No host, no problem: Romanian clitics can form independent Prosodic Words

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As in other Romance languages, pronominals in Romanian are unstressed morphemes that usually precede the verb (1), but follow imperatives and non-finite forms (2). Pronominals have a variety of surface realizations, with vowel alternations that fall out naturally from the interaction of independently motivated phonological constraints applying at the level of the Prosodic Word. This allows us to recognize that pronominals are parsed prosodically in two different ways: as enclitics when post-verbal (**(Vb Pro)ₚwᵈ**) and as independent words when pre-verbal (**(Pro)ₚwᵈ (Vb)ₚwᵈ**). I argue that Romanian pronominals are highly selective with respect to their host: if the verb is available, they encliticize to it; if it is not, they can form independent PWds and even act as hosts to other enclitics: tense and aspect auxiliaries (3-4).

1) *îmi*	*dați*	2) *dați*	*-mi*!	3) *îmi*	*vei*	*da*	4) *mi-*	*ai*	*dat*
(im^j)ₚwᵈ	(dats^j)ₚw	(datsi	m^j)ₚwᵈ	((im^j)ₚwᵈ	vej)ₚwᵈ	(da)ₚwᵈ	(mj	aj)ₚwᵈ	(dat)ₚwᵈ
me.DAT	give	give	-me.DAT	me.DAT	FUT	give	me.DAT	PAST	given
'you give me'		'give me!'		'you will give me'			'you gave me'		

Romanian PWds are subject to three general phonological constraints which will allow us to determine how pronominals prosodify: **A**. PWd-final high vowels such as the plural suffix /i/ are reduced to a glide ([boj] 'oxen') or to a palatalization gesture ([pom^j] 'trees'). **B**. PWds must contain at least one full syllable, hence at least one vowel. **C**. PWd-internal hiatus is resolved by deleting or reducing the first vowel (e.g. the feminine marker /ʌ/, seen in [fatʌ] 'girl', deletes when the definite article /a/ is added: /fatʌa/ > [fata] 'the girl').

In (1-2), we observe the 1SG.DAT pronominal /mi/, which surfaces as [im^j] pre-verbally (1). Note that the high vowel reduces, so it must be PWd-final (A). An epenthetic vowel is then introduced, suggesting that the pronominal needed a syllabic nucleus to become a licit PWd (B). Taken together, these data suggest that pre-verbal /mi/ forms an independent PWd: **(Pro)ₚwᵈ (Vb)ₚwᵈ**. However, post-verbal /mi/ (in 2) surfaces as [m^j] and is prosodified with the verb. The lack of [ɨ] epenthesis suggests the pronominal is not a PWd, but a clitic, specifically an internal one (**(Vb Pro)ₚwᵈ**), not an affixal one (**(**(Vb)ₚwᵈ Pro)ₚwᵈ**), because the verb-final high vowel does not reduce. Thus, pronominals are internal clitics post-verbally and PWds pre-verbally.

Interestingly, pre-verbal pronominals can be phonological hosts to auxiliaries (3-4). We know that they still form independent PWds because the pronominal forms (1) and (3) are identical. But pronominals must also share a PWd with the auxiliary, because hiatus is always resolved between them (C). Thus, the vowel of /mi/ in (4) is reduced to a glide, yielding [mj], which resyllabifies as onset to /ai/ (4). The only prosodic structure that allows pronominals to be independent PWds, but still share a PWd with auxiliaries is **((Pro)ₚwᵈ Aux)ₚwᵈ**: a recursive PWd, with the auxiliary as an affixal clitic on a pronominal host (contra Monachesi 2005:162).

To conclude, we have established that Romanian pronominals want to encliticize to a verb. If they find no such host to their left, they are simply promoted to full Prosodic Words, in which case they can even act as phonological hosts to other clitics. We have seen that pronominals submit to the same phonological constraints as lexical words (see also Bermúdez-Otero & Payne 2011). Finally, this analysis highlights three different options for prosodifying function words in Romanian, raising questions about whether a single set of ranked constraints can capture this behavior, or whether we need lexical prosodic pre-specification (Inkelas 1989).