

Introduction

L1 acquisition of clitic constructions has been studied cross-linguistically:

- Catalan and Spanish (Wexler et al. 2004)
- Cypriot Greek (Grohmann 2010, Petinou & Terzi 2002)
- French (Hamann et al. 1996)
- European Portuguese (Costa & Lobo 2007)
- Italian (Guasti 1993/94)
- Romanian (Babyonyshev & Marin 2005)
- Serbo-Croatian (Ilic & Ud Deen 2003)
- Standard Modern Greek (Marinis 2000, Stephany 1997)

Clitic realisation / omission:

Focus of acquisition studies

Clitic misplacement:

Interesting, yet, understudied phenomenon

Observed in early:

- European Portuguese (Costa & Lobo 2007, Duarte & Matos 2000) and,
- Cypriot-Greek (Petinou & Terzi 2002; participants: five typically developing children and five children diagnosed with SLI).

Both European Portuguese and Cypriot Greek exhibit the enclisis pattern: pronominal clitics immediately follow the finite verb, unless the clause is headed by a proclisis-trigger (i.e. negative particle, wh-element, focused XP).

Finite Clause	<i>Efera to brought-1s CL</i>	'I brought it'
Negative Clause	<i>O João não o comprou</i>	Joao not CL bought
		'Joao didn't buy it'

Table 1: Proclisis Contexts (CG, EP & Galician)

Syntactic Environments	CG	EP	Galician
Subjunctives	YES	NO	YES
Negatives		YES	
Clauses headed by focused XPs		YES	
Wh-questions	YES	YES	NO
Clauses headed by (some) preverbal adverbs	NO	YES	NO

Research Questions

a. Do young Greek-Cypriot children misplace clitics?

Enclisis environments	1. <i>Efera to brought-1S it.ACC.S</i>	2. <i>*To efera it-ACC.S brought-1S</i>
	'I brought it'	
Proclisis environments	3. <i>Thelo na to fero want-1S M it.ACC.S bring-1S</i>	4. <i>*Thelo na fero to want-1S M bring-1S it-ACC.S</i>
	'I want to bring it'	

- Do they manifest true optionality in their clitic placement or are their choices systematic?
- How can this pattern be accommodated within a syntactic account for clitic placement?
- What are the indications for the acquisition of the syntax of pronominal clitics?

Study 1: Spontaneous Data

Participants

9 Greek-Cypriot children
Age-range: 2;3-3;4, Mean Age: 2;9
S1 (2;3-3;0) & S3 (2;7-3;2) followed longitudinally

Methodology

Spontaneous speech recordings (1 hour / child)
Data transcribed in CHAT format

Data Analysis

Pin-pointed clitic constructions
Calculated number of enclisis and proclisis contexts
Calculated proportions of correctly placed and misplaced clitics per condition

Table 2: Clitics Produced (Spontaneous Data)

Enclisis Contexts	Proclisis Contexts
1025	
518	507
100%	
50.5%	49.5%

Figure 1: Clitic Placement in Proclisis Contexts (Spontaneous Data)

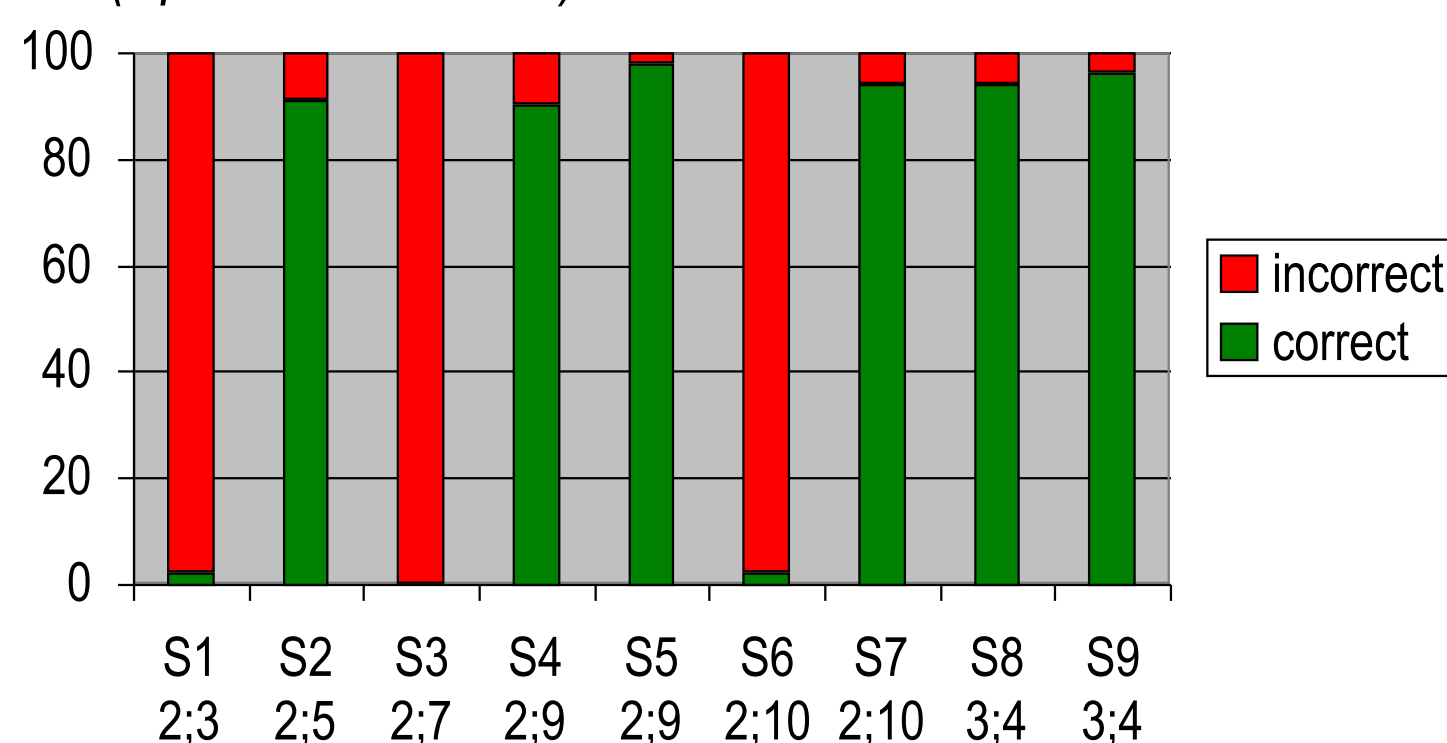
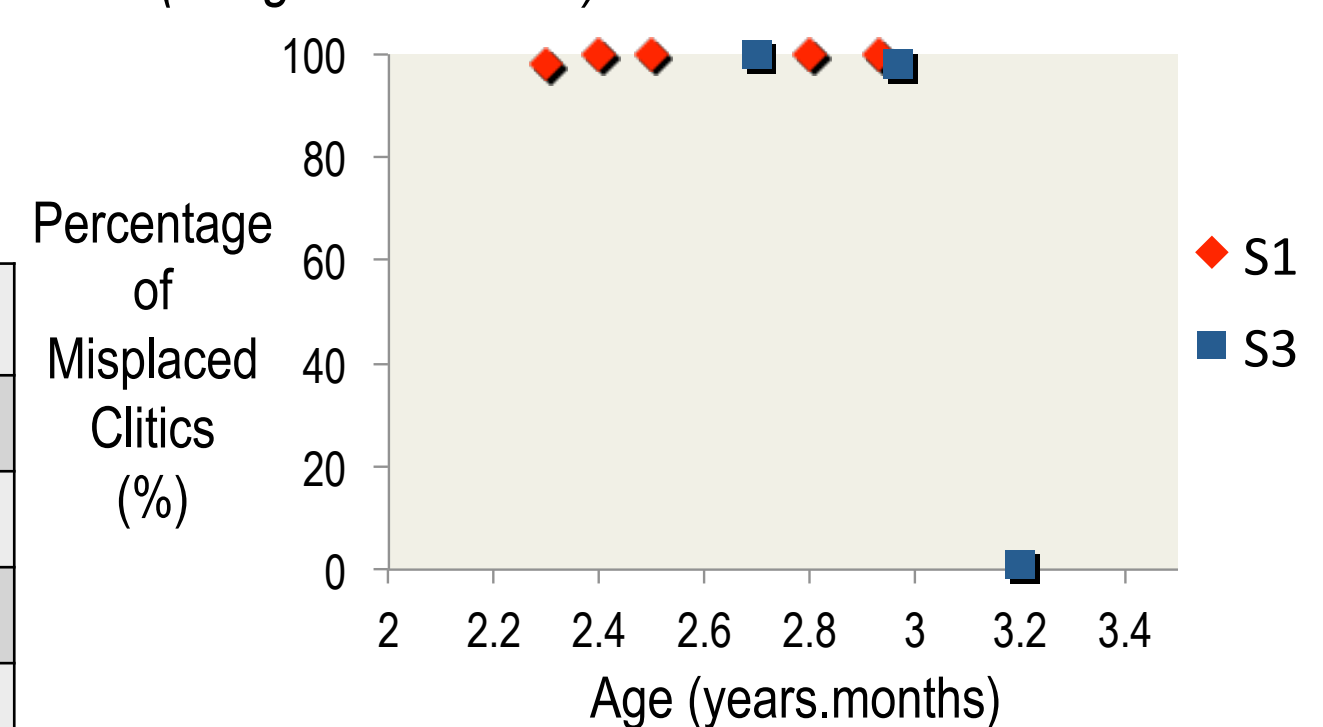


Figure 2: Clitic Misplacement in Proclisis Contexts (Longitudinal Data)



Study 2: Elicited Production

Participants

18 monolingual speakers of CG
Age-range: 2;7-3;9, Mean Age: 3;2

Methodology

Semi-structured elicitation techniques
(1) Puzzle task (Eisenbeiss 2009)
warm-up session / elicitation of pre- and post-verbal clitics

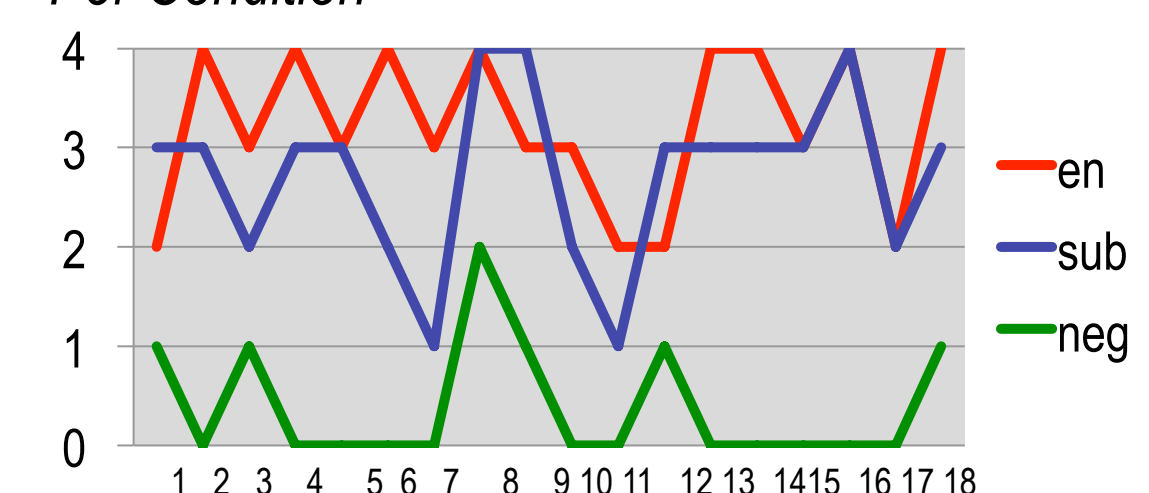
(2) Picture-based task

12 pictures (*First Hundred Words in English* edited by Amery & Cartwright) matched with 12 questions. Elicitation of bare finite clauses (enclisis context), negatives and subjunctives (proclisis contexts): 4 clitic constructions per condition

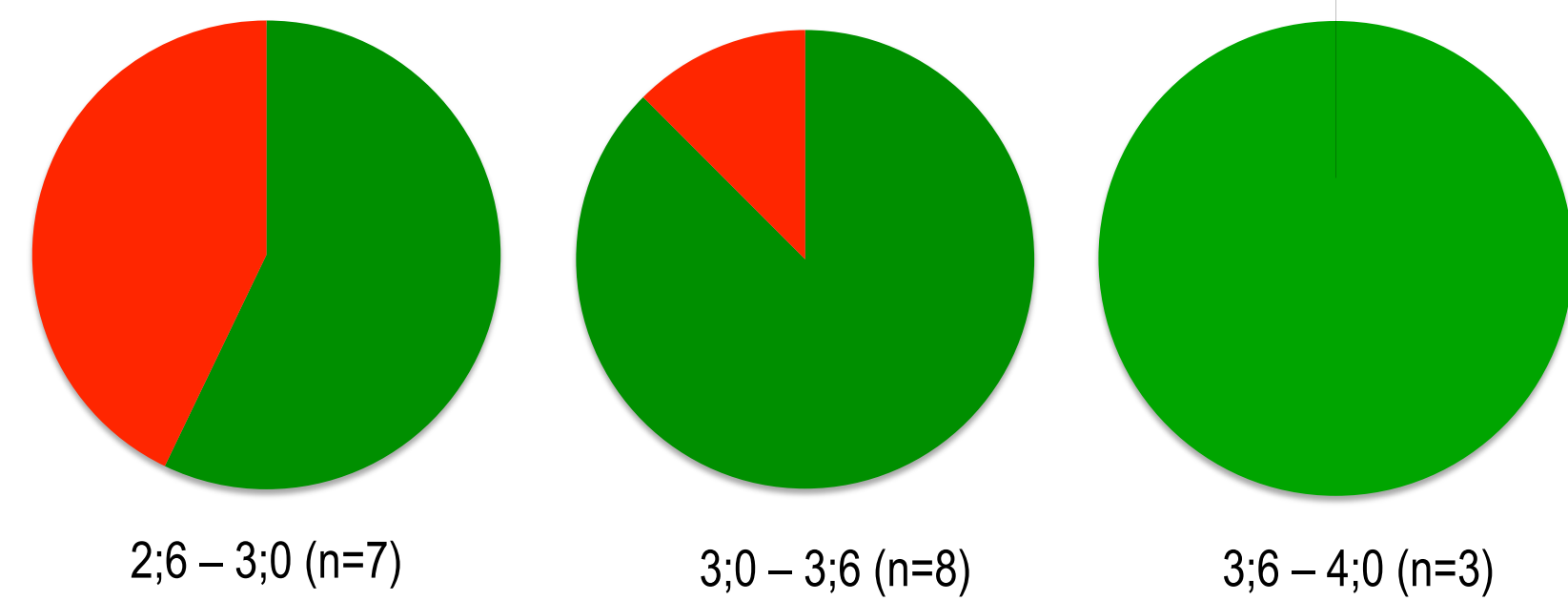
Table 3: Number of Elicited Clauses Per Condition

Structure	Overall Production	Mean
Finite Clauses	58	3,2/4
Subjunctives	49	2,7/4
Negatives	7	0,39/4

Figure 3: Number of Elicited Clauses Per Child Per Condition



Figures 4, 5 & 6: Proportion of Correct / Incorrect Clitic Placement In Subjunctive Clauses per Age Group



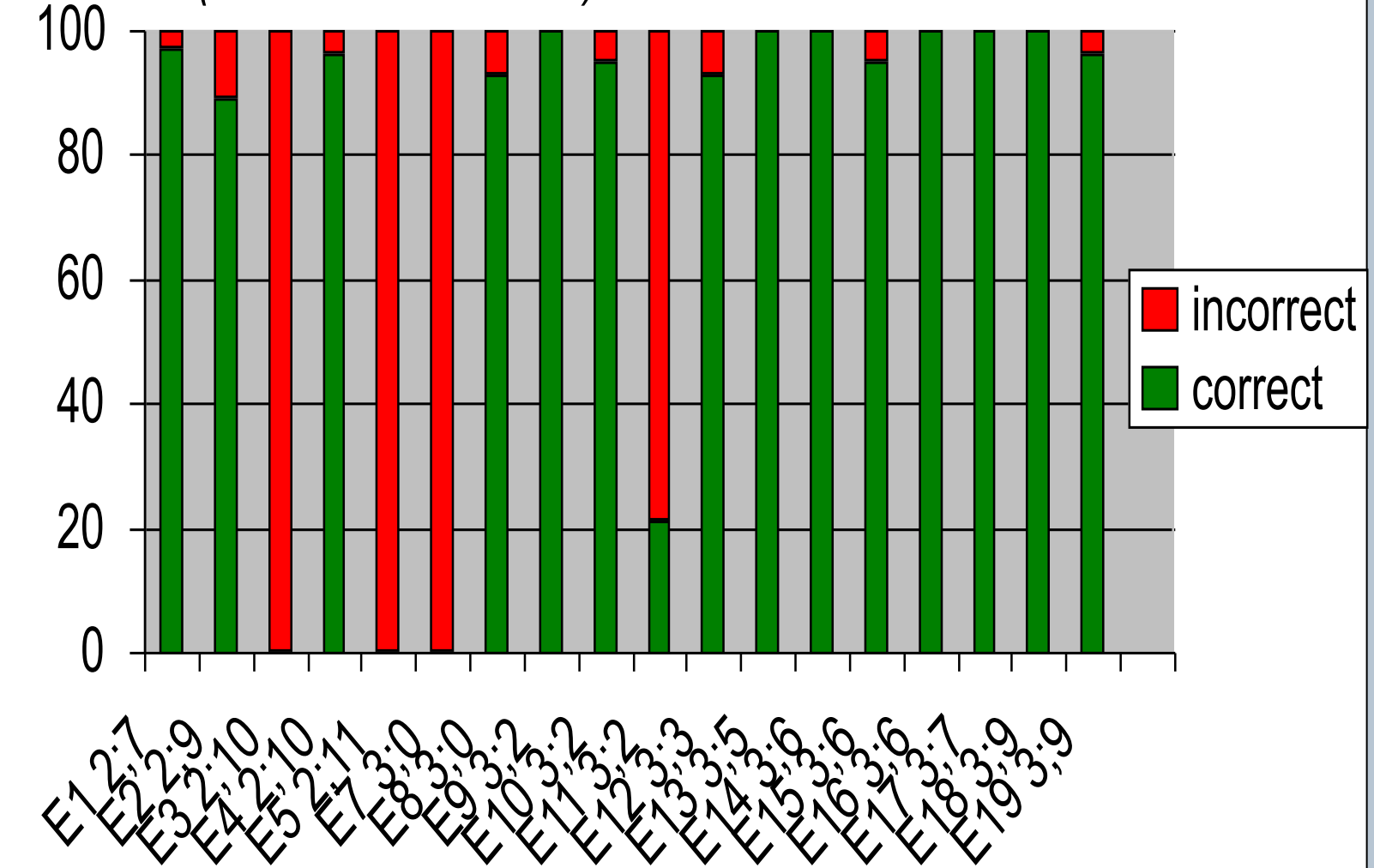
Data Analysis

Pin-pointed clitic constructions
Calculated number of enclisis and proclisis contexts
Calculated proportion of correctly placed and misplaced clitics per condition

Table 4: Clitics Produced (Elicited Production)

Proclisis Contexts	Enclisis Contexts
1018	
654	364
100%	
64.2%	35.8%

Figure 7: Clitic Placement in Proclisis Contexts (Elicited Production)



Results

- Different pattern for the acquisition of enclisis and proclisis contexts.

Enclisis contexts: adult-like from the onset.

Proclisis contexts: not adult-like for a number of children below the age of three.

- Overgeneralization of enclisis pattern regardless of proclisis triggers: enclisis-pro-proclisis.
- Proclisis-pro-enclisis not attested.
- Bimodal distribution in children's clitic placement → Consistent pattern: not true optionality.
- Individual variation.

Syntactic Account

In line with formal accounts for cliticization in CG (Agouraki 2001, Terzi 1999a; 1999b), it is assumed that enclisis derives from proclisis with the manifestation of verb movement.

A designated host for clitics in Cypriot Greek, in the sense of Uriagereka (1995).

If clitics left-adjoin to the verbal host and ex-corporation is not a possibility (Kayne 1994), enclisis cannot be derived.

Proclisis-enclisis alternation in CG does not correlate with finiteness, as in Standard Modern Greek; 'Proclisis correlates with non-restricted/full person agreement on T, while enclisis correlates with restricted person agreement on T' (Mavrogiorgos 2009: 292).

Verb movement is triggered by licensing requirements of CG clitics: strong features that need to be checked within the internal domain of a functional head with operator-like properties (Terzi 1999b).

(Terzi 1999b: 231) The outcome of the study (overgeneralization of enclisis) is attributed to the overgeneralization of verb movement across syntactic contexts.

Conclusions

- Clitic misplacement is attested in early CG and European Portuguese, but not in early Standard Modern Greek (sharing the same morphological paradigm with CG), Italian, Spanish or French.
- Clitic placement is problematic for L1A of enclitic languages but not for L1A of proclitic languages.
- Similar results predicted for L1 acquisition of Galician.
- Only enclisis-pro-proclisis is attested, not vice-versa.
- Enclisis seems to be the default pattern for enclitic languages.
- The age of three is a milestone for language development: the syntax of clitics is acquired by three years of age.

Selected References

- Agouraki, Y. 2001. The position of clitics in Cypriot Greek. *Proceedings of the First International Conference of Modern Greek Dialects and Linguistic Theory* (1-17). University of Patras.
- Costa, J. & M. Lobo. 2007. Clitic Omission, null objects or both in the acquisition of European Portuguese? In S. Baaou, F. Drijkoningen & M. Pinto (eds.) *Romance Languages and Linguistic Theory 2005* (59-72). Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Duarte, I. & G. Matos. 2000. Romance clitics and the Minimalist Program. In J. Costa (ed.) *Portuguese Syntax* (116-142). Oxford University Press.
- Marinis, T. 2000. The acquisition of clitic objects in Modern Greek: Single clitics, clitic doubling, clitic left dislocation. In A. Alexiadou, N. Fuhrop, U. Kleinhenz & P. Law (eds.) *ZAS Working Papers 15* (260-283). Humboldt University.
- Petinou, K. & A. Terzi. 2002. Clitic (mis)placement among normally developing children and children with specific language impairment and the status of Infl heads. *Language Acquisition* 10: 1-28.
- Terzi, A. (1999a). Clitic combinations, their hosts and their ordering. *Natural Language and Linguistic Inquiry* 17: 85-121.
- Terzi, A. (1999b). Cypriot Greek clitics and their positioning restrictions. In A. Alexiadou, G. Horrocks and M. Stavrou (eds.) *Studies in Greek Syntax* (227-240). Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers.

Acknowledgements

Financial Support of **Cyprus Research Promotion Foundation** within the Project «L1 Acquisition of Cypriot Greek Pronominal Clitics» (ΠΙENEK/0609/42). Host Organization: University of Cyprus, Coordinator: Dr Kleanthes K. Grohmann, Supervisor: Dr Teresa Parodi