

The prosody of second position clitics and focus in Zagreb Croatian

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Traditionally, second position (2p) clitics in Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian (BCS) have been described as alternating quite freely between two placements: (1) after the first syntactic constituent (1C placement) or (2) after the first (phonological) word (1W placement).

- (1) Malena lavica *je* našla baricu.
Small lioness AUX found puddle
'A/the small lioness found a/the puddle.'

- (2) Malena *je* lavica našla baricu.
Small AUX lioness found puddle
'A/the small lioness found a/the puddle./It was the small lioness that found a/the puddle.'

A number of linguists have proposed that the 1W placement can be derived syntactically as a particular instance of split constructions in BCS, (Bošković 2001 and refs. therein), where the material preceding the clitic has been moved there. However, because the 1W placement appears to split a syntactic constituent and because clitic placement is sensitive to intonational breaks--e.g. it is delayed in appositive constructions--it has been proposed that prosodic phonology or prosody, in addition to morphosyntax, plays a role in 2p clitic placement (cf. refs in Bošković 2001, Radanović-Kocić 1996).

We suggest that alongside syntax and prosody, pragmatics also influences 2p clitic placement. Anecdotally, both BCS linguists and consultants have suggested that the 1W placement is more natural if the word preceding the 2p clitic is narrowly focused. However, the interaction of pragmatics and 2p clitics has received little attention (Bošković 2001, Progovac 2005, Radanović-Kocić 1996) and the discussion of the prosody of 2p clitics in BCS has also lacked the support of phonetic studies. Thus, we performed two acoustic studies to investigate the interaction of 2p clitic placement, pragmatic focus, and prosody. Since focus can be marked both prosodically and syntactically, we hypothesized that if the 1W placement is more natural in a narrow focus context, then in such contexts, the 1W placement could receive less prosodic marking of focus than the 1C placement if syntactic and prosodic focal marking are in a trade-off relation; also, in broad focus, the 1W placement could retain prosodic markings of focus.

Prosodic studies of BCS (Godjevac 2005, Smiljanic 2004) have proposed that narrow focus is associated with a low tone aligned at the right edge of the focused material. Smiljanic 2004 found that in sentences with disyllabic subject nouns followed by the auxiliary 2p clitic *je*, a low tone which is typically realized at the end of the phonological word in broad focus, i.e., after the clitic, is retracted to the end of the content word, i.e. before the clitic, in narrow focus. This tone was tentatively proposed to be either a focal phrase accent or a word boundary tone. Based on these studies and Radanović-Kocić 1996, we hypothesized that for adjective focus in adjective-noun NPs

as in (1) and (2), this low tone would be aligned to the right edge of the focused adjective, i.e. before the clitic for 1W placement, and after the clitic in broad focus for 1W placement.

In our first experiment, our stimuli were target adjective-noun subject NPs (CVCVCV trisyllabic words) followed by the 2p auxiliary clitic *je* in transitive sentences as in (1) and (2). Our second experiment was similar but also used the pronominal 1s clitic *me*. For both studies, we first elicited all repetitions of the sentences in broad focus, triggered by the context *‘What happened yesterday?’* and then all repetitions in narrow focus on the adjective, triggered by Y/N questions, e.g. *‘Did the BIG lioness find the puddle?’* Our speakers were native speakers of Zagreb Croatian living in California. We chose to record Zagreb speakers because we wanted to control for the influence of lexical pitch accents on prosody, and Smiljanic 2004 found neutralization of lexical pitch accents in Zagreb speakers.

Preliminary results show that while 1W and 1C clitic placements are realized with the same basic intonational contour shape, there are quantitative differences in tonal alignment, segment durations, and pitch heights, but these differences are not all consistent with a tradeoff between syntactic and prosodic marking of focus. They can vary from speaker to speaker, just as for grammaticality judgments regarding 2p clitic placement (Bošković 2001 and refs. therein), perhaps because speakers can interpret the 1W/1C alternation in a variety of ways.

In adjective focus, the low tone discussed in Smiljanic 2004 is generally aligned not just before the clitic as a boundary tone, but earlier, e.g. in the third syllable in four-syllable words, as a focal phrase accent for both 1C and 1W placements, and clitic placement has inconsistent or no effects on the tonal alignment of this low tone. For shorter words such as the disyllabic words in Smiljanic 2004, it is difficult to distinguish between the low tone being either a boundary tone or focal phrase accent. Ambiguous input data from short words could be an avenue for alternative realizations of the low tone, either as a boundary tone or focal phrase accent: indeed, both options are available within speakers. Most of the speakers recorded so far prefer the focal phrase accent, but for one speaker who prefers the word boundary tone realization, the low tone is realized earlier in 1W placements than 1C placements in both broad and narrow focus, which may be suggestive of the 1W placement being associated with pragmatic focus.

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