided a topic THEME DP is cross-referenced, IL As are more restricted. In fact, **only 3 out of 4** speakers accepted structures like (33d), and in this case, they interpreted the THEME as ‘not alive’, a hallmark of ILPs (Kratzer 1995). Finally, speakers may differ as to whether they interpret a particular adjective as SL (cf. e.g. *adinatə* or *groasə*). How can we accommodate these facts?

For those speakers who reject THEME-clitics with IL As across the board, it is reasonable to assume that they do not project Topic & Asp with these particular As (on a par with Ns, which are also ILPs). As a result, they lack the spatio-temporal argument SLPs have, and a topic THEME can only agree with T. On the contrary, SLP THEMES may or not be interpreted as Topics, but when interpreted as such, they must be preverbal and the THEME-clitic present. Presumably, this is because the THEME must stop at Asp & Top, before it moves to T, whereas this is not the case for ILPs. That this may be true is supported by the fact that ILPs are not good answers to wide focus questions, whereas they are good answers to topic questions, provided the THEME is preverbal:

life-time effects, a hall-mark of ILPs, even when a THEME-clitic is present), this is a well-known effect of past tense operators (Kratzer 1995). We leave this issue for further research.

5. Conclusion

We have reported the existence of a peculiar clitic construction attested in some Aromanian varieties spoken in North-Western Greece. This involves the presence of a direct object clitic form on the predicational copula BE, when the latter selects PP and AP predicates as complements. This structure is highly constrained in morphosyntactic terms, and we offered an analysis that reduces these constraints to structural properties, in particular to the presence/absence of an Asp and Top head at the left periphery of the PredP c-selected by BE. Finally, we discussed some implications and predictions of this analysis, and how it fits into the more general typological, empirical and theoretical picture.

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