

Some Issues on Clitic Doubling in Bulgarian Clauses with Preposed Objects

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Abstract: Clitic doubling in Bulgarian occurs not infrequently in clauses with preposed objects, being especially typical of oral speech. Its occurrence is not random in most cases but depends on grammatical and pragmatic factors. Regarding the clause grammaticality, there are two cases: (1) a class of verbs in Bulgarian requires the presence of a clitic, and, (2) clitics act as disambiguation case markers for the preposed non-subject noun phrases (NP). In addition, information packaging considerations also affect the occurrence of clitic doubling: (1) preposed emphatic objects tend to appear without clitic doubling, whereas (2) preposed NPs realizing the direct object (Od) tend to have clitic doubling when their referents are activated in the discourse.

Key words: Preposed Object, Clitic Doubling, Case Marker, Information Packaging, Bulgarian.

INTRODUCTION

Clitic doubling in Bulgarian occurs not infrequently in clauses with preposed objects, being especially typical of oral speech. Its occurrence is not random in most of the cases but depends on grammatical and pragmatic factors. These factors have been researched by linguists investigating the Bulgarian language, but the current study aims at systematically explaining the syntactically obligatory and pragmatically motivated Bulgarian clitic doubling.

GRAMMATICAL CLITIC DOUBLING IN BULGARIAN

1. Grammatically obligatory clitic doubling

In Bulgarian there are verbs with accusative or dative clitics that cannot be dropped (боли ме /have a pain/, тресе ме /have a fever, shake/, домъчна ми /get sad/). Such verbs are termed *analytic verbal lexemes* of the type *phrasal experienter verbs* [1]. The verbs are used as impersonal (тресе ме /I have a fever) or 3rd personal (тресе ме главата /My head is killing me/). Below are examples with obligatory accusative clitics, which, together with the full NPs realizing the Od, are underlined with a single line:

2. i. Мен за Елена ме заболя...
Me(acc) for Elena me(acc clit) hurt(3p sg)
'I felt a pain for Elena'
- ii. Пожарникаря го тресеше страх.
Firefighter-the him(acc clit) shake(3p) fear
'The firefighter was shaking with fear'

In example 2.i. the clause is impersonal with a preposed Od followed by a prepositional complement and the Od clitic. The clitic cannot be dropped regardless of the syntactic arrangement of the clause constituents. In 2.ii. the Od is preposed followed by its clitic, and the subject is in clause end position. However, the clause in 2.ii. can be formed without clitic doubling when its word order is unmarked with an initial subject as in *Страх тресеше пожарникаря*, though a clitic may optionally be used as in *Страх го тресеше пожарникаря*. Therefore, in Bulgarian in clauses with verbs such as *тресе ме* /have a fever, shake/ the Od clitic is obligatory when the Od is preposed.

Another case of obligatory clitic doubling is observed with the impersonal existential verbs *има, няма* /there is/isn't/ and definite NPs realizing the Od:

- (1) a. i. Имаше вятър.
Have(impers) wind
'It was windy'
- ii. Вятър имаше.
Wind have(impers)
'It was windy'
- b. i. Нямаше го вятъра.
Have-not(impers) him(acc clit) wind-the
- ii. Вятъра го нямаше.
Wind-the him(acc clit) have-not(impers)
'The wind was gone'

'The wind was gone'

In (1).a. the Od is realized by the non-definite NP *вятър* /wind/ and clitic doubling is not grammatical with the impersonal *има/нямаше* /there was/wasn't/ regardless of the NP position, pre- or post-verbal **Имаше го вятър*. In (1).b. the NP is definite *вятъра* /the wind/ and the clause is not grammatical without clitic doubling regardless of the full NP position: **Имаше вятъра*.

As it has been shown by the clauses in example 2 and (1).b. in Bulgarian there are cases when clitic doubling is grammatically obligatory. Below will be presented instances when the clitics' role is to disambiguate the syntactic function of a preposed NP, or in other words, the clitics are true case markers.

3. Doubling clitics as case markers

We have seen so far that there is grammatically obligatory accusative clitic doubling in Bulgarian. Let us consider the two clauses below, which contain the predicator *чака* /wait/ and the two NPs of feminine gender: *новата директорка* /the new principal(fem)/ and *много работа* /much work(fem)/:

(2) i. *Новата директорка я чака много работа.*

'Much work awaits the new principal.'

ii. *Новата директорка чака много работа.*

'The new principal is expecting much work.'

The clitic *я* /her (acc clitic)/ in (2).i. disambiguates the function of the initial NP as that of the Od. In (2).ii. without a clitic the initial NP is the subject. This example shows that in some cases accusative clitics in Bulgarian function as case markers disambiguating the syntactic function of the initial NP.

Before turning to the analysis of preposed NPs realizing the Od which may or may not have clitic doubling, let us look at cases when clitic doubling is inadmissible.

4. Inadmissible accusative clitic doubling

Clitic doubling of accusative clitics signalling the Od status of a constituent cannot occur when the preposed NPs realizing the Od are non-definite NPs, introduced for the first time in the discourse or NPs with determiners realized by possessive pronouns and numerals not bearing an article (*мой* /my/, *две* /two/, *двама* /both/ etc.), indefinite pronouns (*нещо* /something/, *нищо* /nothing/ etc.), distributive *любобщителни* [5]/ pronouns (*всичко* /everything/, *всеки* /each/ etc.), quantifiers (*много* /many/ etc.). Notable exceptions are the demonstrative pronouns *това*, *онова* /this, that, etc./ which can receive clitic doubling. In the example below the preposed NP is non-definite:

(3) *Отговор даде новата директорка. cf *Отговор го даде новата директорка.*

'The new principal gave an answer.'

INFORMATION PACKAGING AND CLITIC DOUBLING IN BULGARIAN

In the discussion below I will attempt to answer two questions:

- (i) Under what conditions does an element receive or not receive clitic doubling?
and
- (ii) What are the functional structures that clauses with a preposed Od realize in Bulgarian?

In Bulgarian, "if a preposed Od is not stressed (old information)¹⁵, it is obligatorily doubled with a pronominal clitic, i.e. preposed unstressed Od is always doubled or the verb is stressed" [Penchev, 1998: 639]. The first problem with this rule is that tonic

¹⁵ Brackets are used in the original text: "Ако обаче изнесеното напред допълнение не е ударено (стара информация), то задължително се удвоява, т.е. началното неударено допълнение е винаги удвояно: *Писмото го донесе раздавачът* или с ударение върху глагола." [Penchev, 1998: 639]

prominence and discourse-old status are considered one and the same thing, i.e. the old information is always not stressed. This, however, contradicts some examples when, for instance, the initial demonstrative *това* /this/, which inherently has a discourse-old status, is stressed:

- (4) *Искаме пилотите ни да се състезават с уважение и това видяхме на пустата.*

'We wanted our pilot to race with respect [to each other] and that's what we saw on the racing track.'

The example above shows a preposed *old+stressed* Od which does not have clitic doubling. Therefore, discourse-status and prosody are two independent features that need to be accounted for separately.

The other problem is the deduction which can be made from the rule: a preposed Od that is *stressed+new* is *obligatorily without clitic doubling*. I will argue below that:

- clitic doubling obligatorily does not occur when the element bears contrastive, emphatic focus;
- clitic doubling is inconsistent but strongly preferred in oral discourse when a referent of an expression is activated into the discourse, though this element usually bears prosodic prominence.

1. *No clitic doubling with emphatic, contrastive focus*

The clause in (5).i. below shows that in Bulgarian a preposed Od may be old information but emphatic at the same time, and, in this case, the Od is not doubled by a clitic. The preposed NP, *this teardrop*, is old information, and, in the context of the story, it is the important 'measure' for the debt of the tale character who is not allowed to enter Heaven. The clause with preposing is key for the denouement of the tale, and the NP bears the tonic prominence. The clause does not have clitic doubling and such is not admissible because this preposed Od realizes a case of emphatic, contrastive focus preposing. The preposed NP in question represents a case when a constituent which is topical (i.e. discourse-old) and theme (i.e. placed in initial position) also bears the primary clause focus. This type of focus preposing does not allow clitic doubling in Bulgarian:

- (5) i. *Слепецът попипа камъчето, преглътна обидата и нищичко не каза, но в спялото му око полека преля една бистра сълза и заблестя. Тая сълза сложих на лявото блюдо.*¹⁶
'The old blind man felt the little rock [in his hand], swallowed the insult and said nothing, but into his blind eye rolled a crystal teardrop and sparkled. It was this teardrop that I had placed on the left scale-pan.'

- ii. *В Италия този примерен затворник го държаха в най-строго охранявания пандиз в град Опера.*

'In Italy, this model prisoner was locked in the most tightly guarded prison in the city of Opera.'

In comparison, the example in (5).ii., which also shows a case of preposed Od, contains the NP *this model prisoner*, representing old information which is not stressed: the focus of the clause is the adjunct in clause end position. The initial NP is doubled by a clitic in compliance to the rule for clitic doubling quoted at the beginning of point 2 above.

2. *Clitic doubling in clauses with inactive referents*

'Inactive' is a term used to describe one of the activation states of the mental representations of linguistic expressions [3]. Concepts can be in three activation states: *active*, *semi-active (or accessible)* and *inactive* [3]. A distinction is made between mental representations in the addressee's mind which are *identifiable* and *inactive* and such which are *unidentifiable* and *brand-new*. In example (6) the preposed NP, *решението за*

¹⁶ source: Karaliichev, A. The Sin of Grandpa Ivana, <http://chitanka.info/text/3376-grehyt-na-djada-ivana>

развода /*the decision to divorce*/, which is followed by clitic doubling, is an example of an activated inactive referent:

- (6) *Преди Коледа разбрах, че мъжът ми си има любовница - на годините на дъщеря ми. Всъщност, аз отдавна го подозирах, но със сигурност го научих скоро. Вярвайте, нищо не ми трепна. Просто си казах, че така е трябвало да стане. Решението за развод го взех на секундата.*

'Before Christmas I found out that my husband has a lover – my daughter's age. In fact I had suspected him for a while, but I became certain of it not long ago. Believe me, it didn't affect me in any way. I simply said to myself that that's how it is supposed to be. The decision to divorce, I took in a split second.'

The preposed NP in the Bulgarian clause represents contextually new information but is not the most prominent tonic element. It is stressed but bears *activation accent* [3]. This *topic promotion* [3] is reflected by the way the clause is rendered in English: by a left-dislocation construction.

The occurrence of clitic doubling is admissible due to the fact that, although the constituent is discourse-new, it expresses *given* or hearer-old information in the sense that this information represents "knowledge which the speaker assumes to be in the consciousness of the addressee at the time of the utterance," [Birner and Ward, 1998: 10]. In a monologue of a wife about her husband's infidelity, divorce is not a new topic. Morphologically, the givenness is signalled by the use of the definite article *решението* /*the decision*/ though "definiteness and topicalization are in fact independent" [Birner and Ward, 1998: 83]. This 'oldness' of the information makes clitic doubling possible.

This example, however, shows a major difference between preposing in English and Bulgarian. In English the preposed constituent must contain a link that is contextually recognized to be in some type of relationship to an element in the preceding context. In Bulgarian, preposing can occur without such link to the prior context.

Now, let us look at two authentic clauses from internet forums in which preposing occurs in very similar discourse contexts with and without clitic doubling. In both clauses in (7) below preposed NPs are used in the context when a person chooses between two alternatives.

- (7) i. *Каква кола бихте предпочели – малка и бърза или голяма и бавна? И двете ги искам.*

'What car would you prefer – small and fast, or big and slow? I want both of them.'

- ii. *Каква искаш да станеш като пораснеш голяма? – Дизайнер дизайнер дизайнер. Много искам това, но много искам и писател. Ох, и двете искам много, много, много.*

'What job would you like when you grow up? Designer designer designer. I want this a lot, but also I want to be a writer. Oh, I want both, a lot, a lot, a lot.'

The preposed NPs are clearly discourse-old, active ones: they are linked to the respective NP referents in the preceding clauses underlined with a wavy line. As mentioned earlier, the contexts of both (7).i and ii are very similar. Therefore, it cannot be argued that the preposed NPs are differently accented in their respective clauses: in each clause the preposed NP *двете* /*the two*/ is stressed. Still, in (7).i there is, and in (7).ii there is not clitic doubling. What permits this doubling is the discourse-old status of the preposed NP; what permits the absence of clitic doubling is the fact that the preposed NP is stressed.

Thus, in Bulgarian, with regard to clitic doubling a distinction has to be made between preposed NPs which, though stressed for the purposes of referent activation, do not bear the clause focus accent, and preposed NPs which, though discourse-old and doubled, bear the main tonic prominence. In the first case, the NPs show a strong tendency to be doubled by a clitic, and in the second, the NPs, especially when strongly emphatically stressed, appear without clitic doubling.

This first case of clitic doubling also adheres to the principle of the separation of reference and role of Lambrecht (1994) which, in simple words, the author formulates as the rule: "Do not introduce a referent and talk about it in the same clause." [Lambrecht, 1994: 185]. According to this principle, the preposed NP introduces the respective referent to the discourse (referring function), and the doubling clitic expresses its function as an argument in the proposition (relational function) as in the example below:

(8) *Никой и днес не може да обясни как така във войните българската военна администрация отива дотам, да обезоръжи изцяло българското село, да не може да произвежда. Примерно, колата му я вземат половината, да не му я вземат цялата, тя се дели на предна и задна част.*

'Even today no one can explain to me how it was possible that during the wars the Bulgarian military administration managed to completely disarm Bulgarian villagers so that they were not able to produce anything. For example, your car, they took half of it, not the whole car, it has a front and rear part.'

In this example the doubling clitic has a relational function as does the pronoun *it* in the English version, which is a clause with left dislocation.

The above case of clitic doubling does not show obligatory grammatical clitic doubling when clitics are part of the lexical makeup of a verb (*мреце ме* // I have a fever), nor is the clitic used as a disambiguating case marker. It can be argued that in these two cases the preposed full NPs are doubled with a clitic because they do not bear the main tonic prominence. But that is irrelevant when clitic doubling is grammatical: what matters is that the speaker has no control, with regard to the clause information packaging, over the clitic doubling occurring for grammatical reasons.

CONCLUSIONS

The conclusions on Od preposing with regard to the presence or absence of clitic doubling in Bulgarian are as follows:

- (1) When grammatical, clitic doubling is not influenced by discourse factors.
- (2) When functional, clitic doubling:
 - is less likely to occur with a discourse-old preposed Od bearing the focus/tonic prominence in the clause;
 - occurs in clauses with activated referents of the preposed NPs to promote them to a topic status.

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