

Manuscript title:
Intervention effects in Czech clitic climbing

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1 Introduction

Czech has a number of short, clitic-like elements that tend to appear together in a cluster after the first element of a sentence—thus known as “second position clitics”. Under certain circumstances, clitics associated with the argument structure of an embedded clause can instead appear in the matrix clause, a phenomenon known as *clitic climbing*.

Previous work on Czech clitic climbing has shown limitations on clitic climbing out of infinitival complements of object control verbs (Rosen, 2001; Lenertová, 2004; Rezac, 2005; Hana, 2007). After a brief overview of Czech clitics in Section 2, I discuss empirical evidence clarifying these restrictions. I provide new evidence for a contrast between monoclausal and biclausal structures: within a single TP, clitics may cross one another in moving from their merged position to the clitic cluster (Section 3), but in object control constructions, clitics usually cannot climb if they would have to cross over the controller to do so (Section 4).

In Section 5, I account for these generalizations with a clitic probe containing a novel mechanism: a nested case hierarchy (Caha, 2009) that interacts with a DP by successively shedding layers until matching its case. If the probe reaches a DP in the wrong order, it will have already discarded the layer required to match it. This analysis explains both the standard clitic order and case-based intervention effects in object control sentences. I derive the contrast between monoclausal sentences and object control sentences from the fact that clitics may scramble (and thus reorder themselves to match the required hierarchy), but only within a TP. I then provide an overview of my account’s predictions and discuss outstanding issues. Section 6 concludes with additional paths for future research.

2 Background

Before discussing the details of clitic climbing, I present my basic assumptions about the position and behavior of clitics.

2.1 Clitics come “second”

In (1) we see that the clitics (emphasized here) can appear after the main verb, as in (1-a), or a phrase, like the adverb in (1-b):

- 1 (1) a. Omluvil **jsem se mu**.
 apologized PST.1SG REFL.ACC him.DAT
 2 'I apologized to him.'
- 3 b. Včera **jsem se mu** omluvil.
 yesterday PST.1SG REFL.ACC him.DAT apologized
 4 'Yesterday I apologized to him.' (cf. Fried, 1994, 170)

5 The examples in (1) show members of the clitic cluster in their canonical order: first
 6 come auxiliaries like *jsem*, followed by the accusative *se* and dative *si* reflexive cli-
 7 tics, then pronominal clitics, with dative clitics like *mu* preceding accusative and, more
 8 rarely, genitive clitics.

9 Clitics can sometimes follow two elements, like a complementizer and a contrastive
 10 or non-contrastive topic (Lenertová, 2004; Sturgeon, 2008; Kaspar, 2016). I assume that
 11 clitics are always in the same place, and other things can vary around them.

12 2.2 Clitics are in the specifier of CliticP

13 Following earlier accounts (e.g. Toman, 1999; Lenertová, 2004), I assume that clitics
 14 occupy a set position in the lower left periphery. In main clauses, clitics usually end
 15 up in second position because of an EPP feature that attracts an element to a pre-clitic
 16 projection—which I, in line with these previous accounts, identify as Fin, also the site
 17 of auxiliary clitics. The EPP feature is satisfied by movement of a phrase (like *včera* in
 18 (1-b)) or, if no phrase is available, by head movement of the inflected verb to Fin, as in
 19 (1-a) (Alexiadou & Anagnostopoulou, 1998; Lenertová, 2004; Sturgeon, 2008).

20 I assume Theory A of Toman (1999): clitics are base-generated and move to specifiers
 21 of a clitic projection. Unlike Dotlačil (2007), I assume that clitics are DPs that have some
 22 syntactic deficiency. This deficiency is *not* the ability to receive case: as I show in
 23 Section 3, clitic movement is not case assignment (contra Rezac, 2005). While Toman
 24 (1999) assumes a series of projections—RefIP for reflexive clitics, $K_{dat}P$ for dative clitics,
 25 etc. (see also Ciucivara, 2009)—I place all clitics in successive specifiers of a single
 26 projection, CliticP.

27 2.3 Clitics can climb out of TP, but not CP

28 Certain embedded clauses allow arguments originating within them to “climb” out of
 29 them, cliticizing in second position of the matrix clause. Clitics cannot climb out of finite
 30 embedded clauses or *wh*-infinitives (Lenertová, 2004; Rezac, 2005; Dotlačil, 2007).¹ For
 31 example, when the verb *chtít* ‘want’ (first singular *chci*) acts as a subject control verb

¹Lenertová (2004, fn. 22) discusses an apparent counterexample of clitics climbing out of a certain type of *wh*-infinitive with modal meaning. Šimík (2011) argues that this construction is smaller than a CP in Czech.

1 embedding an infinitive (cf. [Rezac, 2005](#)), the reflexive clitic associated with the verb
 2 *soustředit se* ‘focus’ can climb ((2-a)). However, when it embeds a conditional headed by
 3 a conditional complementizer and an inflected verb ((2-b)), the clitic cannot climb.

- 4 (2) a. Ted’ *se* chci [soustředit hlavně na hokej].
 now REFL.ACC want.1SG focus.INF mainly on hockey
 5 ‘Now I want to focus mainly on hockey.’ (SYNV11)²
- 6 b. Ted’ {**se*} chci, [aby {*se*} soustředil hlavně na
 now REFL.ACC want.1SG that.COND.3SG REFL.ACC focus mainly on
 7 hokej].
 hockey
 8 ‘Now I want him to focus mainly on hockey.’

9 [Dotlačil \(2004\)](#) shows, contra [Lenertová \(2004\)](#) and [Rezac \(2005\)](#), that clitics can climb
 10 out of infinitives with syntactic subjects (that is, PRO). One of his diagnostics for PRO
 11 is partial control ([Landau, 1999](#)), where the subject of the embedded verb includes, but
 12 is larger than, the matrix subject. In (3), the matrix subject *Pavel* cannot be the subject
 13 of the infinitive *líbat se* ‘kiss’, where the reflexive clitic *se* has a reciprocal meaning. This
 14 reading requires a subject coindexed with *Pavel* and some other individual(s), hence
 15 the index *i+* (otherwise the reading is reflexive: ‘Pavel kissed himself’). This PRO does
 16 not block climbing of the reflexive clitic *se* to the matrix clause.

- 17 (3) Pavel_{*i*} *se* ne-chtěl [líbat PRO_{*i+*} v knihovně].
 Pavel REFL.ACC NEG-wanted kiss.INF PRO_{*i+*} in library
 18 ‘Pavel did not want to kiss [someone else] in the library.’ ([Dotlačil, 2004, 92](#))

19 I thus assume that clitic climbing is blocked by a CP boundary, and that embedded
 20 infinitives with PRO can be TPs out of which clitics may climb.

21 2.4 Summary

22 I assume that Czech pronominal clitics are merged like other DPs and cluster together
 23 in multiple specifiers of a single dedicated CliticP projection. Their “second position”
 24 derives from being in CliticP just below Fin, an EPP head that attracts an element to its
 25 specifier (or, sometimes, its head). Clitics originating in embedded clauses can climb
 26 into matrix clauses, but climbing is blocked by a CP boundary.

27 3 Clitic movement is free in monoclausal constructions

28 The next two sections discuss mismatches between the relative order of clitics in their
 29 merged position and their surface position. In this section, I show that, within a

²This note marks examples taken from the Czech National Corpus’s SYNV11 corpus ([Křen et al., 2022](#)).

1 TP, the only restriction on pronominal clitics is their surface order (reflexive–dative–
 2 genitive/accusative). Otherwise, cliticization is quite unrestricted: two pronouns may
 3 reverse their merged order (that is, one may cross over another) when needed to satisfy
 4 this order, and pronouns may cliticize no matter the source of their case—arguments
 5 with non-structural case can be clitics, as can pronouns that are merged within an
 6 argument DP and are thus not arguments. In Section 4, I show that this relative free-
 7 dom contrasts with a restriction on clitic climbing in object control sentences: pronouns
 8 merged in a lower TP usually cannot climb into the matrix clause across a matrix DP.

9 [Rezac \(2005\)](#) attributes the limitations discussed in Section 4 to the fact that clitic
 10 movement is intimately tied to case assignment. However, his account predicts that
 11 clitic movement within a TP should also be more limited: first, clitic movement should
 12 respect the merged order of clitics, and second, arguments with non-structural case
 13 should not cliticize. This section shows that neither prediction is correct, raising the
 14 need for a different explanation of the data in Section 4. My account of these restrictions,
 15 in which clitic movement is separate from case assignment, is presented in Section 5.

16 3.1 ACC-ACC ditransitives: non-structural accusative can cliticize

17 There are a handful of verbs, chiefly *učít* ‘teach’, that take two accusatives. [Rezac \(2005\)](#)
 18 shows that the first accusative (the person being taught) is structural, while the second
 19 accusative (the object of study) is non-structural. This non-structural argument can
 20 cliticize, both with ditransitive *učít* ‘teach’ and its reflexivized form, *učít se* ‘learn’:

21 (4) Učím **se** **ho** celý život, učím **ho** studenty.
 22 teach.1SG REFL.ACC it.ACC whole life teach.1SG it.ACC students.ACC
 ‘I’ve been learning it my whole life, I teach it to students.’ (SYNV11)

23 [Rezac \(2005\)](#) judges a sentence similar to (4), in which the second accusative cliticizes
 24 but the first does not, to be ungrammatical; he uses this to argue that arguments with
 25 non-structural case *cannot* cliticize. However, [Hana \(2007\)](#) considers it grammatical for
 26 both arguments to cliticize (preferring for the structural accusative to come first). I take
 27 this latter judgement, and sentences like (4), as evidence that [Rezac \(2005\)](#) is mistaken
 28 and that (for many speakers, at least) non-structural accusatives can cliticize.

29 3.2 ACC-DAT ditransitives: non-structural dative can cliticize and 30 cross over structural accusative

31 [Dvořák \(2010\)](#) shows that Czech has two types of ditransitive: first, standard dative–
 32 accusative verbs including benefactives, which she analyzes with an accusative merged

1 in VP and a dative merged in a higher applicative projection; and second, accusative–
2 dative verbs, where the dative is the object of a null preposition below the accusative.

3 The dative argument of accusative–dative verbs like *svěřit* ‘entrust’ is thus non-
4 structural, but it can still cliticize, as shown in (5). Moreover, when both arguments
5 cliticize as in (5), the dative must cross over the accusative, since the latter is merged at
6 a higher position.

- 7 (5) Soud **mu** **ho** svěřil loni 25. května.
court him.DAT him.ACC entrusted last year 25th May
8 ‘The court entrusted him [the child] to him last year on May 25.’ (SYNV11)

9 The dative argument in accusative–dative verbs like *podřídít* ‘subordinate’ can be reflex-
10 ived, as shown in (6). Reflexive clitics precede accusatives, so reflexive datives in these
11 verbs must cross over accusatives to cliticize, under the assumption (which I adopt) that
12 reflexive clitics originate in the same position as non-reflexive internal arguments.³

- 13 (6) ‘And what’s more, I’m taking the route of befriending my dog rather ...’
14 než **si** **ho** za každou cenu podřídít.
than REFL.DAT him.ACC for any price subordinate.INF
15 ‘than subordinating him to myself at any cost.’ (SYNV11)

16 The ability of the non-structural dative to cliticize contrasts with the behavior of an
17 analogous class of accusative–dative ditransitives in Icelandic, which do not undergo
18 certain types of A-movement like Object Shift (Holmberg & Platzack, 1995)—again,
19 suggesting that clitic movement is less restricted than case assignment in the A-system.

20 3.3 DAT-ACC ditransitives: reflexive accusative can cliticize and cross 21 over dative

22 If reflexive clitics originate in the same position as internal arguments, as assumed
23 in Section 3.2, the dative–accusative ditransitives discussed in Dvořák (2010) provide
24 another example of clitic order reversing merged order. In these verbs, the accusative
25 argument is merged below the dative argument, so a reflexive accusative would have
26 to cross over the dative to occupy its position in the cluster preceding the dative. This
27 is shown in (7) for *věnovat se* ‘devote oneself, pay attention (to)’, the reflexive form of
28 the dative–accusative verb *věnovat* ‘devote’.

³See Medová (2009, c. 3–5) for an overview of theories of reflexive clitics, focusing on Romance and Slavic. In her account, adapted from Kayne (1986) and Alboiu et al. (2004), reflexive clitics in true reflexive constructions are associated with the merged position of internal arguments, so the examples presented in this section still constitute reversal of merged order. By contrast, in the account of Kayne (1986), the merged order of reflexive clitics always precedes that of verbal arguments and the examples presented here do not constitute reversals of merged order.

- 1 (7) Justýna **se mu** však ne-věnovala tak, jak by rád
 Justýna REFL.ACC him.DAT however NEG-devoted thus like COND.3SG happy.M.SG
 2 ‘Justýna, however, was not paying attention to him as he would have liked’
 3 (SYNV11)

4 This class of ditransitives thus provides further evidence that clitics can be reordered
 5 from their merged position.

6 3.4 Numerals: non-argument genitives can cliticize, datives and re- 7 flexives can cross over them to cliticize

8 Genitive clitics, which are somewhat marginal, are positioned after datives. These can
 9 arise from a few verbs that take genitive arguments or, more commonly, as complements
 10 to certain quantifiers, mostly numerals five or greater (Rezác, 2005):

- 11 (8) Včera jsem **jich** šel [koupit pět].
 yesterday PST.1SG them.GEN went buy.INF five
 12 ‘Yesterday I went to buy five of them.’ (Rezác, 2005, 130)

13 The genitive clitic in (8) is not a verbal argument. This is unexpected if cliticization is
 14 limited to arguments with structural case, as acknowledged by Rezác (2005).

15 Pronominal objects of numeral constructions may cliticize when they are associated
 16 with the *subject* (which triggers neuter singular agreement), as in (9). Here genitive *jich*
 17 slots below dative *mi*, even though the latter originates below it.

- 18 (9) Když jsem jim podával ruku, tak **mi jich** několik řeklo ...
 when PST.1SG them.DAT gave hand then me.DAT them.GEN several said.N.SG
 19 ‘When I shook hands with them, a few of them said to me ...’ (SYNV11)

20 Reflexive clitics likewise cliticize above genitive clitics from subject numerals, as shown
 21 in (10) for the reflexive verb *přihlásit se* ‘enroll’ and the numeral *několik* ‘several’.

- 22 (10) Již nyní **se jich** několik přihlásilo.
 already now REFL.ACC them.GEN several enroll.N.SG
 23 ‘Several of them have already enrolled.’ (SYNV11)

24 The genitives above do not c-command internal arguments when merged inside a nom-
 25 inal phrase; however, if they must extract to the clausal spine to cliticize, their landing
 26 site would c-command those arguments, making (9) and (10) a reversal of hierarchy.

27 3.5 Summary

28 In this section, I showed that pronouns are able to cliticize within a single TP, no matter
 29 their initial position or the source of their case—so long as they end up in the order

1 reflexive–dative–genitive/accusative.

2 4 Clitics cannot reorder in biclausal structures

3 The freedom of clitic order in clauses with a single verb contrasts with clitic climbing
 4 of embedded objects into matrix object control clauses, which obeys several restrictions
 5 (Rosen, 2001; Lenertová, 2004; Rezac, 2005; Hana, 2007). In this section, I show that
 6 embedded objects usually cannot climb into the matrix clause if they would need to
 7 cross over the object controller to do so, regardless of whether the controller is a clitic
 8 or a full DP. There is one exception: accusative and genitive embedded clitics can climb
 9 into dative object control sentences, even if this involves crossing over a full DP dative
 10 controller.

11 4.1 Reflexive clitics cannot climb over object controllers

12 Hana (2007) notes that reflexive clitics cannot climb in object control sentences. We see
 13 this in (11): the reflexive clitic from the embedded infinitive *pojistit se* ‘insure oneself’
 14 cannot climb, but must stay in the lower clause. This is true regardless of whether the
 15 controller is a clitic or a full DP.

16 (11) Vláda {*se} { jim / občanům } doporučila [{se}
 17 government REFL.ACC them.DAT / citizens.DAT recommended REFL.ACC
 18 pojistit].
 19 insure.INF
 ‘The government recommended the citizens to get insurance.’
 (cf. Hana, 2007, 130)

20 The only available site for clitics in the matrix clause is the second position, after *vláda*
 21 ‘government’. Thus, in order for the reflexive clitic to climb to this position, it would
 22 have to cross over the dative controller (*jim* or *občanům* in (11)), which is not permit-
 23 ted. This contrasts with the pattern shown in Section 3.3: within a TP, when reflexive
 24 accusative clitics are merged below datives, the reflexive can cross over the dative to
 25 cliticize in reflexive–dative order.

26 4.2 Dative clitics cannot climb over accusative controllers

27 Embedded dative clitics cannot climb into sentences with accusative object controllers,
 28 as shown in (12). Here, the dative clitic *jí*, which is the oblique object of the embedded
 29 infinitive *pomoct* ‘help’, cannot climb over the accusative controller merged in the matrix
 30 clause. As in (11), the object clitic must remain in the embedded clause. This is true
 31 whether the controller is a clitic or a full DP.

- 1 (12) Matka {***mu**} { **ho** / Petra } přinutila [{**mu**} pomoci].
 mother him.DAT him.ACC / Petr.ACC forced him.DAT help.INF
 2 ‘Mother forced him/Petr to help him.’ (cf. Lenertová, 2004, 162)

3 This restriction, too, contrasts with its monoclausal analogue in Section 3.2: within a
 4 TP, dative clitics precede accusative clitics even when the dative is merged below the
 5 accusative and must cross over it.

6 4.3 Clitics of the same case respect order of embedding

7 Rosen (2001) notes that an embedded dative clitic can climb into a clause with a dative
 8 controller, so long as the controller comes first. Hana (2007) tentatively expands this
 9 to accusatives as well. For example, (13) is better when the dative controller of *zakázat*
 10 ‘forbid’ precedes the indirect object of the embedded infinitive *kupovat* than vice versa;
 11 similarly, (14) is better when the accusative controller of *učit* ‘teach’ precedes the direct
 12 object of the embedded infinitive *napsat* ‘write’, but the reverse order is questionable.

- 13 (13) Martin **mu** **jí** včera zakázal [kupovat takové dárky].
 Martin him.DAT her.DAT yesterday forbade buy.INF such presents
 14 ‘Martin forbade him from buying her such presents yesterday.’
 15 ?‘Martin forbade her from buying him such presents yesterday.’

- 16 (14) Martin **ji** **ho** učil [napsat].
 Martin her.ACC him.ACC taught write.INF
 17 ‘Martin taught her to write it [a masculine noun like *článek* ‘article’].’
 18 ?‘Martin taught him to write it [a feminine noun like *povídka* ‘story’].’
 19 (Hana, 2007, 147–8)⁴

20 These examples are problematic: the judgements are weak, and other authors (e.g.
 21 Veselovská, 1995) consider climbing ungrammatical in both interpretations. In addition,
 22 *jí* can function as either a clitic or a full pronoun, so (13) allows an alternative
 23 analysis where the second dative is not a clitic.⁵ For greater insight, I look at attested
 24 examples of clitics climbing into sentences with a controller of the same case.⁶ I look
 25 at cases where the climbing object is unambiguously a clitic (the second-person singular
 26 and third-person masculine singular clitics) and it has unambiguously climbed,
 27 meaning that there is matrix clause material located between the clitic cluster and the
 28 embedded infinitive. I found 4 examples satisfying these criteria of dative clitics climbing
 29 into matrix clauses with dative object controllers and 56 such examples with two

⁴Hana (2007) writes the feminine accusative clitic as *jí*, with a long vowel, although the standard orthographic form has a short vowel. He notes that the accusative clitic can be pronounced either way, so I bring the example in line with the orthography.

⁵I thank a reviewer for raising this point.

⁶Object control verbs were selected from Lopatková et al. (2022), a database of Czech argument structure.

1 accusatives. One example with two accusatives, similar to (14), is shown below. In
 2 most of the examples, the object controller is first- or second-person; (15) is one of two
 3 tokens with two third-person clitics. Crucially, in all 60 examples across both dative
 4 and accusative, the embedded clitic appears after the controller clitic of the same case.

- 5 (15) A prý ji ho baví i [uklízet]!
 and supposedly her.ACC it.ACC amuses even clean.INF
 6 ‘And she says she even enjoys cleaning it [her house]!’ (SYNV11)

7 The corpus results bolster the judgements in (13) and (14): at least some speakers allow
 8 clitics to climb into matrix clauses with clitic controllers of the same case. However, em-
 9 bedded clitics consistently slot in after the controller clitics. This fits the generalization
 10 that embedded clitics can climb, so long as they do not climb over an object controller.

11 4.4 Accusative and genitive clitics can climb over dative controllers

12 In this section, I show that embedded accusative and genitive clitics can climb into
 13 sentences with dative object controllers (Lenertová, 2004; Rezac, 2005). When both
 14 objects cliticize, the order is dative–genitive/accusative: the merged order matches the
 15 usual clitic order. When the dative object controller is a full DP, embedded accusative
 16 and genitive clitics can still climb into the matrix clause, even though it has to cross
 17 over the object controller to do so. In the examples in (16), the accusative object *ji* of
 18 the infinitive *navštívit* climbs when the dative controller is the clitic *mu* or the full DP
 19 *Petrovi*.⁷

- 20 (16) a. Matka mu ji ne-dovolila [navštívit].
 mother him.DAT her.ACC NEG-allowed visit.INF
 21 ‘Mother didn’t allow him to visit her.’
 22 b. Matka ji Petrovi ne-dovolila [navštívit].
 mother her.ACC Petr.DAT NEG-allowed visit.INF
 23 ‘Mother didn’t allow Petr to visit her.’ (Lenertová, 2004, 162)

24 Attested equivalents to (16) for genitive clitics are shown in (17). In these sentences,
 25 genitive pronouns originating inside a numeral in the embedded clause climb to the
 26 matrix clause, slotting in after a dative clitic controller as in (17-a), or before a full DP
 27 dative controller, as in (17-b). In both cases, the clitics slot in after the reflexive clitic
 28 from the impersonal matrix verb *podařit se* ‘succeed’.

- 29 (17) a. Za pár desítek minut se mu jich podařilo
 during few tens.ACC minutes.ACC REFL.ACC him.DAT them.GEN succeeded

⁷Dotlačil (2004, 81) notes that only third-person accusative clitics can climb across a dative controller (see also Nováková, 2012). This is plausibly due to the Person Case Constraint, which restricts the order of clitics by person (e.g. Béjar & Rezac, 2003, 2009; Nevins, 2007; Deal, 2024).

- 1 [koupit pět]
buy.INF five
- 2 'Over the course of half an hour or so, he managed to buy five of them.'
3 (SYNV11)
- 4 b. Pokud **se jich** účastníkům hry podaří [nasbírat
if REFL.ACC them.GEN participants.DAT game.GEN succeed collect.INF
5 pět], mají na šestou památku vstup zdarma.
five have.3PL to sixth sight entry free
6 'If participants of the game manage to collect five of them, they get entry to
7 a sixth attraction for free.'
(SYNV11)

8 These examples show that full DP dative controllers do not block genitive or accusative
9 clitics from climbing, even though accusative controllers block dative clitics from climb-
10 ing (see Section 4.2). This is the one configuration in which embedded clitics are able
11 to cross over object controllers.

12 4.5 Summary

13 In the preceding sections, I have surveyed the empirical landscape of clitic movement,
14 making the following generalizations:

- 15 1. Within a TP, elements may cross over one another to cliticize.
- 16 2. Clitics originating in an embedded TP usually cannot cross over object controllers
17 to cliticize in a matrix clause. One exception is that embedded accusative and
18 genitive clitics can climb across full DP dative controllers.

19 5 A case containment analysis of clitic movement

20 I will now present an analysis that captures the two generalizations described in Sec-
21 tion 4.5. The main mechanism is a probe on the Clitic head that allows clitics to move
22 into specifiers of CliticP, so long as they are reached in an appropriate order. Examples
23 of successful and unsuccessful clitic movement with the probe are found in Section 5.4.

24 5.1 The probe on the Clitic head

25 An extensive literature on clitics (e.g. Béjar & Rezac, 2003; Coon & Keine, 2021, and
26 many others) casts clitic movement as the product of a need for the clitic to be licensed
27 in some way—the exact way in which clitics are defective relative to other DPs is unclear,
28 though in Czech, it is *not* for the purposes of case assignment (contra Rezac, 2005), cf.
29 Section 3. As case is relevant for my proposed probe, I tentatively suggest that clitics
30 can receive case but lack a K layer to license this case (e.g. Nevins, 2011).

1 I place a probe on the Clitic head that searches the tree below it for potential DPs
 2 to agree with. This probe has no satisfaction requirements; its purpose is to interact
 3 with DPs to allow clitics to move and be licensed. If the probe matches with a clitic, the
 4 clitic can choose to move, although it does not have to.⁸ If a clitic has not cliticized to
 5 a possible landing site at the end of the derivation, the derivation crashes. The probe
 6 interacts with all DPs in its c-command domain, clitic or not, similar in spirit to Multiple
 7 Agree (Hiraiwa, 2001, 2005; Nevins, 2007, 2011) or other probes that allow for multiple
 8 interactions (Deal, 2015, 2024). If a given probe attracts multiple clitics, they occupy
 9 multiple specifiers in the order in which they move, each “tucking in” beneath the last,
 10 as Richards III (1997, 100–101) also suggests for clitic movement in Serbo-Croatian.⁹

11 The probe, like other Agree relations, is blocked by a CP boundary due to the Phase
 12 Impenetrability Condition (Chomsky, 2000, 2001; Keine, 2018). However, it can search
 13 into control infinitives, which are at most weak, penetrable phases (Landau, 2008).

14 5.2 The probe’s feature geometry

15 While interactions with DPs leave no visible trace except for potential clitic movement,
 16 they can prevent DPs lower down from matching the probe. I propose that the probe
 17 has the feature geometry in (18), with a reflexive feature dominating a dative feature,
 18 followed by genitive and accusative features.

19 (18) *Full clitic probe in its initial state – can match REFL, DAT, GEN, or ACC*
 20 [REFL [DAT [GEN [ACC]]]]

21 The REFL feature may be a shorthand for some structure or feature that matches reflexive
 22 clitics; the rest of the hierarchy has been independently proposed as the containment
 23 hierarchy for Czech cases to explain phenomena like case syncretism (Caha, 2009).

24 When the probe encounters a DP, it attempts to match its case (or reflexive feature).
 25 If the top layer of the probe does not match that of the DP (i.e., if the DP is not a reflexive
 26 clitic), it discards layers one by one until it finds a match. For example, if a probe with
 27 the features in (18) encounters a genitive DP, it discards the REFL and DAT features so

⁸That is, the presence of CliticP in a lower clause does not block clitic climbing. This optionality in clitic landing sites predicts that clitics should be able to climb partway to intermediate projections, which Hana (2007, 127) allows. It similarly predicts that in a cluster with multiple clitics, some may climb while others stay low. Rezac (2005, 111) says that this is not possible. The grammaticality judgements of these two authors are likely mutually exclusive, as they are elsewhere, for example in Section 3.1.

⁹Alternatively, Krapova & Cinque (2005) propose that multiple specifier movement must preserve the hierarchy of the moving phrases because reversing their order would violate a form of Relativized Minimality (Rizzi, 2001). That is, the chain comprising a phrase and its copies cannot be contained entirely within the chain of another phrase “of the same structural type”: *XP₁ ... XP₂ ... <XP₂> ... <XP₁>. Relativized Minimality cannot account for all the Czech climbing data: it predicts that full DP object controllers should either *always* block clitic climbing (if full DPs are “of the same structural type” as clitics) or *never* do so (if they are not). However, in Czech this intervention effect is sensitive to case, as shown in Section 4.4.

1 that the required GEN feature is exposed. The probe then continues its search, now with
2 a diminished feature set:

3 (19) *Full clitic probe after matching a genitive – can match GEN or ACC but not REFL or DAT*
4 [GEN [ACC]] (discarded: REFL, DAT)

5 From here, the probe can match any additional number of genitive DPs, or it can shed
6 its GEN layer and match accusative clitics. This process accounts for the order of the
7 cluster: a given probe must first attract reflexives, then datives, then genitives, then
8 accusatives, because once a layer has been discarded, it is gone for the remainder of the
9 probe’s search. However, multiple clitics of the same case can be attracted in succession,
10 for as long as the probe has a given case exposed.

11 In certain case configurations, DPs can act as interveners preventing lower clitics
12 from matching and moving. This occurs, for example, if the probe encounters a dative
13 clitic after an accusative. In this case, the probe discards its DAT feature in the process
14 of matching the accusative, so when it subsequently reaches the dative, it has no DAT
15 feature to match it and the dative cannot cliticize. This is what happens in object
16 control sentences: in most cases, clitics from an embedded clause cannot climb across
17 matrix object controllers (the second generalization in Section 4.5). This is because
18 arguments in a matrix clause (object controllers) interact with the probe before those in
19 an embedded clause. Thus, if both the controller and the embedded object cliticize, the
20 controller must come first. If the controller is a full DP, the intervention effect depends
21 on case: if the controller is accusative, a dative embedded object clitic is unable to
22 match the probe and cannot climb. However, if the controller is dative, an accusative
23 embedded object *can* climb, since the clitic probe can match the dative (which does not
24 move), followed by the accusative (which does). This is the pattern we see in Section 4.4.

25 5.3 Scrambling to accommodate the case hierarchy

26 The probe described in Section 5.2 requires clitics to be matched in a particular order
27 and cannot rearrange them. However, in Section 3, I showed that clitics can cross over
28 one another, with no intervention effects, within a single TP. This can only be true
29 if clitics are able to obviate intervention effects by rearranging themselves *prior to* clitic
30 movement—but only within the bounds of a TP. I propose that they do so through what
31 Kučerová (2007) calls g-movement and Šimík et al. (2014), Šimík & Wierzba (2015), and
32 many others call scrambling: movement of given elements to the middlefield. Clitics are
33 necessarily given elements, and Biskup (2006) and Sturgeon (2008) show that phrases
34 can scramble (to specifiers of *v*P, in their analysis) in any order (contra Veselovská, 1995).

1 Thus, clitics should be able to rearrange themselves as needed to match the probe's case
2 hierarchy by scrambling before clitic movement.¹⁰

3 Kučerová (2007, 34–35) shows that Czech scrambling, unlike *wh*-movement and con-
4 trastive focus movement, cannot escape infinitival TPs.¹¹ Thus, embedded clitics cannot
5 scramble outside of their TP to the matrix *v*P to place themselves above the object con-
6 troller prior to clitic movement. In this case, as described in Section 5.2, embedded cli-
7 tics can only climb into matrix clauses if the matrix clitic probe can successfully match
8 the object controller before the embedded object—that is, if the merged hierarchy (ma-
9 trix object controller > embedded object) matches the probe's containment hierarchy
10 (reflexive > dative > genitive > accusative). By proposing that clitics, like other given el-
11 ements, can scramble, I thus derive the attested contrast between clitic climbing, which
12 shows intervention effects, and clitic movement within a TP, which does not.

13 5.4 Examples

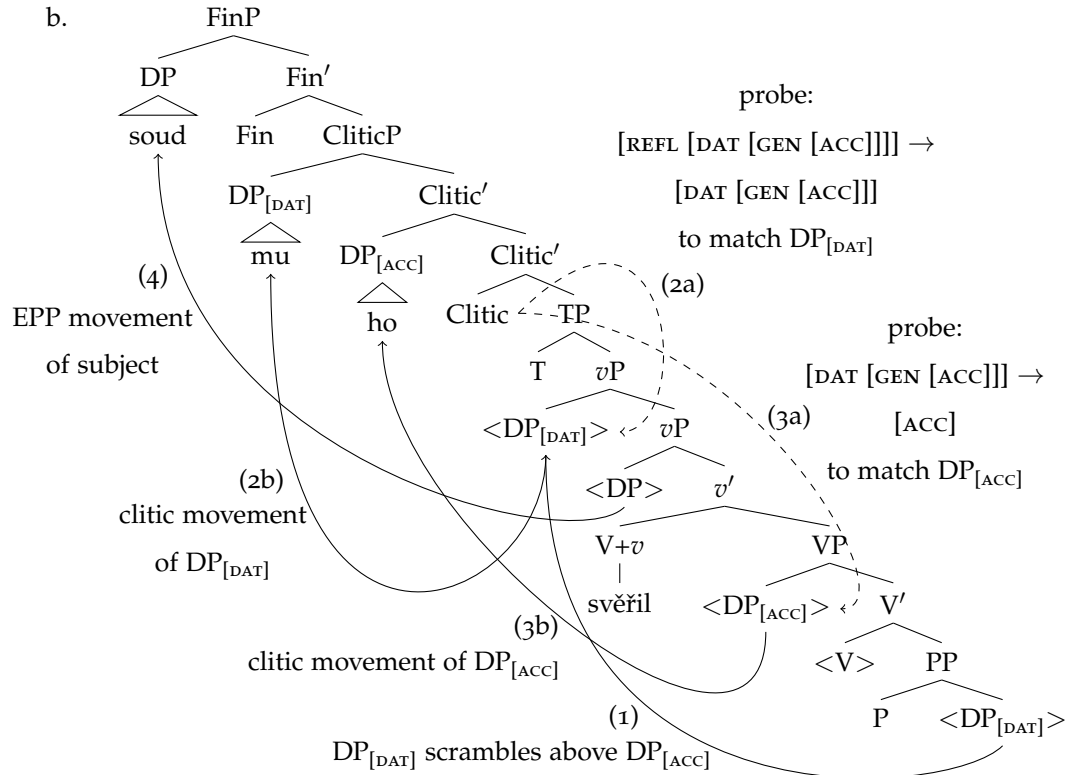
14 I now present two examples showing attempted movement of accusative and dative
15 clitics where the merged position of the accusative c-commands that of the dative.

16 First, (20) features the accusative–dative ditransitive *svěřit* ‘entrust’ (see Section 3.2).
17 The accusative clitic *ho* originates in the VP, while the dative *jí* is merged in a PP be-
18 low it (Dvořák, 2010). For the probe to attract both clitics, the dative must be above
19 the accusative, so (1) the former scrambles to the *v*P edge above the latter. Now the
20 probe can work: (2a) the probe first encounters the scrambled dative clitic, so it sheds
21 its REFL layer to expose DAT and match the dative clitic, which (2b) moves to the spec-
22 ifier of CliticP. The probe then continues (ignoring the subject) until (3a) it reaches the
23 accusative clitic—which I show *in situ*, although it may also scramble below the dative.
24 The probe casts off its DAT and GEN layers to match the accusative and attract it to
25 CliticP, where (3b) the clitic tucks into a specifier beneath the previously moved dative.
26 Finally, (4) the subject moves to the specifier of FinP to satisfy the EPP feature on Fin.

27 (20) a. Soud **jí** **ho** svěřil.
28 court her.DAT him.ACC entrusted
'The court entrusted him to her.' (see (5))

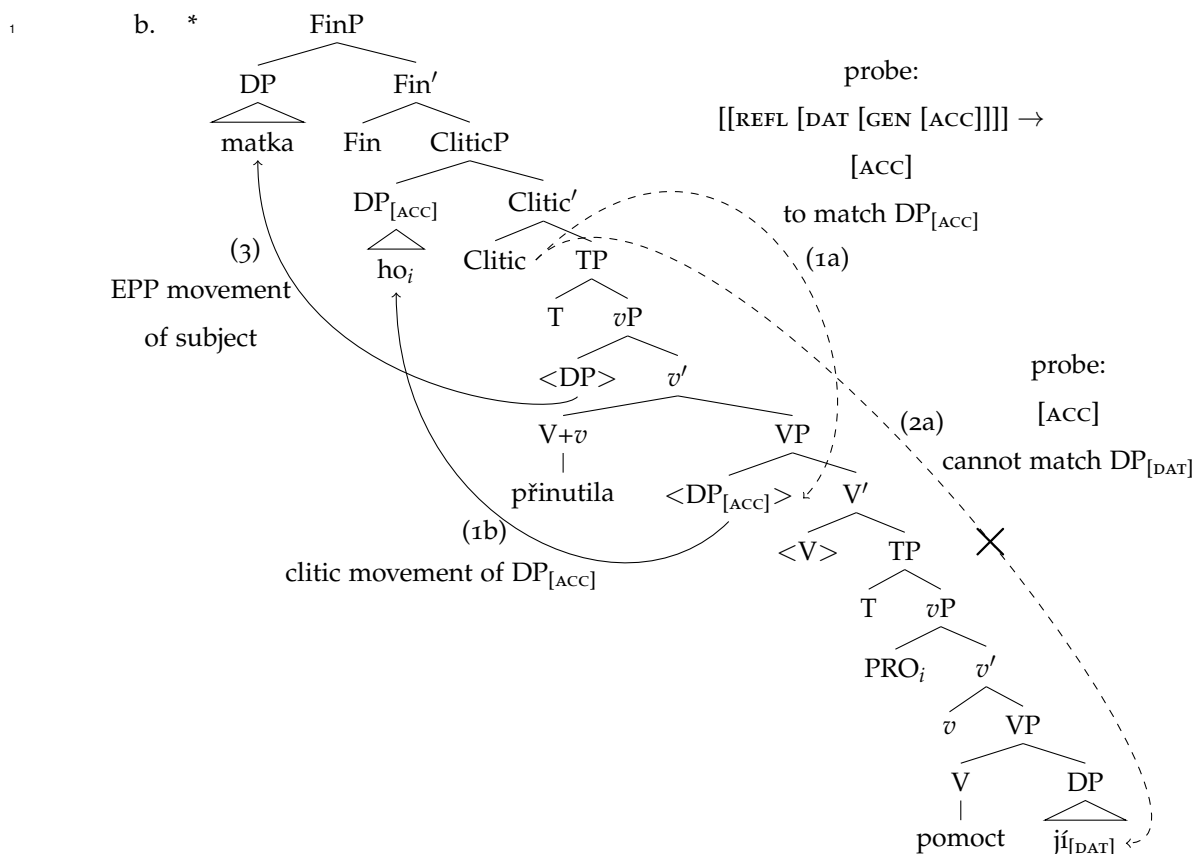
¹⁰Diesing (2003) likewise argues that certain intervention effects in Yiddish *wh*-movement can be cancelled by scrambling (cf. Richards III, 1997, 90–95) prior to *wh*-movement, given that scrambling itself in Yiddish is not subject to superiority effects (Diesing, 1997).

¹¹I follow Kučerová (2007) and Kosta (2006) in assuming that the scrambling operation in question is A movement and has different properties than the long-distance scrambling out of embedded clauses in languages like Hindi and Japanese (see e.g. Mahajan, 1990; Miyagawa, 1997). Kosta (2006) assumes that in Czech, as in German (cf. Wurmbrand, 2001), phrases can only scramble out of infinitives smaller than TP, which themselves can only be embedded under lexically specified “restructuring” predicates. Since object control verbs are not restructuring predicates, they can only embed infinitives out of which objects cannot scramble.



2 We can contrast this with the failed derivation in (21), with an accusative controller
 3 *ho* in the matrix clause and a dative object *jí* merging in the embedded clause, as the
 4 object of *pomocť* (whether this argument is a simple VP complement, as I have it, or
 5 introduced in a different structure does not matter for these purposes). This dative
 6 cannot scramble outside of its TP, so it is stuck below the accusative. Thus, (1a) the
 7 clitic probe first encounters the accusative DP and sheds its first three layers, leaving
 8 only [ACC]. After being matched, (1b) the accusative moves to the specifier of CliticP.
 9 Next, (2) the probe finds the embedded dative. By this point, the probe has no DAT
 10 feature, and cannot match the dative object. Thus, the dative clitic is stranded in a non-
 11 clitic position, so after (3) regular EPP movement of the subject to FinP, the derivation
 12 crashes. The grammatical alternative (not depicted here) is for the dative to be attracted
 13 to a lower CliticP projected in the embedded clause, where the accusative controller
 14 cannot intervene—that is, the clitic does not climb.

15 (21) a. *Matka *jí* **ho** přinutila [pomocť].
 mother her.DAT him.ACC forced help.INF
 16 'Mother forced him to help her.' (see (12))



5.5 Predictions and outstanding issues

This section discusses my account's predictions. Table 1 shows combinations of clitics merged in the same TP. The predicted orders are listed in with the section in which evidence, sometimes incidental, is provided. Canonical cases in which the template and the merged order align and for which I have no example are labelled [C].

		<i>merged lower</i>				
		REFL	DAT	GEN	ACC	
<i>merged higher</i>	REFL	REFL REFL	REFL DAT [C]	REFL GEN [C]	REFL ACC	3.1
	DAT	REFL DAT 3.3	DAT DAT	DAT GEN [C]	DAT ACC [C]	
	GEN	REFL GEN 3.4	DAT GEN 3.4	GEN GEN	GEN ACC	
	ACC	REFL ACC 3.2	DAT ACC 3.2	GEN ACC	ACC ACC	

Table 1: Predicted clitic orders for single clauses, with sources of evidence

Table 2 shows predicted combinations of matrix and embedded clitics—certain combinations should be impossible (that is, certain embedded clitics should not climb), while the others should be possible in a fixed order, with the matrix clitic (*m*) preceding the climbing embedded clitic (*e*). When a section is listed in brackets, the relevant cases are not discussed directly but follow the pattern shown in that section.

		<i>embedded clitic</i>										
		REFL		DAT		GEN		ACC				
<i>matrix clitic</i>	REFL	REFL _m	REFL _e	REFL _m	DAT _e	[4.4]	REFL _m	GEN _e	4.4	REFL _m	ACC _e	[4.4]
	DAT	*	4.1	DAT _m	DAT _e	4.3	DAT _m	GEN _e	4.4	DAT _m	ACC _e	4.4
	GEN	*	[4.1]	*	[4.2]		GEN _m	GEN _e	[4.3]	GEN _m	ACC _e	
	ACC	*	[4.1]	*	4.2		*			ACC _m	ACC _e	4.3

Table 2: Predicted clitic combinations and orders for embedded infinitives, with sources of evidence

1 Some issues remain involving two arguments of the same case or type. Table 1
2 predicts that clitics of the same case from the same TP should appear in any order.
3 However, for *učit* ‘teach’, which takes two accusatives, only one order is attested, and
4 Hana (2007) prefers this order as well (see Section 3.1). The reverse order may be ruled
5 out by economy (dispreferring movements unnecessary to obtain a grammatical result)
6 or a preference for animate clitics to precede inanimate clitics.

7 Reflexive clitics are predicted to be able to climb into clauses with other reflexive
8 clitics, but as Rosen (2014) discusses, they cannot. However, one solution is the deletion
9 of one of the reflexives (haplology). This restriction and solution are unique to reflexive
10 clitics, so I assume that these clitics are subject to some additional restriction.

11 Another issue involves clitics climbing into clauses with full DP controllers of the
12 same case. Matrix controllers serve as interveners whether they are clitics or full DPs
13 (see Section 4.2 and Section 4.4) and clitics can climb into clauses with clitics of the
14 same case (see Section 4.3), so they should be able to climb over full DP controllers of
15 the same case as well. However, I have not been able to find any examples of them doing
16 so: sentences like (22), adapted from (15), should be grammatical but are unattested.

17 (22) %A *prý ho její nácileté děti baví i [uklízet]!*
18 and supposedly it.ACC her teenage children.ACC amuses even clean.INF
19 ‘And she says her teenage children even enjoy cleaning it [their house]!’

19 These examples may be unattested because they are confusing, featuring inversion of
20 merged order for arguments of the same case. Sentences somewhat similar to (22) are
21 marked * by Dotlačil (2004, 80) but ?? by Dotlačil (2017)—so it is unclear whether such
22 sentences are wholly ungrammatical or merely degraded. I leave rigorous testing of
23 this prediction to future research.

24 My account predicts that genitive clitics should precede accusative clitics. Geni-
25 tive and accusative clitics rarely appear in the same cluster and exhibit widespread
26 syncretism—they are only consistently distinguished in the third personal plural, which
27 has genitive *jich* and accusative *je*. The literature is divided about their ordering.
28 Veselovská (1995) and Toman (1999) place genitive clitics before accusative clitics. How-

1 ever, Franks & King (2000, 108) report mixed judgements for (23), which has a genitive
 2 clitic extracted from a subject numeral (see Section 3.4) and an accusative object clitic:
 3 of three speakers asked, one preferred each clitic order and the third rejected both.

- 4 (23) %Pět mu { jich ho / ho jich } nikdy nedalo.
 five him.DAT them.GEN it.ACC / it.ACC them.GEN never NEG-gave
 5 ‘Five of them never gave it to him.’ (Franks & King, 2000, 108)

6 There is also one common ditransitive verb, *zbavit* ‘rid’, which takes a genitive and an
 7 accusative argument: ‘to rid X [accusative] of Y [genitive]’. Franks & King (2000) found
 8 that when both arguments cliticize in this verb, as in (24-b), speakers preferred the
 9 order accusative–genitive, although judgements were quite uncertain. Lenertová (2004,
 10 154) also claims that arguments of *zbavit* usually cliticize in accusative–genitive order.

- 11 (24) a. Zbavili Alenu občanství.
 rid Alena.ACC citizenship.GEN
 12 ‘They stripped Alena of her citizenship.’
 13 b. Zbavili { %ji ho / *ho ji }.
 rid her.ACC it.GEN / it.GEN her.ACC
 14 ‘They stripped her of it.’ (Franks & King, 2000, 108)

15 A corpus search suggests that sentences like (23), with a genitive clitic extracted from
 16 the subject and an accusative object clitic, overwhelmingly show genitive–accusative
 17 order (as predicted in Table 1), while sentences with *zbavit*, like (24), show a rather
 18 more ambiguous preference for accusative–genitive order. For reasons of space, I leave
 19 further empirical study of the order of genitive and accusative clitics for future work.

20 For object control sentences, my account similarly predicts that accusative clitics
 21 originating in embedded infinitives should be able to climb into matrix clauses with
 22 clitic or full DP genitive controllers; if both are clitics, the order should be genitive–
 23 accusative. There are no verbs that assign genitive case to controllers, so these genitives
 24 must be extracted from numeral accusative object controllers (as shown in (25)) or nu-
 25 meral subject controllers.¹² Examples (25) and (26) below are shown with their *predicted*
 26 judgements.

- 27 (25) ‘The teacher would be devastated if none of his students tried his goulash, ...’
 28 tak bychom { jich ho / *ho jich / ho kluků }
 so COND.1PL them.GEN him.ACC / him.ACC them.GEN / him.ACC boys.GEN
 29 měli přinutit ochutnat alespoň pár.
 should force.INF taste.INF at least few
 30 ‘so we should force at least a few of them / the boys to taste it.’

¹²I thank a reviewer for suggesting this point and the basic format of these examples.

1 In contrast, embedded genitive clitics should not be able to climb into matrix clauses
2 with accusative controllers—thus, sentences like (26) should always be ungrammatical.

3 (26) ‘You can’t expect that Pepa will learn to cook every classic Czech dish, but ...’

4 *příští týden bych { jich ho / ho jich / jich
5 next week COND.1SG them.GEN him.ACC / him.ACC them.GEN / him.ACC
6 kluka } mohl naučit vařit šest.
7 boy.GEN could teach cook six

8 ‘next week I could teach him / the boy to cook at least six of them.’

9 My proposal’s predictions are clear but hard to test. I have not found attested examples
10 like (25) and (26), and speakers have unclear judgements or reject all such examples—in
11 part because they are confusing, requiring multiple extractions and stacked verbs. Here,
12 too, I leave thorough testing of my account’s predictions to future work.

11 5.6 Summary

12 I have proposed that clitic movement is driven by a probe with a hierarchy of reflexive
13 and case features that it uncovers one at a time to match DPs in its c-command domain.
14 When DPs are ordered in accordance with the probe’s hierarchy, we get the canonical
15 clitic order of reflexive–dative–genitive–accusative. When they are not, clitics fail to
16 cliticize. Scrambling allows clitics to reorder themselves as needed, so long as they are
17 in the same TP. This probe thus accounts for the generalizations about clitic climbing
18 discussed in the previous sections. Some predictions of my account, particularly those
19 involving genitive and accusative clitics, require further testing.

20 6 Conclusion

21 In this work, I have refined previous empirical generalizations about Czech clitic climb-
22 ing (e.g. Dotlačil, 2004; Lenertová, 2004; Rezac, 2005; Hana, 2007) and proposed a novel
23 probe that handles intervention effects through a hierarchical feature geometry that
24 removes layers to match successive DPs depending on their case. While this general ap-
25 proach neatly unifies the various possibilities and limitations of Czech clitic movement
26 presented here and makes generally correct predictions, some further issues remain.

27 One issue is technical: what is the feature I call REFL? We cannot say that reflexives
28 somehow bear nominative case alongside dative or accusative: nominative is at the
29 *bottom* of the case hierarchy (Caha, 2009), predicting that reflexives should come *last*.

30 Another open question is the interaction of case and person. Some Czech speakers

1 allow inversion of the usual clitic order to satisfy the Person Case Constraint, which
 2 requires first- and second-person clitics to precede third-person clitics (Medová, 2009;
 3 Sturgeon et al., 2011)—that is, first-person accusative clitics may precede third-person
 4 dative clitics. Future work should aim to reconcile the Person Case Constraint and the
 5 case-based template. One potential route is to require two steps of clitic movement, first
 6 for case and then for person, as proposed by Ciucivara (2009) for Romanian.

7 Another avenue for further exploration is scrambling. Kosta (2006) and Kučerová
 8 (2007) assume that elements cannot scramble out of TPs, but Lenertová (2004, 162n24)
 9 shows an example with a full DP scrambling out of an embedded infinitive into a matrix
 10 clause beneath (but not across) an object controller. Future work should explore when,
 11 exactly, elements can scramble out of embedded infinitives.

12 Overall, the empirical theoretical work presented in this study should provide ample
 13 ground for further exploration of Czech clitic movement and embedded infinitives.

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