Nsyilxcn (a.k.a. Okanagan) and Nxaʔamxčín (a.k.a. Moses-Columbian) are closely related Interior Salish languages. Typical of Salish languages (cf. Gerds & Werle 2014, Huijsmans 2015), they have a wide range of particles, clitics in many cases, with various functions, e.g., mood, modality, emphasis, etc. The prosodic behaviour of these clitics differs markedly but consistently between the languages; our paper develops a theoretical analysis of this variation.

For Nsyilxcn, Lyon (2018a) discusses particles traditionally analyzed as clitics by Mattina (1973), and shows that clitics may be grouped into an ‘inner’, phonologically-integrated domain, and an ‘outer’, less phonologically-integrated domain. Inner clitics (e.g., absolutive subject in (1) and future mi in (1,2)) must attach prosodically to the main predicate as a host, while outer clitics (e.g., the question particle ha in (2)) may attach to an adverb or pre-predicative DP.

(1) \_mi\_k\^u\_x\^ůy.  (2) \_ha\_i\_yámx\^a\_mi\_k\^i[n]-nt-x\^w\
FUT\_1PL.ABS\_go Q\_DET\_basket FUT\_take\_DIR\_2SG.ERG

Let’s go.  Is it the basket you’re going to take?

Nsyilxcn clitics mi ‘future’ (and ki? ‘adjunct focus’) occur in the middle of a clause (in and around Tense; Lyon 2018b), and share properties of both inner and outer clitics, however outer clitics will always precede mi or ki? in a sentence, while other inner clitics must follow.

Very few clitics in Nsyilxcn can occur in more than one position relative to their host (excepting the question particle ha). However for Nxaʔamxčín, many clitics can vary their position (Czaykowska-Higgins 2018), as shown for example with the absolutive subject and question clitics in (3) and (4). It is a striking fact that the order of clitics in (4) mirrors that in (3). These examples illustrate a general pattern in Nxaʔamxčín whereby certain ‘inner’ clitics must occur closer to their prosodic host than other clitics, albeit without regard to strict linearity. There seems to be free variation with respect to the ordering illustrated in (3) and (4) in Nxaʔamxčín, though the equivalent of (4) is not possible in Nsyilxcn.

(3) \_sá\_k\^p\_k-paq\^q\^-ána\_?  (4) \_šχawiymix\_k\^p\_a\_?
Q 2PL.ABS DRV\_spill\_RED\_ear hungry 2PL.ABS Q

Did it spill on you folks?  Are you folks hungry?

Our analysis utilizes Selkirk’s (1995) prosodic hierarchy: inner clitics which show phonological integration with their host are parsed as part of the same prosodic word (\(\omega\)), whereas outer clitics, which do not, are parsed into a phonological phrase (\(\varphi\)). Such a parsing of (3,4) will yield (5,6):

(5) \(\_\varphi\_sá\_o\_k\^p\_k-paq\^q\^-ána\_?)  (6) \(\_\varphi\_\_šχawiymix\_k\^p\_a\_?)

We claim that the clitic syntax in (3,4) is identical: While a syntactic account of the ordering in (4) must be derived by optional head movement; our phonological account instead linearizes a clitic according to the prosodic level at which it is parsed. Linear alignment constraints also play a part: a family of STAY constraints (Agbayani & Golston 2010) tailored to specific phonological units assure linear correspondence is satisfied, as in (5), unless outranked by a family of STRONG-START constraints (Selkirk 2011), which derive the mirror image (6). Restricted partial constraint orderings (Antilla 2001) derive free variation, predicting only certain linearizations within a larger clitic mirror. Nsyilxcn (nearly) always favours STAY > STRONG-START.

Nevertheless, certain clitics (e.g. Nxaʔamxčín a\^i\_ ‘past tense’) do not conform to such mirroring. We explore the possibility that these exceptions involve syntactically local constituents, interacting phonologically via a mechanism which works in tandem with, yet overrules, the linearity derived via STAY or STRONG-START constraints.
Linearizing Clitics in Two Interior Salish Languages: Nsyilxcen and Nxaʔamxčín
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References: