

## X. LINGUISTICS

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#### A. ON THE INAPPROPRIATENESS OF RULE FEATURES

We consider certain facts from French syntax that bear on the question of the availability of rule features to the grammar. To the extent that rule features, i.e., the possibility of marking particular lexical items as exceptions to particular transformations, exist as a mechanism for handling exceptions in syntax, we would expect to find cases in which their use is supported by empirical evidence. What we have found, however, is just the opposite. Thus it seems that a class of verbs in French that are superficially exceptions to the rule of clitic-placement are best treated as having different lexical subcategorizations; the assignment of the feature "minus clitic-placement rule" to these verbs would prevent the statement of a number of linguistically significant generalizations and would make it impossible to account for all the facts in any natural way.

There is a small number of verbs<sup>1</sup> in French which take complements of the form 'à+NP', but, contrary to the general case, may not be preceded by the personal clitics corresponding to this type of complement (i.e., 'me', 'te', 'lui', 'leur', 'nous', 'vous', 'se'):

- |                      |              |
|----------------------|--------------|
| (1) *Je parle à lui. |              |
| (2) Je lui parle.    | general case |
| (3) Je pense à lui.  |              |
| (4) *Je lui pense.   | exceptional  |

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The question is, how are these facts to be represented in the grammar? We consider two possibilities: One, verbs like 'penser' are marked as exceptions to the rule of clitic-placement. This is the rule-feature hypothesis.<sup>2</sup> Second, the two classes of verbs are to be distinguished in the lexicon either by postulating two distinct 'à's, or by saying that verbs like 'parler' take 'dative' complements, whereas the complements of verbs like 'penser' are true prepositional phrases. For the purposes of exposition, we shall assume two distinct 'à's, but the argument would hold equally well if 'dative' were shown to be the relevant feature. Various other possibilities such as surface structure sub-categorization with respect to clitics are not directly considered; some of the arguments below work against them, too.

The postulation of two 'à's is of course ad hoc, but we are not claiming that there is any synchronic explanation for these facts.<sup>3</sup> The choice is between different ways of stating exceptions; that is, will the learner of French represent the exceptionality of these verbs by direct reference to the rule involved or by assigning to them a new subcategorization?

Considering first verbs like 'parler', we note that the clitic-placement rule must somehow distinguish the preposition 'à' from other prepositions, since personal clitics do not occur corresponding to 'Prep+NP', where Prep does not equal 'à'.

- 5) Je jure contre lui.
- 6) \*Je lui jure.
- 7) \*Je lui jure contre.

(Apparent exceptions such as 'Je lui tire dessus.' can be shown to be derived from an intermediate stage containing an 'à+NP' (dative) complement.<sup>4</sup>)

Let us assume as sufficient for this argument the following formulation of the clitic-placement rule:

Y-V-X-Pro-Z — 1 4+2 3 5  
1 2 3 4 5

where if X equals 'X\*-Prep', then Prep equals 'à' (there will be further restrictions on the variable).

The rule as stated does not distinguish between 'penser' and 'parler'. The rule-feature hypothesis says that 'penser' is marked as an exception to the rule, thereby permitting: (3) Je pense à lui. and excluding: (4) \*Je lui pense. The subcategorization hypothesis says that the complement of 'penser' contains a preposition 'à<sub>2</sub>' distinct from the preposition 'à' mentioned in the clitic-placement rule, i.e., the structure underlying sentence (3) does not meet the structural description of the rule, and is therefore not subject to clitic-placement. A priori, there is no way to choose between the two hypotheses. Examination of further data, however, is instructive.

There is reason to believe (see Appendix) that clitic placement is optional, not obligatory, despite examples (1)-(4). This observation in itself would change nothing, since verbs like 'penser' could be marked as exceptions to an optional rule. More importantly, though, there is a related argument (see Appendix) to the effect that the grammar of French must contain an output condition excluding sequences of the form \*X-V-à-Pro-Y<sup>5</sup> except under certain conditions; for example, if the pronoun is in a contrastive environment:

- (1) \*Je parle à lui.  
 (8) Je parle à lui, mais pas à sa femme.

This output condition must distinguish the preposition 'à' from other prepositions:

- (1) \*Je parle à lui.  
 (9) Je parle de lui.

But now

- (3) Je pense à lui.

is an exception to this output condition. This result is predicted by the assignment of a distinct preposition 'à<sub>2</sub>' to 'penser'. Sentence (3) will not meet the structural description of the output condition and will not be excluded. The rule-feature hypothesis cannot capture the obvious generalization and must assign two unrelated rule features to the 'penser'-type verbs.

The clitic 'y', which is a Pro-PP,<sup>6</sup> as opposed to 'lui', which is a Pro-NP, has a complicated distribution which is subject to the following generalization: 'y' can never refer to 'Prep+Human Noun' if the preposition is 'à', except in the case of some of the 'penser'-type verbs<sup>7</sup>:

- (10) \*J'y parle, à cette fille.  
       \*J'y écris, à cette fille.  
       \*J'y donne des livres, à cette fille.  
       \*J'y envoie un télégramme, à cette fille.  
 (11) J'y pense, à cette fille.  
       J'y tiens, à cette fille.

While it is unclear exactly how this constraint should be stated, it is certain that under the rule-feature hypothesis, these facts could not be related to the previous ones.

What we have shown is that verbs like 'penser' act as a natural class in three distinct parts of the grammar. This type of generalization is of the kind predicted by the sub-categorization hypothesis, but not by the rule-feature hypothesis. We now consider two arguments which suggest that the rule-feature hypothesis is observationally inadequate.

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We show elsewhere<sup>8</sup> that in the 'faire'-V construction:

- (12) Je ferai partir Jean.  
Je ferai lire ce livre à Jean.

clitic-placement must follow the rule which raises the verb of the embedded sentence, i. e., Je ferai Jean lire le → Je ferai lire le à Jean → Je le ferai lire à Jean. Furthermore, the appearance of a 'dative' clitic corresponding to the underlying subject of the embedded sentence always indicates that the verb has been raised. Consider then the following sentences:

- (13) Cela lui fait penser à sa mère.  
That makes him think of his mother.  
(14) Cela fait penser Jean à sa mère.<sup>9</sup>  
That makes John think of his mother.  
(15) \*Cela lui fait penser Jean.  
That makes John think of her.

Sentence (13) is derived by having the 'dative' clitic 'lui' move over the verbs 'faire penser': Cela fait penser à lui à sa mère. Sentence (15) should apparently be derivable in the same way from: \*Cela fait penser Jean à elle. However, it is not. The reason is clearly that sentence (15) could arise only through cliticization of an underlying complement of 'penser', which complement is never subject to clitic-placement. Sentence (13), on the other hand, is derived through cliticization of an underlying subject of 'penser' which has become 'dative' through a series of transformations; the fact that it must pass over 'penser' is evidently irrelevant:

- (13) Cela lui fait penser à sa mère.  
Il pense à sa mere.  
(15) \*Cela lui fait penser Jean.  
\*Jean lui pense.

These facts follow from the subcategorization hypothesis, since the complement of 'penser' is 'à<sub>2</sub>+NP', and thus never subject to clitic-placement. Sentence (13) is allowed by noting that the rule giving rise to the 'à-NP' complement will introduce the usual 'à', as is natural. The rule-feature hypothesis cannot distinguish sentences (13) and (15), and is therefore observationally inadequate.

This argument is somewhat weakened by the observation that most speakers reject:

- (16) \*? Je lui ferai parler Georges.

cf. (17) Je ferai parler Georges à sa mère.

However, some speakers accept (16), while no one accepts (15). The intuition of the speakers who reject both is that although (16) is not good, it is not inconceivable, while (15) is forever impossible:

(16) \*? Je lui ferai parler Georges.

(15) \*\*\*Cela lui fait penser sa mère.

A second argument of this nature involves the construction:

(18) Je croyais Jean à Paris.

Je croyais Jean facile à contenter.

Je croyais Jean aimé de sa femme.

We argue elsewhere that the deep structure of the above contains a sentence with 'être':

(18a) Jean est à Paris, facile à contenter, etc.

and, implicitly, that clitic-placement must apply after the deletion of 'être'<sup>10</sup>:

(19) J'y croyais Jean fidèle, à ces principes.

?Je lui croyais Jean fidèle, à sa femme.

J'y croyais ton frère, à Paris.

Je l'en croyais capable.

However, corresponding to:

(20) Je croyais ce livre à Jean.

cf. Ce livre est à Jean.

we do not get:

(21) \*Je lui croyais ce livre.

cf. \*Ce livre lui est.

Clearly, the prepositional complement of 'être' is non-cliticizable, whether or not 'être' is present. Again, this result follows from the subcategorization hypothesis, and is unstable in the rule-feature hypothesis. The rule-feature hypothesis could furthermore not account for the acceptability of (23), which should apparently be ruled out by the output condition. That is, there is no way to relate:

(23) Je croyais ce livre à lui.

(24) Ce livre est à lui.

vs (25) \*Je parle à lui.

Finally, the subcategorization hypothesis allows us to account for the hitherto

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anomalous fact that only verbs taking 'indirect objects' can be exceptions to clitic-placement. That is, there are no verbs taking direct objects such that 'Verb lui' is good but '\*le+Verb' is not.<sup>11</sup> Under the rule-feature hypothesis, this is an inexplicable asymmetry. Under the subcategorization hypothesis, one would not expect such symmetry.

We conclude that linguistic theory must be such as to severely limit the possibility of using rule-features. That is, if transformational rule-features exist, the evaluation measure must be designed so as not to pick them in this kind of case. We note that within a theory countenancing rule features, clitic-placement is exactly the kind of rule we might expect to see them applicable to.<sup>12</sup> The fact that they are not is that much more significant.

Appendix

Although examples (1)-(4) suggest that clitic placement (CL-PL) might be an obligatory rule, there is evidence that the rule must in fact be optional, and that it must be supplemented by an output condition that will exclude sentences like (1). Consider the case of environments in which CL-PL is inapplicable:

- (26) Je ferai parler Jean à Marie.  
\*? Je lui ferai parler Jean.
- (27) Jean passe pour fidèle à Marie.  
\*? Jean lui passe pour fidèle.
- (28) J'admire sa fidélité à Marie.  
\*? Je lui admire sa fidélité.

and in which the corresponding sentences with non-cliticized pronoun are likewise ungrammatical:

- (29) \*? Je ferai parler Jean à elle.  
\*? Jean passe pour fidèle à elle.  
\*? J'admire sa fidélité à elle.

In the absence of an output constraint, it is difficult to see how the sentences in (29) would be ruled out. In particular, they contrast with:

- (30) Je parlerai et à toi et à Jean.  
\*? Je te parlerai et et à Jean.

We therefore propose an output constraint blocking sentences containing a cliticizable pronoun preceded by 'dative' 'à', except in contrastive environments (and conjoined structures<sup>13</sup>):

- (31) Je parlerai à toi, mais pas à Jean.  
\*Je parlerai à toi.

Notice, though, that given such an output condition, there is no longer any reason not to consider CL-PL optional, since the output condition will automatically exclude (32). Significantly, this now permits us to account for cases of true optionality:

- (33) Je parlerai volontiers à toi, mais pas à ton frère.  
Je te parlerai volontiers, mais pas à ton frère.<sup>14</sup>
- (34) Tu parles plus souvent à moi qu'à Jean.  
Tu me parles plus souvent qu'à Jean.

In addition, no special condition on CL-PL need be stated to account for its apparent inapplicability in the 'ne...que' construction:

- (35) Paul ne parle qu'à toi.

since we can, not unnaturally, consider 'ne...que' a contrastive environment.<sup>15</sup> Finally, the present analysis allows us to account for the contrast between (35) and<sup>16</sup>:

- (36) Je n'en aime que la première partie.  
Je n'en ai que trois.

#### Footnotes

1. A relatively complete list of these verbs can be found in Fraser, Squair and Parker (1948).
2. For a general discussion of rule features, see Lakoff (1965).
3. Nor are we necessarily excluding the possibility of some such explanation being found. See footnote 7.
4. See Kayne (1969, Chapter 2).
5. This formulation of the output condition is adequate for the purposes of the argument. For more details, see Appendix.
6. For an argument in favor of this position, see Kayne (1969, Chapter 2).
7. A perhaps related observation is that the verbs like 'penser' (with the probable exception of 'être' - see below) can be characterized as allowing the object of 'à' to be freely animate or inanimate. Many of the 'parler'-type verbs, on the other hand, take only animate indirect objects. This observation is complicated, however, by the existence of verbs like 'obéir', 'répondre', which take both kinds of objects, yet can be preceded by dative clitics:
  - (a) Jean obéira aux officiers.  
Jean obéira aux ordres.
  - (b) Jean leur obéira (aux officiers).
 vs
  - (c) Jean y obéira (aux ordres).

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Moreover, this paradigm contrasts with:

- (d) Jean donnera un coup de pied à Marie.  
Jean donnera un coup de fer à son pantalon.
- (e) Jean lui donnera un coup de pied.  
Jean lui donnera un coup de fer.

Whatever sub-generalizations remain here, this example is likely to be indicative of the kind of generalization one might look for in trying to avoid the worst possible case, which would be to idiosyncratically mark each lexical verb taking an 'à'-complement as a 'penser'-type verb or a 'parler'-type verb.

8. See Kayne (1969, Chapter 4).

9. Also possible is:

- (f) ?Cela fait penser à Jean à sa mère

corresponding more precisely to (13). Conversely, corresponding to (14), we have:

- (g) Cela le fait penser à sa mère.

See Kayne (1969, Chapter 3) for further discussion.

10. See Kayne (1969, Chapter 4).

11. It seems likely that sentences such as:

- (h) C'est moi le plus malin.  
\*Ce m'est le plus malin.

will turn out not to be true counterexamples to this claim.

12. An alternative would be to claim that rule features are severely limited in availability only with respect to a certain subclass of rules, e.g., rules containing a variable. This would allow freely using rule features on rules not containing a variable, while reducing the force of the argument given in the text. It would have to be shown, however, that such a restriction was not merely ad hoc. The important point is that insofar as rule features are definable in linguistic theory, they extend quite naturally, albeit incorrectly, to CL-PL (although perhaps not to certain other variable-containing rules such as wh-preposing). If a motivated reason for their inappropriateness with respect to CL-PL cannot be found, their validity in general must be questioned.

13. It is not clear that a separate statement is necessary for conjoined structures. We leave this question open.

14. This sentence shows that it is not the case that CL-PL is blocked in contrastive environments.

15. We do not attempt to give a detailed characterization of contrastive environment.

We note that there are certain cases in which CL-PL may fail to apply in non-contrastive environments:

- (i) Jean me présentera à elle.

vs (j) \*Jean le présentera à elle.

These do not bear directly on the question of an output condition; they are 'exceptional' in either analysis. For further discussion, see Kayne (1969, Chapter 3).

16. The sentence:

- (k) \*Paul ne te parle que.

will be excluded by some restriction on 'bare' 'que'.

We leave open the question of the extent to which these arguments carry over to direct object clitics.

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References

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