

Expressing Modality by Recycling Clitics*

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Abstract

This paper tries to interpret the role of certain clitics attached to functional categories located over AgrS. They seem to be in charge of the expression of the modal orientation of the sentence. We show that while certain languages have elements specifically designed for this purpose, other languages resort to a recycling strategy which enables morphologically accusative clitics to do the job. In clear contrast with all these languages, Catalan is an example of a language in which modal clitics seem to be completely absent from the clitic paradigm.

Key words: clitics, modality, functional heads.

Resum. *L'expressió de la modalitat a través del reciclatge de clítics*

Aquest article vol oferir una explicació del comportament de determinats clítics relacionats amb categories funcionals superiors a SConc i encarregats de l'orientació modal de la frase. Mentre algunes llengües compten amb elements específicament dissenyats per a aquesta funció, altres llengües recorren a l'estratègia del reciclatge, la qual habilita els clítics d'acusatiu per a l'expressió de la modalitat. En contrast amb totes aquestes llengües, el català és un exemple de llengua que no compta amb clítics de modalitat.

Paraules clau: clítics, modalitat, categories funcionals.

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Table of Contents

- | | |
|---|------------------------------|
| 1. Galician and Asturian Modal Clitics
in the Context of Romance Cliticization
2. Clitic Recycling: An Overview
3. An Analysis of the Modal
Clitic Construction | 4. Conclusions
References |
|---|------------------------------|

1. Galician and Asturian Modal Clitics in the Context of Romance Cliticization

1.1. Modal Clitics in Galician

Galician exhibits the property of using morphologically accusative clitics as subject clitics under certain conditions, as in (1) (see ́lvarez, Regueira and Monteagudo (1986: 173)):¹

- (1) a. ¡Aquí *as* *veñen* *elas!*
 here cl.-3p.-pl.-fem.-ac. come-3p.-pl. they-fem.
 'Here they come!'
 b. ¡Ahí *os* *van* *os veciños!*
 there cl.-3p.-pl.-masc.-ac. go-3p.-pl. the neighbors
 'Here come the neighbors!'

As can be noted from the examples, the verbal inflection, the lexical subject (which is optional, as usual), and the accusative clitic all share their *f*-features: third person and plural, in the case of (1). The lexical subject and the clitic also share the gender feature: feminine in (1a) and masculine in (1b).

The conditions that make this construction possible are the following:

- (a) It is only possible if the individuals denoted by the subject are present in the utterance situation. Thus this construction can only be used in present tense, as a means of expressing a «deixis ad oculos», using Bühler's (1934) term. Moreover, it has an appellative function and therefore an exclamatory meaning.
 (b) The use of the accusative clitics observed in (1) is only possible in sentences with a presentational meaning. The verbs which can express this meaning are those belonging to stative (*estar* 'to be, to appear') and movement classes (*venir* 'to come', *ir* 'to go', *chegar* 'to arrive, to come').

A similar phenomenon is found in some Northern Italian dialects, such as

1. Sentences of this kind are also used in Galician Spanish, as can be observed in the translation of (1):
 (i) ¡Aquí *las* vienen ellas!
 (ii) ¡Ahí *los* van los vecinos!

As they are identical in their properties, we are going to illustrate the phenomenon by using only Galician data.

those studied by Poletto (1992) and Brandi and Cordin (1989). In Veneto, for instance, we can find sentences very similar to (1):

- (2) No *la* vien.
 neg. cl.-3p.-sing. come-3p.-sing.
 'She doesn't come.' (Poletto 1992: ex. (1))

Nevertheless, the differences between (1) and (2) are more notable than their similarities. Actually, this kind of clitic in Veneto is neither restricted to sentences with a deictic use—cf. property (a)—nor with a presentational verb—cf. property (b)—. This is the reason of the contrast between (3a), a correct sentence from Veneto, and (3b), an incorrect one from Galician:

- (3) a. *La* magna pomi.
 cl.-3p.-sing. eats apples
 'She eats apples.'
 b. **A* xanta mazás.
 cl.-3p.-sing. eats apples

From this, we can conclude that Veneto has 'pure subject clitics', which is not the case of Galician.

Galician clitics can also be related to a different kind of subject clitics in other Northern Italian dialects. As discussed by Poletto (1992: 66–103), certain subject clitics of these dialects should be expressing a head position higher than AgrS but lower than Comp. These clitics always appear to the left of negation, and sometimes cliticize over Comp. The first property is illustrated in (4a), a sentence from Polesano, and the second one in (4b), taken from the Polesano dialect of Adria:

- (4) a. *A* no vegno.
 cl. neg. come-1p.-sing.
 'I'm not coming.' (Poletto 1992: ex. (10a))
 b. *A* no so *sa* vegnaró.
 cl. neg. know-1p.sing. whether-cl. come-1p.sing.-fut.
 'I don't know whether I will come.' (Poletto 1992: ex. (23b))

Poletto's proposal is that this kind of subject clitics is located in a functional head related to the modal orientation of the sentence. Therefore, it is clearly related to the clitic topic marker of Fiorentino, as illustrated by the examples given by Brandi and Cordin (1989):

- (5) *Te, e* tu parli troppo.
 you cl. you talk-2p.-sing. too much
 'As for you, you talk too much.' (Brandi and Cordin 1989: ex. (9a))

The similarity to Galician is found in that subject clitics in this language are only permitted if the sentence has a special modal orientation: appellative, in the case

of Galician, and emphatic, in the case of Fiorentino. But again, important differences are found in this case. First of all, Galician clitics show agreement markers with the subject, as shown in (6a); in the Italian cases, the form of the clitic is invariable, as shown in (6b) (cf. (5)):

- (6) a. ¡Aquí *o* ven el!
 here cl.-3p.-sing.-masc. come-3p.-sing. he-masc.
 'Here he comes!'
- b. La María, *e* la parla troppo.
 the María cl. she talk-3p.-sing. too much
 'As for Mary, she talks too much.' (Brandi & Cordin 1989: ex. (114))

Secondly, in Galician the clitic is in complementary distribution with negation, as shown in (7), which is not the case in the Italian dialects:

- (7) *¡Aquí *non as* veñen elas!
 here not cl. come they-fem.

Finally, this kind of clitic is not restricted to appearing in the context of verbs of movement in the Italian dialects, as can be seen in (5) and (6b).

Summing up, what is found in Galician can be described as a compound of the pure subject and the modal subject clitics of the Northern Italian dialects described by Poletto, though much more restricted in use. As an expression of a modality content, the Galician clitics could relate with two different functional positions:

- (a) the Comp head, and
(b) a lower head specifically designed for modal purposes.

Our proposal is that modal clitics found in Galician are to be attributed the last type of head position, a head in which the relation between the speaker or the sentential subject and the utterance situation is coded. Actually, this is basically Uriagereka's (1995) proposal about an FP projection in Northwestern Iberian dialects. However, the projection we are looking for looks very much like the ΣP proposed by Laka (1990); i.e., a projection in which sentential negation and certain emphatic features are complementarily generated. This fits well with the fact pointed out in (7). In the next section, devoted to Asturian, we offer an argument in favor of this analysis for modal clitics in the Northwestern Iberian languages.

1.2. *Modal Clitics in Asturian*

The Galician sentences examined so far lose part of their exceptional flavor if we look at another construction found in Asturian. This language offers a structure in which a pronoun corresponding with the subject of a related presentational sentence cliticizes onto a locative *wh*-phrase. In these sentences, the original verbal head deletes (see D'Andrés (1993: 14–16)). This kind of construction is mainly used as a request for locative information missed from a previous utterance. The pheno-

menon is illustrated in (8b) and (8c), with (8a) offering the corresponding sentence with a verbal head and a non-clitic subject:

- (8) a. *¿Ú ta Xuan / María?*
 where be-3p.-sing John / Mary
 'Where is John / Mary?'
 b. *¿Úlu?*
 where-cl.-3p.-sing-masc.
 'He's where?'
 c. *¿Úla?*
 where-cl.-3p.-sing-fem.
 'She's where?'

The most important restriction that affects this structure is that cliticization is only possible over the *wh*-word *ú*, a very special one in the Asturian *wh*-paradigm.² *Ú* is restricted to matrix questions, as in (8); it cannot be used either in indirect questions or as a relative pronoun, as shown in (9):

- (9) a. **Nun sé ú ta Xuan.*
 neg. know-1p.-sing. where is-3p.-sing. John
 b. **La casa ú Xuan vive.*
 the house where John lives

The sentences in (9) become correct by substituting *ónde* for *ú*. *Ónde* can also be used in matrix questions, but it does not allow cliticization:

- (10) **¿Óndelu?*
 where-cl.-3p.-sing.-masc.

A *wh*-word almost equivalent to the Asturian *ú* is found again in the Italian dialects studied by Poletto. She points out that Friulan has a locative *wh*-word, *do*, with exactly the same restrictions observed in relation with *ú*: *do* is an alternate of *dula* (the more extensive one, that is, the equivalent of Asturian *ónde*) in matrix questions. What is somehow unexpected is that *do*, contrary to *dula*, is incompatible with the modal subject clitics of Friulan, as shown in (11):

2. Galician has expressions similar to those in (8b) and (8c). The main difference is that in the case of Galician the special *wh*-word used in these cases cannot be used if the verb remains in the sentence. This means that Galician does not exhibit sentences equivalent to Asturian (8a) (see Álvarez et alii 1986: 431). A similar construction was also observed by Menéndez Pidal (1906) in Old Castilian, where the locative *wh*-word *do* admitted cliticization of an morphologically accusative clitic in sentences such as the following:

- (i) *Do los mis amores, dolos?*
 Where the my loves where-cl-3p-plu-masc.
 'Where are my loves, where are they?'

- (11) a. **Do a comprial il pan?*
 where cl. buys the bread (Poletto 1992: ex. (19b))
- b. *Do comprial il pan?*
 where buys the bread
 ‘Where does he buy the bread?’ (Poletto 1992: ex. (19a))

Poletto, following Benincà (1986), argues in favor of the X^0 character of *do*. According to her, *do* is a head *wh*-word located in Comp^0 , as opposed to *dula*, a XP *wh*-word located in [Spec, CP]. Poletto’s proposal about the impossibility of (11a) is that *do* already includes the modal clitic, after incorporation from its modal head position.

We can extend some of these observations to Asturian, and assume the head character of *ú*, as distinct to the XP nature of *ónde*. We can further postulate that the Asturian *ú* subcategorizes for an emphatic ΣP as a part of its properties as a head. Thus, the opposition between an *ú* matrix question and an *ónde* matrix question is based on the emphatic character of the former, in contrast with the neutral character of the latter. The intuition of Asturian speakers about the use of each form seems to confirm this. Asturian *ú* does not include however a subject clitic, as Friulan *do* does, but it can host an accusative clitic used as an emphatic subject clitic (see (8b) and (8c)), which is only possible in a presentational context.

Therefore, what we have found in Asturian is a construction similar to the Galician one introduced in the previous section in that it makes use of a morphologically accusative clitic. This clitic exhibits the features of the subject, and it clearly relates with the emphatic feature which we are positing within the Σ functional head; therefore, we consider it an emphatic subject clitic. Moreover, the construction is restricted to presentational contexts in both languages.

An explanation is then needed for the following facts:

- (a) the foundations of the lexical restriction observed both in the Galician and Asturian constructions, which confines the phenomenon we are considering to presentational contexts, and
- (b) the nature of the connection established by the clitics between the features of Σ and AgrS within these constructions.

But an even more basic question still remains to be explained:

- (c) why do we find morphologically accusative clitics in these contexts.

2. Clitic Recycling: An Overview

We have observed that, Galician and Asturian not having clitics specifically designed for emphatic purposes —as opposed, for instance, to Polesano and Fiorentino—, they use the same clitics that are used for other purposes in the appropriate contexts. What we suggest is that in the constructions considered in this paper, Galician and Asturian ‘recycle’ the accusative clitic for an emphatic nominative-like use.

The ‘recycling mechanism’ that we postulate is a very productive one in the Northwestern Iberian languages. We have defined it in previous work as a kind of last resort strategy which applies in the lexicon and extends the use of an

element of the clitic paradigm in order to fill in a gap. It can be formulated as follows:

- (12) Clitic Recycling Strategy:
 'Use the (most) unmarked clitic to fill in gaps in the paradigm.'
 (Longa, Lorenzo and Rigau (1995: ex. (40)))

Asturian and Galician, which lack both partitive and locative clitics, make use of the items from the accusative inventory in recycling operations. Some illustrations are given below:

- (13) 'Accusative → Partitive':³
- a. *Asturian*
- ¿Había bruxes?
 had witches
 'Were there witches?'
- No, nun *les* había.
 no not cl.-acc-pl-fem. had
 'No, there weren't any.'
- b. *Galician*
- ¿Había meigas?
 had witches
 'Were there witches?'
- No, non *as* había.
 no not cl.-acc-pl-fem. had
 'No, there weren't any.'

3. The recycling strategy is starting to be used in the context of the existential verb *haber* of Spanish dialects other than Northwestern (see Suárez (1982: 58–61)). An illustration is given below:

- (i) Aviones, *los* hay todos los días
 Planes, cl. has everyday
 'There are flights everyday.'

Nevertheless, the use of recycled accusatives is by far more general in Northwestern than in Castilian Spanish, as can be observed in the contrasts shown in (ii.) and (iii.):

- (ii) Fiebre, no *la* tengo / Cast. * Fiebre, no *la* tengo (Northwestern Spanish)
 fever not cl. have fever not cl. have
 'I do not have any fever.'
- (iii) Dolor, no *lo* siento / Cast. * Dolor, no *lo* siento (Northwestern Spanish)
 Pain, not cl. feel Pain not cl. feel
 'I do not feel any pain.'

In cases in which a clitic can be interpreted both as accusative and as partitive, both interpretations are permitted because there is no an alternative for any of the competing constructions. An example is given in (i.), in which *la* may stand both for a partitive object (as *fiebre* 'fever') or for an accusative object (as *la llave* 'the key'):

- (iv) *la* tengo (Standard Spanish)
 cl. have
 'I have any / it.'

(14) 'Accusative → Locative':

a. *Asturian*

Les muyeres taben xunto la creizal, pero los paisanos nun
 the women were beside the cherry tree but the men not

lo taben
 cl-acc-sing-masc were

'The women were beside the cherry tree, but the men were not there.'

b. *Galician*

As mulleres estaban xunto á cerdeira, pero os homes non
 the women were beside the cherry tree but the men not

o estaban.
 cl-acc-sing-masc were

'The women were beside the cherry tree, but the men were not there.'

The Asturian and Galician sentences are to be compared with their equivalents in Catalan, whose clitic paradigm has both partitive and locative clitics:

(15) a. — Hi havia bruixes?

cl-loc. had witches
 'Were there witches?'

— No, no *n'hi* havia.

no not cl-part.-cl-loc. had
 'No, there weren't any.'

b. Les dones són prop del cirerer, però els homes no *hi* són.

The women are beside the cherry tree but the men not cl-loc. are
 'The women are beside the cherry tree, but the men are not there.'

Some version of the Elsewhere Condition must be adopted here in order to prevent that unmarked elements as Asturian *la* and *lo* appear in other contexts as dative. Our idea is that such a condition avoids an unmarked clitic to appear in contexts for which specific elements exist in the paradigm.

3. An Analysis for the Modal Clitic Construction

Going back to the Galician cases introduced in section 1.1., it is important to note that the appellative character of the construction does not lie so much on the locative element introducing the sentences as on the deictic content of the utterance as a whole. Actually, *aquí* 'here' is not a locative argument in these presentational sentences, as proven by the fact that there is no paraphrase of (16a) parallel to that of (17a) found in (17b):

- (16) a. Aquí as veñen elas! ≠ b. *Aquí é onde as veñen elas!
 here cl. come they-fem. here is where cl. come they-fem.
 'Here they come.' 'Here is where they come.'

- (17) a. *Aquí xantan elas.* = b. *Aquí é onde xantan elas.*
 here eat they-fem. here is where eat they-fem.
 'They eat here.' 'Here is where they eat.'

This means that *aquí* —or a similar locative-type element, such as *aí* 'there'— is in this context nothing more than a marker of the emphatic-deictic meaning of (16a) as a whole. We thus postulate for this element a specifier position within the functional projection in which the modal character of the sentence is expressed, i.e., ΣP . Therefore, this element is not related to the lexical structure of the verb, since it is not one of its arguments, nor does it modify the relation between them in any relevant sense. We thus conclude that it does not move from the VP to the functional projections; instead, we are going to assume that an element like *aquí* in (16) is base-generated within the functional structure of the sentence. It is not to be considered as an emphasized argument, but rather as a 'emphasizing operator' generated externally to the verbal lexical projection. For instance, *ir* 'to go' implies the movement to a place necessarily different from the position of the speaker. This aspect of its meaning must be reflected in the lexical structure projected by the verb. *Ir* has thus a dynamic meaning which cannot be modified by a word with the stative meaning of *aquí*—cf. *va desde aquí* 's/he goes from here' vs. **va aquí* 's/he goes here'—. *Aquí* can only be used in the context of *ir* reduced to a very basic deictic meaning understood independently of the lexical properties of the verb.

Another emphatic element that can introduce these sentences is the non-aspectual *xá* 'already', which should be translated in these cases as 'really':⁴

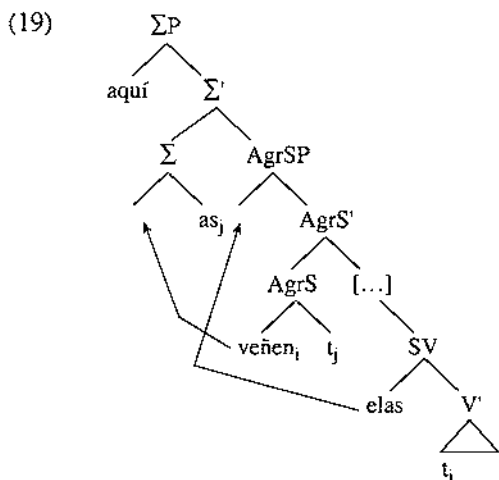
- (18) ;*Xa as chegan elas!*
 already cl. come they-fem.
 'Here they come!'

As for the recycled clitic, we hypothesize that it is inserted under the AgrS node, and thus compelled to show agreement with the subject. From this position, the clitic reaches the Σ position, in which the emphatic features are posited and reinforced by the emphasizing operator. The emphatic character of the sentence as a whole obtains after the verb moves overtly to AgrS, and covertly to Σ .⁵ The DP sentential subject —*elas* in (16a)— reaches the [Spec, AgrSP] position also at LF. All these movements are represented in (19):

4. One of the authors had the privilege of listening the following sentence in a recent visit to Galicia:
 (i) ;*Mira cómo lo viene, el avión!* (Galician Spanish)
 Look-imperative how cl. comes the airplane
 'Look, here comes the airplane!'

In this sentence, it is the imperative form of *mirar* 'look' the element that acts as the appellative introducer. See the Catalan example in (22.b).

5. Benincà (1983) also analyses the Paduan subject clitic *a*, which appears within exclamatory sentences, as a modal clitic. This can be seen as another instance in which a subject clitic assumes the function of a modal marker. The difference is that in the case of Paduan the clitic has lost its person features.



3.1. Why only in sentences with stative and movement verbs?

The analysis so far proposed still leaves unexplained why the modal clitic construction is not possible with verbs other than *venir* 'to come', *chegar* 'to arrive', *ir* 'to go', *estar* 'to be, to appear', etc. Any other verb —as, for instance, the agentive verb *xantar* 'to eat'—, can not receive a presentational reading, even if an element such as *aquí* introduces the sentence. In these contexts, *aquí* must be interpreted in its original meaning of central coincidence, which blocks its use as a pure emphatic marker. Therefore, raising of *aquí* to [Spec, ΣP] would serve to emphasize the locative circumstance of the predicate at issue. Moreover, the intervention of a modal clitic is not needed in these cases, because it is only an adjunct of the verbal projection that is emphasized, and not of the situation described by the VP as a whole.

We thus obtain the source of the contrast between (16a) —which implies a global deictic emphasis— and (17a) —which only implies the emphasis of the locative circumstance—, as well as the reason of the equivalence between (17a) and (17b), and its absence in the case of (16a) and (16b).

3.2. What about other languages?

Spanish has a construction equivalent to the Galician one which does not make use of a clitic.⁶

- (20) ; Aquí vienen ellas!
 here come they-fem
 'Here they come!'

6. Asturian behaves in this respect on a par with Spanish.

As in the case of Galician, this construction implies a global emphatic attitude in relation with the utterance situation, not an emphasis on the initial locative word. Our proposal is that Spanish has an abstract element in charge of the mission that Galician entrusts to the recycled accusative clitic. This idea fits well with what we observe in other Spanish sentences. Consider, for instance, the Spanish counterparts of (13), (14) and (15):

- (21) a. — ¿Había brujas?
 had witches
 'Were there witches?'
 — No, no había.
 no not had
 'No, there weren't any.'
- b. Las mujeres estaban junto al cerezo, pero los hombres
 the women were beside the cherry tree but the men
 no estaban.
 not were
 'The women were beside the cherry tree, but the men were not there.'

Notice that while Catalan uses partitive and locatives clitics, and Galician and Asturian recycled clitics, Spanish exhibits no surface clitics in these constructions. What we suggest is that Spanish is using abstract locative and partitive elements in (21a) and (21b), respectively. An extension of this idea is that (20) contains an abstract modal element.

There are languages, on the other hand, which are incapable of constructing something like (17a) or (20). This is actually the case of Catalan. We attribute this to the fact that Catalan lacks the appropriate —overt or covert— element to build up the construction, and that it has not developed the recycling strategy introduced in section 2. Given this lexical deficiency, Catalan resorts to certain idiomatic constructions in which the intended emphatic deixis is made explicit:

- (22) a. Heus-les aquí!⁷
 look-them here!
 'Here they are!'
- b. Mira-te-les!
 look-you-them!
 'Look at them!'

7. According to Coromines (1980: s.v. *haver*), the element *heus* derives from the fusion of a complex which included the elements *ec + heu + vet* ('here + interjection + look-imperative'). This proves that the Catalan item is closely related with the French expressions *voilà* and *voici*. See Morin (1979: 294–295) for an analysis of the French elements.

Some conclusions can be formulated at this point about the clitic systems of the different languages considered along this section. Both Catalan and Spanish have a rich paradigm of specific clitics, as opposed to Asturian and Galician, which have to resort to the recycling mechanism. However, while Catalan has overt partitive and locative clitics, their Spanish counterparts are abstract.

Furthermore, Catalan and Spanish differ in that the former lacks a specific modal clitic, while the latter owns an item which can be considered the abstract counterpart of the overt modal clitic of languages as Fiorentino and Polesano —see section 1.1.—. The status of modal clitics in the different languages considered along this paper is summarized in the following schema:

(23)	Florentino, Polesano	Spanish	Galician	Catalan
	Overt Clitic	Abstract Element	Recycled Clitic	No clitic
	A no vegno	¡Aquí [e] vienen!	¡Aquí <i>as</i> veñen!	—

3.3. Remaining Issues

The Asturian case studied in section 1.2. —cf. (8b) and (8c), repeated below as (24)— can be analyzed along the lines of the previous sections:

- (24) a. *¿Úlu?*
 where-cl.-3p.-sing-masc.
 'He's where?'
 b. *¿Úla?*
 where-cl.-3p.-sing-fem.
 'She's where?'

Ú has been already characterized as a C^0 , that appears in emphatic questions instead of the PP *ónde*, a CP specifier. We may think that this $wh-X^0$ word doesn't reach its position by movement from the lexical structure of the verb. Actually, the interpretation of the sentence does not imply an emphatic questioning of its locative circumstance, but rather an emphatic questioning of the sentence as a whole. This effect obtains by raising the verb to the head of a ΣP selected by *ú* as its complement. As in the Galician construction, we suppose that a recycled clitic is inserted under AgrS in these cases, which further moves up to Σ .

A peculiarity of the Asturian recycled modal clitics, as opposed to the Galician ones, is that they need to further cliticize over the higher head. For this reason, they only appear in the context of *ú*, as in (24a) above, and not in contexts equivalent to those in Galician in which Σ is the higher functional head, as in (25):

- (25) **aquí lu* *vien él*
 here cl.-masc.-sing come he

4. Conclusions

The facts offered in this paper are illustrative of the existence of certain clitics attached to functional categories located over AgrS, which are in charge of the expression of the modal orientation of the sentence. We have seen that while certain languages have elements specifically designed for this purpose —overt, in the case of Fiorentino and Polesano; abstract, in the case of Spanish—, other languages resort to a recycling strategy which enables morphologically accusative clitics to do the job —Galician and Asturian—. In clear contrast with all these languages, Catalan is an example of a language in which modal clitics seem to be completely absent from the clitic paradigm.

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