Clitic placement and syntax-prosody mapping

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A class of enclitics in several Mayan languages occurs at the right edge of a prosodic constituents of the major phrase level (Aissen 1992; Skopeteas 2009). The enclitics in the following examples illustrate this phenomenon in Yucatec Maya. Definite noun phrases are obligatorily enclosed by an enclitic; see (1). This enclitic does not necessarily appear adjacent to the noun phrase but at the right edge of the encompassing major phrase; see (2).

(1) tān u wen-el le xibpal *(·a’/-o’/-e’)*  
PROG A.3 sleep-INCMPL DEF man:child-D1/D2/D3  
‘The boy (here/ there/ afore mentioned) is sleeping.’

(2) k-u xǐimat-ik le h-mèen hun-túul h-k’iin-ó’.  
IPFV-A.3 visit-INCMPL DEF M-shaman one-CLAN M-priest-D2  
‘A priest visits the shaman.’

This talk presents evidence from several classes of enclitics in several syntactic constructions (focus vs. topic constructions; restrictive vs. non-restrictive relative clauses; different types of clausal complements) and reaches the following generalizations: (a) the placement of a subclass of enclitics is determined by the prosodic domains and can be accounted for in terms of mapping rules between prosody and syntactic linearizations; (b) another class of enclitics are direct exponents of prosodic boundaries; (c) the choice of syntactic construction in conflict situations implies a mechanism that anticipates the possible conflicts that will arise after the completion of the syntax-to-prosody mapping.

**References:**  