

## On the domain of second position clitics

Arsalan Kahnemuyipour (Syracuse University) and Karine Megerdooimian (MITRE)

The auxiliary verb in Eastern Armenian (EA) is a clitic that carries tense and agreement and appears on seemingly unrelated elements (1) (underlining indicates main clausal stress). Linguistic analyses have identified two main categories of *special* clitics (in the sense of Zwicky 1977): (i) second position clitics that must appear as the second element in a clause; and (ii) verb-adjacent clitics that take the verb as their host. However, the EA auxiliary defies classification in these major categories: It remains low in the main clause in neutral contexts and does not occupy the second position in the sentence (1c). Nor does it have to be adjacent to the main verb (1d).

The goal of this paper is to account for the puzzling positional distribution of this clitic. A closer investigation reveals a clear hierarchy of the elements that host the auxiliary, schematized in (2). We argue that the auxiliary is a case of a second position clitic within the  $vP$  domain, akin to the second position phenomena observed across languages in the CP domain (e.g., Bošković 2001 for Serbo-Croatian, Roberts 2001 for Pashto). According to our proposal, the auxiliary follows the highest element in the spell-out domain of the lower  $vP$  phase. As such, we draw heavily on the parallel between CP and  $vP$  in recent syntactic literature, in particular their status as phases in the minimalist framework (e.g., Chomsky 2001).

The interaction between the clitic and focus introduces another fascinating dimension to the question of the EA clitic's distribution. In focused contexts, the clitic appears after the focused constituent (3). We argue that the position of the auxiliary in this case is the result of its movement to a focus head (akin to Brody's 1995 proposal for verb movement in Hungarian) followed by movement of the focused constituent to SpecFocP. An intriguing question arises as to what unifies the distribution of the auxiliary in the focused and non-focused contexts. We explore the hypothesis that in both contexts it is the phasal structure that determines the domain of second position clisis. Under this view, a focus head, just like C or  $v$ , is taken to induce a phasal boundary (reminiscent of proposals with respect to focus marking prosodic phrase boundaries, see Kanerva 1990, Truckenbrodt 1995, among others).

We further argue that the position of the clitic is syntactically determined independently from the computation of sentential stress. While the clitic may appear to follow the element carrying the main stress in the clause, behaving as a prosodic clitic (Tamrazian 1994), further evidence from EA seems to undermine the prosodic/phonological analysis. For instance, when main stress is on an element inside a more complex nonspecific object, the auxiliary follows the whole object NP, rather than the word with main stress and shows no splitting effects. Similarly, in focused contexts, when focus and highest stress are on an element within a larger constituent, the auxiliary follows the whole constituent (4). We suggest that the apparent correspondence between the placement of the auxiliary and primary stress follows from the mechanics of how each is computed with reference to phasal domains such that the structural height of the constituent prior to spell-out determines both prosody (stress assignment) and clitic placement.

In this paper, we provide a novel analysis of the distribution of the EA auxiliary in focused and non-focused contexts. The Armenian auxiliary emerges as an interesting example of a second position phenomenon, where second position is computed with respect to phasal domains rather than the more traditionally postulated clausal domain. The analysis has implications for the growing literature on the syntax-phonology interface and the parallel between the  $vP$  and CP domains.

