Structural deficiency across phases: oblique pronouns in Old Tuscan varieties.
Silvia Rossi (Università Ca' Foscari Venezia) – Jacopo Garzonio (Università di Padova)

1. In this paper we take into exam the syntactic microvariation in the distribution of deficient pronouns (Cardinaletti & Starke 1999, henceforth C&S) in the history of Italo-Romance, in particular in Old Tuscan varieties. Our main goal is to understand if structural deficiency is subject to a predictable parametric variation. Our analysis shows that there seems to be a cline from parameters pertaining to individual classes or categories to parameters pertaining to single lexical items. In other words, the history of Italian deficient oblique pronouns shows a clear diachronic shift from micro- to nano-parameters (Roberts 2012 and subsequent work). Moreover, we will argue that the trigger of this shift is originally dependent on the interaction of macro-parameters (like V2 across phases, Poletto 2014) and that the weak/clitic divide shows no fixed distinguishing properties but is a by-product of changing parameters (hence individual deficient forms will show some core properties with some slightly different distributions).

2. Starting point of our discussion is the Modern Italian (MI) oblique plural *loro*, which C&S consider a prototypical case of weak pronoun. MI oblique *loro* presents peculiar properties in that: (i) it must occur before a full-DP direct object (Dative Shift like position); (ii) it can surface between the auxiliary and the past participle; (iii) it precedes low/Voice adverbs like *bene* 'well' and *tutto* 'completely' (Cinque 1999); (iv) it cannot be coordinated, modified or topicalized/focalized. While (iv) is also true of clitics, properties (i)-(iii) are specific for *loro* and are accounted for by C&S by assuming that *loro* obligatorily occupies the specifier of an AgrP projection as a consequence of its pertaining to the universal category of mildly structurally-deficient pronouns, i. e. weak (but see Manzini 2014 for a critical discussion).

3. In Old Florentine (OFlor.), the oblique weak paradigm included forms for other persons: there are instances of 3rd singular *lui/lei* 'to.him/to.her' patterning like plural *loro* (Cardinaletti 2010: 421ff. also reports a few cases of 1st singular *me* 'to.me' and 2nd plural *vo'* 'to.you' but these are probably relics of a previous extended paradigm). These elements occurred in the same positions as MI *loro*, but they also had positional possibilities no longer available in MI: (i) they could appear before the tensed verb (1a), and (ii) they could appear after a direct object, (1b):

(1)   a. … che Dio era padre de' poveri, e **loro** ha donato podere delli altri giudicare.
            … that God was father of.the poor and to.them has given power of.the other to.judge
          OFlor., 1310; Zucchero Benivenni, *Esposizione del Paternostro*, 27).
        b. Allora dissi queste parole *loro*…
            Then said.1sg these word to.them
          (OFlor., 1293; Dante Alighieri, *Vita Nuova*, chap. 18, par. 1-9, pag. 69)

Pre-T *loro* occupies a position in the Left Periphery as we find cases of *sì loro*:

(2)   Allor la donna, come ch'e' le piaccia // Udir quelle parole, **sì lor** dica
        Then the woman, how that it to.her pleasant.is to.hear these words, *sì* to.them say
        (OFlor., 1300; Dante Alighieri, *Fiore (II)*, 176, pag. 354)

Following Benincà (2006), *sì* 'then' is an adverb hosted in the Focus field; it must be concluded from (2) that pre-T *loro* is in the Left Periphery.

        Whatever the parameter governing this distribution, it is clear that in OFlor it was a microparameter of a small lexically definable subclass of functional items (oblique pronominals) subsequently reduced in the passage to MI to a nanoparameter of an individual grammatical item (3rd pl oblique *loro*). Furthermore, we will argue that the distribution in (1) can be accounted for by assuming that these items satisfy the V2 property of OFlor. in both the lower and the higher phases (Poletto 2014). This entails that these elements were generated in the lower clausal portion and then moved to the Left Peripheries as XPs (as expected under C&S's tripartition).

4. On the basis of this preliminary discussion, one could conclude that OFlor *loro* is a weak with some strong-like properties. Thus, it is striking that *loro* could also display some clitic-like properties, as for instance it could also appear after negation:

(3)   ed elli medesimi si piglieranno luogo e tempo di combattere, se voi non *loro* lo date.
        And they themselves will.take place and time of to.fight, if you not to.them it give.2pl
        (OFlor., 1350, *Deca prima di Tito Livio Volgarizzata,* L. 7, cap. 14, pag. b169)

Moreover, there is at least one case (in Old Pisan) in which *loro* looks like a resumptive pronoun of a dislocated topic (a possibility not available to MI *loro*):

(4)   A tutte le creature hae Idio data **loro** virtù e sufficienzia di potere venire…
        (OPis., 1306; Giordano da Pisa, *Quaresimale fiorentino (1305-1306),* 60, 297)

(Notice that in Giordano da Pisa's text, possessive *loro* is normally postnominal and when prenominal it very often requies a D).

5. Some Southern Old Tuscan varieties like Old Sienese (OSien) furthermore present also a clitic *lo'* derived from *loro*. Egerland (2010) determines the clitic status of *lo'* as it patterns like other clitics: (i) *lo'* appears proclitically or enclitically according to finiteness of the verb (and it is subject to the Tobler-Mussafia's Law); (ii) it forms clitic clusters, usually with the modern order dat > acc; (iii) it always follows negation; (iv) we found also cases of reduced *l'* before tensed verbs and auxiliaries beginning with a vowel. Yet again, *lo'* also displays few weak-like properties in that it does not appear to give rise to PCC effects and it could appear proclitically on non-finite verbs when preceded by negation:

(5)   a. Cristo mai non **me lo'** parta dall'anima.
           Christ never not me to.them take.away from.the soul
           (OSien., 1367; Giovanni Colombini, *Lettere,* 28)
        b. altri crede che gli debbia esser fatta alcuna cosa non **lo'** domandata
           others believe that to.him has to.be done any thing not to.them asked
        (1268; Andrea da Grosseto, *Trattati morali di Albertano da Brescia volgarizzati,* 2.49)

6. Thus, the empirical evidence in the above sections indicate that the clitic/weak divide is rather blurry in Old Tuscan. It seems however that there was a clear and early tendency to reaccomodate these items according to a systematic and predictable (and thus more easily learnable) strong vs. deficient partition: deficient elements have to occur in the higher phase (i. e. in the C/T domain), while strong pronouns have to occur in the lower lexical phase (i. e. the v/V domain). In a nutshell: the more deficient a pronoun, the higher it surfaces in the sentence structure. In more general terms, we will argue that this reaccomodation is a direct consequence of the resetting (loss) of a generalized V2 macro-parameter which triggers the subsequent resetting of related micro-parameters, some of which may eventually survive as nanoparameters. This is confirmed among other things, by the fact that in 15th cent. Florentine, CP V2 was marginal and pre-T oblique *loro* is never attested (Ricci 2005).

As a final remark, the present study lends support to the idea that major linguistic changes are not always the product of the sum of small steps (*pace* Kayne 1996), but rather, microvariation arises from the resetting of small parameters following a 'great leap' (Ledgeway to appear), i. e. a macro-parametric change.

Selected references. CARDINALETTI, A. (2010). "Il pronome personale obliquo", in: L. Renzi & G. Salvi (eds.), *Grammatica dell'italiano antico,* vol. 1, chap.11 par. 2, 414-450. Bologna: Il Mulino; EGERLAND, V. (2010), "I pronomi *lo'* e '*ro* nel toscano dei primi secoli", *L'Italia Dialettale*, 71: 111-145. LEDGEWAY, A. (to appear). 'From Latin to Romance syntax: the great leap', in P. Crisma & G. Longobardi (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Diachronic and Historical Linguistics,* Oxford: OUP; MANZINI, M. R. (2014). "Grammatical categories. Strong and weak pronouns in Romance". *Lingua* 150: 181-201; RICCI, A. (2005). *Mercanti Scriventi. Sintassi e testualità di alcuni libri di famiglia fiorentini fra Tre e Quattrocento.* Roma: Aracne.