Clitic placement in Cypriot Greek

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Περίληψη

Η παρούσα μελέτη διερεύνησε τα κλιτικά και τη θέση τους σε σχέση με το ρήμα στη σύγχρονη κυπριακή ελληνική (ΚΕ), η οποία υφίσταται ομογενοποίηση και ισοπέδωση τοπικών υπο-ποικιλιών. Συγκεκριμένα, διερευνήθηκε η αποδοχή της απροσδόκητης πρόκλισης μέσω ενός διαδικτυακού ερωτηματολογίου με 74 συμμετέχοντες. Οι παράγοντες που εξετάστηκαν ήταν η μορφοσύνταξη του ρήματος, το συντακτικό περιβάλλον που προηγείται του κλιτικού, το γραμματικό πρόσωπο, καθώς και το φύλο και η ηλικία των συμμετεχόντων. Τα κύρια ευρήματα ήταν ότι το φύλο καθορίζει την αποδοχή της απροσδόκητης πρόκλισης, με τις γυναίκες να την αποδέχονται περισσότερο οδηγώντας έτσι στην αλλαγή.

Λέξεις-κλειδιά: Κυπριακή Ελληνική, Κυπριακή Ελληνική Κοινή, κλιτικά, πρόκλιση, αποδεκτότητα, γλωσσική αλλαγή

1 Introduction

The term *koiné* was originally used to describe the form of Greek used as lingua franca, as a common language of communication (Siegel 1985). From a linguistic point of view, a *koiné* includes elements from different dialects / languages, although it is initially based on one of them.

According to Siegel (1985), speakers who contribute to the processes of forming a new common variety display a form of bidialectism as regards the contributing varieties and, as a result, their speech has interlanguage characteristics in several cases. Moreover, linguistic systems with grammatically new forms are produced by non-native speakers of a second language or related variety in their attempt to acquire this variety (Schumann 1978), which can be treated as a product of competing grammars (Taylor 2002, Croft and Cruse 2004) between the native and the target language (Adjemian 2006).

1.1 Research Aims

The aim of this study was to investigate the extent to which competing grammatical systems that coexist in a continuum within which a new koiné variety is being formed are part of the repertoires of the speakers who contribute to the formation process of this new variety. The data examined in order to investigate the processes of language change come from the emerging Cypriot Greek Koiné (Karyolaimou 2000, Tsiplakou et al. 2006, 2017, Tsiplakou 2014a, 2014b).

1.2 The Cypriot Greek Koiné

Cyprus is an example of a *diglossic* community where Standard Modern Greek (SMG) is the High variety, while Cypriot Greek (CG) is the "Low" variety. However, in contemporary Cypriot Greek there is homogenization and consequent levelling of local sub-varieties (Karyolemou and Pavlou 2001; Tsiplakou et al. 2006; Tsiplakou, Armosti and Evripidou 2016). Finally, the use of dialectal forms is indicative of different stylistic levels or registers (Papapavlou and Sophocleous 2009), which are related to specific parameters of each communicative situation, while the *koiné* displays novel, hybrid forms which bring it closer to the "High" variety and is also becoming a prestige variety (Tsiplakou 2014a, 2014b).The dialect continuum is no longer geographical but stylistic.

1.3 The variable: Clitics in Cypriot Greek

The present study focused on clitics and the positions that they hold in the sentence in relation to the position of the verb. Clitics in CG can appear before the verb (proclisis) after the verb (enclisis) or in both positions, as is evidenced by data from various surveys (Terzi 1999, Agouraki 2001, Condoravdi and Kiparsky 2002, Revithiadou and Tzakosta 2006, Revithiadou and Spyropoulos 2008, Chatzikyriakidis 2010, 2012, Mavrogiorgos 2010, 2013, Neokleous 2015). Enclisis is obligatory in the following environments as shown in (1). In examples (1)–(2) below, relevant clitics are indicated in bold typeface, host verbs are underlined.

(1) Obligatory enclisis (V-Cl)

(i) Indicative

CG		SMG
(a) <u>είδες</u> **το**;		**το** <u>είδες</u>;
'did you see that?'		
(b) <u>έφερα</u> **σου το**		**σου το** <u>έφερα</u>
'I brought it to you'		
(ii) Imperative		
(a) <u>πε</u> **μου το**		<u>πες</u> **μου το**
(b) *<u>πε</u> **το μου**		<u>πες</u> **το μου**
'say it to me'		
(iii) Gerund		
(a) <u>διώντας</u> **μου το**		<u>δίνοντάς</u> **μου το**
(b) *<u>διώντας</u> **το μου**		<u>δίνοντάς</u> **το μου**
'giving it to me'		
(c) ?μεν <u>διώντας</u> **σου το**		μη <u>δίνοντάς</u> **σου το**
(d) *μεν **σου το** <u>διώντας</u>		μη **σου το** <u>δίνοντας</u>
'without giving it to you'		

CG		SMG
⟨iv⟩ Structures with a copula		
⟨a⟩ ε̲ν̲’ μιάλον **μου**		**μου** ε̲ί̲ν̲α̲ι̲ μεγάλο
'it's big for me'		
⟨b⟩ *εν **μου** ε̲ν̲’ μιάλον		δε **μου** ε̲ί̲ν̲α̲ι̲ μεγάλο
⟨c⟩ έννε̲ν̲’ μιάλον **μου**		
'it's not big for me'		
⟨d⟩ ε̲ί̲σ̲α̲ι̲ μιάλη **του**		**του** ε̲ί̲σ̲α̲ι̲ μεγάλη
⟨e⟩ *ε̲ί̲σ̲α̲ι̲ **του** μιάλη		
'you are big for him'		
⟨v⟩ Structures with emphatic use of *'end͡ʒe*		
⟨a⟩ εν **μου το** ε̲ί̲π̲ε̲ς̲		
'you didn't tell me that'		
⟨b⟩ έντζε ε̲ί̲π̲ε̲ς̲ **μου το**		
⟨c⟩ *έντζε **μου το** ε̲ί̲π̲ε̲ς̲		
'it's not the case that you told me that'		
⟨vi⟩ Coordinating *t͡ʃe*		
⟨a⟩ έ̲φ̲ε̲ρ̲ε̲ν̲ **μου** το κινητόν τζαι έ̲δ̲ω̲κ̲α̲ **του** την βαλίτσαν		
'he brought me the mobile phone and I gave him the luggage'		

1.3.1 *Unexpected Proclisis*

The present study focuses on cases of unexpected proclisis, as shown in the examples in ⟨2⟩.

⟨2⟩ Unexpected Proclisis

⟨i⟩ εγώ παλιά δεν μιλούσα την κυπριακήν διάλεχτον· **την** ε̲θ̲ε̲ώ̲ρ̲ο̲υ̲ν̲ δείγμαν αμορφωσίάς
'I did not use to speak Cypriot Greek in the past; I considered it a sign of being uneducated'

⟨ii⟩ ο Κκεμάλης ήταν, τελοσπάντων, τούτος ο Τούρκος ο μεθύστακας, τζαι έρκετουν τζαι **μας** εφοΐτσιαζεν
'Kemal was, anyhow, this Turkish drunkard and he would come and scare us'

⟨iii⟩ ξέρω το τούτον, ξέρω το· **το** έ̲σ̲ε̲ι̲ μαθητής μου
'I know this, I know it; my student has it'

⟨iv⟩ A: —εν έφαες τίποτα
B: —όι έφα το κοτόπουλλον μου·**το** έ̲φ̲α̲ όλον

'A: —You didn't eat anything
B: —No, I ate my chicken; I ate it all'

⟨v⟩ εσυμπλήρωσα το τζαι **το** <u>ευχαριστήθηκα</u>
'I completed it and enjoyed it'

(data from Tsiplakou 2006:287-290)

Tsiplakou, Armostis and Evripidou (2016) observed that in data from sociolinguistic interviews unexpected proclisis appeared at 19%, while Leivada, Papadopoulou and Pavlou (2017), in data from the spontaneous speech of five speakers, identified its occurrence at a rate of 17%. Finally, the results of the Magnitude Estimation Test in Pappas (2014) (see Table 1) show that the cases of unexpected proclisis are part of the grammar of the CG and not the occurrence of code switching due to language contact.

Environment	Medieval Greek	Interviews	Elicitation	MET	Conclusion
αφού	unattested	enclisis	enclisis	enclisis	enclisis
έντζε	unattested	enclisis	enclisis	enclisis	enclisis
ότι	enclisis	enclisis	no preference	no preference	unclear
επειδή	enclisis	enclisis	no preference	enclisis (?)	enclisis
γιατί	unattested	enclisis	no preference	no preference	unclear
γιατί.wh	unattested	proclisis	proclisis	proclisis	proclisis
subj.contrastive	unclear	unclear	unclear	no preference	unclear
subj.information	unclear	unclear	unclear	proclisis	proclisis
subj.neutral	enclisis	enclisis	enclisis	enclisis	enclisis

Table 1 | Clitic placement in the data in Pappas (2014)

We next present the theoretical framework, based on relevant proposals in the literature, regarding the possibly cross-linguistic nature of such unexpected proclisis and the syntactic position of clitics.

1.3.2 Theoretical framework: Clitic placement

The verb phrase (VP) is taken to be the position where clitics are base-generated. According to Uriagereka (1995), the purpose of clitic movement to the head of a proposed FP phrase serves to check person and number features for third-person clitics and to denote speaker attitude as to propositional content. The FP node is a node of interaction between syntax and pragmatics and is hierarchically located immediately after the Focus phrase (see Figure 1).
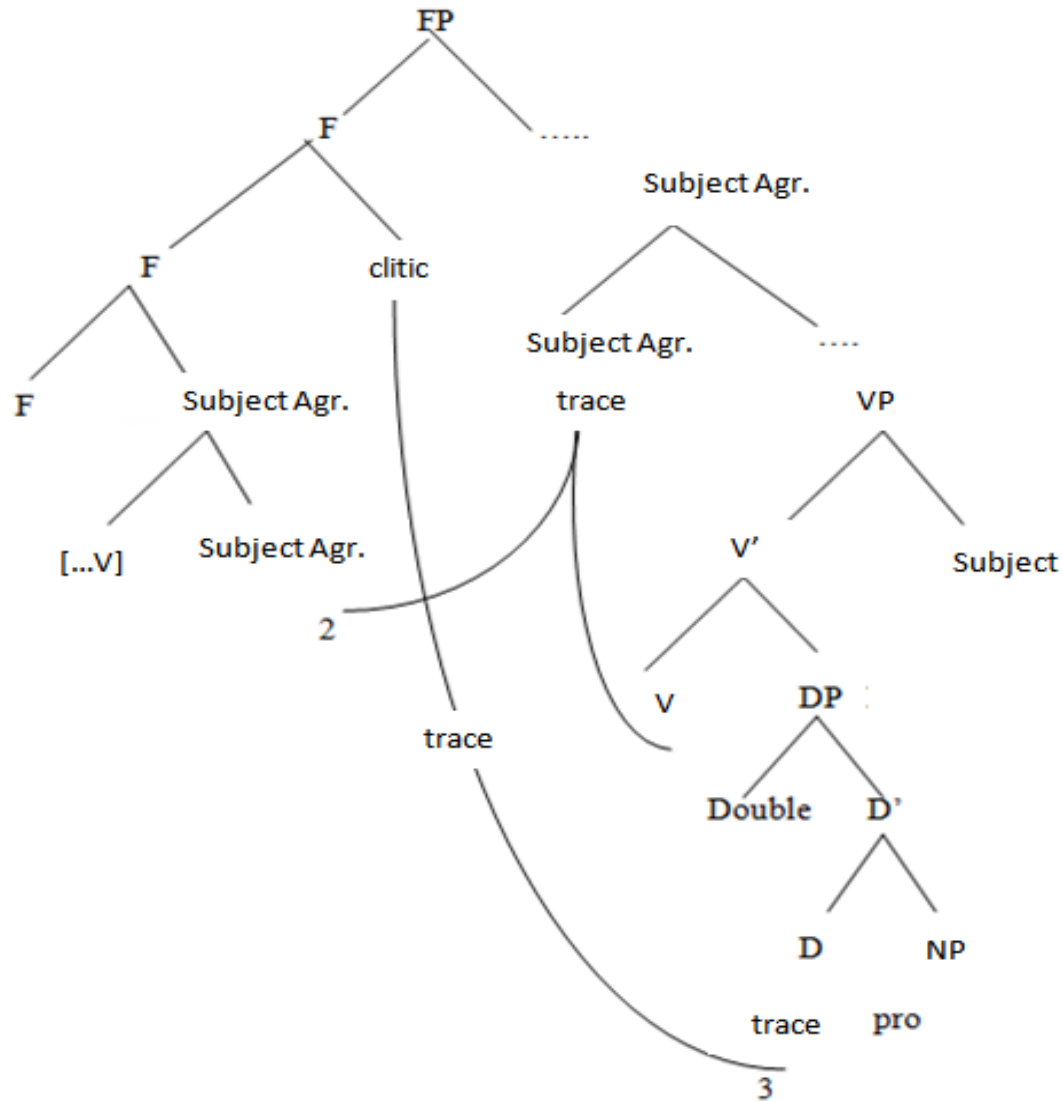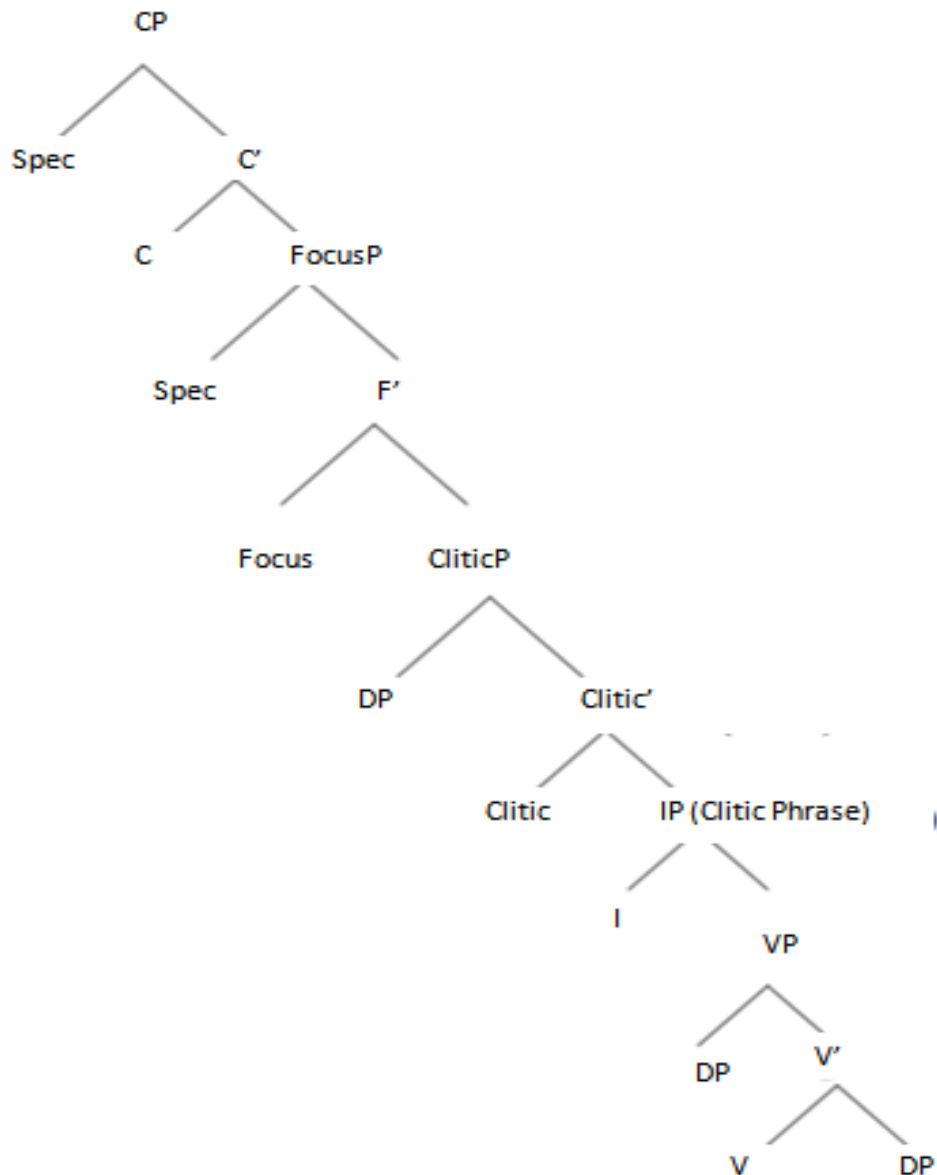
Figure 1 | Clitic placement according to Uriagereka (1995: 97)

Due to their non-tonal character, clitics need to be attached to a tonal word, so that they can be pronounced. The morphological host plays this role. Uriagereka (1995) argues that languages differ with regard to the morphological weight of F. Cypriot Greek, in its most basilectal forms, could be treated as a case of a linguistic variety with a strong morphological weight that does not delay the movement of the clitic till after Spellout. This is why CG displays enclitic structures.

According to Sportiche (1992) and Agouraki (1993), clitics have their own projections, Clitic Voices, which are hierarchically higher than IP or the Subject Agreement Phrase (see Figure 2).

CP

Spec   C'

C   FocusP

Spec   F'

Focus   CliticP

DP   Clitic'

Clitic   IP (Clitic Phrase)

I   VP

DP   V'

V   DP

Figure 2 | Clitic Phrase (Agouraki 1993: 47, 51)

Sportiche (1992) argues that clitics relate to the internal complement of the verb. When there is no morphological realization of the internal complement of the verb, clitics occur in combination with a zero-morpheme complement of the verb. Postulating a null object morpheme can also account for cases of clitic doubling. Added to this, the clitic node is a node of interaction between syntax and semantics and clitic voices encode the Specificity feature.

Finally, the literature discusses the "phonological enclisis criterion", according to which the clitic is attached to a phonological host on its left that is in the same Complementizer Phrase (CP) with it (Condoravdi and Kiparsky 2002). The particular attachment leads to prosodic inversion between the verb and the clitic, resulting in the postverbal position for the clitic. A basic condition, of course, is that this phonological criterion must be activated. According to Godsuno (2000), there are 'conservative' dialects that perform such movement before Spellout, but also 'innovative' dialects that perform transformations post-Spellout. In the case of 'conservative' dialects,

enclisis structures are expected, while in the case of 'innovative' dialects, proclisis structures are observed.

1.4 Assumptions

On the basis of the above-mentioned theoretical framework, the following hypotheses were formulated in the present study:

1. If the movement of the clitics to the FP node (Uriagereka 1995) has to do with the checking of interpretable features, which are arguably 'visible' at the syntax-pragmatics interface, then clitic placement could be 'permeable' and subject to structural change in the development of a new *koiné* variety under influence from the competing grammatical system of SMG. Therefore, the unexpected preverbal position of the clitic in the emerging Cypriot *koiné* is possible. Since such unexpected variation between proclisis and enclisis also takes place in otherwise dialectal conetxts, it may be possible that proclisis is part of the natural repertoire of a CG speaker and not the result of code switching from CG to the SMG.

2. If the movement of the clitic before Spellout is necessary and obligatory in more basilectal environments due to strong morphological weight, and the postponement of the movement of the clitic after Spellout is expected in more acrolectal environments, due to non-strong morphological weight, then the free alternation between proclisis and enclisis is the result of the bidialectism of the speakers of the emergent *koiné*. At the moment, the grammar is at an intermediate evolutionary stage, especially for speakers with higher levels of bidialectism. Due to the sociolinguistic condition of diglossia, we also expect grammatical change to occur at the highest stylistic or register levels.

3. If morphophonological constraints are valid even in the stabilized stage of development of a new common variety (Condoravdi and Kiparsky 2002), then it is expected that the free alternation between proclisis and enclisis will be observed in cases where have a morphological element preceding the clitic. In case the specific morphological element is missing, it is expected that the variation will not be possible.

4. Finally, an open question arises as to what kind of grammatical system allows this diversity in bidialectal speakers. More specifically, the question arises as to whether the bidialectal speaker's linguistic repertoire includes one grammar or two competing grammars.

2 Method

2.1 Research tool selection and variables under investigation

The purpose of the present study was to investigate the morphosyntactic conditions of unexpected proclisis and whether the morphophonological features of the verb affect the occurrence of unexpected proclisis. The morphosyntactic nature of the variable under investigation restricted the possibility of gathering adequate ethnographic data (Wolfram 1998). Also, spontaneous speech could not cover some but not all morphosyntactic conditions that precede the clitic. As a result, qualitative data collection methods would provide insufficient data for the present study. On the contrary, the questionnaire as a means of data collection ensured the inclusion of all

the morphosyntactic and morphophonological conditions of unexpected proclisis under investigation.

Thus, in the present study, the digital questionnaire was used as a means of data collection, which examined morphosyntactic and sociolinguistic variables. From a morphosyntactic perspective, the following environments were tested:

- proclisis with object in accusative,
- proclisis with object in genitive,
- proclisis with direct and indirect object, and
- proclisis with ethical genitive.

From a syntactic point of view, the environment that precedes the clitic was examined. More specifically, the following environments were examined:

- proclisis preceded by a topicalised subject,
- proclisis with Clitic Left Dislocated object (CLLD),
- proclisis with the coordinating $\widehat{tʃe}$ conjunction, and
- proclisis following interjection.

In addition, the alternation between 1st-2nd person and 3rd person clitic pronouns was investigated. The parameters examined at the sociolinguistic level were: (1) gender, (2) educational level, and (3) age.

Thus, the questionnaire was formed as a combination of the aforementioned factors: 4 morphosyntactic environments × 4 syntactic environments preceding the clitic × 2 options for the clitic pronoun person × 2 repetitions = 64 trials. For each combination, a test sentence containing unexpected proclisis was created, which was framed by the appropriate context, when deemed necessary. The context always preceded the sentence of interest, as shown in (3).

(3) —Τι έγινεν με τον Αντρέα τζιαι εθύμωσεν η Δέσποινα;
     —Επήαινεν με μεγάλη ταχύτητα, τζιαι την επροσπέρασεν στον δρόμον.
     '—What happened with Andreas that got Despoina angry?
     —He was speeding on the road and overtook her.'

The questionnaire was prepared and run online using the Google Forms. The 64 questions were presented in the questionnaire in a predefined random order. At the beginning of the questionnaire, questions were included regarding participant demographics with special emphasis on whether they grew up in Cyprus and whether they speak Cypriot Greek as an exclusive L1.

2.2   Procedure

Social media was used for recruiting participants. Personal invitations to participate in the survey were sent to members of the researchers' social network. Participants first completed the demographics part and then proceeded to the main questionnaire. Each of the 64 experimental stimuli was presented in writing and participants were asked to rate the last sentence of the stimulus (which contained the clitic) in terms of its

naturalness on a scale from 1 (completely unnatural) to 6 (completely natural). After their response, they were given the option to comment on what they would change in the sentence. The completion of the questionnaire required about 30 minutes.

2.3 Participants

In the study, 79 people participated, five of whom were excluded, as they stated that they were native speakers of other language(s) in addition to CG. Thus, the final number of participants was 74: 50 female and 24 male. Their ages ranged from 19 to 62 years, with an average of 37.7 and a standard deviation of 8.9. With the exception of three participants who were high school graduates without higher education, the remaining sample was of tertiary education.

2.4 Analysis

The variable measured was the participants' numerical response regarding the naturalness of each sentence (1–6). As this is an ordinal scale, ordinal regression was chosen to statistically analyse the results of this research. The numerical evaluation of the naturalness of each sentence was entered as the dependent output variable. The above-mentioned four morphosyntactic environments, the four syntactic environments that precede the clitic, the person of the clitic pronoun, as well as the demographic variables of gender and age were entered as predictors (i.e., as independent input variables). The educational level was not included in the statistical analysis as the sample was almost exclusively of higher education.

3 Results

As shown in Figure 3, in general, the answers for naturalness concentrated around point 5 of the naturalness scale.
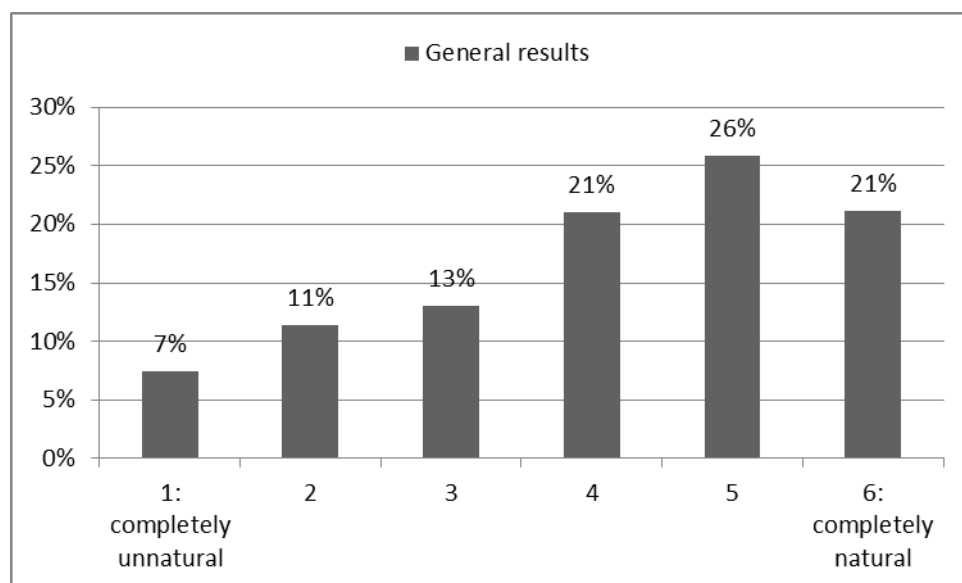

Figure 3 | General results of evaluating the naturalness of utterances with unexpected proclisis

The statistical analysis showed that the odds of female subjects reporting that they find proclisis completely natural was 1.676 times that of male subjects, $b = 0.516$, Wald $\chi^2(1) = 86.872$, $p < .0005$. This means that female subjects reported finding proclisis more natural than male subjects. As shown in Figure 4, males' responses concentrated around point 4, while females' concentrated around point 5.
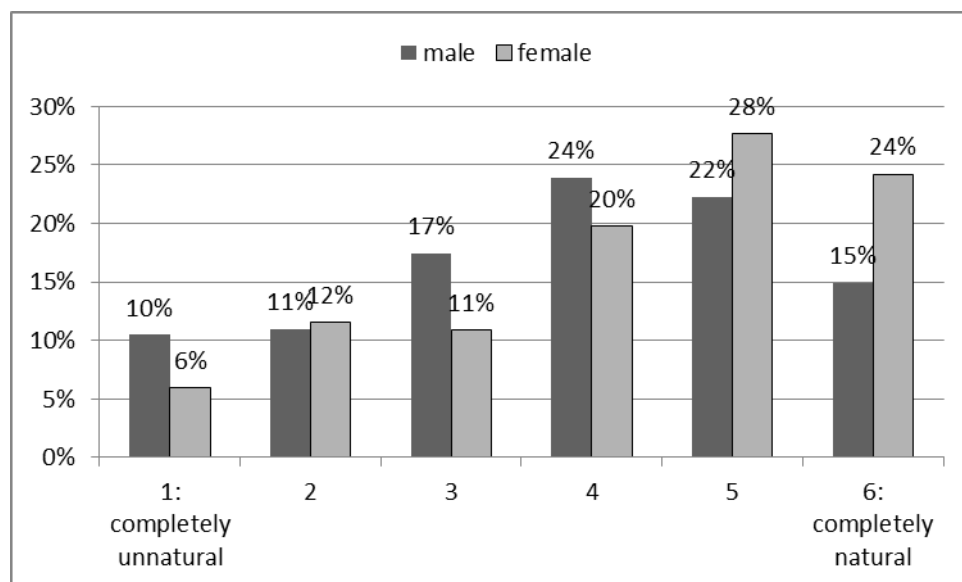
Figure 4 | Comparison of male and female responses regarding the evaluation of the naturalness of utterances with unexpected proclisis

With regard to the four morphosyntactic environments (proclisis with object in accusative, proclisis with object in genitive, proclisis with direct and indirect object, proclisis with ethical genitive), none of them emerged as a statistically significant predictor for naturalness. With regard to the four syntactic environments that precede the clitic, the cases of proclisis preceded by the coordinating t͡ʃe conjunction or interjection did not have a statistically significant contribution to the evaluation of utterance naturalness. As for proclisis preceded by the sentence topicalised subject, the odds of subjects reporting that they find it completely natural was 0.837 times that of proclisis in other environments, $b = -0.178$, Wald $\chi^2(1) = 6.011$, $p = .014$. This means that proclisis preceded by a topicalised subject was perceived less natural than proclisis in other environments. Regarding proclisis with CLLD, the odds of subjects reporting that they find it completely natural was 0.779 times that of proclisis in other environments, $b = -0.250$, Wald $\chi^2(1) = 11.730$, $p = .001$. This means that proclisis with CLLD was perceived less natural than proclisis in other environments.Figure 5 presents the descriptive statistics for these two statistically significant syntactic variables.
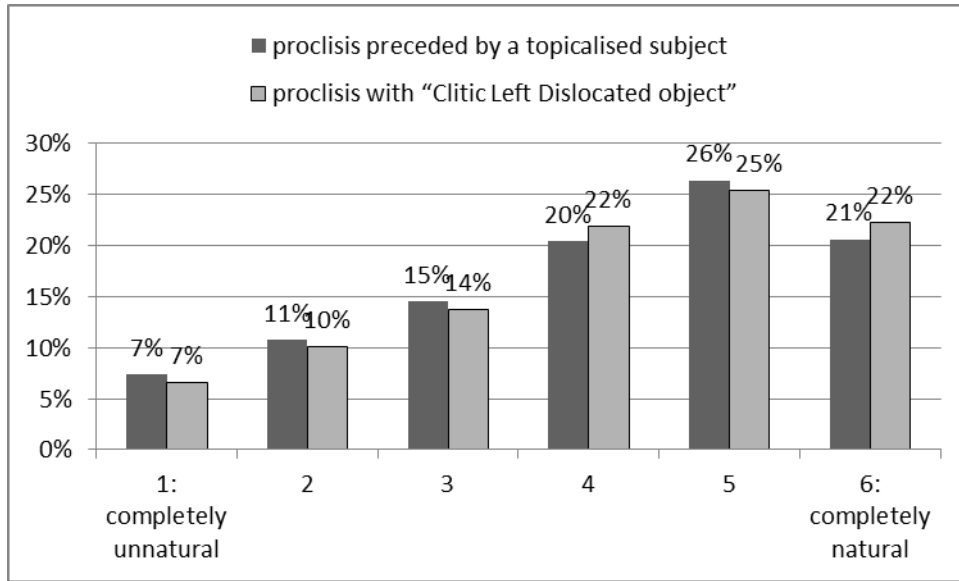
Figure 5 | Comparison of evaluation of sentences with unexpected proclisis in which the clitic is preceded by (a) subject, and (b) Clitic Left Dislocated object

As for the person, whether the clitic was 1st-2nd or 3rd person did not play a statistically significant role.

4 Discussion and conclusions

The unexpected proclisis structure appears to be accepted as completely natural at a rate of 24% on average (see Figure 3). This result is consistent with the results of oral speech studies, cf. Pappas (2014), Tsiplakou, Armostis and Evripidou (2016), Leivada, Papadopoulou and Pavlou (2017), Tsiplakou (2017). If we accept that the parameter relating to clitic movement is realised at the syntax-pragmatics interface, as Uriagereka (1995) supports, the results are likely to provide support to Interpretability Hypothesis (Tsimpli 2003, Tsimpli and Dimitrakopoulou 2007). More specifically, with the Interpretability Hypothesis, the re-parameterisation of the parameter that concerns the moment of clitic movement to the FP node is due to its interpretable nature. The term *interpretable* nature describes the referentiality receiving (personality and number characteristics) for third person clitics and the speaker's attitude towards the propositional content. In addition, the fact that these results relate to the process of language change confirms the literature, according to which speakers who contribute to the process of forming a new koiné variety are characterised by a form of *bidialectalism* and results in cross-dialectal *translanguaging* (Siegel 1985).

The statistical analysis of sociolinguistic data clearly showed that in terms of linguistic innovation, women constitute the most innovative social group. Our participants were of higher education (except for three), which may mean that education may also lead this change. However, this parameter must be investigated with a sample with more educational variability. The question that remains to be answered is whether this is the case of a mixed grammar or of competing grammars.

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