The topic of this paper is clitic doubling, the occurrence of tautoclausal, coreferent NP-clitic pairs, as illustrated in (1) and (2) (subscripts indicate coreference):

(1) \( \text{Lo}_i \, \text{vimos}_i \, \text{a Juán}_i. \) (Spanish)  
    *him we saw to*  
    We saw Juan.

(2) \( \text{Beit-}o_i \, \text{šel ha-more}_i \, \text{̄om} \, \text{al ha-giv’a}. \) (Hebrew)  
    *house his of the teacher stands on the hill*  
    The teacher’s house stands on the hill.

Clitic doubling constructions such as (1) and (2) are to be distinguished from superficially similar constructions such as (3) and (4):

(3) The man\(_i\) he\(_i\) came. (English)

(4) Jean\(_i\) il\(_i\) est venu. (French)  
    *he has come*  
    Jean came.

Although disagreement exists as to exactly what properties are constitutive of clitic doubling, one very important distinctive will be assumed throughout this paper, namely, that doubled NPs, as in (1) and (2), Juán...
and ha-more 'the teacher', are in ARGUMENTAL positions (A-positions) (e.g., Jaeggli 1982, pp. 15ff; Borer 1984, pp. 35ff). That is, doubled NPs occur in positions subcategorized by the phrasal head, from which they also receive their THEMATIC ROLE (θ-role). In (3) and (4), however, the coreferent NPs, the man and Jean are in NONARGUMENTAL positions (Ā-positions), and are not directly assigned a θ-role by any element within the clause.¹ Another relevant, though less important, difference between the sentences in (1) and (2) as opposed to (3) and (4) is the obligatory presence of the adpositions a 'to' and šel 'of', respectively, in (1) and (2). A common account of this latter property is that clitics 'absorb' the syntactic case (henceforth Case) normally assigned by the head to its complement, forcing the doubled NP to receive its Case via the insertion of an adposition (or some similar device).² In nondoubled examples such as (3) and (4), the Case of the coreferent NP is totally unaffected by the presence of the clitic (hence no special preposition need precede the man or Jean).

Clitic doubling has attracted a great deal of attention in recent years in both formal linguistics (e.g., Jaeggli, 1982; Borer, 1984; Aoun, 1981) and typological studies (e.g., Givón, 1976; Shaul, 1983). This interest derives from the fact that clitics have been shown to be a rich source of insights into principles of Case assignment, thematic structure, agreement, empty categories, and other components of UNIVERSAL GRAMMAR (UG).³

This paper contributes to a formal model of clitics via a detailed study of clitic doubling in Pirahã. It is argued that the differences between Pirahã clitics and those in better known languages must be understood as resulting from cross-linguistic variation in clitics themselves, rather than their containing configurations, along the lines suggested in Aoun (1981). The discussion is presented in terms of GOVERNMENT and BINDING THEORY (Chomsky, 1981, 1982, 1986a, 1986b).

¹ See Kayne (1983) on French. In the English example, the man is in an Ā-position (e.g., Topic) rather than an A-position, such as subject. To see this, consider:

(i) Nobody came.
(ii) *Nobody he came.

Bare quantifiers like nobody, who, etc., can generally only be generated in A-positions. In (i) nobody is subject, an A-position. But in (ii) it is an Ā-position (cf. the man in (3) in the text) and thus (ii) is ungrammatical.

² The precise role of Case is discussed in section 1.1.2. below. See Borer (1984, pp. 36ff) for a clear statement of the Case-absorption hypothesis.

³ Universal Grammar refers to the innate human capacity for language, as elaborated by Chomsky in various works including the references cited in this paper.