DISAMBIGUATING THE SPANISH (∗)*TE ME* CONSTRAINT: EVIDENCE FROM RUSSIAN DITRANSITIVES[1]

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The goal of this paper is to provide an analysis of the constraint on the grammaticality of the sequence of Spanish 2nd and 1st person clitics, *te me*. Whereas there have been recent proposals treating the sequence as either grammatical (Anognostopoulou 2003, Rivero 2008) or ungrammatical (Ormazabal & Romero 2007, Adger & Harbour 2007), I argue that its (un)grammaticality varies in a systematic way and hence is predictable. Namely, I propose that the grammaticality of this sequence depends on the type of Low Applicative head (LA, Pylkkänen 2002) the ditransitive verb selects: Control LA or Affect LA. Developing the approach proposed in Cuervo 2003, I analyze Spanish dative clitics as Applicatives. I argue that *te me* lexicalizes only Affect LA and hence is incompatible with verbs selecting for Control LA. I argue that LAs mediate the relation between the verb and its arguments by "fine-tuning" θ-roles, assuming that the latter are encoded in the verb's lexical entry by means of two binary features (Reinhart 2002). LAs add a third feature, [control:]. I argue that the grammar bans the assignment of the [-control] specified θ-role in ditransitive constructions, Theme, to the arguments whose referents are adult humans. I also demonstrate that a similar ban operates on Russian ditransitive constructions with nominal arguments. Namely, verbs that select for Control LA normally do not take as direct object NPs referring to adult humans. However, in Spanish this ban is encoded at the level of functional heads as ungrammaticality of the clitic sequence in question with verbs selecting for Control LA. In Russian the ban is not grammaticalized in the same way and might be overruled for pragmatic reasons.

The paper is organized as follows. Section 1 outlines the controversy around the Spanish *te me* sequence. Section 2 presents Russian ditransitive constructions. In Section 3 I develop an analysis for the Russian data which is extended onto the Spanish material in Section 4. Section 5 concludes the paper.

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1. (Un)grammaticality of the *Te Me* Cluster

A consensus has not been reached in the literature as to whether Spanish ditransitive sentences with 2nd and 1st person clitic pronouns should be treated as grammatical or not. Anagnostopoulou (2003) and Rivero (2008) follow Bonet (1991) in assuming that *te me* is acceptable. Assuming that this sequence is all right, Bonet (1991) classifies Spanish as a Weak Person Case Constraint language (the Weak PCC). The Strong version of the constraint as formulated by Bonet bans all clitic sequences with 1st or 2nd person clitics/weak pronoun as a direct object. The Weak version bans only those combinations where the indirect object is a 3rd person clitic/weak pronoun. In other words, the Weak PCC allows for the sequences of 1st and 2nd person clitics. The example in (1) illustrates the latter case (Rivero 2008:3).

(1)   *Te   me*   presentar-on
        2Sg   1Sg   introduce-3Past.Pl
        'They introduced you to me (*or* me to you).'

Ormazabal & Romero (2007), however, bring in different data that suggests that *te me* with ditransitive verbs might be ungrammatical, as (2) demonstrates (Ormazabal & Romero 2007:316).

(2)   *Pedro   *te   me*   envía
        Pedro   2Sg   1Sg   send.Pres.3Sg
        'Pedro sends me to you.'

According to O. & R. (2007), acceptability of *te me* varies from verb to verb. On the one hand, the verbs in (3) are given by the authors as incompatible with *te me* (O. & R. 2007:333-334).

(3)   *te me*: *encomendar* 'to entrust', *enviar* 'to send', *recomendar* 'to recommend', *entregar* 'to hand', *presentar* 'to present'.

On the other hand, sentences with the main verbs from the list in (4) and *te me* are acceptable.

(4)   **te me*: *vender* 'sell', *comprar* 'buy', *dar* 'to give', *enseñar* 'to show'.

Based on this variability, O. & R. (2007) as well as Adger & Harbour (2007) conclude that Spanish clitics are subject to the Strong PCC, along with their French counterparts.

In the next section I will show that Russian ditransitive constructions with pronominal and nominal arguments show a similar variability. I will also present an account for this variability in terms of the different Applicative heads (Pylkkänen 2002) involved.

2.   The Constraint on Russian Ditransitive Constructions

First, let us compare the ungrammatical (5) with well-formed (6) and (7):

(5)   *Devushk-u otvez-l-i   babusk-e
        girl-ACC   drive-PAST-PL   grandmother-DAT
        'They drove the girl to her grandmother.'

(6)   Devushk-u   predstavi-l-i   hozyajk-e
        girl-ACC   introduce-PAST-PL   hostess-DAT
        'The introduced the young woman to the hostess.'

(7)   Sobak-u   otvez-l-i   babusk-e.
        dog-ACC   drive-PAST-3PL   grandmother-DAT
        'They drove the dog to the grandmother.'

  The sentences in (5)-(7) demonstrate what seems to be the same ditransitive construction consisting of a ditransitive verb and two arguments, a direct object marked by the Accusative case, and an indirect object marked by the Dative case. However, (5) is ungrammatical while (6) and (7) are perfect. (6) is different from (5) in the verb used, *predstavit'* ('to introduce') instead of *otvezti* ('to drive'). In (7) the verb is the same as in (5) but this time the Accusative marked object differs: it is *sobaka* ('dog') and not *devushka* ('girl, young woman') I argue that a particular combination of semantic properties of the verb and the direct object in (5) make the sentence ungrammatical. More specifically, verbs that introduce events of possession/control are not compatible in ditransitive constructions with direct object referring to human beings, exercising self-control. In (8) I give a (non-exhaustive) list of Russian verbs of the same kind as *otvezti*.

(8)   *dat'* ('to give'), *demonstrirovat'* ('to demonstrate'), *vernut'* ('to return'), *napravit'* ('to direct'), *(ot)vezti* ('to drive'), *(po)slat'* ('to send'), *(pri)nesti* ('to bring')[3]

  The verb *predstavit'* in (6) appears to be compatible with the noun *devushka* as its DO. I propose that *predstavit'* typifies a class of verbs introducing events of non-physical affect. The list in (9) gives examples of verbs that are compatible with direct objects capable of self-control.

(9)   *doverit'* ('to entrust'), *otrekomendovat'* ('to recommend'), *pokazat'* ('to show'), *poruchit'* ('to put under care'), *predstavit'* ('to introduce'), *sovetovat'* ('to advise')

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[3] Verbal prefixes are given in brackets to indicate that the generalization holds with other prefixes as well.

In summary, I believe to have shown that Russian ditransitive constructions are subject to a constraint on the combination of the verb and DO. Informally, one can speculate that the language grammaticalized a world knowledge observation that an adult human being normally cannot be physically possessed/controlled by another one. That the meaning of possession/control of the DO by the IO is an intrinsic component of prepositionless ditransitive constructions has been mentioned in Pylkkänen (2002) and Beck & Johnson (2004), among others, for languages other than Russian. Ditransitive constructions with a preposition do not share this property of their prepositionless counterparts and thus are free from the constraint operating in (5), as (10) illustrates.

(10) Devushk-u   otvez-l-i   k   babusk-e
      girl-ACC   drive-PAST-PL   to   grandmother-DAT
      'They drove the girl to her grandmother.'

The meaning of (10) is that the girl was driven to the place where her grandmother lives, whereas (5) can be interpreted only in a way that the girl was transferred into grandmother's possession as an object.

3.   Predicate-Argument Relations in Ditransitive Constructions

3.1   Control and Affect Applicative Heads

In this section I address the question of how the verb and its arguments are made 'visible' to each other in the ditransitive construction. Answering this question would give us a formal representation for the constraint discussed in Section 2. I follow Pylkkänen (2002) and Tsedryk (2006) for Russian in assuming that what mediate this verb-argument relation are Low Applicative heads. More specifically, I propose that there are two LAs in Russian: Control LA and Affect LA. These heads encode the relations of control/possession and non-physical affect, respectively. The former is illustrated by (7) and the latter by (6). I argue that LAs modify verb's theta-roles by specifying them with the [control:] feature. I will discuss the semantics of this feature in Subsection 2.1
      I adopt the representation of θ-roles by means of two binary features [$\pm$m(ental state)] and [$\pm$c(ause change)] proposed in Reinhart (2002). The main θ-roles are represented in this framework as follows: Agent = [+m+c]; Experiencer = [–c+m]; Theme/Patient = [–c–m]; Goal/Beneficiary = [–c]; Subject matter = [–m]. As the notation shows, this approach collapses together Theme and Patient as well Goal and Beneficiary θ-roles. Also, this system does not seem to distinguish Recipient. I am going to assume that in this notation Recipient is undistinguishable from the Goal/Beneficiary role. I argue that the function of LAs is to split these 'broad' θ-roles.
      Namely, I propose that LAs specify clusters with a third binary feature – [c(on)tr(o)l:] which sets apart Theme from Patient and Goal/Beneficiary from

Recipient θ-role. Specifically, Control LA 'creates' Recipient ([–c+ctrl]) out of Goal/Recipient/Beneficiary ([–c]) and Theme ([–c–m–ctrl]) out of Theme/Patient ([-c-m]). Affect LA creates Beneficiary [–c–ctrl] out of Goal/Recipient/Beneficiary [–c] and Patient [–c–m+ctrl] out of Theme/Patient[-c-m]. This is summarized in the table below.

Table 1

	Direct Object	Indirect Object
Control LA	Theme [–c–m–ctrl]	Recipient [–c+ctrl]
Affect LA	Patient [–c–m+ctrl]	Beneficiary [–c–ctrl]

I assume the following neo-Davidsonian representation for a ditransitive verb of the type 'give':

(11) $[[give]] = \lambda x\ \lambda y\ \lambda e\ .\ give(e)\ \&\ [–c–m](e,x)\ \&\ [–c](e,y)$

As (11) shows, the ditransitive verb 'give' comes out of the lexicon with two 'broad' θ-roles: [–c] = Goal/Recipient/Beneficiary and [–c–m] = Theme/Patient. I argue that in a prepositionless ditransitive construction the verb combines with an LA in order to create more 'precise' θ-roles, or, put differently, to express particular argument relations: either control/possession or non-physical affect. The idea is that by defining [ctrl:] specifications of arguments we automatically end up with a particular relations between them, since Theme and Recipient according to our definitions of θ-features can be only in a relation of control whereas Patient and Beneficiary can be only in a relation of non-Physical Affect.

I propose to analyze LAs as three-place predicates of the same kind as a ditransitive verb, taking one argument of the event type and two arguments of the entity type, as (12) and (13) demonstrate:

(12) $[[Control\ LA]] = \lambda x\ \lambda y\ \lambda e\ .\ Control(e)\ \&\ [–c–m–ctrl](e,y)\ \&\ [–c+ctrl](e,x)$

(13) $[[Affect\ LA]] = \lambda x\ \lambda y\ \lambda e\ .\ Non\text{-}physical\ Affect(e)\ \&[–c–m+ctrl](e,y)\ \&\ [–c–ctrl(e,x)$

I argue that a ditransitive verb and an LA combine by means of Predicate Modification (Heim & Kratzer 1998), a function that combines two predicates of the same type and that is true if and only if both predicates are true.

I propose that it is lexically specified whether a verb is compatible with Control LA, Affect LA or both. I assume that the majority of the verbs listed in (8) selects for Control LA whereas the verbs in (9) select for Affect LA. I propose that some verbs, such as *(ot)davat'* ('to give') can select either for Control LA or Affect LA, which is illustrated in (14)-(15) and (16)-(17) correspondingly.

(14) Sobak-u   otda-l-i   vladel'c-u
      dog-ACC   give-PAST-PL   owner-DAT
'They gave the dog to its owner.'

In (15) I give a semantic representation for (14) assuming that syntactically the verb first takes LA as its complement and then two arguments are merged higher up in the structure. The function in (15) is true if the implicit event argument has a property of being an event of giving and an event of control at the same time.

(15) ([[davat']])([[Control LA]])([[sobaku]])([[vladel'cu]]) =
= λe . davat'(e) & control(e) & [–c–m–ctrl](e,sobaku) & [–c+ctrl](e,vladel'cu)

The following example is a case of *davat'* selecting for Affect LA which has consequences for the interpretation, as (17) shows.

(16) Devushk-u otda-l-i   etom-u parnj-u   v zgeny
      girl-ACC   give-PAST-PL   this-DAT guy-DAT   as a wife
      They gave the girl to that guy in marriage.'

(17) [[Affect LA]]([[otdavat']])([[devushku]])([[etomu parnju]]) =
= λe . davat'(e) & affect(e) & [–c–m+ctrl](e,devushku) & [–c–ctrl](e,etomu parnju)

The event denoted by (17) is the one of non-physical, metaphorical giving. Supposedly, Russian verbal prefixes can lexicalize Applicative heads, as proposed for Resultative heads in Tsedryk (2006). This question however, is beyond the scope of this discussion and will left to further research.

The next subsection is concerned with the semantics of the feature [ctrl:] that play a crucial role in disambiguating θ-roles.

3.2   The Feature [ctrl:]

Following Reinhart's approach to the semantics of θ-features[4], I propose that the semantics of [control:] is a function of a θ-role cluster it is added to. Thus with Goal/Beneficiary/Recipient cluster ([-c]) [control:] encodes the state of (not) being in a position to physically control something or somebody. This way the cluster [-c+ctrl] (Recipient) encodes a participant not causing a change in the event and being in a position to physically control the relevant entity. The

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[4]   "The same property (mental state – A. S.) distinguishes the **experiencer** role from **theme** or **patient**. Note that (as is standard) [/+m] entails animacy, but not conversely. An animate patient of an event (say someone who got kissed) may have all kinds of mental-states associated with that event. But the linguistic coding does not consider these mental-states relevant for the argument structure. The specifics of the mental state involved vary with the features-combination. Occurring with /+c (namely in the **agent** role), it is taken generally to entail volition. But combined with a /-c feature (**experiencer** role) it is associated with various emotions, depending on the verb." (Reinhart 2002:5)

cluster [-c-ctrl] (Beneficiary) refers to an event participant not causing a change and not being in a position to physically control something or somebody relevant for the current situation.

When added to the Patient/Theme ([-c-m]) feature cluster, [ctrl:] encodes an (in)ability to control one's own behaviour. [-c-m-ctrl] cluster encodes the Theme argument that does not have a mental state relevant for the situation, does not cause a change and does not exercise control over itself, whereas [-c-m+ctrl] encodes the Patient argument that is different from Theme in being able of exercising control over his or her own behaviour.

Even though Reinhart's approach suggests that θ-features are not inherent properties of lexical items or their referents, but rather some properties that they have due to a given situation that are relevant for the current situation, it seems that some features do correlate with lexical specifications of nouns. For example, a referent of the argument 'table' will not have a mental state relevant for the situation under any course of events. In a similar fashion a referent of 'baby' will not normally exercise control over its behaviour, whereas a referent of 'girl' will. So I will be assuming that there is a strong correlation between lexical properties of nouns and the way their referents are normally perceived in the discourse.

4. Spanish Clitics in Ditransitive Constructions

4.1 Spanish Ditransitive Verbs: Parallel with Russian

In this section I will show that Spanish ditransitive constructions can be analyzed in terms of Control and Affect LA, on par with their Russian counterparts. This hypothesis is based on the observation that the verbs mentioned in Ormazabal & Romero (2007) as compatible/incompatible with *te me* sequence (see (3) and (4) respectively) roughly correspond to the Russian verbs selecting for Affect or Control LA (see (9) and (8)). Consider the following two tables.

Table 2. Spanish and Russian verbs selecting for Affect LA

Russian Affect LA verbs	Spanish *te me* verbs
otrekomendovat' 'to recommend'	*encomendar 'to recommend'*
predstavit' 'to introduce'	*presentar 'to introduce'*
poruchit' 'to entrust'	*confiar 'to confide'*
pokazat' 'to show'	mostrar ControlA
ControlA	llevar 'to lead'
otdat' ('give in marriage' etc.)	*dar 'to give'*
ostavit' 'to leave smb to smb'	*dejar 'to leave'*
sovetovat' 'to suggest'	ControlA

In Table 2 I italicize Spanish-Russian verb pairs that seem to behave similarly with respect to the compatibility with the *te me* sequence on the one hand and with the arguments associated with [+control] feature on the other. Sentences in (18) and (19) exemplify one such pair, *entregar* ('to entrust' Sp.) and *poruchit'* ('to entrust' Rus).

(18) Menya   emu   poruchi-l   moj   otec
       2SG.ACC   3SG.DAT   entrust-PAST   my   father.NOM
       'My father entrusted me to him.'

(19)[5] Él   te   me   confí-o   a mi
       she   2SG   1SG   entrust-3SG.PRET   to me
'She entrusted you to me.'

Table 3. ControlA Spanish and Russian Verbs

Russian Control LA verbs	Spanish *te me* verbs
(po)slat' 'to send'	*enviar 'to send'*
(ot/pri)nesti 'to carry'	*aportar*
(ot)vezti 'to drive'	*conducir 'to drive'*
napravit' 'to direct, to address'	*dirigir 'to direct'*
dat' 'to give'	*dar 'to give'*
prodat' 'to sell'	*vender 'to sell'*
vruchit' 'to hand'	*entregar 'to hand'*
odolzgit' 'to loan'	*prestar 'to loan'*
kupit' 'to buy'	*comprar 'to buy'*
vernut' 'to return'	*tornar 'to return'*
demonstrirovat' 'to show'	*enseñar 'to demonstrate, to teach about'*
	exponer 'to show'
Affect LA	mostrar 'to show'
Affect LA	aconsejar 'to suggest'

Examples in (20) and (21) illustrate a matching pair from Table 3. Both Spanish and Russian verbs roughly meaning 'to direct', *dirigir* and *napravit'*, appear to pattern as Control LA taking verbs. Both are incompatible in the ditransitive construction with direct objects that refer to adult humans.

(20) *Parnj-a   napravi-l-i   director-u
       guy-ACC   direct-PAST-PL   boss-DAT
       'They directed the guy to the boss.'

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(21) ??Te me   dirigier-on
     2SG 1SG   direct-3PL.PRET
     'They directed you to me.'

Based on the data presented, I argue that Spanish ditransitive constructions can be analyzed in terms of two different Applicative heads that impose different restrictions on the arguments. In the next section I present my account of the variability in *te me* grammaticality that involves an analysis of Spanish pronominal clitics as Applicative heads.
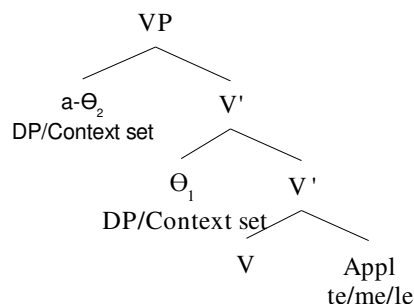
4.2   Spanish Clitics as Applicative Heads

It has been observed in Cuervo (2003) that ditransitive constructions in Spanish express the meaning of possession only if the indirect object is doubled by a clitic. This led Cuervo to analyze Spanish dative clitics as lexicalized Applicative heads. In this paper I follow this analysis, extending it onto 1st and 2nd clitics as well. I also propose that their semantic denotation is similar to what I proposed for LA in Russian in Section 3. Namely, I argue that clitics lexicalize functional elements (semantically functions) that put restrictions on the arguments as (22) and (23) illustrate for the 2nd person clitic.

(22)   Control LA: $[[te]] = \lambda x\ \lambda y\ \lambda e$. control(e) & $[-c-m-ctrl](e,x)$&$[-c+ctrl](e,y)\cap\{Addressee\}$

(23)   Affect LA: $[[te]] = \lambda x\ \lambda y\ \lambda e$. affect(e) & $[-c-m+ctrl](e,x)$&$[-c-ctrl](e,y)\cap\{Addressee\}$

I assume that a ditransitive verb takes a clitic as its complement and two arguments are then merged higher up, filling up argument positions of the predicate V' as (24) illustrates. Argument can be merged either as DP, or as Sets of context relevant referents (Gutiérrez-Rexach 2000). Obviously, in this configuration the Applicative head does not introduce any arguments, as it does in the framework on Pykkänen (2002). I argue that in Spanish the verb comes with two argument slots whether or not the construction has the meaning of possession. In the former case there is a functional head involved that is responsible for the possessive relation between the arguments, namely LA.

(24)

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                        VP
              ┌──────────┴──────────┐
          a-Θ₂                      V'
      DP/Context set         ┌──────┴──────┐
                            Θ₁            V'
                      DP/Context set ┌─────┴─────┐
                                     V          Appl
                                            te/me/le
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In the next section I discuss a constraint on LA doubling that may account for the ungrammaticality of certain clitic sequences.

4.3   The Ban on Applicative Head Doubling

Now it becomes possible to address the main question of this paper. Namely, why is the *te me* sequence sometimes grammatical and sometimes not? From what I have argued so far it follows that the *te me* ungrammaticality arises because the possession relation in a ditransitive construction cannot involve 1st or 2nd person participant as a Direct Object referent. However, things are a bit less straightforward. First, the question arises why clitic clusters such as *me le, *te le are always ungrammatical, independently of the type of the verb involved. Second, in Russian ditransitive constructions one can still pragmatically violate the ban on [+control] DO if the meaning sought is that a human being is treated as an inanimate object. As for Spanish, pragmatics cannot help to repair ungrammatical sentences with *te me*[6].

Addressing the first issue, I propose that there is a ban on doubling Low Applicative heads, and since clitics lexicalize LA, there is a ban on 'dative' clitic doubling. Semantically the ban is a constraint on more than one specification of a θ-cluster with [control:] feature. But as we have seen, *te me* is acceptable in some cases. I argue that that the *te me* cluster constitutes *one* LA by the virtue of its feature composition. In terms of pronominal features, *te me* corresponds to the [Addressee] [Speaker] cluster, which is the same as the feature specification of the 1st person plural inclusive pronoun. One can also notice that the majority of verbs that appear to be compatible with *te me* (and in fact Russian verbs taking [+control] DO) are quasi-reciprocal ones. With verbs such as 'to introduce', 'to show' it might be a matter of the point of view which argument is Patient and which one is Beneficiary, whereas with verb of control/possession the relation is unidirectional. Also, sentences such as (1) repeated in (25) are ambiguous between the reading 'They presented me to you' and 'They presented you to me'.

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[6]   I am thankful to María Cristina Cuervo for bringing up this issue.

(25) *Te   me*   presentar-on
     2Sg   1Sg   introduce-3Past.Pl
     'They introduced you to me (*or* me to you).'

I argue therefore that *te me* lexicalizes one LA. Since neither 1st nor 2nd person participants can be referents of the Theme argument, the cluster *te me* lexicalizes only Affect LA, hence it is compatible only with Affect verbs. Put differently, in Spanish the ban on speech act participants being treated as objects is grammaticalized in that *te me* is unacceptable with Control verbs. In Russian this ban is not grammaticalized in the same way and can be pragmatically violated.

5.   Conclusions

I believe to have shown in this paper that Spanish ditransitive constructions with the *te me* clitic sequence are sensitive to the type of a ditransitive verb involved. Namely, verbs introducing events of physical control/possession seem to be incompatible with the sequence. I have also demonstrated that this sensitivity to the verb type is shared by Russian ditransitive constructions with nominal arguments: verbs that introduce events of physical control are ungrammatical with direct objects whose referents are adult humans. I have argued that this constraint is due to the properties of functional elements, Low Applicatives that mediate the verb-argument relation. I proposed that Spanish 1st and 2nd person clitics are not arguments but rather functional elements, LAs, mediating the verb-argument relation. Moreover, *te me* constitutes one LA which is compatible with verbs introducing event of non-physical affect and is not compatible with verb of control/possession.

It follows from the way LAs are defined in this paper that these functional elements cannot be doubled. This may account for the ban on *te le* and *me le* sequences in Spanish. I argued that the ungrammaticality of these sequences is not due directly to the fact that speech act participants are not usually treated as objects of events of giving, etc.. That the rarity of this situation ended up being grammaticalized by the languages with the PCC has been argued in Halspelmath (2004). I proposed, rather, that the phenomenon is due to the fact that pronominal clitics became functional elements that cannot be doubled.

The approach that I have outlined might be extended beyond dative clitics and ditransitive constructions. Presumably, 'accusative' clitics with monotransitive verbs might be also analyzed as functional heads mediating verb-argument relations.

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