Reinterpreting Ne-cliticization as Split-topicalization

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Abstract

Ne-cliticization has been widely discussed in Italian syntax (Burzio 1986, Belletti and Rizzi 1982, Perlmutter 1989 a.o.), with comparison to similar constructions in other Romance languages (see Cardinaletti and Giusti 2006 for an overview). In this paper, however, we propose a novel way to investigate this construction, from a more cross-linguistic perspective. More specifically, we show that there are a number of similarities between (quantitative) ne-cliticization and split-topicalization, which is attested in many languages such as German and Japanese, and we propose a unified account of the two constructions, based on Zamparelli's (2000) and Ott's (2011) proposals on those constructions.

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Pietro Cerrone and Hiromune Oda*

1 Introduction

Ne-cliticization, as exemplified in (1), has been widely discussed in Italian syntax (Burzio 1986, Belletti and Rizzi 1981, Perlmutter 1989) with comparison to similar constructions in other Romance languages.

(1) Di ragazze, **ne** ho   viste   di belle.
    of girls   NE I.have seen.F.PL of beautiful.F.PL
    'As for girls, I saw beautiful ones.'

Several issues have been raised concerning *ne*-cliticization. The most prominent are:

(2) a. What is the nature of the *ne*-cliticization construction in (1)?
     b. What is the nature of the two occurrences of *di* 'of' in (1)?
     c. What does *ne* stand for?

Some answers have been provided in the literature, as summarized in (3) (see Cardinaletti and Giusti 2006 for an overview):

(3) a. *Ne*-cliticization is a partitive construction (Burzio 1986, Perlmutter 1989, a.o.).
     b. *Di* is realization of a partitive case (Belletti 1988).
     c. *Ne* is a "PRO-NP" whose category is N′ (Selkirk 1977, Belletti and Rizzi 1981), PP (Belletti 1979, Kayne 1975), NP (Belletti 1994, Cinque 1991), or DP (Cardinaletti and Giusti 1992, 2006).

In this paper, however, we will provide very different views from a more cross-linguistic perspective that goes beyond Romance. More specifically, we will show that there are a number of similarities between (quantitative) *ne*-cliticization and split-topicalization, which is attested in many languages, such as German and Japanese.[1] We will then propose a unified account of the two constructions based on Moro's (2000) and more recently Chomsky's (2013) symmetry-breaking approach, following Zamparelli (2000) and Ott (2011) proposals on those constructions. We will thus argue that *ne*-cliticization can be considered as a subcase of this more general construction which goes beyond Romance.

2 Split-topicalization and *Ne*-cliticization

2.1 *Split-topicalization*

Split-topicalization has been discussed for many languages, with extensive focus on German. As shown in (4), the head noun can be topicalized by stranding its modifier in situ in German.

(4) **Bohnen_i** mag er (nur) [**grüne** t_i].
    beans   likes he only   green
    'As for beans, he likes (only) green ones.'

[1]We do not discuss locative *ne*-cliticization, which shows different behavior than quantitative *ne*-cliticization.

There are a number of characteristics of split-topicalization. First, the topic has to be non-specific (Fanselow 1988, van Hoof 2006, Ott 2011). Thus, a definite article is not allowed with the topic, as in (5).

(5)   *$\textbf{Die}$ bohnen$_i$ mag er (nur) [grüne t$_i$].
       the beans   likes he only green
       'Intended: As for beans, he likes (only) green ones.'

In a language which lacks a definite article such as Japanese, this property can be tested with a demonstrative. Thus, a demonstrative cannot be attached to the topic in the corresponding construction in Japanese, as shown in (6).

(6)   (*$\textbf{Korera}$-no) jisho$_i$-wa   Taro-ga   furui-no _$_i$-o   tsukau.
       these-GEN   dictionary-TOP Taro-NOM old-NO   -ACC use
       'As for (these) dictionaries, Taro uses an old one.'

Second, this construction has a topic-secondary focus intonation: the left-dislocated noun has a topic intonation, and the stranded modifier has a secondary focus intonation (van Hoof 2006).[2]

Third, van Hoof (2006) argues that the stranded modifier has to be "nominalized" in a descriptive sense. In German, for example, a stranded modifier in split-topicalization has a strong form as in (7a).[3] This form is not allowed in non-split cases, as shown in (7b).

(7)   a. Geld$_i$ hat er [kein-$\textbf{es}$/*kein   t$_i$].
           money has he no-$\textbf{STRONG}$/no-WEAK
           'As for money, he has none.'
       b. Er hat [*kein-es/$\textbf{kein}$ Geld].
           he has   no-STRONG/no-$\textbf{WEAK}$ money
           'He has no money.'

If a stranded modifier is a more "nominal" element like numerals, it does not need a strong form (or it does not have the strong/weak distinction in the first place), as in (8).

(8)   Autos$_i$ hat er sogar [$\textbf{drei}$ t$_i$].
       cars   has he even   three
       'As for cars, he has even three.'

The form of the "nominalizer" is different in other languages. In Japanese, the nominalizer is -no, which is homophonous between a genitive marker and a pronominal element, as in (9a) (Sugawara 2010). -No is not allowed in the non-split case as in (9b), patterning with the strong form in German.

(9)   a. $\textbf{Jisho}_i$-$\textbf{wa}$ Taro-ga   furui-$\textbf{no}$ _$_i$-o   tsukau.
           dictionary-TOP Taro-NOM old-NO   -ACC use
           'As for dictionaries, Taro uses an old one.'
       b. Taro-wa   furui(*-$\textbf{no}$) jisho-o   tsukau.
           Taro-TOP old-NO   dictionary-ACC use
           'Taro uses an old dictionary.'

When a numeral is stranded, it disallows -no because it is "nominal enough" as in (10), which again patterns with German.[4]

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[2]van Hoof (2006) discusses German data, but Japanese also shows the relevant intonation pattern.

[3]In fact, strong forms nominalize adjectives in adjective-stranding elliptical constructions, as in (i).

(i)   Er hat kein-$\textbf{es.}$
       he has no-STRONG
       'He has none.'

(10) Jisho_i-wa   Taro-ga   san-satsu(*-**no**) __i-o   tsukau.
    dictionary-TOP Taro-NOM three-CL-NO   -ACC use
    'As for dictionaries, Taro uses three.'

In this section, we have seen that split-topicalization involves (i) an indefinite topic, (ii) a topic-focus intonation, and (iii) nominalization of the stranded modifier, whose form varies across languages.

2.2 *Ne*-cliticization

We will now demonstrate that *ne*-cliticization also shows the properties discussed above. First, the referent of *ne*, i.e., the fronted element, has to be non-specific; thus, a definite article is disallowed, as shown in (11) (Giusti 1992, Zamparelli 2000).

(11) **Di** ragazze/***Delle** ragazze, ne ho   vista   una   bella.
     of girls/of.the   girls   NE have.1SG seen.F.SG INDEF.F.SG beautiful.F.SG
     'As for girls, I saw a beautiful one.'

Second, the fronted element (*di ragazze* in (11)) receives a topic intonation, and the stranded modifier (*una bella* in (11)) receives a secondary focus intonation. Third, the stranded modifier has to be "nominalized" when it is not nominal. When an indefinite article is attached to a singular masculine noun, it has a weak form (12a), but when attached to a stranded modifier of *ne*-cliticization, it has to have a strong form (12b). The stranded modifier in *ne*-cliticization patterns in this respect with the one in split-topicalization in German.

(12) a. Ho   letto **un**/*uno   lungo   libro.
          have.1SG read INDEF.M.**WEAK**/STR long.M.SG book
          'I have read a long book.'
    b. Ne ho   letto *un/**uno**   lungo.
        NE have.1SG read   INDEF.M.WEAK/**STR** long.M.SG
        'I have read a long one (book).'

When the stranded modifier is plural or mass, it has to co-occur with *di*, which is a genitive marker, as in (13a) and (13b). Recall that Japanese uses a genitive/pronominal marker *-no* for nominalization. This means that with plural and mass elements, *ne*-cliticization patterns with split-topicalization in Japanese.

(13) a. Di ragazze, ne ho   viste   *(**di**) belle.
          of girls   NE have.1SG seen.F.PL **of** beautiful.F.PL
          'As for girls, I saw beautiful ones.'
    b. Di vino, ne ho   bevuto   *(**di**) migliore.
          of wine NE have.1SG drank.M.SG   **of** better.M.SG
          'I drank better wine.'

Thus, Italian shows both the strong form nominalization like German and the genitive-like nominalization like Japanese.

Finally, as expected from German and Japanese, neither strong agreement nor *di* co-occurs with a numeral as in (14).

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[4]Hiroaki Saito (p.c.) points out that when *-no* is present in (10), it has a different interpretation, which is 'Taro uses a dictionary that has three volumes'. This becomes clearer when a more appropriate classifier *-kan* is used, as shown in (i). In this case, *san-kan* functions as a modifier like an adjective, not as a genuine numeral.
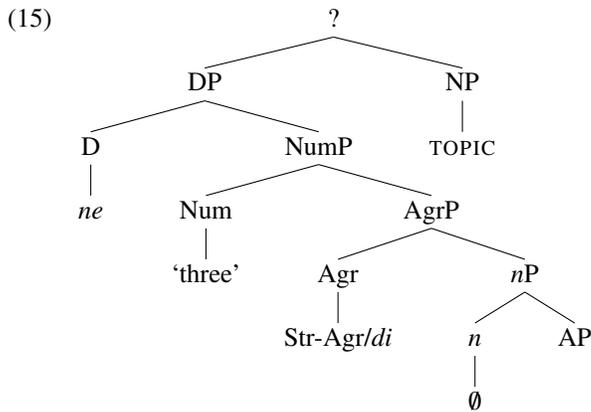
(i) Jisho_i-wa   Taro-ga   san-kan-no __i-o   tsukau.
    dictionaries-TOP Taro-NOM three-CL-NO   -ACC use
    'As for dictionaries, Taro uses one in three volumes.'

(14)　Ne ho　　　　viste　　**tre**.
　　　NE have.1SG seen.F.PL three
　　　'I saw three (of them).'

Thus, *ne*-cliticization and split-topicalization share certain properties: (i) an indefinite topic, (ii) a topic-focus intonation, and (iii) nominalization of a stranded modifier. The nominalizer in Italian *ne*-cliticization can be either a strong form as in German or a genitive marker as in Japanese.

3　Analysis: A Symmetry-breaking Approach

We take the similarities discussed above to indicate presence of the same underlying mechanism in these constructions. Interestingly, Ott (2011) and Zamparelli (2000) independently of each other propose a symmetry-breaking analysis in Moro's (2000) sense for split-topicalization in German and *ne*-cliticization in Italian, respectively, in which the topic is base-generated as a predicate of the stranded modifier and then undergoes left-dislocation.[5] Thus, following their insights, we propose a unified base-structure for split-topicalization in German and *ne*-cliticization in Italian as in (15).

(15)

```
                        ?
              ┌─────────┴─────────┐
             DP                   NP
          ┌───┴────┐               │
          D       NumP           TOPIC
          │     ┌───┴─────┐
         ne    Num       AgrP
               │      ┌────┴─────┐
            'three'  Agr         nP
                      │       ┌───┴───┐
                  Str-Agr/di  n      AP
                              │
                              ∅
```

We assume with Ott (2011) that the stranded modifier (DP) and the topic (NP) are sisters in the base position, the former being the subject and the latter being the predicate. This creates a symmetry problem (Moro 2000; see also Chomsky 2013 for a labeling interpretation of this issue), so the topic NP has to move to resolve it.[6] The predication relation (i.e., subset-superset relation) captures the intuition of "partitive"-ness regarding *ne*-cliticization. Crucially, however, *ne*-cliticization is not a partitive construction under the current proposal, because the stranded modifier and the topic are just sisters and no special relationship other than the subject-predicate relation is encoded.[7]

We propose that *ne* is base-generated within the stranded modifier, unlike Zamparelli (2000), who assumes that *ne* is a topic. Our proposal is supported by the fact that the past participle agrees with the stranded modifier, not with the topic, as shown in (16).

(16)　Di ragazz**e**, ne ho　　　vist**a/*e**　　　　un**a**　　　bell**a**.
　　　of girl**s**　　NE have.SG seen.1F.**SG**/F.**PL** INDEF.F.**SG** beautiful.F.**SG**
　　　'As for girls, I saw a beautiful one.'

We assume that *ne* selects NumP in the presence of a numeral and AgrP in the absence of a numeral. *Ne* shares the ϕ-feature with Agr, *n*, and AP and mediates past participle agreement with the stranded modifier as an object clitic, which generally triggers past participle agreement. If *ne* were to share the ϕ-feature with the topic, the past participle agreement mediated by *ne* should be plural in (16),

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[5]Thanks to Yuta Tatsumi for bringing Zamparelli (2000) to our attention.

[6]Movement of the stranded modifier is in principle possible, but it violates a general topic-comment schema; see Ott (2011).
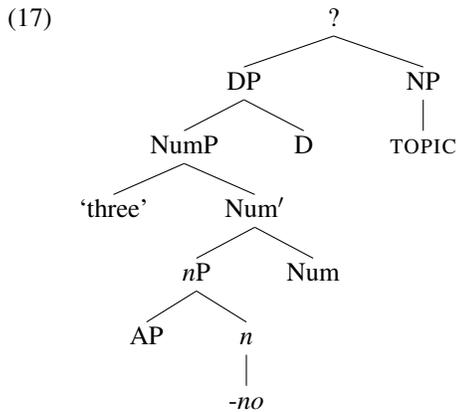
[7]This goes along with McNay's (2007) argument that split-topicalization is a pseudo-partitive construction rather than a partitive construction.

contrary to the fact. Thus, we conclude that *ne* is associated with the stranded modifier and not with the topic.

Agr hosts a strong form in German whether it is singular or plural. Crucially, in Italian, Agr is a strong form when it is singular, but *di* when it is plural or mass. This proposal is motivated by the fact that *di* appears only with the plural or mass modifiers and shows complementary distribution with the singular strong form. If *di* is realization of a partitive case as Belletti (1988) argues, it would not be clear why it is not allowed to co-occur with a singular modifier, which should also require a partitive case just like a plural and mass modifier. Thus, it is not implausible to conclude that *di* is a realization of agreement on a par with the strong form, not a partitive case.

In addition, following Lobeck (1993), we assume that strong agreement (a Number-feature for her) licenses ellipsis of the head noun (or *n* under the current proposal). When there is a numeral, which does not require agreement, we assume that it inherently has a ϕ-feature that licenses ellipsis (presumably a Number-feature), so that *n* can be elided.[8]

Turning to Japanese, we propose the structure in (17), which is slightly different from (15).

(17)

```
                    ?
                  /   \
                DP     NP
               /  \     |
            NumP   D  TOPIC
            /  \    |
       'three'  Num′
               /   \
             nP     Num
            /  \
          AP    n
                |
               -no
```

We assume that Japanese lacks Agr that licenses ellipsis of the head noun, unlike German and Italian, and that the nominalizer of the stranded modifier *-no* in Japanese is a light noun in Hiraiwa's (2016) sense.[9] Sugawara (2010) argues that *-no* in Japanese split-topicalization is a pronominal element like English *one*, which has a restriction on its referents, because an abstract noun cannot be a referent of *-no*, as shown in (18).[10]

(18)   a. ***Shinnen**ᵢ-wa Hanako-ga   koogaku-no   _ᵢ-o   magenakatta.
           belief-TOP   Hanako-NOM love.of.learning-NO -ACC bend.not.PST
           'As for beliefs, Hanako did not act against hers in love of learning.'
           (Sugawara 2010:8)

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[8]This analysis allows for the possibility that *di* can still appear and license ellipsis of *n* in the presence of a numeral and an AP which requires agreement/concord with Agr, since the ϕ-feature (or a Number-feature) of *di* can license ellipsis independently of that of the numeral. This is in fact observed in (i), where the presence of *di* is optional.

(i)   Ne conosco   due **(di)** simpatici.
      NE know.1SG two of nice
      'I know two nice ones.'
      (Cardinaletti and Giusti 2006:64)

In (i), either Num (*tre*) or Agr (*di*) can license ellipsis of *n*. When the former licenses ellipsis, *di* does not occur, but when the latter licenses ellipsis, both a numeral and *di* occur at the same time.

[9]In fact, another light noun that has a pronominal status can be used as in (i).

(i)   Jishoᵢ-wa   Taro-ga furui-**yatsu** _ᵢ-o   tsukau.
      dictionary-TOP Taro-NOM old-YATSU   -ACC use
      'As for dictionaries, Taro uses an old one.'

    b.   koogaku-no   shinnen
        love.of.learning-NO belief
        'the belief in love of learning'
        (ibid.)

    Finally, we suggest that *di* occurring with the topic in (16) is a topic marker, on a par with the topic marker *-wa* in Japanese.[11] Thus, under the current proposal, *di* is not a partitive case marker for either the stranded modifier or the topic. This is desirable because under the current analysis *ne*-cliticization is not a partitive construction but split-topicalization, which does not involve a partitive construction. In the next section, we provide evidence for this view.

4 Consequence: *Ne*-cliticization is NOT a Partitive Construction

There is an interesting consequence of our proposal for *ne-cliticization*. In particular, our proposal accounts for an otherwise puzzling gender pattern found with 'egg(s)' in *ne*-cliticization.[12] In Italian, *uovo* 'egg' is masculine when it is singular (19a), but it is feminine when it is plural (19b).

(19) a. **un**   uov**o** /*un**a**   uov**a**
         INDEF.**M** egg.**M**   INDEF.**F** egg.**F**
     b. *due uov**o** /due uov**a**
        two egg.**M** two egg.**F**

When used in a partitive construction, both *uno* 'one' and *uovo* 'egg' have to be feminine, as in (20)

(20) a. un**a**   delle uov**a**
         one.**F** of.the egg.**F**
     b. *un**o**   delle uov**a**
         one.**M** of.the egg.**F**
     c. *un**o**   delle uov**o**
         one.**M** of.the egg.**M**
     d. *un**a** delle uov**o**
         one.**F** of.the egg.**M**

Crucially, *ne*-cliticization with *uovo/uova* 'egg(s)' is grammatical only when the stranded modifier is masculine, as in (21), which is not the case with the partitives in (20b,c).[13]

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[10]Guglielmo Cinque (p.c.) pointed out that *di* can co-occur with a singular modifier whose indefinite article has strong agreement, as shown in (i).

 (i) Di ragazzi, ne ho   visto uno   (**di**) bello.
     of boys   NE have.1SG seen INDEF.M.STR of beautiful.M.SG
     'As for books, I have seen a beautiful one.'

It seems that the co-occurence of *di* with a singular stranded modifier is allowed only when the referent is animate (or possibly human). Thus, when the referent is inanimate, *di* is not allowed as in (ii).

 (ii) Di libri, ne ho   letto uno   (***di**) lungo.
      of books, NE have.1SG read INDEF.M.STR   of long.M.SG
      'As for books, I read a long one.'

This means that the occurrence of *di* in singular is restricted depending on the referent of the elided noun, like Japanese *-no*. Thus, we conclude that *di* in (i) is a pronominal element, which is the head of *n*P.

[11]Thanks to Andrea Calabrese for discussing this point with us.

[12]We are grateful to Luke Adamson for bringing a relevant data to our attention.

[13]We acknowledge that there is some speaker variation regarding the gender of *uovo/uova* 'egg(s)' in (21a). For example, some speakers do not like the gender mismatch between the topic and the stranded modifier (**di uova...uno solo*). Still, it is clear that a gender pattern that is not allowed in the genuine partitive phrase is allowed in *ne*-cliticization, so that the main point in the text still holds.

(21) a. Di uov**o/a**, ne ho   mangiat**o** un**o**   sol**o**.
          of egg.**M/F** NE have.1SG eaten.**M**   one.**M** only.**M**
          'As for eggs, I have eaten only one.'
      b. *Di uov**a**, ne ho   mangiat**a** un**a**   sol**a**.
          of egg.**F** NE have.1SG eaten.**F**   one.**F** only.**F**

This is not expected in analyses where *ne* + the stranded modifier and the *di*-phrase constitute a partitive construction (e.g., Cardinaletti and Giusti 2006), since those analyses expect that *ne*-cliticization in (21) and partitives in (20) would show the same gender pattern. In contrast, our analysis can capture the difference. In our analysis, the stranded modifier and the topic are just sisters in the base position, and crucially there is no partitive construction involved. It then follows that when the stranded modifier is singular, its gender can be masculine, as in the usual singular case (19a), since this is not a partitive construction. In addition, the gender of the elided singular *n* (*uovo*) is expected to be independent of that of the topic, which can be masculine or feminine, as in (21a). Thus, we can conclude from this gender pattern that *ne*-cliticization is not a partitive construction, which can be captured straightforwardly by our analysis.[14]

5 *Ne* as a D Head: Two Types of Split-topicalization in Italian and *There*-construction

In addition to *ne*-cliticization, Italian allows another type of split-topicalization, which Frascarelli and Ramaglia (2014) call split-nominal construction, as illustrated in (22).

(22) Di libro, ho   letto questo.
      of book have.1SG read this
      'As for books, I read this one.'
      (Frascarelli and Ramaglia 2014:75)

This construction disallows a definite topic and a weak form of a stranded modifier, just like split-topicalization in German and *ne*-cliticization, as shown in (23) and (24).

(23) ***Del**   libro, ho   letto questo.
       of.the book have.1SG read this
       'As for books, I read this one.'
(24) a. Di libro, ho   letto **quello**/*quel   lungo.
          of book, have.1SG read that.M.**STR**/WEAK long
          'As for books, I read that long one.'
      b. Ho   letto *quello/**quel**   libro lungo.
          have.1SG read   that.M.STR/**WEAK** book long
          'I read that long book.'

Although Frascarelli and Ramaglia (2014) do not distinguish the split-nominal construction from *ne*-cliticization, there is a crucial difference between the two: the stranded modifier in the split-nominal construction has to be definite, whereas the one in *ne*-cliticization has to be indefinite, as shown in (25).

(25) a. Di libro, (***ne**) ho   letto **quello**   lungo.
          of book,   NE have.1SG read **that**.M.STR long
          'As for books I read that long one.'
      b. Di libro, ***(ne)** ho   letto **uno**   lungo.
          of book,   NE have.1SG read **INDEF**.M.STR long
          'As for books I read that long one.'

---

[14]See also Giusti (1992) and Zamparelli (2000) for an argument that *ne*-cliticization is not a partitive construction.

The definiteness effect of *ne*-cliticization is reminiscent of that of the *there*-construction in English, as illustrated in (26).

(26)   There is **a/*that** long book on the table.

Interestingly, Sabel (2000), Hornstein and Witkoś (2003), and Abe (2016) argue that the expletive *there* is a D head that forms a constituent with its associate NP in the base position.

(27)   ___ is [$_{DP}$ there [$_{NP}$ a long book]] on the table.

There, which carries a D-feature that is responsible for definiteness (Chomsky 1995, Bošković 2007), then moves to Spec,TP. Given the definiteness effect common to *ne*-cliticization and *there*-construction, it is not implausible to conclude that *ne* is a D head as we proposed in Section 3. In the case of the split nominal construction in (22), the D head remains in the base position and hence the stranded modifier has to be definite. In (25b), on the other hand, the D head, which is *ne*, undergoes movement like *there* in (26) under the movement analysis of *there*.

6 Conclusion

In this paper we have shown that *ne*-cliticization shares a number of properties with split-topicalization that is found in languages such as German and Japanese. From this perspective, we have proposed a unified account of these two constructions based on Moro's (2000) and more recently Chomsky's (2013) symmetry-breaking approach. In the course of the argument, we have addressed the questions in (2), which were raised in Section 1. We repeat them here as (28) below.

(28)   a. What is the nature of the *ne*-cliticization construction in (1)?
       b. What is the nature of *di*'s in (1)?
       c. What does *ne* stand for?

Our analysis of the two constructions provides the answers in (29).

(29)   a. This *ne*-cliticization is one type of split-topicalization, which is attested in many languages such as German and Japanese.
       b. *Di* with the topic is a topic marker like Japanese *-wa*, and *di* with the stranded modifier is an agreement marker that licenses ellipsis of the head noun (see also fn. 10).
       c. *Ne* is a D head, which is base-generated with the stranded modifier and whose extraction contributes to the definiteness effect of the construction.

(29a) is straightforward since *ne*-cliticization and split-topicalization essentially show the same properties. This conclusion amounts to saying that the *ne*-cliticization construction under consideration does not have to be interpreted as a partitive construction, which is supported by the gender pattern of *uovo/uova* 'egg(s)' discussed in Section 4. This is also compatible with (29b). Given that the *ne*-cliticization construction in question is not a partitive construction, the genitive marker *di* found in *ne*-cliticization should not be related to *di* found in genuine partitives, and given that this *ne*-cliticization construction is essentially split-topicalization, it is not implausible to assimilate *di* with elements found in split-topicalization in other languages. (29c) is supported by the past participle agreement with the stranded modifier triggered by the movement of *ne*, and the definiteness effect, which is similar to the one found in the *there*-construction in English.

    Our proposal leads us to conclude that the *ne*-cliticization construction under consideration is part of a broader cross-linguistic pattern which goes beyond Italian/Romance.

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