

A new strategy for progressive marking and its implications for grammaticalization theory: the subject clitic construction of Pantiscu*

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Abstract

The variety of Sicilian spoken in Pantelleria has developed a progressive construction which involves pronominal subject clitics. This is striking in many respects. Firstly, on a Romance scale, subject clitics are usually regarded as characteristic for varieties spoken north of Florence. Secondly, in none of the central Romance dialects where subject clitics are known to occur, do these convey progressive meaning. The latter seems to be unusual on a larger scale too, as none of the strategies for progressive marking reported in the relevant literature on linguistic typology seems to be directly comparable with the one displayed by Pantiscu. Besides, the results of the present study have some consequences for grammaticalization theory, as they suggest that recent revisions of Hopper & Traugott's 'cline of grammaticalization' are not on the right track and that rather, the cline originally proposed should be revised so as to include the distinction between syntactic and phonological cliticization.

Keywords: progressive aspect, subject clitics, syntactic vs. phonological cliticization, grammaticalization, evolutionary cline, Italo-Romance dialect variation.

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1. Introduction

This paper analyzes a progressive construction which occurs in the Sicilian dialect spoken on the island of Pantelleria (95 kilometres off the coast of Sicily, and 67 kilometres from that of Tunisia), and which may be defined as new on several accounts. Firstly, no comparable strategy for the marking of progressive aspect seems to have ever been described so far for any language of the world, in spite of the rich typological literature available on the topic. Secondly, this strategy for progressive marking must have developed quite recently, judging from the fact that it is totally isolated even within the Romance language family,¹ and that the Romance variety displaying it has a somewhat special sociolinguistic history.

On the empirical side, the present study is intended to make the description of this (to date) unique phenomenon available to an international audience, so that future studies on progressive marking in the world's languages may take it into account, thus enriching the cross-linguistic inventory of the grammatical devices known to be used to this purpose. On the theoretical side, on the other hand, the paper discusses the implications of this progressive construction for grammaticalization theory, focusing especially on recent revisions of the grammaticalization cline (by Askedal 2008:46-47, Faarlund 2008:223) which suggest that it should be split in a purely grammatical and a purely phonological part. The evidence, it is argued, militates against such a split and rather suggests that the cline be enriched so as to include the distinction between syntactic and phonological cliticization.

The paper is organized as follows. In §2, I give some background on the sociolinguistic history of the Sicilian dialect at issue, as well as on currently available data. In §3, I describe Pantiscu pronominal progressive, showing that it includes a subject clitic forming a periphrasis with the verb (§§3.1-4), and that it tests positively for diagnostics of progressiveness familiar from typological literature (§3.5), both morphosyntactic (e.g. ungrammaticality with imperatives) and *Aktionsart*-based (e.g.

¹ The comparative argument is the only one that can be brought to bear in order to draw diachronic inferences on Pantiscu, as the language is not documented earlier than the 20th century (see §2).

incompatibility with permanent statives). Furthermore, the progressive periphrasis will be shown to obey further restrictions that hold true for progressive in modern Italo-Romance varieties but not cross-linguistically, both of a morphosyntactic (incompatibility with the passive) and aspectual nature (incompatibility with perfective verb tenses). In §4, I then discuss the status of the periphrasis from the point of view of grammaticalization, arguing that Pantiscu pronominal progressive has developed into a fully grammaticalized expression of this value of the semantic category aspect (§4.1), and exploring the implications of Pantiscu data for grammaticalization theory (§4.2), especially as to the exact shape of the ‘cline of grammaticalization’ (Hopper & Traugott 2003:7). In §5, I finally move on to briefly review the strategies for progressive marking which have been described in the languages of the world (§5.1), focussing in particular on those which involve pronominal expressions (§5.2). This review will show that none of the strategies known so far parallels Pantiscu pronominal progressive.

2. *Pantiscu: history and documentation*

The data discussed in this paper stem from fieldwork carried out on the island in June 2009 – whose recordings are available at the University of Zurich’s *Phonogrammarchiv* (PAZ) – as well as on further work with informants in the subsequent months. The informants were asked to translate the items of a questionnaire from standard Italian – the vehicular language employed in the fieldwork sessions. Then, based on the answers, grammaticality judgements were elicited concerning dialect utterances manipulated for the relevant feature(s).

Apart from the digital audio recordings at PAZ, I am unaware of further public data sources: in particular, there are no (electronic) corpora available, and the reader must bear in mind that the interpretations presented in what follows rest on elicitation of data and grammaticality judgements, not on the observation of usage: this remains a desideratum for further research.

Previous work on Pantiscu, with special reference to the data at issue, is evaluated in Loporcaro et al. (2010), to which the reader is referred for more detail. Before my

own fieldwork on this dialect, the only published first-hand data source is Tropea (1988) (previously published in a preliminary version as Tropea 1975), who devotes one page to the progressive construction at issue here (cf. Tropea 1975:242, 1988:xlii). All subsequent literature on the dialect so far depends on Tropea's data, both on this specific topic (cf. e.g. Sgroi 1986:130f, Benincà 1992:37f, Leone 1995:43 fn. 84, Sornicola 1997:77, Brincat 2000:11, 2003:105) and in general (cf. e.g. Brincat 1977, Lüdtke 1978:217, Pellegrini 1989:47s., Loporcaro 2009:42), but note that none of the cited authors realized that the Pantiscu data must be analyzed as a progressive construction involving subject clitics.

While Sicilian has, on the whole, been well documented since the 14th century, no written extant documents are known for Pantiscu, so that Tropea's fieldwork carried out in the 1960's – along with the unpublished dissertations by Valenza (1936-37) and D'Ancona (1966-67) which Tropea capitalized on for his own description – provide the earliest documentation of the language. Since neither Old Sicilian nor any other modern Sicilian dialect display the progressive construction discussed here, this must have developed after Sicilian was imported onto the island, which happened at a relatively late date, since the inhabitants of Pantelleria – which like Sicily, was settled by Arabs from the mid 8th century onwards – seem to have remained prevalently Arabic-speaking until the end of the 17th century, long past its *reconquista* by the Normans in 1221, after which the island always remained under the same rule as Sicily. (See the historical testimonies discussed in Bresc 1986, II:623 fn. 177, Cremona 1994:290 fn. 7, Brincat 2003:98.) This prolonged contact had a massive impact on the dialect: Tropea's (1988) grammatical sketch and dictionary illustrate the peculiarities of Pantiscu, which departs from Sicilian because of the larger number of Arabic loanwords it incorporated over the centuries, as well as for contact-induced changes at all structural levels. For instance, to this day, Pantiscu preserves a post-velar fricative in Arabic loans (realized variably as laryngeal or pharyngeal: e.g. *maha'luf:u* 'waste raw cotton' < Arabic *mahlūğ* 'cleaned' [from *halāğā*]) whereas the rest of Sicilian (like standard Italian) has replaced Arabic uvular, laryngeal and glottal fricatives by [k]. As

for the impact of Arabic on the grammar of Pantiscu, see (30a) below, where a calque on Arabic in verbal morphology is mentioned. A similar calque is assumed by Sgroi (1986:130) for the pronominal progressive construction to be discussed in this paper, while in Loporcaro (2010a) (to which the reader is referred) an alternative internal explanation is put forward. This discussion though, will have to be postponed and will not be addressed further here.

Unfortunately, the origins of Sicilian settlement on Pantelleria (in terms of demographic contributions from different parts of the bigger island), and hence the steps through which the modern Italo-Romance dialect eventually ousted Arabic on the island, cannot be studied in local documents, since the local registry archives were burnt down during an uprising in 1820 and again when the island was bombarded during World War II (cf. Brincat 2000:7).

3. *Pronominal progressive in Pantiscu*

3.1. *The three pronominal series*

In order to pave the way for the description of the Pantiscu pronominal progressive construction, we first have to briefly consider the system of personal pronouns, both strong and clitic, in the dialect of Pantelleria:

(1)	strong		clitic		
	a. subject	b. object/oblique	c. DO	d. IO	e. reflexive
1sg	'je	'mi:a		mi	
2sg	'tu	'ti:a		ti	
3msg		'id:zu	(l)u		
3fsg		'id:za	(l)a	(t)sI	sI
1pl		'n(j)a:tsI		ni/mi	
2pl		'v(j)a:tsI		vi	
3pl		'id:zi	(l)i	(t)sI	sI

Pantiscu has strong pronouns occurring in all syntactic functions (with a case distinction preserved only in the 1st and 2nd person singular), alongside unstressed clitic

pronouns, which are syntactically objects, either direct or indirect and either reflexive or non-reflexive: both contrasts are neutralized in the 1st and 2nd person singular and plural.

While the picture in (1) is the one familiar for Sicilian and – apart from phonetic detail – for all of southern Italo-Romance (except the few dialects with a richer case system analyzed in Loporcaro 2008), third person forms, singular and plural, depart from the remaining persons of the paradigm in that they display a peculiarity, as illustrated in (2): (Etymological information is provided in (2), to show that all the series share the same Latin origin. Latin etyma, for the singular, are given in the accusative form, which became generalized in most Romance languages.)

(2)	3 rd person pronouns:	Latin etymon:	Status:	Syntactic function:
a.	' <i>Id:zu</i> , ' <i>Id:za</i> , ' <i>Id:zi</i>	< <i>illum</i> ,- <i>am</i> ,- <i>i/-ae</i>	strong pronoun	all (SUBJ, OBJ, OBL)
b.	(<i>I</i>) <i>u</i> , (<i>I</i>) <i>a</i> , (<i>I</i>) <i>I</i>	< (<i>il</i>) <i>lum</i> ,- <i>am</i> ,- <i>i/-ae</i>	clitic	direct object
c.	<i>q:zu</i> , <i>q:za</i> , <i>q:zi</i>	< (<i>i</i>) <i>llum</i> ,- <i>am</i> ,- <i>i/-ae</i>	?	?

As is readily apparent, in addition to strong and object clitic pronouns ((2a-b)), Pantiscu has a third distinct series of 3rd person pronominal elements ((2c)), which stems from the same diachronic source as the remaining two. This third series does not occur in any other southern Romance variety. In what follows, I will first show that those in (2c) are subject clitics, and then (in §§3.2-3.3) I will move on to demonstrate that clitics with the same syntactic function do occur in the remaining persons too, although with a crucial difference as far as their prosodic structure is concerned.

Before starting to analyze Pantiscu pronominal clitics, it is fair to recall that the notion ‘clitic’ has stirred a huge debate, which is understandable since it is an “umbrella term”, as Zwicky (1994:xiii) puts it, and “Umbrella terms are names for problems, for phenomena that present “mixed” properties of some kind, not names of theoretical constructs”. As examples of the on-going debate, consider e.g. Bermúdez-Otero & Payne (2011), who question the legitimacy of Zwicky’s (1977:4) category of ‘special clitics’, to which Romance pronominal clitics are usually ascribed. These, on the other hand, “are better regarded as elements which are neither canonical affixes nor

canonical clitics” according to Spencer & Luís (2013:147). And there is indeed plenty of evidence that they cannot be reduced to (word-level) affixes.² For instance, in some modern Romance varieties, pronominal clitics can be separated from their hosts by an intervening adverbial, which never happens to affixes. This is illustrated in (3)-(4) with a southern Italian dialect (Cosentino, cf. Ledgeway & Lombardi 2005:78) and standard Romanian:

- (3) a. *si=sempre lav-a*
REFL= always wash.PRES-3SG
's/he always washes him-/herself'
 - b. *un mi=cchiù parr-a*
NEG 1sg.IO=anymore speak.PRES-3SG
's/he doesn't speak to me anymore'
- (4) a. *muzic-ă bun-ă ca ast-a nu se=mai găsește*
music(F)-SG good-FSG like this\F-SG NEG REFL=never find:PRES:3SG
'such good music as this is never found'
 - b. *se=pree pote*
REFL=too much can:PRES:3SG
'it's well possible'

Non-adjacency between clitic and host is much more widespread in the older stages of all Romance languages, as the Old Spanish examples in (5) show (cf. Fontana 1993:1):

- (5) a. *pero que l-o=non fall-amos en tod-a l-a estoria*
but that 3-MSG.DO=NEG find-PRES.1PL in all-FSG DEF-FSG story(F)[SG]
'but we do not find it through the whole story' (Campa Gutiérrez 2009:II.11v)
- b. *assi como les=dios auie prometid-o*
so as 3PL.IO=god have:IMPF:3SG promise:PTP-MSG
'as God had promised them' (Sánchez-Prieto Borja 2001-09:I.60v)

² A conceivable alternative consists in analyzing Romance clitics as phrase-level affixes: cf. e.g. Bermúdez-Otero & Payne (2011) for discussion and criticism.

This non-identity between Romance pronominal clitics and (word-level) affixes will have to be borne in mind for discussion of the grammaticalization cline in §4.2.³ For our present purposes, however, the crucial fact is that Romance pronominal clitics can be distinguished from the corresponding full pronouns through a well-established set of standard diagnostics (cf. e.g. Kayne 1975, van Riemsdijk 1999:2-4, Russi 2008:4-7), which will be put to use in (6)-(10), applying them to Pantiscu *d:zu*, *d:za*, *d:zi*. As shown in (6b), unlike strong pronouns ((6a)), *d:zu* cannot occur in isolation (i.e. without a verb hosting it): (Here and in what follows, I omit semantic glosses for ungrammatical sentences.)

- (6) a. *ku* 'v_{IM}-I| 'Idz_z-U?
 who come.PRET-3SG 3-MSG
 ‘who came? (was that) him?’
- b. **ku* 'v_{IM}-I| d_z-U?
 who come.PRET-3SG 3-MSG

As already apparent from the elliptical answer to a wh-question in (6b), *d:z-u* cannot occupy the subject position, unlike its strong counterpart '*Idz-z-u*'. (The reason why the grammaticality test has to be performed with a perfective verb tense will be made clear in §3.5, while commenting on (29)-(30).)

- (7) a. '*Idz-z-u* 'v_{IM}-I
 3-MSG come.PRET-3SG
 ‘he came’
- b. *'*dz-z-u* 'v_{IM}-I
 3-MSG come.PRET-3SG

³ Most treatments of Romance pronominal clitics indeed assume such a non-identity, albeit admitting that “a further development of object clitics to verbal affixes cannot be excluded” (cf. Gabriel & Rinke 2010:73, who discuss prosodic evidence for the contrast).

Furthermore, *dżvu* cannot be conjoined ((8b)), again unlike strong pronouns ((8a)):

- (8) a. *'Idż-_z-u e 'Idż-_a*
 3-MSG and 3-FSG
 'he and she'
 b. **dż-_z-u e dż-_a*
 3-MSG and 3-FSG

Neither can *dżvu* be preceded by a focalizer, whereas a strong pronoun is not subject to this restriction:

- (9) *umj 'vit-_I a 'nudżvu | 'majku a 'Idż-_z-u /* a dż-_a-u*
 NEG see.PRET-1SG to nobody not even to 3-MSG/to 3-MSG
 'I didn't see anybody, not even him'

These tests unambiguously point to clitic status. As for the syntactic function of *dżvu*, comparison with object clitics yields a clear result:

- (10) *u/*dż-_z-u 'vit-_I an 'tura*
 3.MSG/3-MSG see.PRET-1SG a moment ago
 'I saw him a moment ago'

While being a clitic, *dżvu* is not an object clitic. Thus, we have to conclude that we are dealing with a pronominal element which does not carry any argumental relation: it cannot be a direct object, either clitic ((10)) or non-clitic ((9)), and cannot be a subject ((7b)). On the other hand, it shows subject agreement:

- (11) a. *'Idż-_I dż-_I/*dż-_z-u/*dż-_a fi'niʃ-_{3PL}-unu u tsa'vaj-_{SG}-u*
 3-PL 3-PL/3-MSG/3-FSG finish.PRES-3PL DEF.MSG work(M)-SG
 'they are finishing up the work'

- b. *lu¹tʃI:a d²z-a/*d²z₂-u/*d²z₂-I 'I³-a a a ma¹rIn-a*
 Lucy 3-FSG/3-MSG/3-PL go-IMPF.3SG to DEF.FSG sea(F)-SG
 ‘Lucy was going to the sea’

Finally, note that Pantiscu *d²zu*, *d²za*, *d²zi* can be gapped under conjunction, as shown in (12), something one would not expect from an affix:

- (12) a. *p¹p²nu d²z-u 'mantf-a e 'b¹zv-I*
 Joseph 3-MSG eat.PRES-3SG and drink.PRES-3SG
 ‘Joseph is eating and drinking’
- b. *'kwanv tsa¹s-IE nt a 'stants-a*
 when enter-PRET.1SG into DEF.FSG room(F)-SG
ma¹rI:a d²z-a ku'sI:-a e sku'sI:-a u vis¹t²t-u
 Mary 3-FSG sew-IMPF.3SG and unstitch-IMPF.3SG DEF.MSG dress(M)-SG
 ‘when I entered the room, Mary was sewing and unstitching the dress’

This is evidence that these clitics, like Romance pronominal clitics in general (cf. the above discussion of the data in (3)-(5)), are distinct from affixes.

To sum up, the third pronominal series in (2c), which does not occur in Sicilian, standard Italian or in any other southern Romance variety, has to be analyzed as a subject clitic. Subject clitics are known to occur in a central Romance area spanning from southern France to northern Italy (down to the Apennines and Florence) to Istria (cf. e.g. the maps provided by Heap 2000). Comparison of the Pantiscu data with northern Italo-Romance and Gallo-Romance subject clitic constructions (cf. Loporcaro 2010b) is beyond the scope of the present contribution. In a nutshell, in the (very rich) literature on the syntax of northern Italian subject clitics, it seems to be taken for granted that their function must be restricted to the marking of the verb’s inflectional categories of person, number and (for 3rd person) gender (cf. e.g. Cardinaletti & Repetti 2008:549, Manzini & Savoia 2005, I:69-196, among the many studies on the topic). The Pantiscu data challenge this implicit assumption, as its subject clitics have a semantic value which is unprecedented, both on a Romance scale as well as cross-

linguistically.⁴

A terminological remark is in order here. Much of the literature in Romance syntax (recent examples include e.g. De Cat 2005, Olivieri 2009, Culbertson 2010 etc.; cf. Loporcaro 2010b for discussion) uses the label ‘subject clitic’ to refer promiscuously to different syntactic objects, such as the (phonologically clitic) subject pronouns of standard French (*tu manges* ‘you.SG eat’), on the one hand, and the true (non-argumental) subject clitics of northern Italo-Romance, as e.g. Florentine *tu* in *te ttu mmangi* ‘you.SG eat’. It is proposed that this terminological ambiguity should be avoided, distinguishing between (standard French) clitic subjects, as opposed to subject clitics *stricto sensu*, as found in Northern Italo-Romance. In the following, I will adopt this terminology.⁵

⁴ One anonymous referee asks whether there are “any indications of contact with northern Italian varieties”. The answer is no. Indeed, Sicilian as a whole has been in contact with dialects from north-western Italy ever since the migration of sizable groups of settlers onto the island was initiated in the early 12th century by the Normans, shortly after conquering Sicily from the Arabs (cf. Värvaro 1981:185-191, Pfister 1994:6-8). Several villages scattered on the island still preserve the Gallo-Italic dialects spoken by these settlers. It is probably because of this long-lasting contact situation, possibly together with superstratum influence from Norman French, that Sicilian has departed from mainland southern Italian dialects as to many distinctive lexical and grammatical isoglosses, described in several studies by Gerhard Rohlfs (cf. e.g. Rohlfs 1964). Thus, there are several pairs of lexemes such as e.g. Sic. *a'guʃ:ia* ‘needle’ vs. mainland southern Italian *'a:ku*, or Sic. *'testa* ‘head’, as opposed to mainland southern Italian *'kapu*. Some grammatical isoglosses, such as possessive placement, have the same distribution: possessives are prenominal in Sicilian (e.g. Pantiscu *me 'nan:u* ‘my grandfather’) whereas they are always postnominal in the rest of southern Italy (e.g. Altamurano *v kum'bwan:ə 'mij* ‘my friend’). Nevertheless, no Sicilian dialect has ever developed subject clitics of the northern Italian type, which themselves had not yet arisen by the time northern settlers arrived in Sicily (cf. Vanelli 1987:57-8, 64-6, Loporcaro 2008:211). These Medieval events, anyway, cannot possibly matter for the explanation of a grammatical property which distinguishes Pantiscu from the rest of Sicilian, given what has been said on the history of this variety in §2.

⁵ In the typological literature, on the other hand, this contrast is often framed in terms of anaphoric/pronominal vs. grammatical agreement, as is the case e.g. in Bickel & Nichols’ (2007:§8.1)

3.2. *The expression of progressive in Pantiscu*

In analyzing the Pantiscu aspectual system, I am assuming here Bertinetto's (1986) taxonomy and terminology, according to which the imperfective divides into progressive, habitual and continuous.⁶ This is represented schematically in (13):

(13)

imperfective			perfective	
progressive	habitual	continuous	perfect	aoristic

There are many terminological and conceptual differences in the definition of progressive, a topic which has attracted considerable interest in studies on verbal aspect in several lines of research, from the functional-typological approach to generative grammar to formal semantics. Comrie (1981:35), for instance, has [±progressive] as a further subdivision of continuous (i.e. continuous combined with non-stative meaning), while Bybee et al. (1994:138-139) argue against a negative definition of progressive. For Frajzyngier (2008), on the other hand, progressive is not primarily a value of the category aspect but rather a discourse-structuring device signalling “pragmatic dependency”. Such definitional matters, however, will not be pursued any further here. We shall now concentrate on the expression of progressive,

taxonomy, by whose criteria Romance pronominal clitics would qualify as ‘bound formatives’, just like plain verb affixes. The reasons why an affixal analysis of Romance clitics is unsatisfactory was touched upon earlier in this section (cf. (3)-(5)).

⁶ While in English grammars the label ‘continuous’ is sometimes used interchangeably with ‘progressive’, and Comrie (1981) uses it to refer to stative verbs, Bertinetto defines ‘continuous’ as a subdivision of imperfective, distinct from both habitual and progressive): “in ogni istante t_i , compreso entro l’intervallo considerato, l’evento è in corso” [at each moment t_i , included in the interval considered, the event is on-going] (Bertinetto 1986: 163). Continuous, thus defined, contrasts with habitual because there are no implications as to the recurrence of the event beyond the interval at issue, and contrasts with progressive because of focalization on each moment of the interval, rather than on one single moment, as required by the progressive aspect (cf. also Bertinetto 1996b:229-232, who dubs continuous as ‘plurifocal’, as opposed to ‘monofocal’ progressive).

whereas the further subdivisions of imperfective as well as perfective aspect will be addressed only briefly in §3.5.

As a first illustration, consider the Pantiscu data in (14)-(15):

- (14) a. *'Idz-I* *'part-unu*
3-PL leave.PRES-3PL
'they leave' or 'they are leaving'
b. *'Idz-I* *'sta-n:u* *part-en:u*
3-PL stay-PRES.3PL leave-GER
'they are leaving'
c. *'Idz-I* *d:z-I* *'part-unu*
3-PL 3-PL leave.PRES-3PL
'they are leaving'
- (15) a. *'ɔ:ra* *'cɔ:v-I*
now rain.PRES-3SG
'now it's raining' or 'it's going to rain in a while'
b. *'ɔ:ra* *'sta* *cɔ:v-en:u*
now stay.PRES.3SG rain-GER
'now it is raining'
c. *'ɔ:ra* *d:z-U* *'cɔ:v-I*
now 3-PL rain.PRES-3SG
'now it is raining'

The (a) examples contain an unmarked present, so that their aspectual value can be either perfective or imperfective and, within the imperfective, either progressive or habitual or continuous.⁷ On the other hand, both examples (b) and (c) are aspectually marked as progressive. (14b)/(15b) show the widespread progressive periphrasis '*sta:rɪ* 'to stay' + gerund, which occurs in all Sicilian dialects (cf. Leone 1995:43) and in many Italo-Romance varieties including standard Italian, as well as – under slightly different conditions – in Sardinian and Ibero-Romance (cf. Squartini 1998 for an overview). Pantiscu departs from all the above-listed cognate varieties in also displaying the further strategy for progressive marking, exemplified in (14c)/(15c).

⁷ The most natural perfective interpretation of a present tense form is *praesens pro futuro*: e.g. 'they will leave (in a minute)' (10a), 'it's going to rain soon' (15a).

Here, addition of the subject clitic to the plain present form forces the aspectual interpretation as progressive.

3.3. *Syntactic vs. phonological clitics*

While the pronominal progressive construction only involves a pronominal element in the 3rd person singular and plural which is both phonologically and syntactically clitic, the remaining pronouns (listed in (1a) above) also occur in the same construction. Thus, in this case they must be regarded as syntactic clitics, although unlike the *q̪z̪u*, -*a*, -*I* third person forms, they are disyllabic, carry lexical stress (on the first syllable) and are therefore not prosodically defective. This is exemplified with the 2nd person plural in (16):

- (16) a. *ki* 'v̪ja:t̪si *fāʃ-L̪ti*
what 2PL do.PRES-2PL
‘what are you doing?’
- b. **ki* *m:a'rl̪a* 'fāʃ-I
what Mary do.PRES-3SG
- c. *ki* 'fāʃ-I *ma'rl̪a* / 'id̪z̪-a
what do.PRES-3SG Mary / 3-FSG
‘what is Mary doing?’

The pronominal form '*v̪ja:t̪si*' in (16a) occurs in a position (after a DO interrogative pronoun) from which NPs are barred, as shown in (16b). In Pantiscu just like in standard Italian, only (16c) is grammatical, where the referential expression (be it a noun or a full pronoun) follows the verb in the interrogative clause. This is evidence that the 2nd plural '*v̪ja:t̪si*' in (16a) is a clitic. Further evidence comes from the fact that '*v̪ja:t̪si*' can even occur twice within one and the same (non-dislocated) clause, as in (17a):

- (17) a. *ki* *'vja:tsi* *faʃ-Iti* *'vja:tsi*
what 2PL do.PRES-2PL 2PL
'what are YOU doing?'
b. **ki* *'vja:tsi* *'vja:tsi* *faʃ-Iti*
what 2PL 2PL do.PRES-2PL

Crucially, however, it cannot occur twice before the verb ((17b)). This is easily explained under the analysis adopted here: when *'vja:tsi* occurs twice ((17a)), the preverbal form is the subject clitic, while the postverbal one is the strong pronoun under focus; on the other hand, in (17b) no strong pronoun can occur after the interrogative pronoun, which explains the ungrammaticality of the clause.

This demonstrates that (16a)/(17a) contain a syntactic clitic, even if the pronominal form fulfilling this function is identical to the strong pronoun in the same person. This goes for all the remaining persons in the paradigm too.

Phonological clitichood of the pronominal form is not a necessary condition for the progressive construction in 3rd persons either. This is shown in (18), which is synonymous with (15a), even if in (18) the full form of the pronoun occurs:

- (18) *'ɔ:ra* *'Idz-u* *'cɔ:v-I*
now 3-SG rain.PRES-3SG
'now (= in this moment) it is raining'

Here too as in (15c), the meaning is obligatorily progressive. Consequently, we have to infer that *'Idz-u* is a syntactic clitic here, just like *dz-u* in (15c) which however, in addition, also phonologically cliticizes to the verb.

3.4. *Further evidence for clitichood*

Whether they are only syntactic or also phonological clitics, Pantiscu subject clitics obey linearization restrictions too, of the kind familiar from cross-linguistic studies of clitics. They exhibit a fixed order with respect to object clitics:

- (19) a. *a* *'fatʃɪ* | *ma'ri:a* *dʒəz-a* *s* *a* *'la:v-a*
 DEF.FSG face(F)-SG Mary 3-FSG REFL 3.FSG wash.PRES-3SG
 'her face, Maria is washing it'
 b. **a* *'fatʃɪ* | *ma'ri:a* *si* *dʒəz-a* *a* *'la:v-a*
 DEF.FSG face(F)-SG Mary REFL 3-FSG 3.FSG wash.PRES-3SG

As shown in (19), the subject clitic must precede DO and IO clitics (in this order). It also has a fixed position relative to negation:

As seen in (20a), the progressive clitic must follow the negation. If, on the other hand, a (homophonous) pronominal form precedes the negation, as in (20b), then the clause is aspectually undetermined (not necessarily progressive) and no strong pronoun can be added after the verb (unlike in (20a)), because clause-initial '*je*' is the strong pronoun in this case: it cannot be a clitic, since it precedes negation.⁸

Having described the basic morphosyntactic properties of the Pantiscu pronominal progressive, let us now move on to have a closer look at its semantics.

3.5. Semantic constraints on Pantiscu pronominal progressive

The occurrence of Pantiscu subject clitics is subject to restrictions on progressives familiar from the typological literature. They are incompatible with imperatives, as shown in (21a):

⁸ In the 1st person singular, the current form is (‘)je, which is both a strong pronoun and a clitic.

In addition, a form *'jeu* is marginally available for some speakers, but limited to the strong (i.e. non-clitic) pronoun function. Thus, 1st singular provides a further instance of a formal contrast between subject clitics and the corresponding strong forms, if not so clear-cut as in the 3rd person.

- | | | |
|------|---|---|
| (21) | 2 nd person singular | 2 nd person plural |
| a. | * <i>tu</i> <i>mants-a;</i>
2SG eat-IMPER.2SG | * ¹ <i>vja:tſs-I</i> <i>man'tf-atI</i>
2PL eat-IMPER.2PL |
| b. | * <i>st-a</i> <i>man'tf-amv;</i>
stay-IMPER.2SG eat-GER
be eating | * ¹ <i>sta:-tI</i> <i>man'tf-amv</i>
stay-IMPER.2PL eat-GER |

The same constraint, which is at work in other languages too (cf. e.g. Bertinetto 1994:68, 2000:582, Frajzyngier 2008 on English, albeit with different interpretations), also bars the alternative, and more widespread, progressive periphrasis as illustrated in (21b). Moreover, both progressive constructions are incompatible with (permanent) stative predicates as well, as shown in (22):⁹

- (22) a. *d_z-a f₁n̩es-a (*d_z-a) si f₁fatʃ-a*
 that-FSG window(F)-SG 3-FSG REFL open onto-PRES.3SG
 'su:p_a a s₂a:t_a
 on DEF.FSG street(F)-SG
 ‘that window opens onto the street’

b. **d_z-a f₁n̩es-a si 'sta f₁a'tʃ-anv*
 that-FSG window(F)-SG REFL stay.PRES.3SG open onto-GER
 'su:p_a a s₂a:t_a
 on DEF.FSG street(F)-SG

As shown in (23), if the subject entails a non-stative reading of the verbal predicate, the progressive constructions become grammatical:

- (23) a. *ma'ria d^z-a si f^tat:f-a a a fi'nes^t-a*
 Mary 3-FSG REFL look out-PRES.3SG at DEF.FSG window(F)-SG
 ‘Mary is looking out of the window’

⁹ This is a cross-linguistically valid generalization: cf. e.g. Comrie (1981:35-38), Castelnovo (1993:9), Bertinetto (1994:66-67). In Comrie's (1981) view (see §3.2 above), restriction to non-stative verbs is criterial for the definition of the progressive aspect itself.

- b. *ma'ria si 'sta fia'tʃ-an.u a a fi'nɛʂ-a*
 Mary REFL stay.PRES.3SG look onto-GER at DEF.FSG window(F)-SG
 ‘Mary is looking out of the window’

Both progressive constructions are also subject to a series of restrictions which are not valid cross-linguistically but constrain the grammaticality of progressive periphrases in Italo-Romance alone. One case in point is categorical non-acceptability with the verb ‘to be’ (cf. Comrie’s 1981:36 on Italian):

- (24) a. *'kidz-a miʃ'kln-a (*dʒ-a) e 'stajk-a*
 that-FSG poor(F)-SG 3-FSG be-PRES.3SG tired-FSG
 ‘that poor women is tired’
 b. **'kidz-a miʃ'kln-a 'sta e's:-en.u 'stajk-a*
 that-FSG poor(F)-SG stay.PRES.3SG be-GER tired-FSG

Another case in point is the non-grammaticality with the passive (like in Italian – cf. Bertinetto 1986:138 – and unlike, for instance, in English):

- (25) a. *I jurna'te:ri (*dʒ-I) su p:a'g-a:t-I 'po:ku*
 DEF.MPL day-labourer(M).PL 3PL be.PRES.3PL pay-PTP-MPL little
 ‘the day-labourers are ill-paid’
 b. **I jurna'te:ri 'sta-n:u e's:-ennu*
 DEF.MPL day-labourer(M).PL stay-PRES.3PL be-GER
p:a'g-a:t-I 'po:ku
 pay-PTP-MPL little

Note on the other hand that the Pantiscu subject clitic construction is not subject to any restriction depending on the (in)transitivity and/or reflexivity of the predicate involved. While most of the examples adduced up to now contained intransitive verbs, transitives may just as well occur in pronominal progressives, if their direct object is a full NP (see (11a) above, repeated here as (26a)) or a clitic ((26b)):

- (26) a. *'idz-I dʒ-I fi'nif-unu u tsa'vaʃ-u*
 3-PL 3-PL finish.PRES-3PL DEF.MSG work(M)-SG
 ‘they are finishing up the work’

- b. *u tsa'vaj:-u | 'id:z-I d:z-I u fi nif:-unu*
 DEF.MS work(M)-SG 3-PL 3-PL 3MSG finish.PRES-3PL
 ‘the work, they are finishing it up’

As for reflexivity, up to now a predicate with a (non-argumental) reflexive clitic was provided in (23), whereas in (19a) an indirect transitive reflexive clause was adduced, with reflexivity following from coreference of the subject with the direct object possessor. Direct transitive reflexives are also allowed in this construction, as shown in (27):

- (27) *ma'rza d:z-a si 'la:v-a*
 Mary 3-FSG REFL 3.FSG wash.PRES-3SG
 ‘Mary is washing herself’

In addition to the morphosyntactic and *Aktionsart*-based constraints exemplified in (21)-(24), Pantiscu pronominal progressive, like the '*sta:ri* + gerund periphrasis, is subject to an aspectual restriction which has become established during the historical development of Italo-Romance. The pronominal progressive has been exemplified so far with verb forms (mostly) in the present or in the imperfect (see (11b)) indicative tenses, The only further tense which can occur in this construction is the imperfect subjunctive:¹⁰

- (28) *si a pi'nat-a (d:za) vu'f:-IS:I*
 if DEF.FSG pot(F)-SG 3FSG boil-SUBJ[3SG]
pu't-IS:I-mu ka'l-ari a 'past-a
 can-SUBJ-1PL drop-INF DEF.FSG pasta(F)-SG
 ‘if water (lit. the pot) was boiling, we could add pasta’

¹⁰ Pantiscu, like all southern Italian dialects, has lost the present subjunctive inherited from Latin (cf. Loporcaro 2009:132-133).

On the other hand, all perfective verb tenses (i.e. simple and compound perfect as well as pluperfect)¹¹ are incompatible with the progressive (both the pronominal one and the '*stāri* + gerund periphrasis), be they synthetic (simple past, in (29)) or periphrastic (pluperfect, as exemplified with the two different forms of the Pantiscu pluperfect in (30)):¹²

- | | | | | | | | |
|---------|---|---------------|------------------|----------------|----------------------|----------------------|------------|
| (29) a. | <i>nta</i> | <i>d̪z̪-u</i> | <i>tr'r:ε:nū</i> | (<i>*jε</i>) | <i>ʃi=tsa'vaj:-a</i> | <i>'jε</i> | |
| | in | that-MSG | field(M)-SG | 1SG | there=work-PRET.1SG | 1SG | |
| | 'in that field, it's me who worked there' | | | | | | |
| b. | <i>*nta</i> | <i>d̪z̪-u</i> | <i>tr'r:ε:nū</i> | (<i>jε</i>) | <i>ʃi='ste:s-i</i> | <i>tsa'vaj:-annu</i> | <i>'jε</i> |
| | in | that-MSG | field(M)-SG | 1SG | there=stay.PRET-1SG | work-GER | 1SG |
-
- | | | | | | | |
|---------|---|---------------|------------------|-------------------------|----------------------|------------|
| (30) a. | <i>nta</i> | <i>d̪z̪-u</i> | <i>tr'r:ε:nū</i> | (<i>*jε=)ε:ra</i> | <i>ʃi=tsa'vaj:-a</i> | <i>'jε</i> |
| | in | that-MSG | field(M)-SG | 1SG=be.IMPF | there=work-PRET.1SG | 1SG |
| b. | <i>nta</i> | <i>d̪z̪-u</i> | <i>tr'r:ε:nū</i> | (<i>*jε=)ʃ=a'v-ia</i> | <i>tsa'vaj:-at-u</i> | <i>'jε</i> |
| | in | that-MSG | field(M)-SG | 1SG=there=have-IMPF:1SG | work-PTP-MSG | 1SG |
| | 'this job, it's my grandfather who had done it' | | | | | |

Incompatibility with the perfective characterizes the progressive constructions of modern Italo-Romance varieties, as exemplified with the contemporary standard language in (31) (cf. Bertinetto 1986:138, Squartini 1998:130):

¹¹ Unlike in English, in the past tenses of the Romance languages there is “a straightforward distinction between perfective and imperfective” (Comrie 1981:25): the imperfect tense is aspectually imperfective, whereas the simple past and all compound tenses containing a past participle are perfective.

¹² While (30b) is an instance of the common Romance pluperfect (imperfect of the auxiliary verb + PTP of the lexical verb), (30a) is a calque on Arabic (Tropea 1975:241-242, 1988:xli, Lüdtke 1978:217, Brincat 2004:104), where the inflected form of the simple past of the lexical verb (corresponding to the Arabic perfective in the model construction) is preceded by an invariable (3rd singular) form of the imperfect of the auxiliary '*es:iri* ‘to be’. In Arabic, on the other hand, a regularly inflected form of the perfective of the corresponding verb *kāna* ‘to be’ occurs (cf. Comrie 1981:81).

- (31) **Paolo è stat-o parl-ando con Luca*
 Paul be.PRES.3SG stay:PTP-MSG talk-GER with Luca
per tutt-a l-a ser-a
 for all-FSG DEF-FSG evening(F)-SG
 ‘Paul has been chatting with Luca all night long’

This incompatibility is foreseen, on deductive grounds, in typological studies of aspect (“Progressive, in the narrow sense, is incompatible with perfective”, Blansitt 1975:3), only to then observe that a number of languages do combine progressive marking with perfectivity. Within Romance, this holds true for the remaining languages which display the *stare/estar*-progressive periphrasis. This occurs in perfective tenses in both Sardinian ((32)) and Ibero-Romance ((33)): ¹³

- (32) *pau'liku el bis'ta:ð-u vae'ði-en:ε kun 'tɔ:rε* Sardinian
 Paul be.PRES.3SG stay:PTP-MSG talk-GER with Salvatore
'ðotu z-u 'zε:rɔ
 all DEF-MSG evening(M)-SG
 ‘Paul has been talking with Salvatore all the evening’

- (33) *ayer Pilar estuv-o habl-ando con Jaime* Spanish
 yesterday Pilar stay:PRET.3SG talk-GER with Jaime
durante dos hora-s
 during two hour(F)-PL
 ‘Yesterday Pilar was talking to Jaime for two hours’

Italian also used to admit perfective tenses with the progressive periphrasis until the 19th century (cf. Bertinetto 1986:137, 1996a:103, Squartini 1998:73-74):

¹³ Cf. Squartini (1998:73), from which the Spanish example is drawn, as well as Blansitt (1975:3), Comrie (1981:22-23), Bertinetto & Delfitto (1996:225) on the grammaticality of the *estar*-progressive in perfective tenses in Ibero-Romance. The Sardinian data stem from my own fieldnotes on the Logudorese variety of Bonorva (province of Sassari).

- (34) *l-a signor-a Rigeys stett-e ascolt-ando il rumor*
 DEF-FSG Mrs-SG Rigeys be:PRET.3SG listen-GER DEF.MSG noise(M)
de=i pass-i
 of=MPL step(M)-PL (A. Fogazzaro, *Piccolo mondo antico*, 1895)
 ‘Paul has been chatting with Luca all night long’

Thus, both the comparative picture and the diachronic data on Italian suggest that the ban on perfectives is a recent Italo-Romance development. Hence, even in the absence of historical data on Pantiscu, one may speculate that this dialect must have shared the same diachronic evolution as the rest of Italo-Romance.

To complete the description, note finally that not only perfective tenses are incompatible with our subject clitic constructions, but also other values of the imperfective aspect which are different from the progressive (cf. Bertinetto’s 1986 taxonomy, schematized above in (13)). As shown in (35a), the pronominal progressive (just like the '*stari*-periphrasis, (35b)) is ungrammatical given a habitual reading:

- (35) a. *'Id:z-I (*d:z-I) 'part-unu 'sempe ε: 'ſɪŋku*
 3-PL 3-PL leave-PRES.3PL always at.DEF.PL five
 ‘they always leave at five o’clock’
 b. **'Id:z-I 'stan:u par't-en:u 'sempe ε: 'ſɪŋku*
 3-PL stay-PRES.3PL leave-GER always at.DEF.PL five

The same applies to continuous reading too:

- (36) a. *'tot-a 'nɔt-e nt o 'let-u*
 all-FSG night(F)-SG in DEF.MSG bed(M)-SG
*(*d:zu) si ḥarbi'a-v-a*
 3-MSG REFL toss and turn-IMPF-3SG
 ‘s/he tossed and turned in her/his bed all night long’
 b. **'tot-a 'nɔt-e nt o 'let-u*
 all-FSG night(F)-SG in DEF.MSG bed(M)-SG
si 'sta-v-a ḥarbi'an:u
 REFL stay-IMPF-3SG toss and turn-GER

What has been said in this section concerning the semantics shall suffice to my present purpose: a closer investigation of the interaction of aspect and Aktionsart in

Pantiscu, as for this pronominal construction and in general, must be left for further research.

4. *Pantiscu pronominal progressive and grammaticalization theory*

The description in §3 has provided enough evidence to argue that the Pantiscu pronominal progressive behaves like a fully grammaticalized periphrasis. This point is made explicit in the present section, which also explores the implications of the Pantiscu facts for the theory of grammaticalization.

In Haspelmath's (2000:656-660, 2002:143-144) terms, the Pantiscu pronominal progressive (just like the alternative '*stari*-progressive construction) is not a case of a gap-filling periphrasis (as it does not compensate for any gaps in the inflectional paradigm, unlike, say, the Latin passive perfect or future subjunctive periphrases) but is rather an instance of a categorial periphrasis. As such, it might not be a part of the inflectional paradigm of the verb (and thus not a part of inflectional morphology *stricto sensu*),¹⁴ but this need not mean that it is not grammaticalized (recall that the English *have*-perfect also belongs to the categorial periphrasis type, and is therefore excluded from the inflectional verb paradigm by e.g. Hockett 1958:212). Indeed, that it is grammaticalized can be argued, based on both its form and content.

As a preliminary remark, note that discussions of grammaticalized verbal periphrases such as Haspelmath's (2000, 2002:143-144) usually focus on constructions involving two verbs, viz. a modifier (or auxiliary) and a lexical (or main, or modified) verb: this is the only configuration contemplated by criterion (b) in Bertinetto's

¹⁴ See, however, Cruschina (forthcoming) for a discussion of Haspelmath's criteria, concluding that even non-gap-filling periphrases may be part of morphology. Indeed, much recent work within Word-and-Paradigm approaches to morphology does treat within inflectional morphology, periphrases that by Haspelmath's criteria would definitely fall outside it: cf. e.g. Sadler & Spencer (2000), Corbett (2010). Most recently, within the framework of Canonical Typology, Brown et al. (2012:235) argue that it is not necessary to choose whether a periphrasis “is syntax or morphology”, since, under their approach, “it can be both”.

(1990:332) list of scalar diagnostic criteria for assessing the degree of grammaticalization of verbal periphrases.

In Pantiscu, the alternative (almost pan-Romance) way of expressing progressive ('*stari* + gerund, seen above in (14b), (15b), (23b)) obviously qualifies as a fully grammaticalized periphrasis (of the categorial type), on a par with, say, its standard Italian counterpart (cf. Bertinetto 1990:347). The question to be raised now concerning the pronominal progressive, is whether it also deserves the same label, in spite of the fact that it involves a pronominal element, rather than an auxiliary, combining with the main verb. As for the status of periphrasis, note that while this is more commonly attributed to verb clusters, examples involving nominal elements are reported too, such as the Romanian periphrastic oblique case, occurring with names which lack a synthetic case form for that function: e.g. periphrastic *lui Petre* (= OBL Petre) ‘to/of Peter’, as opposed to synthetic *An-ei* (Ana-OBL) ‘to/of Ana’ (cf. Haspelmath 2000:657, 2002:143). Other reported examples of suppletive, or gap-filling, periphrases are even more to the point here, in that they involve pronominal elements that are drafted in to combine with verb forms in order to fill in (only) some cells of a verbal paradigm. This is illustrated in (37), with examples drawn from two Transylvanian dialects of the Maramureş area (analyzed by Maiden 2004:242; cf. also Corbett 2010:3):

(37) The verb ‘to go’ in some Romanian dialects of Maramureş (Maiden 2004:242):

	1SG	2SG	3SG	1PL	2PL	3PL
a. Fundătura	<i>mə duk</i>	<i>t'ə duc</i>	<i>sə 'duce</i>	<i>'merem</i>	<i>'merets</i>	<i>sə duk</i>
b. Tăureni	<i>mə duk</i>	<i>ce duf</i>	<i>'mere</i>	<i>'merem</i>	<i>'merets</i>	<i>sə duk</i>

In these dialects, the suppletive paradigms in (37a-b) result from conflation of what are usually two distinct syntactic constructions elsewhere in Romance, as exemplified for standard Romanian and Italian in (38)-(39):

- (38) a. *Liana se duc-e acasă* Romanian
 Liana REFL.OD bring.PRES-3SG home
 ‘Liana is going home’

- | | |
|---------------------------------|---------|
| b. <i>Maria si rec-a a casa</i> | Italian |
| M. REFL bring.PRES-3SG to home | |
| ‘Maria is going home’ | |
-
- (39) a. *Liana merg-e acasă* Romanian
- Liana go.PRES-3SG home
- ‘Liana is going home’
- | | |
|---------------------------|---------|
| b. <i>Maria va a casa</i> | Italian |
| Maria go.PRES.3SG to home | |
| ‘Maria is going home’ | |

The sentences in (38a-b) contain retroherent unaccusative predicates (Rosen 1981[1988], Perlmutter 1989), in which a non-argumental reflexive marker occurs on the verb, due to a purely morpho-syntactic process, while (39) illustrates plain unaccusatives (not requiring the pronominal clitic) by means of Romanian/Italian verbs of similar semantics.

The cases in (37)-(38), however, differ substantially from the Pantiscu pronominal progressive. Firstly, the latter has a clear semantic (aspectual) value, whereas the reflexive clitics in (37)-(38) are semantically void. In fact, although for several Romance languages it has been argued that such clitics correlate with some semantic value – say, ‘externalization of causation’ (Lidz 1995), or ‘focalization of resulting state’ (Jezek 2003a-b) – such analyses are hard to generalize. The examples in (38), for instance, seem to involve neither externalization of causation nor focus on a resulting state. Indeed, the very emergence of suppletive paradigms like (37a-b) provides evidence against analyses of Romance non-argumental reflexive clitics treating them as endowed with semantic content.

Secondly, the Pantiscu pronominal progressive is not subject to any lexical restrictions (thus complying with Bertinetto’s 1990:334 criterion (i), generalizability), in the sense that it is available with all verbal lexemes, provided that the *Aktionsart* requirement illustrated in (22) (the ban on permanent statives) is fulfilled. On the contrary, in the cases exemplified in (37)-(38) – as well as in all comparable Romance examples – the clitic *se/si* combines with a (more or less) restricted set of verbal lexemes in an idiosyncratic way, which seems to hold true for all instances of non-

argumental reflexivization which have been argued to correlate with some (loosely) aspectual semantic value, such as Spanish (*se*) *murió* ‘s/he died’.

Even given these differences though, what comparison with (37)-(38) does show is that one cannot exclude *a priori* that a string consisting of pronominal clitic plus verb may constitute a (verbal) periphrasis, be it gap-filling, as in (37), or not, as in (38) and in the Pantiscu case.

4.1. *The Pantiscu pronominal progressive as a product of grammaticalization*

That the Pantiscu periphrasis is grammaticalized can now be shown by applying standard methodology in grammaticalization theory,¹⁵ as expounded in a handbook introduction such as Heine (2003:577) (following on a long tradition: cf. Meillet 1912, Kuryłowicz 1975, Lehmann 1995 *inter alios*):

“grammaticalization is defined as the development from lexical to grammatical and from grammatical to even more grammatical structures”.

This development is sometimes synthesized in what has been termed the evolutionary cline of grammaticalization (or, in short, the grammaticalization cline):

- (40) The grammaticalization cline (Hopper & Traugott 2003:7):
a. content item > b. grammatical word > c. clitic > d. inflectional affix

Change may affect linguistic elements, displacing them along the cline through four interrelated mechanisms, which I again report in the handbook presentation by Heine (2003:579):

¹⁵ I use this label to refer to studies in the field, while remaining non-committal as to whether or not this is a theory in its own right: see e.g. Joseph (2001:184; 2004), among others, who argues against answers in the positive provided by proponents of “grammaticalization theory”, such as Bybee et al. (1994:4-5).

(41) Four mechanisms for grammaticalization:

- a. desemanticization (or “bleaching”, semantic reduction): loss in meaning content;
- b. extension (or context generalization): use in new contexts;
- c. decategorialization: loss in morphosyntactic properties characteristic of the source forms, including the loss of independent word status (cliticization, affixation);
- d. erosion (or “phonetic reduction”): loss in phonetic substance.

I will now show how these mechanisms allow us to effectively describe the change that yielded the Pantiscu pronominal progressive, and show that these – in turn – require a revision of the grammaticalization cline in (40).

First of all, the part of the cline which is sometimes defined “grammaticalization on the word level” (Askedal 2008:46) need not concern us here, since the change which gave rise to the Pantiscu pronominal progressive did not affect any content word. Its input was already – and has always been – a grammatical word. In fact, Pantiscu subject clitics arose via reanalysis of (homophonous) strong pronouns in the subject position, which can all be traced back to pronouns all along the documented (and, earlier, the reconstructed) history of the relevant language family. Pantiscu 1st singular *jɛ*, for instance, comes from Latin *ego*, which in turn can be traced back to PIE **h₁eǵ-(o)H* ‘I’; 3rd person *'id:zv* is an outcome of (the accusative form *illum*, as shown in (2a) above) of Lat. *ille* ‘that; he’, a Latin innovation that ousted the archaic *olle* ‘that; he’, going back to a (demonstrative) PIE pronoun **h₂ol-no-* ‘that, yonder’ (cf. de Vaan 2008:187, 298, 426), and so on.

The motivation for the reanalysis (full pronoun > syntactic clitic) can be interpreted in different ways: as mentioned in §2, Sgroi (1986:130) proposed that the change was prompted by contact with Arabic, whereas in Loporcaro (2010a) an internal explanation is put forward, in which the trigger context for the reanalysis is located in impersonal constructions (e.g., those involving meteorological predicates). Further illustration of the origin of the Pantiscu progressive construction would exceed the scope of the present paper (since it would entail detailed examination of the textual

evidence from Old Sicilian and comparative evidence from the remaining Sicilian dialects which did not undergo the change) and is unnecessary here, since the input to the grammaticalization (full pronouns) process is self-evident anyway.

For all the cells of the paradigm, except 3rd person singular and plural, the change produced syntactic clitics without resulting in phonological cliticization (cf. §3.3 above). In this case, both the input and the output of the change coexist to this day, as illustrated in (42): (No phonetic difference is observed in connection with the two readings in (42b-c): in particular, it is not the case that (42c) implies destressing of the pronominal form.)

- (42) a. *'nja:tſI can'tf-ɛ:mu*
1PL cry.PRES-1PL
b. strong pronoun + verb = ‘we cry’ or ‘we are crying’ (aspectually unmarked)
c. Ø + subject clitic + verb = ‘we are crying’ (progressive only)

Since Sicilian is a pro-drop language, the string in (42a) is ambiguous between a strong-pronoun analysis (42b) (the original construction) and the subject-clitic analysis (42c), yielding the pronominal progressive characteristic for Pantiscu (the new construction).¹⁶ Thus, the change can be located between stages (40b) and (40c) of the cline. This provides a good illustration of what has been called the overlap model of grammaticalization (Heine 1993:48-53), as clauses involving a syntactic clitic ((42a)) may still be ambiguous, thus instantiating the intermediate overlap stage, whereas clauses where subject clitics have developed special phonological forms (in the 3rd person; see (6)-(15) above) are instances of the final stage of the grammaticalization process, where the ambiguity is resolved.

If we now check this process against the list in (41), we see that the four mechanisms have been at work in Pantiscu. Although the input to the change was not a

¹⁶ According to one anonymous reviewer, “due to the existence of the construction under discussion, where subject clitics are obligatory, Pantiscu is only a partial pro-drop language”. I find it more useful to define the notion of pro drop in terms of the omissibility of argumental full pronouns. Under this definition, varieties displaying subject clitics, like northern Italo-Romance dialects and Pantiscu, still qualify as pro drop.

content item, one can maintain that loss in meaning content ((41a)) took place, provided that content be not defined in strictly lexical-semantic terms. In fact, while a strong pronoun is argumental, and thus refers deictically or – for 3rd persons – anaphorically resumes its antecedent, a subject clitic is non-argumental and hence has none of these properties: in Bickel & Nichols' (2007:§8.1) terms, it is just a grammatical agreement marker, either free (the unreduced forms) or bound (the reduced ones) phonologically.

But even supposing that (41a) was not at work here, the application of mechanisms (41b-d) is undisputable. Prior to the change, the strong pronoun was barred from a series of syntactic contexts (as exemplified above in (16)-(17)) where the subject clitics are now permitted, thus satisfying (41b) (extension). Also decategorialization ((41c)) is observed, by definition, since cliticization took place. Finally, phonetic reduction ((41d)) occurred in the 3rd person progressive markers, which also became clitics phonologically, as shown in §3.1.

A final remark on the content side is that progressive meaning in the Pantiscu periphrasis, does not result compositionally from the meanings of its parts (Bertinetto's 1990:332 criterion (a)), since the verbal form in itself does not convey this aspectual meaning (the imperfect tense does signal imperfective aspect, though not specifically progressive, whereas the present is aspectually unmarked, as shown in (14a)-(15a) above) and neither of course is it conveyed by the pronominal clitic itself. In the central Romance varieties in which they have long been known to occur, subject clitics usually mark the inflectional categories of person, number and gender: Pantiscu is so far the only Romance variety in which subject clitics take on a function which is otherwise fulfilled, cross-linguistically, by other formal devices (verbal affixes, among them: cf. below, (46a)). In a sense, subject clitics may be conceived of as pronominal elements which are located somewhere on the continuum between full independent pronouns, filling an argumental position (as a dependent), and agreement affixes on the verb (as an integral part of the head) (cf. Bossong 1998 for an early proposal in this direction, as well as e.g. Spencer & Luís 2013, mentioned in §3.1 above). In this perspective, one can say that subject clitics normally mark agreement in the features

for which the verb inflects contextually (cf. Booij 1994, 1996), whereas our Pantiscu subject clitics take a further step, marking not only the usual contextual categories but also, cumulatively, an inherent inflectional feature, namely aspect, which is – unlike person/number/gender – a uniquely verbal category.

4.2. *The Pantiscu pronominal progressive and the grammaticalization cline*

Having thus demonstrated that the change which occurred in Pantiscu is an instance of grammaticalization, I will now show that the Pantiscu facts have an interesting fall-out for a much-discussed topic in grammaticalization theory, concerning the cline in (40). Several authors have maintained that there is a substantial difference between (40a-b), on the one hand, and (40b-d), on the other:

“content item to grammatical word is a morphosyntactic and semantic change, while grammatical word to clitic and clitic to affix are primarily phonological changes. The cline [...] should therefore be split in two” (Faarlund 2008:223).¹⁷

This is shown in (43):

(43) The grammaticalization cline (revised, Faarlund 2008:223):

- a. content item > grammatical word
- b. word > clitic > affix

The evidence adduced includes cases such as English *was* vs. *is* (44a-b):

(44) a. *She was dancing*
b. *She's beautiful*

Here, according to Askedal (2008:46-47):

¹⁷ Cf. also Askedal (2008:46) for a similar view ([1]-[4] = (40a-d) here): “The transition [1] > [2] constitutes grammaticalization on the word level, whereas the transitions [2] > [3] and [3] > [4] represent (phonological) developments ‘from grammatical to even more grammatical forms’ (cf. Heine & Kuteva 2002:2)”.

“[o]ne cannot [...] reasonably maintain that the English progressive auxiliary *was* in (2a) [reproduced as (44a) here, M.L.] is less ‘grammatical’ than the present tense copula ‘*s* (*is*) in (2b) [= (44b) here, M.L.], which is cliticized”.

This is probably true. Yet, what it shows is that purely phonological (as opposed to syntactic) cliticization is in itself irrelevant to grammaticalization.¹⁸ Thus, in order to establish the evidence for determining the most appropriate form of the grammaticalization cline, one must be careful to exclude cases such as (44b), and include instead cases like the Pantiscu change from (42b) to (42c). This change (from pronoun to syntactic clitic) is clearly an instance of grammaticalization, and does not entail any phonological modification. Indeed, several scholars have maintained that phonetic erosion (41d) has to be expunged altogether from the list of the “mechanisms” or diagnostic traits of grammaticalization in (41): see e.g. Campbell’s (2001:122-124) critique of Bybee et al. (1994:21), Haspelmath (1999:1050) and other authors who assume necessary covariation between form and meaning in grammaticalization (or even regard phonetic erosion as definitional of grammaticalization, Haspelmath 1998). For Campbell (2001:123) “phonological reduction often follows grammaticalization (sometimes only after a very long time interval) precisely and mostly only because it is then that the conditions favorable to the sound changes which result in phonological reduction first come about.” Along similar lines, Newmeyer (2001:199) argues that “the erosion associated with reanalysis may simply be a least-effort response having nothing to do with grammaticalization

¹⁸ English reduced auxiliaries are an instance of purely phonological clitics (or “simple clitics”, in Zwicky’s 1977:5-6 terms), whose behaviour “depends only indirectly on syntactic form, and only to the extent this is a significant determinant of prosodic form” (Anderson 2005:72). Other cases in point are the English clitic variants of the object personal pronouns (e.g. *we fed him/’im* [wi fed m̩], cf. Nevis 2000:393) and, at least under some analyses (e.g. Rizzi 1986), Standard French subject pronouns as in *il/elle parle* ‘he/she speaks’ (cf. the conclusion of §3.1 above).

per se”, an epiphenomenal response on other factors such as the increased frequency of use of the items being grammaticalized, in turn ultimately explicable by Zipf’s law.

The synchronic facet of this view is the separation of phonological and syntax criteria in Bickel & Nichols’ (2005, 2007) treatment of inflectional synthesis: in their terms, Pantiscu *'nja:t̪si* in (42a) (given the reading (42c)) and any other phonologically unreduced pronominal progressive marker would qualify as a free formative, and grammaticalization can thus be viewed as the change through which such a free formative originated from a free word (the full pronoun) (in reading (42b)). Phonological change from free to bound formative (i.e. *'id:zv* > *d:zv*) may then cumulate to, but is logically independent from, grammaticalization.

Thus, if (42b) > (42c) is an instance of grammaticalization in the absence of phonetic erosion, this provides counter-evidence to the split proposed in (43) and suggests that the cline should be refined through the insertion of the syntactic vs. phonological clitic distinction, as shown in (45):¹⁹

- (45) The grammaticalization cline (revised, M.L.):
- a. content item > b. grammatical word > c. syntactic clitic >
 - d. syntactic and phonological clitic > e. inflectional affix

While the distinction between stages (45c) and (45d) must not be obligatorily assumed for all instances of cliticization involved in grammaticalization processes (in the absence of evidence for purely syntactic cliticization), the analysis of grammaticalization of the Pantiscu pronominal progressive does require this distinction. Such a distinction is in keeping with Schiering’s (2010:85) recent study of cliticization, which concludes that “cliticization is not universally accompanied by erosion”. Schiering’s rhythm-based approach to cliticization shows that phonological reduction tends to accompany cliticization, especially in languages with strong

¹⁹ Note that stage (45d) (“syntactic and phonological clitic”) must be necessarily labelled this way: had I just mentioned phonological cliticization, this would not have conveyed the intended idea, given the existence of phonological clitics which are not syntactically clitics (see fn. 18).

segmental effects of stress (like German), and is thus sensitive to rhythm type, rather than a universal concomitant of cliticization processes. Note, however, that rhythm is not an absolute requirement either, as Pantiscu must have developed its phonological progressive clitics fairly recently (cf. §1 and fn. 1), in a phase in which this dialect, like all of Sicilian (cf. Schmid 1997:262), is syllable-timed. Yet, the existence of Romance clitics in itself may have something to do with a general prosodic change: the rise of the whole system of pronominal (object) clitics is, in fact, a major innovation distinguishing Proto-Romance from Classical Latin, and there are independent reasons (from resyllabification, syncope etc.) to believe that “Proto-Romance [...] might have shifted [...] towards the stress-timed pole.” (Loporcaro 2011:107).

Once the cline has been revised as in (45), it becomes apparent that it cannot be neatly split into a purely grammatical and a purely phonological part, since the transition from word to clitic may involve a merely grammatical (i.e. non-phonological) change.²⁰ More generally, this boils down to the conclusion that, in grammaticalization processes, changes in grammar and phonology may indeed be intertwined along the cline, so that the split in (43) is an unwarranted oversimplification.²¹

5. *Cross-linguistic comparison*

5.1. *The expression of progressive meaning*

Let us finally move on to place the Pantiscu facts into a cross-linguistic perspective. As a starting point, it can be observed that the inventory of strategies for

²⁰ Of course, once the distinction is introduced into the cline, in principle it becomes possible that in language change, the two manifestations of cliticization occur in the opposite order, so that phonological cliticization precedes – and thus may occur independently from (cf. fn. 18) – syntactic cliticization. In this case, as argued above, the first step (phonological cliticization) is per se not (yet) a symptom of grammaticalization.

²¹ Alternatively, one could espouse the position defended by e.g. Campbell (2001), Newmeyer (2001) (see above) and say that the cline must exclude any reference to the phonology. Either solution fares better than Askedal’s (2008) and Faarlund’s (2008) split between a purely grammatical and a purely phonological part of the grammaticalization cline.

progressive marking in the languages of Europe produced by Bertinetto *et al.* (2000) (see (46)) does not report any parallels, and the same can be repeated for cross-linguistic surveys like Blansitt's (1975), Bybee's *et al.* (1994:125ff):

- (46) No parallels in the languages of Europe: Bertinetto *et al.* (2000)
- a. affixal progressive marker
 - b. complex verb phrases as progressive signals:
 - i. verb phrases with a copula as auxiliary
 - ii. verb phrases with a motion or postural verb as auxiliary
 - iii. verb phrases with a pro-predicate (*do*-type) as auxiliary
 - iv. verb phrases with a special progressive auxiliary verb
 - c. other strategies:
 - i. particles
 - ii. word order

Clearly, the Pantiscu pronominal progressive construction is not an instance of affixal progressive marking ((46a)), of the kind represented, within Europe, only by Turkish:

- (47) *çalışı-yor-du*
work-PROG-PST[3SG]
's/he was working'

True, under many accounts, (central Romance) subject clitics are represented as verbal affixes.²² Yet, there is a patent difference between the Turkish case and the pronominal paradigm of syntactic (and, for the 3rd person, phonological) clitics described in §2 for Pantiscu, so that it does not seem desirable to just equate the

²² This may follow from different, indeed quite opposite, theoretical stances: in the functional-typological approach, Bickel & Nichols (2007:§8.1) are a case in point (cf. fn. 5). In generative syntax, under generalized verb movement (Pollock 1989, Belletti 1991), both (subject) clitics and verbal affixes are structurally represented as base-generated in INFL (cf. e.g. Culbertson 2010); likewise, under other generative analyses, which do assume a distinction between morphology and morphosyntax, clitics are claimed to be just another kind of verbal affix (cf. e.g. Auger 1995, Cummins & Roberge 1994). Be that as it may, all these kinds of approaches would equate Pantiscu *d:zu*, *d:za*, *d:zI* with the Turkish progressive affix *-yor-*.

Pantiscu pronominal progressive with strategies for progressive formation involving affixal verbal inflection (e.g. prefixation, like in Arabic dialects, cf. e.g. Durand 1996:136-137) or other morphological strategies such as reduplication – partial (cf. e.g. Frajzyngier 2002a:317 on Hdi, Chadic) or total (cf. e.g. Crowley 1990:12, Siegel 2008:188 on Solomons Pijin). Rather, as argued above, Pantiscu *džu 'cɔ:vi* ‘it's raining’ must be regarded as a grammaticalized periphrasis.

Once this is established, Pantiscu stands out in that its pronominal progressive does not involve an auxiliary verb, thus departing from the cross-linguistically well-documented case mentioned in (46b). Clearly, it does not involve a particle either ((46c-i)), of the kind occurring e.g. in Albanian:

- (48) *unē po lex-oj*
1SG PROG read-PRES.1SG
'I am reading'

Particles are invariable. On the contrary, though non-argumental (as shown in §3.1), the forms which in Pantiscu determine progressive reading are not only pronominal in origin, but also retain a pronominal formal structure, in that they show person, number and – for 3rd person – gender agreement with the subject, like other personal pronouns.

Furthermore, although Pantiscu subject clitics have a fixed order (with respect to verb, negation and other clitics, as illustrated in §3.4), neither can the progressive construction they enter be compared with word-order strategies for aspect marking (mentioned for the progressive in Bertinetto et al.'s 2000 inventory in (46c-ii)), as exemplified in (49) with Moru (Sudanic), where indicative clauses have SVO order if aspectually perfective, as opposed to SOV if imperfective (cf. Anderson 1994:236):

- (49) a. *kɔkè sī mātɛ*
dog bite 1SG COMPLETIVE
'the dog bit me'
b. *kɔkè ká mā ð-sī*
dog 3.IMPF 1SG IMPF-bite
'the dog is biting me'

To round up the inventory in (46), one can still mention locative expressions – either involving a postural auxiliary verb ((46b-ii)) or case-marked/prepositional/postpositional locative phrases – which are also a widespread device for the encoding of the progressive (e.g. Fr. *être en train de travailler*, German *am Arbeiten sein*), as exemplified with Chinese (*zhèng*) *zài* in (50a-b) (cf. Comrie 1981:101, 128, Egerod 1994:298-303, Soh 2008:395):²³

- (50) a. *tā zài kàn bào*
3MSG (be-)in read newspaper
'he's reading the newspaper'
- b. *tā zhèng zài yòng zhe wǒ de máobine*
3MSG just (be-)in use PROG 1sg REL brush
'he's using my brush right now'
- c. *wǒ chī zhe fān*
1SG eat3 PROG rice
'I'm eating'

As seen in (50b), *zài* '(be) in' may also co-occur with the other progressive marker *zhe* (cf. (50c)). Obviously, this is not comparable with the Pantiscu pronominal progressive, just like all the strategies listed in (46).

5.2. Aspect marking involving pronominal expressions

We now move on to consider other cases of aspect-marking devices, not occurring in the languages of Europe, which in some way involve pronominal forms. There are languages in which the locus for aspect-marking (though not specifically progressive marking) includes a pronominal expression, like in the 'person-aspect complex' of Hausa (Jaggar 2001:148):

²³ The list of languages which employ a locative expression for the progressive is long and genetically disparate (cf. Bybee et al. 1994:128).

- (51) a. *su-nā zuwā masāllaci kllum*
3PL-IPFV go mosque all the time
'they go to the mosque all the time'
- b. *Audu Ø-nā zuwā masāllaci kllum*
Audu IPFV go mosque all the time
'Audu goes to the mosque all the time'

Note however that in Hausa, the pronoun that appears conglobated with the aspect marker in (51a) disappears as soon as a full NP is inserted, as in (51b). This means that it is not (the occurrence of) the pronoun itself that correlates with aspectual meaning.

In several languages of the Nilo-Saharan family – one example is Lulubo (Sudanic) in (52) – one finds specific forms of subject prefixes for perfective vs. imperfective:²⁴

- (52) *ጀ-nā* vs. *kጀ-ná*
3.PFV-eat 3.IPFV-eat
'he has eaten' 'he's eating'

But while "the two aspects are characterized by segmentally distinct sets of subject prefixes" (Anderson 1994:248), it is not the case that the plain *addition* of a pronominal form to the verb (i.e. its commutation with zero) marks aspect (nor, specifically, progressive) like in Pantiscu.

Cases in which the expression of verbal aspect is (syntagmatically) connected with pronominal elements occur among the languages of Australia too. In Warlpiri (a Pama-Nyungan language), subject (as well as object) clitics cliticize to the aspect marker to form an 'auxiliary cluster' (data from O'Shanessy 2005:37; cf. also Hale et al. 1995):²⁵

²⁴ Other Chadic languages feature several distinct series of 'person-aspects markers': cf. e.g. Burquest (1986:73-78) on the pronominal systems of Angas, Sura, Margi and Podoko.

²⁵ Similarly, in Xerente (a Jê language spoken in Goias, Brazil), the subject pronoun set "is not affixed to the verb but forms a unit with the aspect-intensity morphemes" (Wiesemann 1986b:364).

- (53) *ngarrka-patu-rlu ka-lu-jana karnta-patu nya-nyi*
man-PL-ERG IPFV-3PL-3PL woman-PL see-NPST
‘the men see the women’

As said at the end of §4.1, one might want to consider Pantiscu progressive pronominal clitics as cumulative exponents of aspect and person/number/gender, so that the difference with respect to Warlpiri – as Balthasar Bickel points out to me – would reduce to “cumulative vs separative exponence of categories”. Still, a further difference with respect to systems in which pronominal and aspectual features are systematically co-expressed (cumulatively or not), is that in Pantiscu, it is just *one* aspectual value (progressive) that, as a product of the grammaticalization process discussed in §4, participates in this cumulative exponence.

Progressive is crucially involved in the following examples, from Gurindji-Kriol, a mixed language of northern Australia combining elements from aboriginal Gurindji and the English-based creole Kriol. In this language, aspectual value is signalled by adding a mark on the pronoun as well as on the verb (cf. McConvell & Meakins 2005, Meakins 2009):

- (54) a. *i tok*
3SG speak
‘he speaks’
b. *i-m tok-in*
3SG-PROG speak-PROG
‘he’s speaking’

A case in which addition of pronominal elements arguably induces a modification in the aspectual reading of the verbal predicate – though again, not involving progressive – has been described for some Chadic languages of the West and Biu-Mandara branches (cf. Frajzyngier 1977:119-120). These languages display what have been called “intransitive copy pronouns”, which in Pero (the language focussed on primarily in that study) can be added either to intransitive predicates ((55a)) or to intrinsically transitive ones ((56a)), provided that the direct object is not realized. In

the former case, they act as detransitivizers ((55b)), whereas in the latter ((56b)) they signal a change from stative to inchoative (ICP = ‘intransitive copy pronoun’):

- (55) a. *yé dígè icc-aáni*
inside pot dry-STAT
‘the pot is dry’
b. *yé dígè iccé-k-ée-tò*
inside pot dry-PERF-ICP(3F)
‘the pot dried’

- (56) a. *nì bélò-kò jírè vúró-ì*
1SG break-PERF branch tree-PERF
‘I broke the branch off the tree’
b. *jók bél-k-ée-tò*
chair break-PERF-ICP(3F)
‘the chair got broken’

Detransitivization concerns voice rather than aspect, and the non-occurrence of ICPs in transitive clauses makes them differ from Pantiscu progressive subject clitics, which are unconstrained in this respect, as shown in (26). The semantics also differs: Frajzyngier (2011) argues that the function of Chadic ICPs is to code the point of view of the subject. Thus, the reason for mentioning ICPs in the present context, is their occurrence in (55b), where their addition to the intransitive predicate results in an aspectual modification, admittedly a rather limited similarity.

6. Conclusion

To conclude, what I have come up with in the preceding section is an inventory of cases in which the pronominal expression in some way relates, syntagmatically or paradigmatically, to the marking of aspect. However, in none of the languages reviewed here, could we observe any grammatical construction matching the Pantiscu pronominal progressive as to both form and function. In other words, it never seems to be the case that a grammatical form conveying progressive meaning is derived by just adding a pronoun to the verb form. Thus, judging from the descriptions and typological studies available to date, it seems fair to conclude that there is no close parallel to the

Pantiscu subject clitic pronominal progressive described in this paper, which consequently deserves the qualification of ‘new’ assigned to it in the title.

This construction, I have also argued, provides an argument which can be used to refine the grammaticalization cline and to refute recent proposals that split it into a purely grammatical and a purely phonological part (cf. Askedal 2008:46-47, Faarlund 2008:223). Rather, the traditional cline should be maintained, and further specified by building the syntactic vs. phonological clitic contrast into it, as shown in (45).

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