

# **Clustering of sentence-level grammatical elements (clitics): cross-linguistic evidence**

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– In his famous article (Über einen Gesetz der indogermanischen Wortstellung, 1892), Jacob Wackernagel wrote about *2-nd position enclitics* in ancient Greek, Sanskrit, Latin, and Gothic. Wackernagel's clitics are believed to be sentence-level grammatical elements.

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- The umbrella-term *clitic* was proposed by Zwicky (1977, 1985). Anderson (1992, 2005) proposed definitions of “phonological” and “morphosyntactic” clitics.

**Phonological clitic** (Anderson 2005: 23):

A linguistic element whose phonological form is deficient in that it lacks prosodic structure at the level of the (Prosodic) Word.

**Morphosyntactic clitic** (Anderson 2005: 31):

A linguistic element whose position with respect to the other elements of the phrase or clause follows a distinct set of principles, separate from those of the independently motivated syntax of free elements in the language.

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- In Generative Grammar, clitics are often believed to manifest a cross-linguistic category belonging to the UG (e.g. Cardinaletti & Starke 1999).
- In the spirit of denial of the possibility to “diagnose” the “pre-established” cross-linguistic categories that are claimed not to exist, Martin Haspelmath (2015) also denies the existence of any cross-linguistically definable boundary between morphology and syntax.

# Haspelmath, 2011:



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“We need comparative concepts that are universally applicable”

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“Different phonological criteria may lead to different conclusions about phonological dependence... different phonological criteria often give different results for the determination of phonological-word domains” (e.g. stress and vowel harmony in Turkish)

## Turkish (Kabak & Vogel 2011):

<p><i>ki</i> (nominalizer): outside the stress domain and vowel harmony domain.</p> <p>a. év ‘house’  b. ev-dé ‘in the house’  c. [ev-dé]-ki ‘(the one) in the house’  d. baş ‘head’  e. baş-tá ‘in the head’  f. [baş-tá]-ki ‘the one in the head’ (no harmony: *baş-tá-kı)</p>	<p><i>mi/mi/mu/mü</i> (polar question): outside the stress domain, inside the vowel harmony domain.</p> <p>[git-tí] mi?  ‘Did s/he come?’</p> <p>[ol-dú] mu?  ‘Was s/he?’</p>	<p><i>yor</i> (progressive): inside the stress domain, outside the vowel harmony domain</p> <p>gid-i-yór-um  ‘I am going’</p>
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## How many nuts make a pile?





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### **Minimorph (= bound morph(eme)? = grammatical morpheme):**

a morph with a meaning that is normally omitted in translation into some other language without significant loss of content (i.e. a meaning that could easily be inferred from context, or a meaning that makes a small, subtle contribution)

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### **Problem with this definition:**

Many roots also cannot form utterances on their own and only occur together with bound morphs.

## **Second-position clitics:**

## **Second-position clitics:**

Bound morphs (=minimorphs, grammatical morphemes) that occur after the first phonetic word or the first constituent of a sentence independently of the grammatical class it (= its root) belongs to. They may cluster with each (but do not necessarily need to).



## Ossetic:

um            wal            dam iw        æj            vaʒ  
there        still            CIT HAB 3SG.GEN leave.IMP  
They say, leave her/him there (for now) [Abaev 1949: 535]

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## Old Russian:

kako že        mi        jesi        samə        reklə  
how EMPH 1SG.DAT COP.2SG yourself say-PP.M.SG  
Exactly in the way you said it to me yourself [Zaliznyak 2008:  
24]

## **2P clusters in different languages**

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“Adverbial” particles						Pronominal clitics			
Additive 1	Contrastive Topic	Additive 2	“still, yet, more”	Quotative	Iterative	Dat/Dir/Ap ellative	Gen (Dir.Obj)	Inessive	Ablative

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Pashto (Zimmerling 2012):

TAM		Pronominal Clitics			Modality	Pronominal clitic	Temporal adv.
Epistemic modality (“sure”)	Future tense	Pronoun 1, 2 PL	Pronoun 1, 2 PL	Pronoun 1SG	Deontic Modality: 2SG	Pronoun 3PL	“then”

## Old Russian (Zaliznyak 2008):

Modality & Illocutionary force					Clitic pronouns		Copulas
Contrastive/Emp	Question	«because»	Allocutive <2SG.DAT(?) (ti)	COP.IRREALIS (by)	Dative Pronominal clitics	Accusative pronominal clitics	Present copulas

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## Warlpiri (Zimmerling 2012):

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## Tagalog (Schachter 1972):

Pronouns	Modals+Illocutionary force	Pronouns
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**Do clusters of comparable nature occur in other positions?**

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**Yes!**

*Mandarin Chinese:*

tā mǎi fángzi le ma?

3SG buy house MIR Q

Did (s)he buy a house? (Li & Thompson: 238)

*Japanese:*

Sore dake ka ne?

only it Q ALLOC

Only it, right? [Alpatov et al.: 464]

# **Utterance-final cluster in Buryat:** (Panov 2016)

## Utterance-final cluster in Buryat: (Panov 2016)

9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Sentential negation	Epsistemi c modals & their combina- tions; mirative	discontinu ous past	Tag question markers	Polar question particle, informati on question particle	Subject argument markers	Existential copula- based con- firmative particles	Appellati ve	Quotative

# **Utterance-final cluster of Mandarin:** (Paul & Pan 2017)

## Utterance-final cluster of Mandarin: (Paul & Pan 2017)

tense+aspect	focus	Illocutionary force	epistemic modality+interpersonal level
currently relevant state+mirative, recent past	only	adversative, confirmative, polar question	softening, gentle reminder, impatience, dogmatic assertion, epistemic inference

## Utterance-intial cluster:



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Welsh:

(Borsley et al. 2007)

Polar and Wh-question, affirmative, negation, relativizer	Accusative pronouns
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# Utterance-initial particles followed by 2P cluster:

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Tamashek Tuareg:  
(Heath 2005)

Initial stressed elements	Dir/Ind object pronouns	Directionals	Locatives
Future / Imperfect / Negation	If 1 person present: 1P > Non-1P	“from the speaker” / “toward the speaker”	Localization pronouns
	No 1 person present: Acc-Dat (?)		

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# **The position of Lithuanian polar question particle:**

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Ar tu nori alaus?

Q 2SG want-2SG beer-GEN.SG.

Do you want some beer?



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Ar nori alaus?

Tu ar nori alaus? (colloquial)

## Some claims and some questions:

- There are several cross-linguistically comparable positions in which clause-level grammatical elements tend to occur and form clusters.
- Not verb-adjacent: crucial or not?
- There is a significant overlap between functions expressed by this kind of elements in different positions; there is also cross-linguistic evidence of this overlap.

# **Recurrent functions of clustering sentence-level grammatical elements:**

## **Recurrent functions of clustering sentence-level grammatical elements:**

- Illocutionary force (interrogative / declarative)
- Modality (various types)
- Copulas (various types)
- Sentential negation
- Tense & Aspect (usually with modal connotations)
- Spatial meanings (~ preverbs / satellites)
- Allocutives
- Argument markers (direct & indirect objects > subjects)
- Discourse cohesion markers (“then”, “and”)
- Relativizers

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- It is sensible to extend the typological studies of “verbal” grammatical categories to elements of this kind as well. Cross-linguistically, there seem to be no “verbal” grammatical categories, but sentence-level grammatical categories to a larger or smaller extent associated with the verbal stem. The extent verb-adjacency of different categories varies cross-linguistically. Typological hierarchies of grammatical markers like (Cinque, 1999) and others should not exclude clause-level markers not adjacent to the verb.

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- The cross-linguistic study of elements clusterizing in utterance-initial, second and utterance-final positions is as important as study of verbal “affixes”. Both should constitute one theory.

**Thank you!**  
**Ačiū!**