

UNIT 3 Clitics

- Clitics are functional elements which do not have their own stress or accent and for this reason cannot be phonologically independent. That is why they are called bound words.
- A number of function words in English can appear either as clitics or fully accented words.
- Like affixes, clitics are obliged to 'lean' on a host word, either before or after it.

Affix	Clitic
Prefix	Proclitic
Suffix	Enclitic

- Unlike affixes, clitics can attach to hosts belonging to any part of speech.

ENGLISH AUXILIARY CLITICS

- The full forms of English auxiliaries may be stressed to emphasise the polarity of the sentence:

We did close the door!

- The reduced forms are cliticized to the word to the immediate left.

- | | | |
|-----|-----------------|-------------|
| (1) | a. it is | b. it's |
| (2) | a. could have | b. could've |
| (3) | a. she will | b. she'll |
| (4) | a. we had/would | b. we'd |

- The phonological shape of the clitic is not always easy to predict from the full form.

ENGLISH AUXILIARIES: CLITICS

- The auxiliaries give us the following system:

am	əm / m	will	əl / l
are	ə	would	əd / d
is	z	has	z
have	əv / v	had	əd / d

- The form without any vowel is found exclusively with vowel-final subject form personal pronouns.
- The form with the reduced vowel is found everywhere else.
- The clitic appears in the same syntactic position as the full form auxiliary, which means that in principle it can attach to a word of any category.

ENGLISH AUXILIARIES: CLITICS

- Tom's a linguist* (noun)
- A friend of mine's a linguist* (pronoun)
- The girl we met yesterday's a linguist* (adverb)
- The man you were talking to's a linguist* (preposition)

- It is also possible to have a string of clitics (we always refer to pronunciation, not to spelling or written language conventions).

The boys'll've been playing football

BETWEEN CLITICS AND AFFIXES: EDGE INFLECTIONS

- Normally, when a phrase is marked for a particular feature value, and that feature value is expressed inflectionally, the inflected element is the head of the phrase.

The black cat (NP) → Pluralization → *The black cats*

- We call this head inflection and can be extended to clauses: if we want to mark a clause for [TENSE PAST] we mark the verb head of the clause with the inflectional feature [TensePast].

The cat walks → Past marking → *The cat walked*

- However, languages do not restrict themselves to head inflection. It is also possible to inflect some peripheral word in the phrase, commonly the last word.
- When this occurs, we speak of edge inflection.

BETWEEN CLITICS AND AFFIXES: EDGE INFLECTIONS

- A good example of edge inflection in English is the possessive (Saxon genitive) 's.
- Unlike normal suffixes, 's does not only attach to the possessor, but also to different types of words:

a. *Harriet's hat*

b. *The man who Harriet met's hat*

c. *The girl I'm speaking to's hat*

- In this case, the Saxon genitive behaves in a similar way to the clitic form of the auxiliaries *is* and *has*.
- Unlike the clitic form of *is* and *has*, the Saxon genitive does not have a corresponding full word.
- What is happening here is that 's attaches to the last word of a whole phrase, e.g. 's' is a phrasal affix.

PRONOMINAL OBJECT CLITICS

- Practically any function word is prone to become permanently unaccented and hence prosodically dependent, i.e. a clitic.
- The object forms of pronouns are also subject to reduction and hence cliticization:
 - a. *Bake him* [ɪm] *a cake*
 - b. *Bake her* [ə] *a cake*
 - c. *Bake us* [əs] *a cake*
- Occasionally, an object pronoun may trigger idiosyncractic allomorphy on its host (minority and idiomatic):

Give me a break → *Gimme* [gɪmɪ] *a break*

PREPOSITIONS AND DETERMINERS

- The articles are prosodically clitics, except when they're specially accented (a different allomorph is found for non-clitic cases).

He's THE [ði:] *writer, not just an ordinary writer*

He's the [ðə] *teacher*

I asked for A [eɪ] *watermelon, not a pear!*

I asked for a [ə] *clarification*
- Prepositions that have a grammatical function rather than a lexical meaning tend to get phonologically and accentually reduced to become clitics.

PREPOSITIONS AND DETERMINERS

- The process applies to *to* and *for* when they appear as the infinitive marker and a complementizer respectively.

A cup of tea [ə 'kʌpə 'ti:] ('v' is lost)

The man to meet [ðə 'mæntə 'mi:t]

Tea for two ['ti: fə 'tu:]

- *to* and *for* can also be proclitic:

I sent it to you [aɪ 'sent ɪt tə ju:]

That's for me ['ðætʃ fə mi:]

TO-CLITIC AND WANNA CONTRACTION

- An infinitive marker may coalesce with the previous verb:

Who d'you wanna meet?

They're gonna leave tomorrow

We hafta go now

- Again, this is only found with certain verbs:

*Who d'you *intenna meet? (intend to)*

NEGATION

- Negation is generally thought of as a particle which comes after the auxiliary verb:

We cannot speak Russian

They do not like salad

She will not agree

- However, this is only found in written English. In spoken language, we usually find the negation element *-n't*

We can't speak Russian

They don't like salad cream

BUT **I mayn't be able to make it*

**I amn't going to the party*

NEGATION

- The *-n't* element is generally referred to as a clitic. However, there are reasons to assume that this is a suffix, and not a clitic.
- According to this view, *can't*, *don't*, *won't* are negative inflected forms of the auxiliary.
 1. Clitics exhibit a low degree of selection with respect to their hosts, while affixes exhibit a high degree of selection with respect to their stems.
 2. Arbitrary gaps are more characteristic of affixed words than of clitic groups.
 3. Affixes may trigger stem allomorphy, while clitics never do.

NEGATION

- Criterion 1: The *-nt* element only attaches to auxiliaries, even though it can appear in various parts of the sentence.

It's a not uninteresting proposal

**It's an't uninteresting proposal*

- Criterion 2: There are gaps such as *mayn't* or *amn't*.
- Criterion 3: There is stem allomorphy in *can't*, *don't*, *won't*.

can [kæn] *can't* [kɑ:nt]

do [du:] *don't* [dəʊnt]

will [wɪl] *won't* [wəʊnt]

- Undoubtedly, the *-nt* forms were originally clitics, but these have been fully morphologized and become an affix, creating a new inflectional category for English auxiliaries [Polarity:Neg].