

**Person, role and other factors: On clitic / affix interactions
in Sorani argument cross-referencing**

The cross referencing of verb arguments in Sorani Kurdish (Western Iran, Iraqi Kurdistan) is realized by two sets of formatives, referred to here as pronominal clitics and verbal affixes respectively. The relevant paradigms are given in Table 1:

	Pronominal clitics		Verbal affixes	
	Sg	Pl	Sg	Pl
1	-(i)m	-mân	-(i)m	-îñ
2	-(i)t	-tân	-î	-(i)n
3	-î/-y	-yân	-ê(t)/∅	-(i)n

Table 1. Pronominal clitics and verbal agreement affixes in Sorani Kurdish

The clitic status of the pronominal clitics derives primarily from their ability to attach to hosts of different categories, while the verbal affixes are restricted to the right edge of the verb stem. Both sets occur as cross-referencing devices for verbal arguments, with the distribution of function mediated by the tense of the verb. For example, in (1a), the pronominal clitic attaches to the direct object, but it cross-references the transitive subject (A). This is the typical pattern for past-tense transitive verbs. In (1b), on the other hand the pronominal clitic cross-references the direct object (O), illustrating the typical usage of pronominal clitics with present-tense transitive verbs. The second bold-faced marker in (1b), -m, is a verbal affix indicating the A:

- (1) (a) *min šart=im kird-uwa tagal xwā*
 1S bond=1S:CLC do:PST-PTCPL with God
 ‘I have made a bond with God’ (MacKenzie 1962: 22)
- (b) *a=t-ka-m ba ‘abd-i xo=m*
 PROG=2S:CLC-do:PRES-1S to slave-IZ REFL=1S:CLC
 ‘(I) shall make you my slave’ (MacKenzie 1961: 76)

As is already evident from (1a), what is formally and historically evidently a clitic is functionally a subject agreement marker: it is obligatory with past transitive verbs, regardless of the presence of the full pronoun *min*. This runs contrary to the typologically expected association of agreement with affixes (cf. Corbett 2005).

But the mismatch between form and function runs in the other direction as well: formatives belonging to the verbal affix paradigm occur in configurations that would normally require a pronominal clitic:

- (2) *bāñ=yān kird-im*
 call=3PL:CLC do:PST-1S
 ‘They called me’ (MacKenzie 1961: 109)

Here the verbal affix takes up an otherwise unexpressed direct object, essentially fulfilling pronominal function. Even more remarkable is the use of verbal affixes in 3-

participant constructions, where they may have pronominal reference to a Possessor or Source:

(3). awân=î lê sand-î**n**
3PL=1S:CLC from take:PST-1PL
'He took them from us' (MacKenzie 1961: 114)

(4). Pule-y ke pê=yan bû le gîrfan=î
money-EZ REL. with=3PL:CLC be.PST.S in pocket=3S:CLC

derêna-**n**.
extract.PST-3PL

'He took out the money that they had (with them) out of their pockets.'
(From a folk story published in Dehqan 2009)

It is likewise in 3-participant constructions that clitic-affix concatenations can run counter to general expectations. In (5), the verbal affix *-in* actually occurs outside of the clitic =*im*, in violation of one of the few widely-accepted criteria for clitic-hood (Zwicky and Pullum 1983: 504):

(5). Sand=*im-in*
take:PST=1S:CLC-3PL
'I took them' (Fattah 1997: 220)

The only principled account on the issue to date, Haig (2008), attempts to explain the mechanism governing the positioning of the clitic vs. affix elements in terms of person and animacy interactions, though he concedes that a purely animacy-based account fails to cover the affects of number.

As yet none of the existing accounts of clitics in Sorani Kurdish has provided an adequate explanation for these facts. Jügel (2009) and Samvelian (2007) propose, respectively, 'subject agreement markers' and 'personal clitic affixes' analyses for the set of clitics employed in past transitive constructions, analyzing the forms basically through their function, while ignoring the fact that they form a distinct paradigm with high mobility and several other restrictions. As for the clitic-affix concatenations, as yet only a subset of the possible data has been considered. Furthermore, all previous accounts concentrate on Suleimani variety of Sorani Kurdish, while ignoring the considerable variation in neighbouring varieties.

This contribution presents data from ongoing research, based on extensive primary data (oral literature and natural speech recordings) of Mukriyani Kurdish, collected in the field, and data from written literature of two other varieties (Leki and Suleimani). I analyse (i) the frequency of possible orders of clitic-affix combinations, (ii) probable motivations (person, number, definiteness,) for attachment tendencies where the order is not strict, focusing on three-participant constructions, (iii) treatment of detached possessors in concatenations such as (4).

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