Subject and Object Clitic Pronouns in Valdostan Francoprovençal:The Fenisan Variety

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Abstract

Subject clitics (SCLs) are a debated topic regarding their structural position and their categorial status. Accounting for a phenomenon he observed in some Francoprovencal varieties and that he calls `OCL-for-SCL', Roberts (2015, 2018b) proposes that SCLs in Francoprovencal are the result of the morphophonological process of fission. Focusing on a particular variety of Francoprovencal (the Fenisan Francoprovencal, or FFP), and based on Roberts' (2010) approach of cliticization as incorporation, this study shows that Roberts' proposal on the nature of SCLs in Francoprovencal cannot account for the data in FFP. Relying on the behavior of subject and object clitics with lexical and functional verbs, I show that SCLs in FFP are better analyzed as syntactic objects base-generated in argumental position inside the vP/VP domain. FFP also provides new arguments for considering both the auxiliary and possessive verb have and both the auxiliary and copular verb be as functional verbs, as the clitics behave differently with these verbs contrary to lexical verbs. This study also shows that there can be a direct interface between syntax and phonology regarding the representation of clitic pronouns.

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1 Introduction

Francoprovençal is a Gallo-Romance language that was initially spoken in an area covering French-speaking Switzerland (with the exception of the canton of Jura), a major part of the former Rhône-Alpes region in the east of France and, in Italy, the Aosta Valley, west Piedmont and two villages in the southern Italian region of Apulia. Recent studies (Unio 2020, Regis 2019, Diémoz 2017, Pivot 2017) showed that the Aosta Valley is the only place where Francoprovençal is still a living language.

As Kristol (2016:350) writes, "what we call 'Francoprovençal' is not 'a' language but a collection of speech varieties displaying a common linguistic typology yet an extremely high degree of dialect fragmentation [which] has (…) never experienced any linguistic standardization." Therefore, it is better considered as a group of varieties, which share some fundamental properties.

Diémoz (2007) clearly illustrated in her PhD dissertation that each village, at least in the Aosta Valley, has its own variety, which exhibits morphosyntactic specificities significantly distinct from each other. For this research, I focus on the Francoprovençal variety spoken in the town of Fenis, located a few kilometers to the East of the City of Aosta. I will call this variety 'Fenisan Francoprovençal' (henceforth *FFP*).

Based on Roberts' proposal that cliticization is incorporation (2010) and that clitics are generated in an extended nominal projection (2018a), this study shows that Roberts' (2015, 2018b) analysis of the phenomenon he calls 'OCL-for-SCL' cannot account for the data in FFP and that the subject clitics (SCLs) in FFP are better analyzed as syntactic objects base-generated in argumental position inside the vP/VP domain. FFP also provides new arguments for considering both the auxiliary and possessive verb *have* and both the auxiliary and copular verb *be* as functional verbs, as the clitics behave uniformly with these verbs, differently from lexical verbs. This study also shows that there can be a direct interface between syntax and phonology regarding the representation of clitic pronouns.

This paper is structured as follows. In section 2, I present the SCL constructions in FFP. In section 3, I discuss Roberts' (2015, 2018b) proposal regarding the interaction of subject clitics and object clitics in some Francoprovençal varieties, and show that it cannot account for the data in FFP. In section 4, I present the cliticization mechanism I adopt, following Roberts (2010), and discuss in greater detail the phenomenon of rime elision that clitics undergo in FFP. I argue that this phenomenon has two components, a syntactic one and a phonological one, and that both are necessary for elision to apply. In section 5, I present my conclusions.

2 Subject Clitics in FFP

At first sight, the behavior of subject clitics (SCLs) in FFP seems rather opaque. There is a complete paradigm, as each person has its own SCL (excepting 3sg and 3pl SCLs that are homophonous), but not all SCLs are obligatory. When attached (as proclitics) to lexical verbs, SCLs have the same form regardless of whether the verb begins with a vowel or with a consonant. They also have the same distribution, namely, 2sg, 3sg and 3pl are obligatory while the three others are optional (see examples (1) and (2)).[1]

*I am grateful to all the native speakers of Fenisan Francoprovençal and other varieties of Francoprovençal who provided me data and grammaticality judgements. I am also deeply grateful to Ur Shlonsky for our numerous discussions and his helpful comments.

[1]As Francoprovençal has no widely consensual written convention, I use the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) to write it. For the other languages, I use the usual spelling. When Francoprovençal is cited, I reproduce the spelling used by the author.

(1)	1sg	(dzʏ)	ˈpekɔ	1pl	(nɔ)	piˈkɛn	
		SCL.1SG	eat.1SG		SCL.1PL	eat.1PL	
		‘I eat/I’m eating.’					
	2sg	ty	ˈpekɛ	2pl	(vɔ)	piˈkodɛ	
		SCL.2SG	eat.SG		SCL.2PL	eat.2PL	
	3sg	i	ˈpekɛ	3pl	i	ˈpekʊŋ	
		SCL.3	eat.SG		SCL.3	eat.3PL	

(2)	1sg	(dzʏ)	aˈkuktɔ	1pl	(nɔ)	akukˈtɛn	
		SCL.1SG	listen.1SG		SCL.1PL	listen.1PL	
		‘I listen/I’m listening.’					
	2sg	ty	aˈkuktɛ	2pl	(vɔ)	akukˈtodɛ	
		SCL.2SG	listen.SG		SCL.2PL	listen.2PL	
	3sg	i	aˈkuktɛ	3pl	i	aˈkuktʊŋ	
		SCL.3	listen.SG		SCL.3	listen.3PL	

The situation is different with the verb *aˈvi* (*to have*), whose paradigm in present tense is given in 0. All SCLs undergo an elision and only maintain their consonantal onset and, in addition, they are all obligatory.

(3)	1sg	dz	e	ˈtʁɛj	miŋˈnu[2]	1pl	n	ɛn	ˈtʁɛj	miŋˈnu
		SCL.1SG	have.1SG	three	child[3]		SCL.1PL	have.1PL	three	child
		‘I have three children.’								
	2sg	t	o	ˈtʁɛj	miŋˈnu	2pl	v	ɛj	ˈtʁɛj	miŋˈnu
		SCL.2SG	have.2SG	three	child		SCL.2PL	have.2PL	three	child
	3sg	j	a	ˈtʁɛj	miŋˈnu	3pl	j	ɑ̃	ˈtʁɛj	miŋˈnu
		SCL.3	have.3SG	three	child		SCL.3	have.3PL	three	child

With *ˈitʁɛ* (*to be*), SCLs undergo obligatory elision and are obligatory only when the verbal form begins with a vowel, i.e., 2sg, 3sg and 2pl. The other SCLs have a syllabic form and are optional.

(4)	1sg	(dzʏ)	ˈʔi	laˈɲa	1pl	(nɔ)	ˈʔɛn	laˈɲa	
		SCL.1SG	be.1SG	tired		SCL.1PL	be.1PL	tired	
		‘I am tired.’							
	2sg	t	ˈi	laˈɲa	2pl	v	ˈitɛ	laˈɲa	
		SCL.2SG	be.2SG	tired		SCL.2PL	be.2PL	tired	
	3sg	l[4]	ˈɛ	laˈɲa	3pl	(i)	ˈʔʊŋ	laˈɲa	
		SCL.3	be.3SG	tired		SCL.3	be.3PL	tired	

How can we account for the different behavior of SCLs? Examples (1) to (4) clearly show that the distinction is not simply phonological. I propose that this paradigm is syntactically conditioned and linked to the verb’s type (lexical vs. functional) and that there is a second component, which is phonological and needs a specific structural configuration to apply.

One should note that in FFP, as in many other languages, the verb *aˈvi* (*to have*) has two functions. It can be an auxiliary or a possessive verb. Example (3) gives its paradigm as a possessive verb and example (5) shows its use as an auxiliary.

[2]As in many other Valdostan Francoprovençal varieties, *dz’e* freely alternates with the form *n’i*. I will not address that issue in this paper.

[3]Masculine nouns do not have any number inflection. I thus use singular by default in the English gloss.

[4]The particular form *l* for the 3sg SCL is not surprising per se, as it is the most common diachronic evolution from Latin strong pronoun *ille* in front of a verb beginning with a vowel. What is more surprising is the fact that this form occurs only with the verb *ˈitʁɛ* and not with any other verb.

(5)	1sg	dz	e	ˈfe	dɛ	ˈʁis[5]	1pl	n	ɛn	ˈfe	dɛ	ˈʁis
		SCL.1SG	have.1SG	made	some	rice		SCL.1PL	have.1PL	made	some	rice
		‘I cooked some rice.’										
	2sg	t	o	ˈfe	dɛ	ˈʁis	2pl	v	ɛj	ˈfe	dɛ	ˈʁis
		SCL.2SG	have.2SG	made	some	rice		SCL.2PL	have.2PL	made	some	rice
	3sg	j	a	ˈfe	dɛ	ˈʁis	3pl	j	ɑ̃	ˈfe	dɛ	ˈʁis
		SCL.3	have.3SG	made	some	rice		SCL.3	have.3PL	made	some	rice

We can observe from examples (3) and (5) that SCLs have the same behavior and the same form with the auxiliary and the possessive verb. The SCLs undergo elision of their final vowel and only maintain their consonantal onset.[6] The similarity of these pronominal forms to those occurring with lexical verbs (see (1) and (2)) argues in favor of the hypothesis that there is only one series of SCLs, but that an additional phonological process occurs with *aˈvi* (*to have*), which renders the elision of the vowel obligatory. We can also observe that all SCLs are obligatory with *aˈvi*, contrary to lexical verbs, as already mentioned.

Of course, we must ensure that the behavior of the SLCs with *aˈvi* (*to have*) is not due to the metrical structure of this verb. Although *aˈvi* in present tense is the only verb that has monosyllabic verbal forms beginning with a vowel, the same SCL paradigm is manifested in all other tenses and moods including those that have bi- or trisyllabic verbal forms (see (6) for the past tense).

(6)	1sg	dz	aˈvijɔ	ˈtʁɛj	ˈtsat[7]		1pl	n	aˈviŋ	ˈtʁɛj	ˈtsat	
		SCL.1SG	had.1SG	three	cat			SCL.1PL	had.1PL	three	cat	
		‘I had three cats.’										
	2sg	t	aˈvijɛ	ˈtʁɛj	ˈtsat		2pl	v	aˈvik	ˈtʁɛj	ˈtsat	
		SCL.2SG	had.SG	three	cat			SCL.2PL	had.2PL	three	cat	
	3sg	j	aˈvijɛ	ˈtʁɛj	ˈtsat		3pl	j	aˈvijʊŋ	ˈtʁɛj	ˈtsat	
		SCL.3	had.SG	three	cat			SCL.3	had.3PL	three	cat	

Comparing (2) and (6), we observe that the SCLs do not behave in the same way with *aˈvi* and with lexical verbs, even if they have the same metrical structure and begin with the same vowel. The constraint that SCLs undergo with *aˈvi* is therefore not purely phonological but is linked to the type of verb. As the auxiliary and the possessive verb have the same SCLs paradigm, this means that these two verbs have similar properties and that the possessive verb is a functional verb, as proposed by Kayne (1993) and Levinson (2011), among others.

The situation is similar with the verb *ˈitʁɛ* (*to be*), which also has two functions in FFP, as a copula (see (4)) and as an auxiliary (see (7)).

(7)	1sg	(dzʏ)	ˈʔi	aˈlo		1pl	(nɔ)	ˈʔɛn	aˈlo	
		SCL.1SG	be.1SG	gone			SCL.1PL	be.1PL	gone	
		‘I went…’								
	2sg	t	ˈi	aˈlo		2pl	v	ˈitɛ	aˈlo	
		SCL.2SG	be.2SG	gone			SCL.2PL	be.2PL	gone	
	3sg	l	ˈɛ(t)	aˈlo		3pl	(i)	ˈʔʊŋ	aˈlo	
		SCL.3	be.3SG	gone			SCL.3	be.3PL	gone	

In the same way as auxiliary and possessive *aˈvi* (*to have*) have the same clitic paradigm, SCLs have the same behavior with auxiliary (7) and copular (4) *ˈitʁɛ* (*to be*). As mentioned above, SCLs undergo elision only when the verb begins with a vowel, i.e., in 2sg, 3sg and 2pl. I will refer to *aˈvi* (*to have*) and *ˈitʁɛ* (*to be*) as ‘functional verbs.’ Modal verbs in FFP behave like lexical verbs, similarly to French.

Regarding the definition of clitic pronouns, I follow the seminal work of Cardinaletti and Starke

[5]The same *dz’e* / *n’i* alternation occurs with the auxiliary and the possessive verb.

[6]The process is slightly different with 3sg and 3pl SCLs, but this has no influence on the proposed analysis.

[7]The same alternation between *dz* and *n* occurs for the 1sg SCL in all tenses.

(1999) that divides pronouns into three categories: strong pronouns, weak pronouns, and clitic pronouns. It is noteworthy that both the syllabic form and the elided form of SCLs in FFP behave uniformly with respect to the usual tests for clitic status (Poletto 2000, Kayne 1975, Cardinaletti 2015, among others). Syllabic and elided SCLs cannot appear in isolation, cannot be coordinated, cannot be modified, cannot be objects of prepositions, cannot be separated from their verbal host (except by another clitic) and cannot bear word stress.

The situation in FFP is hence peculiar. With lexical verbs, there is no influence on the clitic by the consonantal or vocalic onset of the verb, while there is with functional verbs. To clarify this issue, let us consider Roberts' (2015, 2018b) proposal on the nature of the SCL occurring with the auxiliary in other Valdostan Francoprovençal (henceforth *VFP*) varieties.

3 'OCL-for-SCL'

Roberts (1993, 2015, 2018b) observed in some VFP varieties that an SCL is obligatorily cliticized to the left of the auxiliary (i.e., in proclisis), while object clitics (OCLs) appear in enclisis on the past participle (see (8a)). Crucially, when an OCL appears in proclisis on the auxiliary, it somehow steals the SCL position, and no SCL is possible (see (8b)). Roberts calls this phenomenon 'OCL-for-SCL'.

(8) a. Gnunc l' a viu -me
noone 3SG.SCL= has seen =1SG.ACC
'No one has seen me.'
(Valdostan of Ayas (Roberts 2018b:257))

b. Gnunc m' a viu
noone 1SG.OCL= has seen
'No one has seen me.'

It is to note that this is not a kind of 'one clitic per head' restriction, because two OCLs can appear in proclisis, as example (9) (VFP variety of Saint-Nicolas) shows.

(9) tə nɔ= l= ˈa ˈdza dəmanˈdo
SCL.2SG CL.DAT.1PL= CL.ACC.3SG= have.2SG already asked
'You already asked it to us.'

Like many other authors, Roberts takes OCLs to be generated as complements of V. In his proposal, however, subject clitics are the result of the morpho-phonological process of fission. Fission is a process developed in Distributed Morphology (Halle & Marantz 1993), which divides the features of a head to create a separate morpheme. As resumed by González Poot and McGinnis (2006), "an underspecified VI (Vocabulary Item) is inserted into a terminal node, but only some of the node's features are morphologically discharged (…). Any remaining features then fission off to form a subsidiary morpheme, into which another VI from the same list is inserted (…). As a result, one syntactic terminal node yields two morphological positions."

Therefore, for Roberts, there is fission on T that divides T's φ-features and creates SCLs. In other words, the moved auxiliary does not fully morphologically map the featural specification of T, and the remaining features form the SCL. These features must consequently be φ-features or a D-feature. In Roberts' proposal, the 'OCL-for-SCL' phenomenon derives from the fact that the presence of the proclitic OCL blocks fission in some way.

3.1 SCLs elision in Fenisan Francoprovençal

Yet, Roberts' analysis does not fully account for SCLs in FFP. The first problem with Roberts' approach is that it is restricted to subject pronouns occurring with an auxiliary. However, in FFP SCLs may appear with both auxiliary and lexical verbs, as in (1), (2), (5) and (7). These clitics differ phonologically, as we have already seen: when SCLs appear with a functional verb beginning with a vowel, their rime is elided, as in (5) and (7). I refer to this phenomenon as 'rime elision' because this process applies to the whole rime, eliding not only the vowel which forms the nucleus of the

syllable but the coda of the clitic as well, as we will see in section 3.2 with the partitive clitic. If fission is limited to auxiliaries, as in Roberts' proposal, that would mean that the elided SCLs and the syllabic ones are not generated by the same process. Since the SCLs that occur with functional verbs are the elided forms of those that occur with lexical verbs, there is no reason to postulate two different series of SCLs. Those that occur with lexical verbs should be generated by the same process that generates those that occur with functional verbs. Moreover, if we extend Roberts' DM proposal and claim that all SCLs are generated by fission of T's φ-features, regardless of the type of verb that moves to T, the elision process that characterizes cliticization to functional verbs would require an independent explanation. This is so because in SCLs, person and number features (and presumably D) are represented on the consonantal onset and not on the elided rime. We would thus be led to postulate an arbitrary morphological rule to account for the difference between functional and lexical verbs regarding rime elision. Therefore, this difference regarding elision cannot be linked to T and cannot be explained if SCLs are all generated by the fission of the φ-features on T.

3.2 OCLs in Fenisan Francoprovençal

The second observation arguing against the generation of SCLs by fission of T's φ-features is that with the verb *aˈvi* (*to have*), obligatory rime elision applies to all clitics, not only to SCLs.

Looking first at OCLs, we observe that they also undergo obligatory elision with *aˈvi*, as in (10a), while elision is not obligatory with lexical verbs, as in (10b).

(10) a. (dzʏ) l(*ɔ) ˈe ˈmɛ
SCL.1SG CL.ACC.3SG.M have.1SG STR.PRON.1
'I have it.'
b. l(ɔ) aˈtsøtɔ pwe dʏˈmaŋ
CL.ACC.3SG.M buy.1SG FUT tomorrow
'I will buy it tomorrow.'

The partitive clitic manifests the same distribution: it undergoes obligatory elision of its rime when it is cliticized to *aˈvi*, as we can see in (11a), while it appears in its syllabic form when cliticized to a lexical verb, as in (11b).

(11) a. ty n(*ɛn) aˈvijɛ ˈtʁɛj
SCL.2SG CL.PART. had.SG three
'You had three (of them).'
b. nɛn aˈtsøtɔ pwe dʏˈmaŋ
CL.PART buy.1SG FUT tomorrow
'I will buy some tomorrow.'

One might assume that all clitics are merged on T so that fission would then result in elision on all clitics. However, there is clear evidence that OCLs are not generated on T. Indeed, in FFP, while OCLs and the partitive clitic are proclitics with finite lexical verbs (see (10) and (11)), they must appear in enclisis on the past participle in periphrastic tenses, with the auxiliary *aˈvi* (*to have*) (12a, b) as well as the auxiliary *ˈitʁɛ* (*to be*) (12c). SCLs never appear in enclisis.

(12) a. j a atsøˈto la
SCL.3 have.3SG bought CL.ACC.3SG.F
'He/she bought it.'
b. j a atsøˈto nɛn ˈdɔvɛ
SCL.3 have.3SG bought CL.PART. two.F
'He/she bought two (of them).'
c. l ɛ aˈlo sɛ nɛn
SCL.3 be.3SG gone CL.REFL.3 CL.PART.
'He/she has gone.'

OCLs and SCLs must hence be generated in different positions. Taking SCL rime elision to be

the consequence of fission of T's φ-features therefore fails to explain why OCLs and partitive clitics undergo the same process of rime elision when procliticized to *a ˈvi*. The difference regarding elision must rather be linked to a particular property of the verb itself. I will address this issue in more detail in section 4.

The alternative I would like to propose puts together and develops two ideas. First, I follow Cardinaletti and Repetti (2010) and Belletti, (2009), among others, in assuming that all clitics are merged as arguments, inside the vP/VP domain, and that cliticization is syntactic movement and not a morphological operation on features. Second, I argue that obligatory and non-obligatory elision is keyed to whether cliticization is to *a ˈvi* (*to have*) or to lexical verbs.

4 Clitic Pronouns and Incorporation

I proposed in sections 3.1 and 3.2 that the difference in SCLs regarding elision cannot be linked to T and must be due to a particular property of the verb. In order to understand what this property is, let us first consider how cliticization works.

I follow Roberts' (2010) proposal that cliticization is incorporation. Following this approach, head movement is limited to incorporation. The proposal is grounded in a modification of Chomsky's (1995) definition of minimal category.

(13) A category is minimal iff it dominates no category β distinct from itself.
(Roberts 2018b:259)

Consequently, incorporation can occur only if the incorporated category is non-distinct from the category it incorporates with. Roberts gives the following constraints on incorporation.

(14) One minimal category α can attach to another minimal category β, provided that (i) α is non-distinct in features from β and (ii) an Agree relation exists between β and α.
(Roberts 2010:62)

According to this, the clitic must be a goal for the minimal category it incorporates with. As its features must be similar to the ones of its probe, it is what Roberts calls a 'defective goal,' of which he provides the following definition:

(15) A goal G is defective iff G's formal features are a proper subset of those of G's Probe P.
(Roberts 2010:62)

However, Roberts (2018a) considers clitics to be part of a DP, base-generated as the specifier of nP:

(16) $[_{DP}$ D $[_{NumP}$ Num $[_{nP}$ Cl n (NP)]]]
(Roberts 2018a:119)

The clitic first incorporates with D, and the complex head {clitic+D} then incorporates with its probe. As Roberts considers that the object clitic incorporates with v, the presence of the D-feature is problematic, because the OCL would not be a defective goal in relation to v. Therefore, he revises the notion of defectivity as φ-defectivity.

(17) φ-defectivity: a goal G is φ-defective in relation to a probe P iff G's φ-features are properly included in those of its probe P.
(Roberts, 2018a:119)

It follows that the D-feature of the clitic does not interfere in the Agree relation between the clitic and its probe. However, this revision of defectivity is unnecessary if we consider Longobardi's (2008:200) claim, that "the so-called D category minimally consists of the person feature." This means that clitics have a full set of φ-features (i.e., person, gender and number features), and that they have no categorial D-feature. As clitics must be defective goals in relation to their probe, this

implies that their probe must have a full set of φ-features.

I propose that the elision of the clitic's rime that we observe in FFP is syntactically driven and linked to incorporation. More specifically, the incorporation of the clitic with the verb is needed for the elision to apply.

If so, clitics in FFP incorporate with functional verbs (i.e., with *aˈvi* (*to have*) and *ˈitʁɛ* (*to be*)), and not with lexical verbs. If clitics are defective goals in relation to their probe and are endowed only with φ-features, it follows that lexical verbs do not probe for φ-features, while functional verbs do. Since possessive and auxiliary *aˈvi* (*to have*) and copular and auxiliary *ˈitʁɛ* (*to be*) are all functional verbs they are generated outside the vP/VP domain. This means that v is not a φ-probe in FFP.

4.1 'OCL-for-SCL' in Fenisan Francoprovençal

Going back to 'OCL-for-SCL', we observe a similar phenomenon in FFP. With *aˈvi* (*to have*), when an OCL appears in proclisis, two things happen: SCLs do not undergo elision, and only the 2sg SCL is obligatory, as (18) shows.

(18)	1sg	(dzʏ)	l	ˈe	1pl	(nɔ)	l	ˈɛn
		SCL.1SG	CL.ACC.3SG	have.1SG		SCL.1PL	CL.ACC.3SG	have.1PL
		'I have it.'						
	2sg	ty	l	ˈo	2pl	(vɔ)	l	ˈɛj
		SCL.2SG	CL.ACC.3SG	have.2SG		SCL.2PL	CL.ACC.3SG	have.2PL
	3sg	(i)	l	ˈa	3pl	(i)	l	ˈɑ̃
		SCL.3	CL.ACC.3SG	have.3SG		SCL.3	CL.ACC.3SG	have.3PL

With lexical verbs, the pattern is the same. When there is a proclitic OCL, only the 2sg SCL is obligatory and all SCLs have their syllabic form, as we can see in (19).

(19)	1sg	(dzʏ)	l(ɔ)	aˈkuktɔ	1pl	(nɔ)	l(ɔ)	akukˈtɛn
		SCL.1SG	CL.ACC.3SG.M	listen.1SG		SCL.1PL	CL.ACC.3SG.M	listen.1PL
		'I listen to him/it. / I'm listening to him/it.'						
	2sg	ty	l(ɔ)	aˈkuktɛ	2pl	(vɔ)	l(ɔ)	akukˈtodɛ
		SCL.2SG	CL.ACC.3SG.M	listen.SG		SCL.2PL	CL.ACC.3SG.M	listen.2PL
	3sg	(i)	l(ɔ)	aˈkuktɛ	3pl	(i)	l(ɔ)	aˈkuktʊŋ
		SCL.3	CL.ACC.3SG.M	listen.SG		SCL.3	CL.ACC.3SG.M	listen.3PL

It appears, then, that in the presence of an OCL proclitic, SCLs behave in the same way with *aˈvi* (*to have*) and with a lexical verb. The 'OCL-for-SCL' phenomenon is thus more complex than the simple impossibility for an SCL and an OCL to co-occur.

Following my proposal that v is not a φ-probe and that only functional heads can probe for φ-features, two options come to mind to account for the behavior of SCLs when a proclitic OCL occurs. Either (i) there is a syntactic constraint, i.e., *aˈvi* (*to have*) can probe only once and the SCL cannot incorporate when an OCL has already been probed, or (ii) the constraint is phonological, and the consonantal onset of the OCL prevents rime elision to apply. Recall that OCLs and the partitive clitic are always enclitics on the past participle in complex tenses. Moreover, with the verb *ˈitʁɛ* (*to be*), it is impossible to find a proclitic pronoun other than the SCL, because locative clitics do not exist in FFP (or only marginally for some speakers) and pronominalization of the predicate is impossible (unlike French of Italian). Therefore, the only functional verb that can have an OCL or a partitive clitic in proclisis is the possessive verb *aˈvi* (*to have*). As it only has two arguments, we cannot observe a cluster of complement clitics procliticized to it. It is thus difficult to decide which option is correct.

The verb *ˈitʁɛ* (*to be*) can give us a hint, though, as to why rime elision fails to apply to SCLs when there is an OCL proclitic. As seen in (4) and (7), SCL obligatoriness is linked to rime elision. When an SCL does not undergo obligatory elision, it is not obligatory, and vice versa. Moreover, rime elision applies only when the verbal form begins with a vowel, i.e., in present tense, for 2sg, 3sg et 2pl. The rule is the same in other tenses: when the verbal form begins with a vowel, the SCL undergoes rime elision and is obligatory. When it has a consonantal onset, rime elision does not

apply and the SCL is optional, as example (20) shows.

(20)	1sg	(dzʏ)	ˈʔijɔ	laˈɲa	1pl	(nɔ)	ʔiˈiŋ/ˈʔiŋ	laˈɲa
		SCL.1SG	be.PST.1SG	tired		SCL.1PL	be.PST.1PL	tired
		‘I was tired.’						
	2sg	t	ˈijɛ	laˈɲa	2pl	v	iˈik/ˈik	laˈɲa
		SCL.2SG	be.PST.SG	tired		SCL.2PL	be.PST.2PL	tired
	3sg	l	ˈijɛ	laˈɲa	3pl	l	ˈijʊŋ	laˈɲa
		SCL.3	be.PST.SG	tired		SCL.3	be.PST.3PL	tired

Examples (1), (2), (4) and (7) clearly show that SCLs’ obligatoriness cannot be linked to the featural specification of the clitics, more precisely to the person feature, because the non-elided obligatory SCLs are not the same with all types of verbs. For example, 3pl SCL is obligatory with lexical verbs, as in (1) and (2), but not with *ˈitʁɛ* (*to be*), as in (4) and (7), while it does not undergo elision in either case. If the featural specification of the SCLs were responsible for their obligatoriness, there should be no difference between lexical and functional verbs.

In addition, there is no reason to postulate that not all clitics incorporate with functional verbs, as their featural make-up is similar. Therefore, the difference regarding obligatoriness of SCLs with *ˈitʁɛ* (*to be*) must be linked to the distinction between the vocalic and consonantal onset. The free alternation in the 3pl past tense form, given in (21), provides an additional clue.

(21)	a.	3pl	l	ˈijʊŋ	laˈɲa
			SCL.3	be.PST.3PL	tired
	b.	3pl	(i)	ˈʔijʊŋ	laˈɲa
			SCL.3	be.PST.3PL	tired
			‘They were tired.’		

This example clearly shows that for the same person, tense and aspect, if the verb has a consonantal onset, as in (21b), the SCL undergoes no elision and is optional. In contrast, when the verb begins with a vowel, as in (21a), rime elision applies and the SCL is obligatory. In other words, the clitic’s incorporation always occurs with *aˈvi* (*to have*) and *ˈitʁɛ* (*to be*), but the SCL cannot undergo rime elision when the verbal form has a consonantal onset. Even if it is indirect evidence, it would be reasonable to consider that what prevents rime elision to apply to the SCL when it is followed by an OCL or a partitive clitic is the consonantal onset of the clitic.

I can thus conclude that rime elision must satisfy two requirements. The first requirement is syntactic, i.e., the clitic must incorporate (as defined above following Roberts’ proposal) with the verbal head. The second requirement is phonological, i.e., the verb must begin with a vowel. If one of these two requirements fails to occur, rime elision cannot apply.

In summary, there is a syntactic rule that creates high proximity between the clitic and the functional verbs, and a phonological rule that obligatorily deletes the clitic’s rime when the syntactic configuration is met and when the verb begins with a vowel. Lastly, there is obviously another rule that optionally erases the SCL when it cannot be syllabified with the verb. The nature of this third rule is still to be determined, and I keep this issue for the further course of this research.

5 Conclusion

This study shows that Roberts’ proposal for the phenomenon he calls ‘OCL-for-SCL’ cannot account for the data in FFP, and that, in this variety, SCLs cannot be generated by a morphophonological process of fission. As all clitics (i.e., SCLs, OCLs and partitive clitic) show the same distinction between functional and lexical verbs, I propose that SCLs, like OCLs and the partitive clitic, are generated in the argumental position, inside the vP/VP domain. Following Roberts (2018a), I consider that clitics are generated in an extended nominal projection, as the specifier of n.

Following Roberts’ (2010) approach to incorporation, I argue that the distinction between functional and lexical verbs can be explained in terms of featural specification, and that, in FFP, the lexical verbs do not probe for φ-features, while functional verbs do. It follows that v is not a φ-probe in FFP.

Finally, I show that the obligatory elision of the clitic's rime in front of functional verbs has two components, both of which are required, for the rule to apply. The first component is syntactic and is linked to incorporation, i.e., the clitic must incorporate with the verb. The second component is phonological and requires that the verb begin with a vowel.

I also proposed that rime elision prevents another rule to apply, which can delete an SCL that has not been syllabified with the verb.

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