

## Second Position Clitics in the $\nu$ P Phase: The Case of the Armenian Auxiliary

Second position clitics have been found across different languages (e.g. Serbo-Croatian, Bulgarian, Cypriot, Pashto, among others) and have been an important topic of research in the linguistic literature. These clitics appear either on the first word or the first constituent in the sentence (cf. Halpern 1995). Syntactic approaches have typically analyzed these clitics as occupying a high functional projection in the clause structure such as C while the host element moves to the specifier position in CP. In this paper, we provide evidence for the existence of a second position clitic in the lower  $\nu$ P domain in Eastern Armenian (EA) and posit that this is expected given the parallel between the CP and the  $\nu$ P in recent syntactic literature, in particular their status as phases in the Minimalist framework (e.g., Chomsky 2001).

The verbal auxiliary in EA is a clitic that carries tense and agreement features and appears on seemingly unrelated elements in focus-neutral sentences (1).

- (1)
- |    |                                 |               |                         |             |                       |                       |                         |
|----|---------------------------------|---------------|-------------------------|-------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| a. | šun-ə                           | <u>vaz-um</u> | <b>a</b>                |             |                       | <i>on the verb</i>    |                         |
|    | dog- SP                         | run- PROG     | be-3SG.PRES             |             |                       |                       |                         |
|    | ‘The dog is running.’           |               |                         |             |                       |                       |                         |
| b. | Ara-n                           | gišerner-ə    | <u>girk<sup>h</sup></u> | <b>a</b>    | kart <sup>h</sup> -um | <i>on the object</i>  |                         |
|    | Ara- SP                         | nights- SP    | book                    | be-3SG.PRES | read- PROG            |                       |                         |
|    | ‘Ara reads books at night.’     |               |                         |             |                       |                       |                         |
| c. | es                              | təqe-n        | <u>arag</u>             | <b>a</b>    | girk <sup>h</sup>     | kart <sup>h</sup> -um | <i>on manner adverb</i> |
|    | this                            | boy- SP       | fast                    | be-3SG.PRES | book                  | read- PROG            |                         |
|    | ‘This boy reads books quickly.’ |               |                         |             |                       |                       |                         |

Based on an investigation of the syntactic and prosodic properties of these constructions, we argue that in all these instances, the auxiliary surfaces on the element at the leftmost edge of the verbal domain. We therefore propose that the clitic should be analyzed as occupying the second position in the  $\nu$ P phase projection thus providing a uniform solution to the puzzling positional distribution of this clitic.

Although the clitic always surfaces on the element carrying the main stress in the clause in (1), evidence from EA seems to undermine a prosodic or phonological analysis. Hence, when main stress is inside a more complex nonspecific object, the auxiliary follows the whole object NP, rather than the word with main stress (2) (cf. behavior of second position clitics in Serbo-Croatian, e.g. Boskovic 2001) We argue that the position of the clitic is determined independently from the computation of sentential stress, but both are derived from the syntactic structure at the phase domain.

- (2)
- |    |  |                                   |             |              |           |         |
|----|--|-----------------------------------|-------------|--------------|-----------|---------|
| a. | yerex-erk-ə                            | [ <i>me hat <u>metz</u> muk</i> ] | <b>en</b>   |              |           | č'ar-el |
|    | child-PL-SP                            | one CL big mouse                  | be-3PL.PRES | find-PERF    |           |         |
|    | ‘The children have found a big mouse.’ |                                   |             |              |           |         |
| b. | *yerex-erk-ə                           | [ <i>me hat <u>metz</u></i>       | <b>en</b>   | <i>muk</i> ] |           | č'ar-el |
|    | child-PL-SP                            | one CL big                        | be-3PL.PRES | mouse        | find-PERF |         |

In this paper, we present clitic data not previously discussed in the literature and provide a novel analysis by arguing for an instance of a second position clitic in EA within the  $vP$  phase. The analysis has implications for the growing literature on the syntax-phonology interface and the parallel between the  $vP$  and CP domains.