

Restrictions on DP-Internal Ellipsis in Spanish

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I Introduction

I.1 The basic construction

Aliases: NP-Ellipsis, DP-Ellipsis, N'-Ellipsis, N-Drop, NP-Drop

Basic formula: DETERMINER + GAP + MODIFIER

- Most commonly cited: (1) Det + gap + Adj
- Also: (2) Det + gap + RC, (3) Det + gap + dePP

(1) **Det + gap + Adj**

el pingüino alto y el [] bajo
the penguin tall and the [] short
'the tall penguin and the short [one]'

(2) **Det + gap + RC**

el pingüino que vió Martín y el [] que vió Marta
the penguin that saw Martín and the [] that saw Marta
'the penguin that Martín saw and the [one] that Marta saw'

(3) **Det + gap + dePP**

el pingüino de Antártida y el [] de Australia
the penguin of Antarctica and the [] of Australia
'the penguin from Antarctica and the [one] from Australia'

I.2 Goals:

- Lay out the major restrictions on DP-Internal Ellipsis (DPIE) in Spanish¹
- Argue in favor of a clitic-based approach to these restrictions, in which the clitic nature of the Spanish definite articles predicts what sorts of modifiers are licit for DPIE

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¹Judgments reported in this paper come mainly from speakers of Peruvian Spanish. Most of these judgments appear to be robust across dialects, though some of the finer points, especially regarding pronominal adjectives, tend to vary.

- Other approaches to similar constructions: licensing by focus (Merchant 2001, Corver and van Koppen 2007, Eguren 2009), licensing by ‘rich’ agreement, inflection (Bernstein 1993, Kester 1994, 1996, among others), licensing by other functional heads (Kester and Sleeman 2002), atomicity/partitivity (Valois and Royle to appear, Sleeman 1996)
- Propose and argue for a Clitic Host Selection Algorithm, which accounts for these restrictions

2 Restrictions on DPIE in Spanish

When the determiner in an elliptical DP is one of the definite articles *el*, *la*, *los*, *las*, several restrictions apply. We’ll talk about three today:

2.1 A modifier is necessary

When the determiner is a definite article, a modifier is necessary for DPIE to be licit:

- (4) **DA + gap + *(Adj)** (cf. (1))
 el pingüino alto y el [] *(bajo)
 the penguin tall and the [] *(short)
 ‘the tall penguin and the short [one]’
- (5) **DA + gap + *(RC)** (cf. (2))
 el pingüino que vió Martín y el [] *(que vió Marta)
 the penguin that saw Martín and the [] *(that saw Marta)
 ‘the penguin that Martín saw and the [one] that Marta saw’
- (6) **DA + gap + *(dePP)** (cf. (3))
 el pingüino de Antártida y el [] *(de Australia)
 the penguin of Antarctica and the [] *(of Australia)
 ‘the penguin from Antarctica and the [one] from Australia’

2.2 Only *de* PPs are licit PP modifiers

PPs headed by P⁰s other than *de* are not licit modifiers for DPIE:

- (7) **DA + gap + dePP** (repeated from (3))
 el pingüino de Antártida y el [] de Australia
 the penguin of Antarctica and the [] of Australia
 ‘the penguin from Antarctica and the [one] from Australia’
- (8) ***DA + gap + paraPP**
 * el pingüino para el zoológico y el [] para el acuario
 the penguin for the zoo and the [] for the aquarium

- (9) * **DA + gap + conPP**
 * el pingüino con una bufanda y el [] con gafas
 the penguin with the scarf and the [] with glasses

2.3 Only *que* RCs are licit RC modifiers

Relative clauses are licit DPIE modifiers only when they are *que*-initial:

- (10) **DA + gap + queRC** (repeated from (2))
 el pingüino que vió Martín y el [] que vió Marta
 the penguin that saw Martín and the [] that saw Marta
 ‘the penguin that Martín saw and the [one] that Marta saw’
- (11) * **DA + gap + dondeRC**
 * el pueblo donde crecí yo y el [] donde vivo ahora
 the town where grew.up I and the [] where I.live now
- (12) * **DA + gap + cuandoRC**
 * la vez cuando conocí a Morrissey y la [] cuando conocí a Mick Jagger
 the time when I.met A Morrissey and the [] when I.met A Mick Jagger

3 In favor of clitic-based restrictions

3.1 Restrictions apply only to elliptical DPs with definite articles

All of these restrictions apply only when the determiner immediately preceding the gap is a definite article—they are lifted when a demonstrative is used instead:

- (13) **Dem + gap + Ø**
 este pingüino alto y ese [] (bajo)
 this penguin tall and that [] (short)
 ‘this tall penguin and that (short) [one]’
- (14) **Dem + gap + paraPP**
 este pingüino para el zoológico y ese [] para el acuario
 this penguin for the zoo and that [] for the aquarium
 ‘this penguin for the zoo and that [one] for the aquarium’
- (15) **Dem + gap + dondeRC**
 este pueblo donde crecí yo y ese [] donde vivo ahora
 this town where grew.up I and that [] where I.live now
 ‘this town where I grew up, and that [one] where I live now’

This is consistent with a clitic-based analysis of DPIE, which inherently distinguishes between the clitic definite articles and other non-clitic determiners.

3.2 Strict adjacency matters

As Eguren (2009) points out, in DPIE there is always a strict adjacency between the definite article and a licit modifier.

If a licit modifier immediately follows the gap, the ellipsis is licit:

- (16) el pingüino de Antártida para el zoológico y el [] de Australia para el
 the penguin of Antarctica for the zoo and the [] of Australia for the
 acuario
 aquarium
 ‘the penguin from Antarctica for the zoo, and the [one] from Australia for the
 aquarium’
- (17) la manzana roja para Marta y la [] verde para Martín
 the apple red for Marta and the [] green for Martín
 ‘the red apple for Marta and the green [one] for Martín’

If anything intervenes between the definite article and the modifier, or if the licit modifier is removed, the ellipsis becomes illicit. This is the case even if no new material is introduced into the DP:

- (18) * el pingüino de Antártida para el zoológico y el [] para el acuario
 the penguin of Antarctica for the zoo and the [] for the aquarium
 de Australia
 of Australia
- (19) * la manzana roja para Marta y la [] para Martín
 the apple red for Marta and the [] for Martín

We can see, then, that one ungrammatical apple doesn’t spoil the whole barrel, as long as it doesn’t intervene between the definite article and a licit modifier—this is predicted under a view where a clitic is searching for the first linearly available host.

4 Selecting the clitic host

Several analyses of DPIE and DPIE-related phenomena posit that the Spanish definite articles are clitics, which must attach to a particular type of host (Brucart and Gràcia 1986, Raposo 1999, Kornfeld and Saab 2004, Ticio 2005).

Brucart and Gràcia (1986): the definite article clitics can attach to nominal elements

- More specifically: elements with a [+N] categorial feature²

²Following Chomsky’s (1986) categorization, I take [+N] elements include N and A, and exclude V, P, and Adv

Two major problems, if further refinements aren't made:³

- APs modified by adverbs ([-N]) are actually licit modifiers
 - (20) el coche amarillo y el [] verdaderamente amarillo
 the car yellow and the [] truly yellow
 the yellow car and the really yellow [one]'
- Relative clauses and PPs (as we saw in §1.1) are also licit modifiers
 - The leftmost element in a licit RC or PP modifier is either *que* or *de*—neither of which is nominal

4.1 The Proposal

My proposal: the Spanish definite article clitics are versatile—they can cliticize to either XPs or X⁰s under the right circumstances, as defined by the Clitic Host Selection Algorithm:

- (21) The Clitic Host Selection Algorithm (CHSA)
 - a. The Spanish definite articles cliticize to an XP iff:
 - i. XP is headed by an *overt* [+N] head X⁰
 - ii. Any overt material that intervenes between the clitic and X⁰ must be contained within XP
 - b. The Spanish definite articles cliticize to a head X⁰ iff:
 - i. X⁰ is an overt complementizer head
 - ii. No overt material intervenes between the clitic and X⁰

4.2 Applying the CHSA

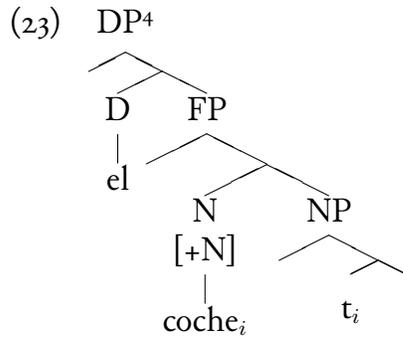
4.2.1 Non-elliptical DPs

The CHSA applies to the definite articles regardless of the elliptical or non-elliptical nature of a given DP—hence it must be shown that the CHSA permits the definite article to cliticize properly in non-elliptical DPs.

³Raposo (1999), Kornfeld and Saab (2004), and Ticio (2005) offer such refinements. Raposo and Ticio, for example, both argue that cliticization cannot occur across a PP-phase, thus generating the PP restrictions. Kornfeld and Saab argue that *de*, due to its phonological weakness, is *also* a clitic. Under their view, *de* procliticizes to following material, then the definite article cliticizes to this whole complex.

Consider the simplest case—a DP with an overt N:

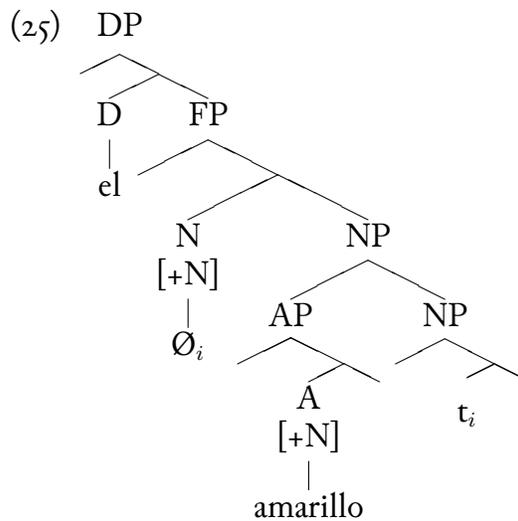
(22) *el coche* ‘the car’



4.2.2 Elliptical DPs with unmodified postnominal adjectives

In elliptical DPs with unmodified postnominal adjectives, the definite article cliticizes to the AP:

(24) *...y el [] amarillo* ‘and the yellow [one]’

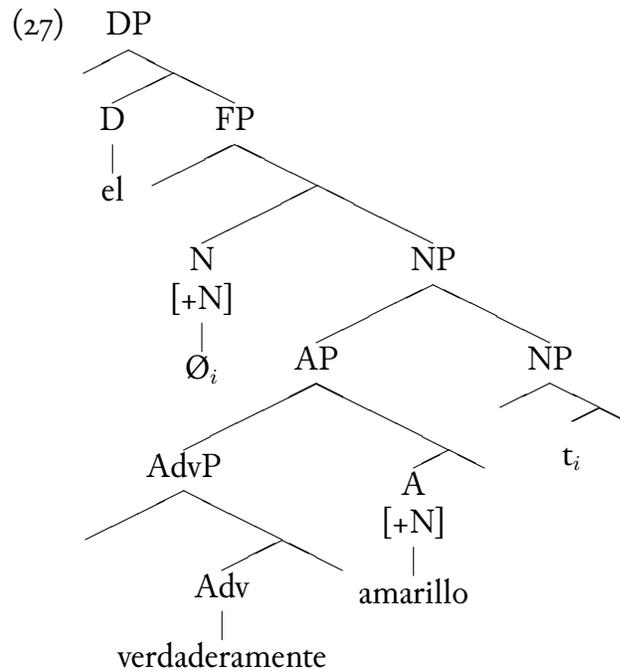


⁴This structure and those throughout are simplified for clarity of presentation. The simplifications do not affect the proposal being made here. See the appendix for a more fully articulated structure.

4.2.3 Elliptical DPs with modified postnominal adjectives

In elliptical DPs with modified postnominal adjectives, the definite article again cliticizes to the A—even if the modifier (here an adverb) is [-N]:

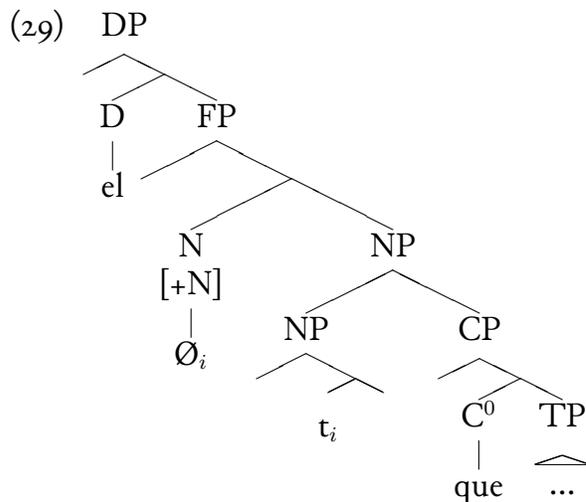
(26) ...y el [] *verdaderamente amarillo* ‘and the truly yellow [one]’



4.2.4 Relative clause modifiers

Following Kayne (1976, 1994), I assume that *que* ‘that’ is a complementizer head in C⁰, while other relative clause-initial elements are XP relative pronouns in SpecCP. In elliptical DPs with *que* relative clause modifiers, the definite article clitic cliticizes to the C⁰ *que*:

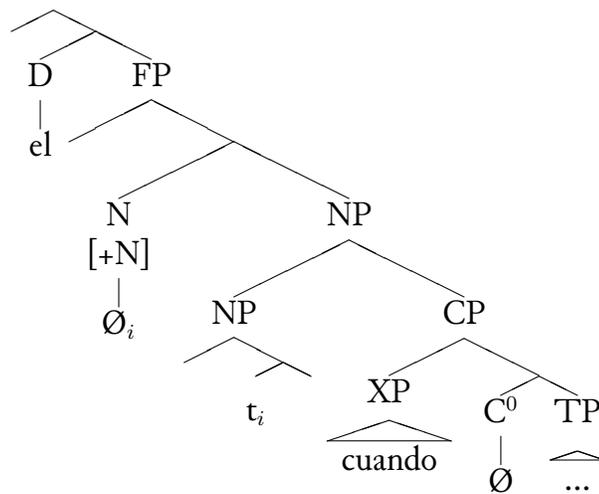
(28) ...y el [] *que...* ‘and the [one] that...’



In elliptical DPs with non-*que* relative clause modifiers, the definite article has nowhere to cliticize—the C⁰ is covert, and overt material (namely, the relative pronoun in SpecCP) intervenes before any other potential host:

(30) *...y el [] *cuando*..... ‘and the [one] when...’

(31) *DP



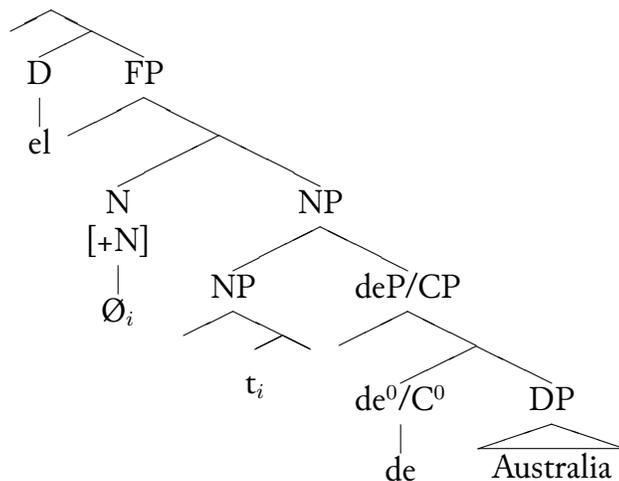
4.2.5 Prepositional phrase modifiers

As with relative clauses, I follow Kayne in determining the categorial status of phrase heads. In particular, I assume that *de* is a complementizer head (marked here as *de*⁰/*C*⁰) heading a *de*P/*CP*. I assume other prepositions are *P*⁰s.

de PPs, headed by *de*⁰/*C*⁰, are structurally quite similar to *que* relative clauses:

(32) ...y el [] *de* Australia ‘and the [one] from Australia’

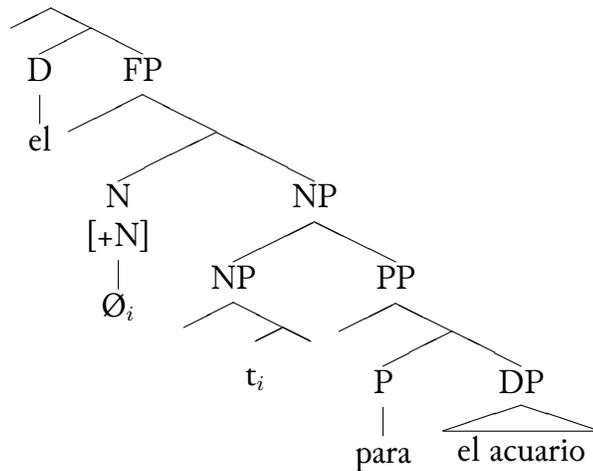
(33) DP



PPs headed by anything other than *de*, though, are illicit modifiers. The definite article has no licit host:

(34) *...y el [] para el acuario ‘and the [one] for the aquarium’

(35) * DP



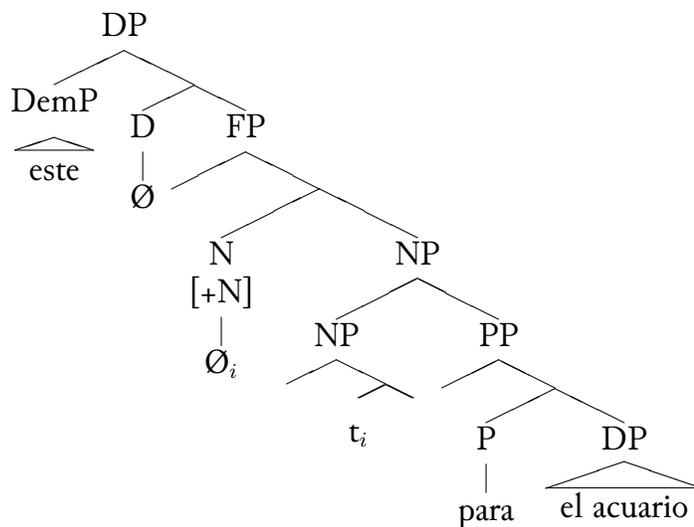
4.3 Demonstratives and other Determiners

Other determiners and demonstratives do not have the restrictions on DPIE outlined here.⁵ This is because they are not clitics, and so are not affected by the CHSA.

The structure of the gap and the modifier remains the same, but the demonstrative does not need to attach to anything—this results in grammatical ellipsis regardless of the modifier:

(36) ...y este [] para el acuario ‘and this [one] for the aquarium’

(37)



⁵The singular masculine indefinite article *un* does not behave like either the definite articles or the other determiners. When followed by a gap, *un* alternates with *uno*. This alternation may be susceptible to an OT-flavored analysis in which switching forms is preferred to cliticization due to a highly-ranked constraint that disprefers the sequence *un* Ø.

5 Conclusion

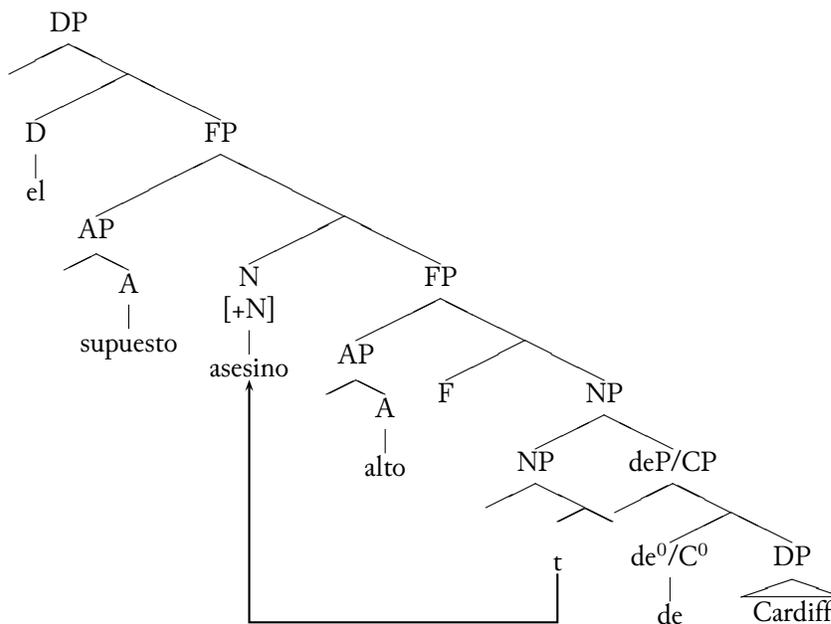
The restrictions on DPIE in Spanish can be derived from the clitic nature of the definite articles. This explains the asymmetry between elliptical DPs with the definite article and those with other determiners.

The CHSA allows the definite articles to cliticize to either an XP or an X⁰, but only under tightly-controlled conditions. This predicts that modified phrases, like APs with adverbial modifiers, may serve as licit DPIE modifiers.

Additionally, the CHSA correctly predicts the restricted set of licit relative clause and PP modifiers in DPIE.

Appendix

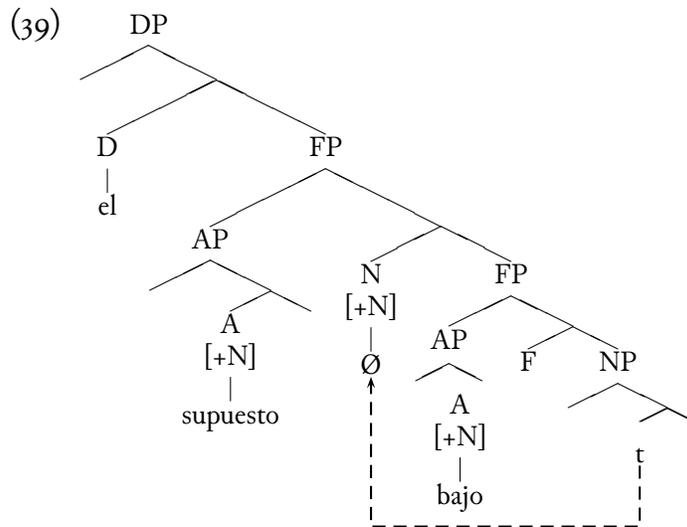
The (more) fully articulated structure



Prenominal adjectives

Prenominal adjectives are predicted by the CHSA to be licit hosts for the definite article clitics. However, DPIE is not licit with a prenominal adjective:

- (38) ...y *el* (**supuesto*) [] *bajo* ‘and the (**supposed*) [one] that’s short’



Note that in this tree, the prenominal AP is a licit host for the clitic—it is headed by an overt [+N] element, and there is no material intervening between it and the definite article clitic.

I assume a modified version of Eguren’s (to appear) condition on contrastive focus in nominal ellipsis:

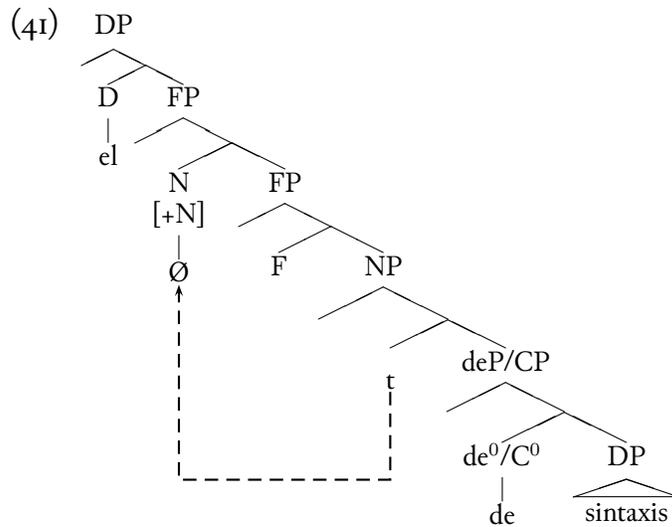
- (40) Condition on Contrastive Focus in DPIE (modified from Eguren (to appear))
 Contrastive focus identifies a subset in a set of contextually or situationally given alternatives, and the focused constituent(s) in the modifier cannot be (semantically) identical to the corresponding part(s) in the antecedent phrase. All elements in the modifier must be able to be contrastively focused under this definition. The focused constituent(s) must also have an intersective semantics.

Prenominal adjectives are largely excluded by this principle, due to their having a non-intersective semantics, or not identifying a subset of the contextually given alternatives. Thus, prenominal adjectives are not sufficiently contrastive to meet this condition.

Complement PPs

The examples of PPs throughout—and the structures shown in §4.2.5 specifically—are non-complement PPs. Cliticization to complement dePPs, and the inability of cliticization to non-de PPs, works quite similarly to non-complement PPs.

In (41), for example, the definite article cannot cliticize to XP, since its head is covert. The de^0 , however, provides a licit host—it is a complementizer head, and no overt material intervenes between it and the definite article clitic.



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