

## EVOLVING TOBLER-MUSSAFIA EFFECTS IN THE PLACEMENT OF FRENCH CLITICS\*

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### 1. *Introduction*

In recent years, there has been renewed and sustained interest for the conditions under which clitics (second-position clitics or V-oriented clitics of the Romance type) are banned from clause initial position. For Romance languages, and for Old French in particular, the restriction against initial position of the clitic is known as the Tobler-Mussafia law: clitics appear postverbally only when being preverbal would place them in clause initial position. In French, this initial ban from clause-initial position has undergone a gradual erosion which can be described in at least five stages:

- Stage 1. Clitics are excluded from the initial position of the minimal clause in all types of clauses. (Strict Tobler-Mussafia stage)
- Stage 2. Clitics are allowed in preverbal position when the minimal clause is introduced by a conjunction of coordination like *et*.
- Stage 3. Clitics are allowed in absolute initial position in all clauses except volitives (imperatives + hortatives).
- Stage 4. Clitics are allowed in absolute initial position in all clauses except imperatives.
- Stage 5. Clitics are always postverbal in positive imperative clauses.

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\* This paper was written while we were visitors at CSLI. Variants of this study were presented at the colloquium 'La cliticisation' (Université Michel de Montaigne, Bordeaux 3), and the linguistics departments of Stanford University and the University of California in Santa Cruz. It benefited greatly from the audiences at these presentations, in particular from Joan Bresnan, Ivan Sag, Peter Sells, and Armin Mester.

We will show that the changes in the position of the clitics with respect to the verb result in part from changes in the requirements to be satisfied by the clitics and in part from changes in the clausal syntax. We limit our discussion to tensed clauses.<sup>1</sup>

## 2. *Description and analysis of the diachronic stages*

Let us mention that, contrary to what is the case in Old Spanish for example, from the oldest texts of Old French on, clitics are always adjacent to the finite verb (Fontana 1993, 1996, Kok 1985, Rivero 1986, Wanner 1996:542).

### 2.1. *Stage 1 – Strict Tobler-Mussafia*

2.1.1. *Description.* In all clause types, including yes-no questions and imperatives, clitics appear preverbally, except when the verb is initial in the clause, in which case they are enclitic on the verb. This is shown in (1)-(6).<sup>2,3</sup>

*Declaratives:*

(1) Preverbal clitic:

*Toutes ces choses **te** presta Nostre Sires*  
all these things 2sDAT lent Our Lord

“Our Lord lent you all those things” (Queste:68,28 in Kok:74)

(2) Postverbal clitic:

*La pucele besse la teste / quant voit venir la*  
The girl lowers the head when sees come the  
*fiere beste. / Fuit **li** li sans et la colour.*  
proud beast. Leave 3sDAT the blood and the color

“The girl lowers her head when she sees the proud beast coming.  
She loses her blood and color.”

(Piramus & Tisbé. ed. C. de Boer. Paris: Champion 1921:664-6)

<sup>1</sup> For some discussion of object clitics in negative infinitival clauses in the history of French, see Hirschbühler and Labelle (1994, 1997).

<sup>2</sup> In the examples, the relevant clitics and verbs are in bold and underlined respectively.

<sup>3</sup> From the beginning, and throughout the history of French, the negative element *ne* counts as an initial element allowing the clitics to remain preverbal. See example (9b).

*Questions:*

## (3) Preverbal clitics:

a *Sire, purquei m' as deceüe?*

Sire why 1sACC have deceived

“Sire, why did you deceive me?” (QLR:55,13 in Kok:78)

b *Sire, (...), ensi vous avint il?*

Sire (...) so 2DAT happen 3sNOM

“Sire, (...), did it happen to you so?”

(Merlin II 246, in Skårup:161)

## (4) Postverbal clitics:

*Plaist te, sire, que jó en alge á une*

Please 2sDAT sire that 1sNOM from-there go to one

*des citez de Juda?*

of-the towns of Juda

“Would it please you, sire, if I went to one of the towns of Juda?”

(QLR:62,1 in Kok:83)

*Imperatives:*

## (5) Preverbal clitics:

*Un vaissel nuvel me portéz.*

a dish new 1sDAT bring

*é sél m' i metéz.*

and salt 1sDAT there put

“Bring me a new dish and put salt in it for me.”

(QLR:176,20 in Kok:78)

## (6) Postverbal clitics:

*Pursiu les, senz dute les prendras,*

Chase 3pACC, without doubt 3pACC take+fut.

*sis ociras.*

adv.+3pACC kill+fut

“Chase them, without doubt you will catch them, and kill them.”

(QLR:58,8 in Kok:84)

Adverbial complement clauses and conjunctions of coordination like *et* do not suffice to allow clitics to be preverbal:<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> In the QLR (end of 12th c.), when the verb is initial in its clause but preceded by a preverbal adjunct subordinate clause or by *et*, there is variation between the V-cl order and the less frequent and innovative cl-V order (in earlier texts, clitics were only postverbal in those contexts; comparative evidence from Romance also indicates that the cl-V order in this context is an innovation (cf. Kok 1985 and Dardel & Kok (D&K) 1996). See also Ramsden (1963:95 sqq).

## (7) a. Declarative:

*É Micol prist une imagene [e] mist la*  
 and Mikal took a statue and placed 3sACC  
*al lit David.*  
 on+the bed David

“And Mikal took a statue and placed it on David’s bed ...”

(QLR 2 R 8.27)

## b. Question:

*[É] saveréiez le me vus mustrer?*  
 and would 3sACC 1sDAT 2pNOM show

“and would you show it to me?” (QLR, in D&K:364)<sup>5</sup>

## c. Imperative:

*(...), receif cest present de ta ancele*  
 (...) receive this gift from your servant

*[é] dune le á ces cumpainguns*  
 and give 3sACC to these companions

“(…), receive this gift from your servant and give it to these companions”

(QLR, in D&K:332)

## (8) a. Declaratives:

*[Sel pois trover a port ne a passage],*

if+3sACC can find at port nor at passage

*Liverrai lui une mortel bataille.*

give 3sDAT a deadly battle.

“If I can find him in a port or passage, I will give a deadly battle to him.”

(Roland 657-658)

*[Cum il vint a únes loges á pasturs en]*

As 3sNOM came to one hut of shepherd in

*[cel chemin], truvad i les freres Achazie, <...>.*

this road, found there the brothers Achazie

“When he arrived at a shepherd's hut, (he) found there the Achazie brothers.”

(QLR., in D&K:72)

## b. Question:

*[se aucuns de vos, ce dist Deus, demandoit]*

if some of you this said God asked

*[son pere del pain], donroit li ses peres*

his father of bread give+cond. 3sDAT his father

<sup>5</sup> For other examples, see Skårup, 1977: 154-156

*en liu de pain pieres?*  
 in place of bread stones

“And if any of you, said God, asked his father for bread, would his father give him stones instead of bread?”

(Sully: 132,37, in Kok:83)

This first stage extends from the first texts to the beginning of the 13th century (Skårup, 1975:166).

2.1.2. *Accounts for the V-cl order.* We adopt Vance’s (1997) view that OF is an asymmetric V2 language, with V occupying C in main clauses, except perhaps in SV(O) main clauses, which might be IPs. Vance shows that in OF the pronominal subject is never lower than SpecIP. Therefore, the order *V-subject clitic* can be taken as a diagnostic that the verb is in C. This means that in both (9a) and (9b), the verb and the object clitics are in C, as depicted in (10a-b).

- (9) a. *Conois la* tu ?  
 know 3sACC 2sNOM  
 “Do you know her?” (Queste:112,17, in Kok:82)
- b. *Ne nos connoissiez* vos *mie?*  
 neg 1pACC know 2NOM not  
 “Don’t you know us?” (Artu:258,19)
- (10) a. [CP Conois+la [IP tu .....  
 b. [CP Ne+nos+connoissiez [IP vos .....]

If the object clitic is generated in an independent structural position situated lower than C, the clitic and the verb must have formed a cluster as the verb moved through the functional position headed by the clitic on its way to C. The result of the incorporation is generally taken to give the unmarked order cl-V. A number of analyses account for the verb-clitic order by moving the finite verb to a head higher than that occupied by clitics (see, e.g. Fontana 1993, Rivero 1994). To account for the V-cl order in the present case, moving the verb to the left of the clitic faces two problems. One is that it requires excorporation of the verb; the second is that there is no appropriate functional head higher than C for the verb to move to, Old French being a V2 language.

Instead of raising V to a higher head, Benincà (1995) assumes that the verb adjoins to SpecC when it is empty. In this approach, the landing site of the

verb is unexpected, as is the triggering effect of an empty SpecCP. Cardinaletti and Roberts (1993), on the other hand, suggest that in the case of the cl-V order, the verb picks up the clitic on its way to C; in the case of the V-cl order, the verb skips the position occupied by the clitic and moves directly to C. The possibility for the verb to selectively pick up clitics seems ad hoc and, in addition, object clitics still have to move independently to C in order to precede the pronominal subject.

Given these difficulties, we explore a different approach to the V-cl order.

2.1.3 *A constraint-based approach.* We adopt a constraint-type approach which could be naturally expressed in the framework of Optimality Theory.<sup>6</sup> A Minimalist approach, with late linearization of the clitic with respect to the verb is a possible alternative.

Two central points of our analysis are the following. First the clitic is an independent syntactic element for at least the first four stages considered here<sup>7</sup> (for a detailed discussion, see Labelle & Hirschbühler 1998). Second, the clitic positions itself with respect to the verb to satisfy its own requirements.

For the first stage, clitics are subject to the three constraints in (11) ranked in the order given in (12).

- (11) 1.{Cl, [+T]}                      clitics adjoin to a terminal element with the feature [+T(ense)]. [When the inflected verb is under C, [+T] is under C.]
- 2.[NONINITIAL, CPmin]        clitics are non initial in the minimal clause.
- 3.[+LEFTMOST]                clitics want to be leftmost.
- (12) Ranking (read ‘»’ as ‘dominates’):
- {Cl, [+T]} » [NONINITIAL, CPmin] » [+LEFTMOST]

The first constraint expresses the fact that OF weak object pronouns are “satellites” of the verb. We assume that they adjoin to the finite verb or to the functional head hosting it. Linearization of the verb and the clitic is taken care of by the other two constraints: rightward linearization of the clitic is

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<sup>6</sup> As the tableaux corresponding to the proposals in the text are straightforward, we do not provide them here for reasons of space.

<sup>7</sup> For Contemporary Standard French, see Labelle (1985), and, for a different point of view, Miller (1992).

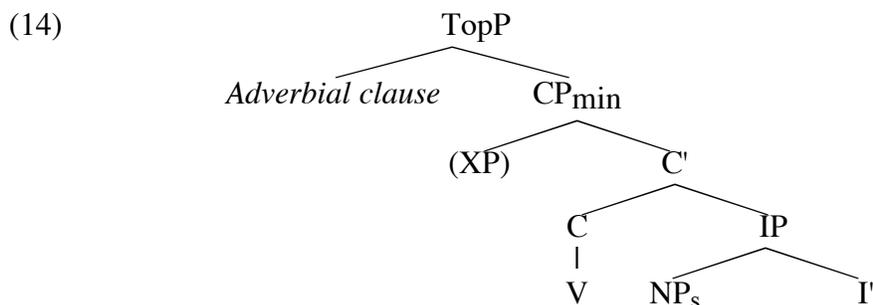
chosen when leftward linearization would have resulted in the clitic appearing in clause initial position (see Wanner 1996:549 sqq).

The second and third constraints, proposed for second position clitics by Legendre (1996, 1997) and Anderson (1996, 1999), are a testimony of an earlier, pre-literary, stage of the language where the clitics were second position (2P) clitics (Dardel & Kok 1996). In OF the second constraint is a purely syntactic condition. Weak object pronouns were not intrinsically enclitic (i.e. phonologically dependent on a preceding element), as they could appear, for example, after parenthetical material:

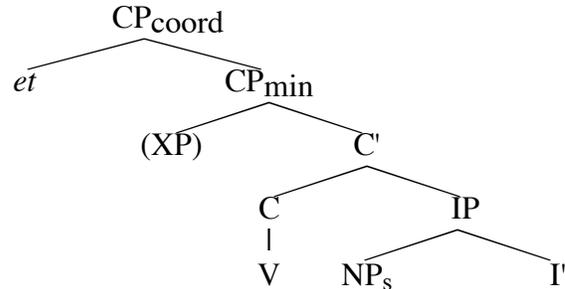
- (13) ...*jó*, *çó dít nostre Sire*, *te receverái od*  
 ... I this said our Lord, 2sACC receive with  
*tes ancestres*, ...  
 your ancestors  
 "...I, this said our Lord, will receive you with your ancestors,..."  
 (QLR IV, 221, XXII, 20)

The third constraint is a general constraint on weak pronouns: they tend to gather towards the left edge of the clause if possible, perhaps because they provide links with the previous discourse. This constraint places the clitics to the left of the verb when this doesn't result in a violation of the second constraint.

We consider that initial adverbial clauses are in a topic projection, as in (14), borrowing Benincà's (1995) analysis for parallel facts in northern dialects of Old Italian, and that *et* is attached to a projection of CP dominating the minimal clause, as in (15).



(15)



Reference to ‘minimal clause’ in the second constraint accounts for the fact that, in clauses introduced by an adverbial clause or by *et*, when SpecCP is empty, the clitic is postverbal (cf. (7) and (8)).

To summarize, in this first stage, the clitics adjoin to a tensed element; they linearize to the left provided that this order does not place them in initial position of a minimal CP. Subsequent stages will result from changes in the formulation of the NONINITIAL constraint.

## 2.2. Stage 2 – Et and adverbial clauses

2.2.1. *Description.* This is a short transitional stage. Towards the end of the 12th c., clitics start appearing to the left of the finite verb when they are preceded by a conjunction like *et* or an adverbial clause. Compare (16)-(17) with (7)-(8).<sup>8</sup>

(16) a. *Declarative:*

*Tele vie mena com ot fait Acháb et li suen*  
 such life led as have done Achab and the his  
et *se forfist* *vers notre Seigneur ...*  
 and refl. commit-a-misdeed against our Lord  
 “He led a life like that led by Achab and his people, and sinned  
 against our Lord.” (QLR:190,27, in Kok:92)

b. *Question:*

*Ies tu mes hom et en as tu talant?*  
 are 2sNOM my man and of-it have 2sNOM will  
 “Do you pay homage to me and is it your will?”  
 (Aspremont:5884 ms.F, in Skårup:357)

<sup>8</sup> For details, see Skårup (1975:319, 355, 358, 376, 377).

c. *Imperative:*

*Levés sus* et *me prestés trois pains*  
 get up and 1sDAT lend three bread  
 “get up and give me three loaves of bread”

(Sully:131,28, in Kok 1985:93)

(17) *Declaratives:*

- a. Quant nos lor donons nos aumosnes,  
 when 1pNOM 3pDAT give our alms,  
*lor faisons bien as cors.*  
 3pDAT do good to-the body  
 “When we give them alms, we do good to their body”  
 (Sully:138,80, in Kok:91)
- b. ainz que il pëussent estre armé, *en ocistrent assez.*  
 before they could be armed, of-them killed many  
 assez.  
 “Before they could be armed, they killed many.”  
 (Vill.:II,142, in Kok:91)

From the second half of the 13th. c. on, the order V-cl is no longer found in these contexts (see Kok 1985:309). In the case of *et*, the change affected all types of propositions. In the case of a preceding adverbial clause, the change is manifest in declaratives, but it does not seem to extend to imperatives (Kok 1985:100). We lack data for yes-no questions.<sup>9</sup>

2.2.2. *Analysis.* Skårup (1975) and Benincà (1995) account for the change by proposing that preverbal adverbial clauses and conjunctions of coordination followed immediately by the verb were integrated in the minimal clause.

Consider adverbial clauses first. Both authors suggest that in examples such as (17), they occupy SpecCP or a position which can be equated with it (*la place du fondement*, for Skårup). Skårup (pp. 300, 359) relates this to the fact that V1 declarative clauses disappear around the same time (around 1200 for him), as a result of the fact that *la place du fondement* comes to be obligatorily filled in declaratives. This presumably forced learners to analyse an adverbial clause immediately followed by the main verb as occupying SpecCP. This account is not without problems.

<sup>9</sup> In Sully, Kok (1985:82-83) counted two cases of postverbal clitics in yes-no questions preceded by an adverbial clause; after ‘et’ in imperatives, this text contains 8 preverbal clitics against 3 postverbal clitics (Kok 1985:103).

First, the most frequent case was for clause-initial adverbial clauses to be followed by a regular V2 construction with filled SpecCP, as in (18).

- (18) Quant I' ot Rollant, *si cumencat a rire.*  
 When 3sACC hear Roland, adv. began to laugh  
 “When Rollant heard it, he started to laugh.” (Roland:302)

Given the comparatively small number of sequences of an adverbial clause followed by a V1 clause, a natural strategy for the learner should have been to analyse these sequences as made of a clause adjoined to a residual V1 construction, and to avoid them, rather than to reanalyse the adverbial clause as occupying SpecCP. And indeed, we see an increase of the regular V2 constructions after an initial adverbial clause, and a decrease of ‘Adverbial clause + V’ sequences (Kok, 1985:101-102). Such a decrease is unexpected under the hypothesis that adverbial clauses had simply come to be able to occupy SpecCP.

Also, in Old French, postverbal pronominal subjects were found in V2 declaratives, but not in V1 declaratives. If strings of the type ‘adverbial clause + V ...’ were reanalyzed as V2 constructions, one would expect postverbal pronominal subjects to start appearing after the verb. This did not happen.

Regarding *et*, Skårup’s and Benincà’s accounts differ. Skårup analyzes *et* as occupying SpecCP in examples of the type of (16). But, there is no reason to assume that in imperatives for example the conjunction of coordination came to obligatorily fill SpecCP, since *et* did not lose its ability to be constructed with a following CP and there was no ban on an empty SpecCP in imperative clauses.<sup>10</sup> Nevertheless, preverbal clitics became general in this type of clause in the course of the 13th century. Benincà, on the other hand, suggests that preverbal clitics result from coordination at the C’ level, avoiding thereof the generation of an empty SpecCP.<sup>11</sup> Old French would not have had this possibility in the first stage considered, but would have acquired it in the second stage. There is however no suggestion as to why such a change occurred, and this approach faces the same problem as

<sup>10</sup> Kok (1985:100) notes that in imperatives with the verb preceded by an adverbial clause, clitics are postverbal in the texts corresponding to stage 2.

<sup>11</sup> In the same spirit, Vance (1997:206-207) analyzes V1 clauses introduced by ‘*et V*’ as Agr’ projections; this accounts for the presence of postverbal nominal and null subjects, these being in SpecVP, and for the lack of pronominal subjects (except *on*), these occupying a higher Spec position.

Skårup's: one must say that coordination at the C' level becomes obligatory in imperatives, even though there is no ban against an empty SpecCP in this type of clause.

This leads us to favor a different type of approach, which attributes the change to the clitics themselves, a view already defended by Kok (1985:106). Specifically, the second constraint in (11) is replaced by (19), which allows object clitics in the initial position of the *minimal* clause provided there is an element to their left in a larger clausal domain, i.e. in the *maximal* clause.

- (19) [NONINITIAL, CP<sub>max</sub>]: clitics non initial in **maximal** CP.

This view interprets the change as a weakening of the ban against clitics appearing in initial position, a natural hypothesis in view of what we know of later developments.<sup>12</sup> In the case of clauses introduced by *et*, and given the structure proposed in (15), this approach correctly predicts that the clitics precede the verb. In the case of clauses preceded by an adverbial clause, whose structure is assumed to still be as in (14), constraint (19) predicts that clitics would remain postverbal. This is correct for imperatives and other volitive clauses, but not for declaratives (see section 2.2.1). Rather than revising the constraint to account for declaratives, we are inclined to think that the examples of the type illustrated in (17) are representative of stage 3 grammar, where clitics are allowed in absolute initial position in both declaratives and questions.

In other words, stage 2 for us corresponds to a change that affects only clauses introduced by *et*, contrary to Kok's description and analysis (Kok 1985).

### 2.3. Stage 3 – Clitics in absolute initial position

2.3.1. *Description.* The third stage occurs very soon after the preceding one, that is, within the 13th c., and perhaps earlier. Clitics start appearing in absolute initial position in questions as well as in declaratives, where relevant examples are rare given the decline of V1 declaratives discussed in the preceding section<sup>13</sup> (cf. Skårup: 358; Kok: 90-91, sect. 3.1.3).

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<sup>12</sup> More work needs to be done on the conjunction 'mais' which allows the order V-cl for a longer period of time (Kok 1985:106, 309).

<sup>13</sup> Skårup (1975:301) points out that, towards 1400, the possibility of leaving the 'place du fondement' empty in declaratives reappears in certain cases.

(20) *Questions*

- a. *S' est il donques corrouciez a nos?*  
 refl. is 3sNOM thus get-angry at 1pDAT  
 “Did he thus get angry at us?” (Artu 82,28, in Kok:92)
- b. *Vous est il avenu si comme je vos dis devant?*  
 2DAT is 3sNOM happen as 1sNOM 2DAT told  
 before  
 “Did it happen to you as I had told you?”  
 (Miracle St Louis:125, 236)

(21) *Declaratives*

- a. *Li Toriaux point ne li souplai, / Le hurte*  
 The bull not neg 3sDAT bow down, / 3sACC hit  
*des cornes si fort / Qu' il y met tout*  
 with the horns so hard/ that 3sNOM there put all  
*son effort.*  
 his might  
 “The bull does not bow down before him, he butts him hard with  
 all his might.” (Isopet I, Avionnet, XVI v. 9, in Skårup:353.)
- b. *Sire, l' ai tant quis que je l' ai*  
 Sire, 3sACC have so sought that I 3sACC have  
*trové en vostre cort.*  
 found in your court.  
 “Sire, I have looked for him so much that I have found him in  
 your court.” (Perceval, Potvin:193, Skårup:354)

No change is observed in volitive clauses — covering imperatives and hortative clauses in the subjunctive. In both cases, the clitic is postverbal only when being preverbal would place it in clause initial position.

(22) *Imperatives:*

Preverbal clitic:

- a. *Si me le pardonnez.*  
 adv. 1sDAT 3sACC forgive  
 “Forgive me.” (La Tour:205, in Kok:316).
- b. *Tost de mon royaume vous departez.*  
 early/soon from my kingdom 2-refl leave  
 “Leave my kingdom soon.” (Nouv.15:4, in Kok:316)

(23) Postverbal clitic:

*Interrogué la: plus tôt l' aura confessé.*  
 question 3sACC earlier/sooner 3sACC will have confess  
 “Question her: she will confess it sooner.”

(Labé:191, in Kok:313)

(24) Hortative clauses:

Preverbal clitic:

a. *Or te suffise a tant .*

Adv. 2sDAT suffice from now on

“Be content with that from now on.”(Palsgrave:836, in Kok:312)

b. *Et pour ce prenez cy bonne exemple, et*  
 and for this take here good example, and  
*vous en souviengne, ...*

2-refl. of-it remember

“And for this, take good example, and remember it,…”

(La Tour:166, in Kok:312)

(25) Postverbal clitic:

*Souvienné vous de la promesse...*  
 remember 2-refl of the promise

“Remember the promise…”

(Saintré:10,22, in Kok:312)

This stage lasted until the 16th c.

2.3.2. *Analysis.* Why did clitics start appearing in absolute initial position in non volitive clauses? Notice that the language was clearly V2 with V in C for most of the period considered (with the possible exception of SV(O) sentences). This precludes an analysis of the change as being due to the fact that verbs no longer raised to C in questions and in declaratives, as opposed to volitives, given, e.g. the fact that the verb continued to precede the pronominal subjects — cliticized to C — in questions. We suggest that the change is not due to some far-reaching parametric change in the language, but rather to a further erosion of the NONINITIAL constraint, which did not affect volitives due to the strength of the primary data: the overwhelming majority of these clauses were verb initial when not negated. The erosion makes sense in assertives, where the evidence of a previous ban against clitics being clause initial became extremely weak as a result of the near disappearance of V1 constructions and of the fact that clitics were now preverbal when the verb was preceded by *et*. This erosion can be stated as a new change in the NONINITIAL constraint:

(26) [NONINITIAL, CPmax[+Volitive]]

Why clitics became preverbal in yes-no questions with the verb in absolute clause initial position is a more difficult question to answer. Skårup (1975: 361) proposes an analogical alignment of interrogatives with declaratives (see also Kok 319-320). But the likely large number of yes-no questions with postverbal clitics available to the language learner in the primary linguistic data makes this suggestion unconvincing, and given that questions are operator constructions, as are volitives, one may have expected questions to remain aligned with volitives. Benincà suggests that the presence of an abstract operator in SpecCP is sufficient to prevent movement of the verb to the left of the clitic (to SpecCP in her account). This implies that in stages 1 and 2 of Old French there was no abstract operator in yes-no questions. Stage 3 would have emerged when learners postulated the presence of an abstract operator in yes-no questions, but not in imperatives or other volitive clauses. The reason why they would do so would have to be elucidated. At this point we don't see independent evidence for the appearance of a previously absent abstract operator in SpecCP.<sup>14</sup>

#### 2.4. Stage 4

2.4.1. *Description.* During the 16th c., clitics became possible in absolute initial position in hortative clauses.<sup>15</sup>

(27) *Vous soubvieigne que...*  
 2-refl remember that  
 "Remember that..." (Rabelais II, 16, Skårup:363)

This change did not extend to imperatives, but, with the loss of V2 during the 16th c., examples like (22a-b) disappeared. As a result, the number of contexts where preverbal clitics are found in positive imperatives is much

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<sup>14</sup> Note that if there always was an operator in yes-no questions, the change could be interpreted as meaning that the properties of clitics changed to the effect that they became sensitive to the presence of the interrogative operator, but not to the presence of the imperative one. This would be an alternative formulation of constraint (26). The more general question of why the sensitivity of clitics to such an operator changed at that time remains.

<sup>15</sup> Hortative clauses disappeared after the 17th c. (Skårup 1975:364; Kok 1985:312)

reduced, being essentially limited to clauses introduced by elements like *et*, *ou*, and *or*. Examples of this type are found as late as the 18th century (Skårup:366).

- (28) *Nicole, apportez- moi mes pantoufles et*  
 Nicole bring 1sDAT my slippers and  
*me donnez mon bonnet de nuit.*  
 1sDAT give my nightcap  
 “Nicole, bring me my slippers and give me my nightcap”  
 (Molière, B.G.II,4)

2.4.2. *Analysis.* Descriptively, the change can be accounted for by reducing the domain of the NONINITIAL constraint to imperatives:

- (29) [NONINITIAL, CP<sub>max</sub>[+Imp]]

What may have triggered this late change? A possibility worth considering is that it is related to the disappearance of V2 and of simple inversion of a nominal subject in questions of the type illustrated in (30) (inverted subject in italics), which reflects a fundamental change in the function played by the C system.

- (30) a. *Est vostre sire ancor levez?*  
 is your lord yet up?  
 “Is your lord up, yet?” (Tristan, 1.8021, Roberts:91 ex. 16a)  
 b. *Et ne m’ a le medecin point ordonné de regime?*  
 And not me has the doctor not ordered of diet?  
 “And hasn’t the doctor ordered me on a diet?”  
 (CNN:26826; Roberts 174, ex. 140b)

The concomitant emergence of questions with complex subject inversion (31) (Roberts 1993:chapter 2) which a growing number of authors are proposing have the nominal subject and the tensed verb within IP (cf. Bakker 1997, Hulk 1991, Noonan 1989, Wind 1994, 1995), suggests that from then on, all declaratives and questions, including simple yes-no questions like (32), have the verb within IP.

- (31) a. *Pourquoi Paul est- il venu?*  
 why Paul is 3sNOM come  
 “Why did Paul come?”  
 b. *Paul l’ a-t- il rencontré?*  
 Paul 3sACC have 3sNOM met  
 “Did Paul meet him?”
- (32) *L’ a-t- il rencontré?*  
 3sACC have 3sNOM met  
 “Did he meet him?”

The disappearance of postverbal clitics in hortative clauses could similarly reflect their reanalysis as IPs, I-to-C movement being limited to imperative verbs.

This might explain why the NONINITIAL constraint became restricted to imperatives: it is restricted to cases where the clitic is present in the C system, as in (33), which has the same coverage as (29).

- (33) \*[CP<sub>max</sub> cl... [IP

At this point, we might want to consider the possibility that all previous NONINITIAL constraints target only clitics present in the CP layer. In this case, the fourth stage discussed here would be a return to the (reformulated) second constraint (see (19)), the [+volitive] stipulation of the third stage being no longer necessary to account for the data. The choice between the two alternatives would have to be examined with respect to nonfinite clauses, something which is outside of the scope of this paper.

## 2.5. Stage 5

2.5.1. *Description.* In this stage, corresponding to contemporary standard French, clitics are preverbal everywhere (34a-c) except in positive imperatives (34d), where they are always postverbal.

- (34) a. *Ne le fais pas.*  
 neg 3sACC do not  
 “Don't do it”  
 b. *Le fais- tu?*  
 3sACC do 2sNOM  
 “Do you do it?”

- c. *Y vivent beaucoup de gens.*  
 there live lots of people  
 “Lots of people live there.”
- d. *Fais- le et tais- toi.*  
 do 3sACC and shut-up 2refl.  
 “Do it and shut up.”

The change from preverbal to postverbal position in positive imperatives introduced by elements like *et*, *ou*, *puis*, takes place during Classical French (17th-18th c.). Towards the end of that period, the clitics are no longer regularly found in preverbal position in positive imperatives.

2.5.2. *Analysis.* This change corresponds to a return to  $CP_{\min}$  as the relevant domain in which clitics are excluded from initial position (as in (11)), so that the NONINITIAL constraint would be as in (35) or (36) according to which of the alternatives introduced in 2.4.2 is adopted.

(35) [NONINITIAL,  $CP_{\min}$ [+Imp]]

(36) \*[  $CP_{\min}$  cl... [IP

We suggest that the change is ultimately related to changes in the primary data resulting from the loss of V2, which eliminated examples like (22), progressively reducing the evidence for the possibility of preverbal clitics in positive imperatives to cases of coordination. In Classical French, clitics were postverbal in the immense majority of cases of affirmative imperatives. As there was no evidence elsewhere in the grammar for a role of coordination on clitic placement, we may surmise that this led acquirers to regularize the pattern of affirmative imperatives by limiting the domain of the NONINITIAL constraint to a more local, less marked, domain,  $CP_{\min}$ , yielding a grammar where object clitics are always postverbal in positive imperatives. In negative imperatives, *ne* counts as initial element, a constant feature throughout the history of French: the clitic is thus preverbal.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> In non-standard French, two situations obtain when *ne* is absent:

(i) In Canadian French, the clitics are systematically postverbal: *Fais-le pas* (‘Don’t do it’); this is in line with (35)-(36).

(ii) In European French, the clitics are generally preverbal: *Le fais pas* (‘Don’t do it’); the postverbal position is however well attested. We reserve discussion of these for another occasion.

### 3. Conclusion

We have shown that the evolution of enclisis in the evolution of French is most naturally captured by a series of changes in a constraint barring object clitics in C from being initial within CP<sub>min</sub>/CP<sub>max</sub>, in some cases with additional restrictions regarding the force of the clause. In most cases, the changes are claimed to result from changes in the primary linguistic data that led the language learner to postulate distributional restrictions regarding object clitics distinct from that postulated by previous generations of learners.

As long as the preverbal or postverbal position of object clitics in positive imperatives was syntactically conditioned, the learner had cues for a syntactic analysis of object clitics. After the change reflected in (35), there remained no syntactic obstacle to a reanalysis of object pronouns (and of the negative marker *ne*) as pertaining to verb morphology, a status which has been regularly proposed in the literature on French (see e.g. Miller (1992) and Miller and Sag (1995, 1997)). We will not take position as to whether this reanalysis has effectively taken place in Standard Contemporary French.

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