Word Order Variation in Slovenian

In written Slovenian, there are two possible ways to build an adversative subordinate clause with respect to the word order in connection with the particle *pa*, combined with pronominal clitics, as seen in (1); though both options can be equally used with no semantic effect, the alternative a) is clearly preferred and can be considered as the stylistically „better“ one.

(1) a) Obiskál me je, jaz pa ga nisem spoznál.
   Visit ppam me aux3 I advers him neg+aux1 recognize ppam
   
   b) Obiskál me je, jaz ga pa nisem spoznál.
   Visit ppam me aux3 I him advers neg+aux1 recognize ppam

   *He has visited me, but I didn't recognize him.*

The situation is very different in spoken language, where a) is not acceptable at all and only b) is possible instead. This fact of opposed stylistical variation between *pa* + Clitic and Clitic + *pa* is very obvious, but has not been discussed and systematically considered so far. There are acceptable cases of this alternation with no semantic effect again, when the last element is stressed for adversative purpose – but the cluster has to occur at the edge (2):

(2) a) Ona ga ne pozná, jaz pa GA.
    Pronf him neg know3 I advers him
    
    b) Ona ga ne pozná, jaz ga PA.
    Pronf him neg know3 I him advers

   *She doesn't know him, but I do.*

It will be claimed that this kind of word order variation is originally a reflex of the ability of the particle *pa* to accept stress; it will be shown how this behaviour changed at different historical stages. Additionally, this variation will be compared with another one (3), in which the word order is semantically relevant:

(3) a) Pustila ga je, pa zapil se je.
    Leave ppaf him aux3 advers drink ppam refl aux3
    She left him and he started to drink (independently).
    
    b) Pustila ga je, pa se je zapil.
    Leave ppaf him aux3 advers refl aux3 drink ppam
    She left him and (consequently) he started to drink.

References: