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Accounting for the combinations of clitic and affix person markers in Central Kurdish

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Abstract: Central Kurdish possesses several sets of person markers, including the typical pronominal clitics and verbal agreement affixes of West Iranian languages. In past tense transitive constructions, the pronominal clitics mark the agent, while the verb agreement affixes mark the patient of the clause. In some particular constellations of past transitive constructions, these historical pronominal clitics and verb agreement suffixes have to occur in combination. The resulting ordering of clitic and verbal person markers shows a split: with all persons, except the third person singular, the pronominal clitic is first in combination. This ordering poses a theoretical problem: following the criteria of clitic-hood (Anderson 2005; Halpern 2001), clitics are expected to occur external to affixes, and the (not-clitic-like) idiosyncratic behaviour of the third person singular clitic requires separate treatment. Relying on Prosodic Phonology (Selkirk 1995) and through a closer look at the facts of lexical stress in Central Kurdish, I propose an analysis where the (historically affixal) verbal person markers in Central Kurdish are argued to be clitic-like in that they do not form a prosodic word with their host. Once this is established, the ordering of pronominal clitics before verbal person markers is argued to follow from a more general prosodically-defined second-position placement principle of pronominal clitics in Central Kurdish (Öpengin 2013). Finally, the idiosyncratic ordering of the third person singular pronominal clitic after verbal agreement affixes is explained in terms of constraints (Yip 1998) that require the forms in sequence to preserve their morpho-phonological and morpho-syntactic identity.

1 Introduction

Central Kurdish has a complex system of person markers (PM), including the historical pronominal clitics and verb agreement suffixes of West Iranian. In certain syntactic constellations, these historical pronominal clitics and verb agreement suffixes have to occur in combination. For instance, in a past tense transitive construction, the transitive subject is marked via a clitic PM, and the object is marked via a verbal PM. When in such a construction the bare verb is the first constituent in the verb phrase, the two person forms (clitic and verbal PMs) occur in sequential order. The resulting ordering of clitic and verbal PMs shows a split: with all persons, except the 3SG, the clitic marking the subject is first in combination, leading to a sequence as [HOST=CLITIC PM-VERBAL PM], as illustrated in (1). When the subject is 3SG, the clitic PM occurs second in combination, leading to a reversed sequence as [HOST-VERBAL PM=CLITIC PM], as illustrated in (2).

- (1) *nārd-ū=yān-im* *bo ēre*
 send.PST-PTCP=3PL-1SG to here
 ‘They have sent me over to here.’
- (2) *bird-in=ī*
 take.PST-1PL=3SG
 ‘He took us.’

If, in terms of their morpho-phonological categorial status, historical clitic PMs are “clitics” and the verb agreement suffixes are “affixes”, the general ordering of clitic and verbal PMs in such combinations, (as in (1) with a clitic preceding an affix) poses a theoretical problem: as syntactic elements, the clitics are expected to occur external to inflectional affixes. This is indeed one of the most reliable diagnostics of clitic-hood in the literature (Anderson 2005; Halpern 2001). On the other hand, the exceptional ordering of a 3SG clitic in combination with verbal PMs does conform to this theoretical expectation, but it is the exceptional or idiosyncratic ordering, and, as such, needs to be accounted for in its own respect.

These two separate but related questions concerning the ordering of clitic and affixal PMs in Central Kurdish have recently attracted the attention of the scholars working on Kurdish; however, a fully satisfactory analysis has not yet been proposed. Relying on the insights from Prosodic Phonology, I will propose an analysis where I will argue that the (historically affixal) verbal person markers in Central Kurdish are clitic-like in that they do not form

a prosodic word with their host. Once this fact is established, the occurrence of clitic PMs internal to “affixal” verbal PMs will no longer pose a theoretical problem, since the issue will then be reduced to the ordering of two clitic (or clitic-like) elements. The ordering of clitic PMs before verbal PMs will be argued to follow from a more general prosodically-defined second-position placement principle of clitic PMs in Central Kurdish (cf. Öpengin 2013). The idiosyncratic ordering of the 3SG clitic after verbal PMs (along with two other analogical constructions, see further below) is explained in terms of constraints that require the forms in sequence to preserve their morpho-phonological and morphosyntactic identity.

The data presented in this paper are naturalistic, spoken language data that were collected in the field in the speech zone of the Mukri dialect of Central Kurdish in North-west Iran (cf. Öpengin 2016 for extensive description of the fieldwork and corpus).

2 Forms and functions in argument indexing in Central Kurdish

Leaving aside the independent person forms, four sets of bound person markers are used for indexing clausal arguments in Central Kurdish. These are given in Table 1.

Table 1: Bound person marker paradigms in Central Kurdish

		Clitic PMs	Verbal Affix PMs		Copular PMs
			Set ₁	Set ₂	
SG	1	= <i>im</i>	- <i>im</i>	- <i>im</i>	= <i>im</i>
	2	= <i>it</i>	- <i>ī</i>	- <i>ī</i>	= <i>ī</i>
	3	= <i>ī</i>	- <i>ē</i>	-∅	= <i>e</i>
PL	1	= <i>mān</i> / = <i>in</i>	- <i>īn</i>	- <i>īn</i>	= <i>īn</i>
	2	= <i>tān</i> / = <i>ū</i>	- <i>in</i>	- <i>in</i>	= <i>in</i>
	3	= <i>yān</i>	- <i>in</i>	- <i>in</i>	= <i>in</i>

These person forms are the two sets of verbal affix person markers, which derive from historical verb agreement suffixes and are used only with verb stems; a set of clitic person markers which derive from historical pronominal clitics of West Iranian (cf. Korn 2009) and can occur with hosts from diverse word categories; and finally, a set of copular person forms, which have most

probably evolved from the contraction of the present tense stem of the verb for ‘to be’ with verb agreement suffixes, whence their close formal similarity.

Reflecting the well-known split-ergativity of West Iranian (cf. Haig 2008), the person marker paradigms have different functions in present and past tense constructions. In present tense, the Set₁ verbal PMs are used for indexing the subject, while the clitics pronominally (i.e. non-obligatorily) mark the object and oblique arguments. In past tense, on the other hand, the clitics obligatorily mark the subject of transitive constructions (A), while the Set₂ verbal PMs mark (i) obligatorily the subject of intransitive constructions (S), and (ii) mostly pronominally mark the direct object¹ (P) and oblique arguments (R). Copular forms are used mainly with non-verbal predicates in present, and in some T-A-M forms of verbs based on past participle. Functional distribution of person markers can be summarized as in Figure 1.

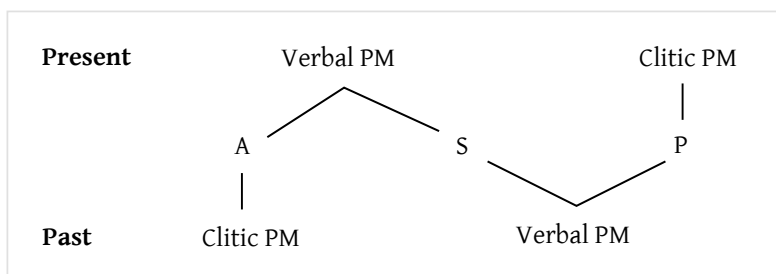


Figure 1: Distribution of person markers for marking clausal arguments (adapted from Bonami & Samvelian (2008))

Restricting our discussion to the past tense, the historically “pronominal” clitics have become obligatory “agreement” markers, since they occur even in the presence of their coreferent NP in the same clause, as in (3).

- (3) *[qerewol-ān]_i kut=yān_i*
 guard-PL say.PST=3PL
 ‘The guards said [that ...]’ (KF.132)

¹Occasionally, the verbal affix person marker can be used even when the coreferent controller noun phrase is present in the clause, thus showing “agreement” with the logical object (P) of the clause. The facts behind this optional “agreement” are yet to be clarified, but the issue does not have any direct impact on our questions here.

The historical verb “agreement” suffixes have remained so in their function of marking an intransitive subject, but they have become “pronominal” when used for marking direct (4) and oblique objects (5).

- (4) *hîç kes řā=î-ne-de-girt-m*
 no person PVB=3SG-NEG.PST-IPFV-keep.PST-1SG
 ‘No one would accept me in [their houses].’ (ŽB.024)
- (5) *xelik lē=yān de-kîrî-m*
 people from=3PL IPFV-buy.PST-1SG
 ‘People would buy (the melons) from me.’ (KF.021)

The comparison of (4) with (6) shows that the verbal PMs in these functions are used only when their coreferent NP is not present in the clause.

- (6) *gödirêž-eke-ān=mān best-ewe*
 donkey-DEF-PL=1PL tie.PRS-ASP
 ‘(At the courtyard of the boy) we tied the donkeys.’ (ŽB.047)

3 Clitic placement and sequential order of clitic and affix PMs in Central Kurdish

Although verbal affix PMs occur only with verb stems, clitics are mobile and can occur with any word category. They are placed in a prosodically defined “second” position within the Verb Phrase, occurring after (or within) the first stressed morphological or syntactic element in the VP (cf. Öpengin 2013: Ch. 5 on clitic placement principles in Central Kurdish). Accordingly, any of the following syntactic and morphological items that comes first in VP is a host for clitic PMs (restricted here to A-past clitics).

Placement of clitic PMs (within Verb Phrase)

NP > Nominal component of a complex predicate > Adposition
 > Preverb > pre-stem NEG/TAM > Verb stem (with inflection)

Now, when the bare stem (or with inflected verb) is the first/only item in VP, both the A-past clitic and the verbal PM indexing P or R will occur on the verb stem, leading to a combination of one clitic PM and one affix PM. Being syntactic elements, clitics would be expected to occur external to affixes

– the sole reliable criterion of clitichood according to some scholars (Anderson 2005; Halpern 2001; Siewierska 2004) – in the following order: [HOST-AFFIX=CLITIC].

However, in Central Kurdish, as it was illustrated with the sentence (1), in such combinations of clitic and verbal affix PMs, the clitic comes before the verbal PM (except with 3SG clitic), in the following order: [HOST=CLITIC-AFFIX]. The order in such combinations is given in paradigmatic form for the verb *girtin* ‘to hold, to keep’ in Table 2, with the 2PL being the invariant subject (A-past).

Table 2: Paradigm of the verb *girtin* ‘to hold’ with combinations of clitic and affix person markers

			A	P
SG	1	<i>girt</i>	= <i>tān</i>	- <i>im</i>
	2	<i>girt</i>	= <i>tān</i>	N.A.
	3	<i>girt</i>	= <i>tān</i>	-∅
PL	1	<i>girt</i>	= <i>tān</i>	- <i>in</i>
	2	<i>girt</i>	= <i>tān</i>	N.A.
	3	<i>girt</i>	= <i>tān</i>	- <i>in</i>

Furthermore, when the subject is 3SG, the order in combination is reversed, to become [HOST-AFFIX=CLITIC], with the clitic following verbal PM, as illustrated in (2). The ordering with a 3SG A-past clitic is thus exceptionally different from the ordering of the rest of the clitic PM paradigm, making it “idiosyncratic”. The ordering of a 3SG clitic is given in paradigmatic form for the verb *birdin* ‘to take’ in Table 3 (the 2SG object is exceptionally realized as a clitic, with which we will deal separately further below).

Table 3: Paradigm of the verb *birdin* ‘to take’ with a third person singular pronominal clitic

			P	A
SG	1	<i>bird</i>	-im	= ī
	2	<i>bird</i>	=it	= ī
	3	<i>bird</i>	-∅	= ī
PL	1	<i>bird</i>	-in	= ī
	2	<i>bird</i>	-in	= ī
	3	<i>bird</i>	-in	= ī

There are thus two separate – but related – questions to resolve. First, given that the clitics are syntactic and affixes are morphological elements, we would expect the clitics to occur second in a clitic and affix combination, but in Central Kurdish the order turns out to be the reverse, where the clitic PMs come before the verbal affix PMs. Thus, the first question is how to approach this unexpected order in clitic and affix combinations. Second, although the order with a 3SG subject clitic conforms to the theoretical expectations (i.e. clitics occurring external to affixes), it turns out to be idiosyncratic within Central Kurdish morphosyntax, requiring an explanation of its own. Before presenting the analysis proposed here, we will have a quick look at the existing accounts of these problems in Kurdish linguistics.

3.1 Previous accounts of the problems

Considering the issue of the clitic person markers occurring between a stem and a verbal person marker, Samvelian (2007: 270–272) claims that the clitic PMs should be viewed as “affixes”, since they occur inside a word and they “linearize” with respect to other morphological items, including lexical affixes (e.g. verbal person markers). The author sees further support for her analysis of clitic PMs as “affixes” in the idiosyncratic placement of 3SG clitics, since the clitics, unlike affixes, are not expected to show idiosyncratic behaviour (cf. Zwicky & Pullum 1983: 505). On that account, once it is accepted that the clitic PMs in Central Kurdish are “affixes”, then there is no conceptual problem with the resulting ordering, since then they will be seen merely as instances of affix sequences. This account is not satisfactory, primarily since (i) clitic PMs show major clitic-like behaviour (e.g. varied host selection; non-phonological attachment to their host, etc.); (ii) the clitic person markers do not “linearize” with other affixes in the sense of inflection, but

rather they are placed following the morphological-syntactic context. Accordingly, the clitic occurs between the inflected stem and the verbal PM in (7a), but when, as in (7b), there is a host available earlier in the construction (the negative formative *ne-*), the clitic will be coaxed from its position and move to the earlier available position. This is not possible for typical inflectional categories.

- (7) a. *nārd-ū=yan-im* → b. *ne=yān-nārd-ūw-im*
 send.PST-PTCP=3SG-1SG NEG=3PL-send.PST-PTCP-1SG
 ‘They have sent me.’ ‘They have not sent me.’

Finally, the analysis in Samvelian (2007) is built upon the assumption that no “second-position” (whether syntactic, morphological, or prosodic) can account for the placement of clitic PMs in Central Kurdish. However, as I have shown in Öpengin (2013: Ch. 5), the clitic person markers do indeed follow a prosodically-defined second position, which, to simplify, is following the first stressed element in the verb phrase (thus after or within the first prosodic word).

A second attempt, Haig (2008), proposes an analysis in terms of person-role constraint. In this account, the unmarked person-role constellations are when the Speech-Act-Participants (SAP; 1st/2nd persons) express an A argument, and non-SAPs (3rd persons) express a P argument. When this requirement is met, that is, the A is a SAP, the clitic occurs first in combination, acting “as a suffix” (Haig 2008: 293), whereas when the A-past clitic is a non-SAP, it follows – although the author accepts that with 3PL A-past, the clitic mostly precedes.

This account is more an attempt at explaining the variation in the order itself (A-P vs. P-A) than the unexpected clitic-affix ordering *per se*, since it does not, for instance, account for why assuming the A role would lead 1st and 2nd person clitics to behave “suffix-like” in the first place. Furthermore, it posits a dual nature for clitics, since they behave both like clitics (when following the verbal person markers) and like affixes (when preceding the verbal person markers). Finally, this account predicts the 3rd person clitics to occur second in combination; however, the 3PL clitic =*yān* systematically occurs first in combination in Mukri, while they mostly do so also in Suleimani dialect, on which the author’s analysis is based. In the same vein, there is no person-role constraint in the ordering of a 3SG A-past and 3PL P-past, since both are non-SAP, but their ordering is the same as in the rest of the paradigm where the clitic follows the verbal PM (see the data in Table 3).

The existing accounts have greatly contributed to the elucidation of the practical and theoretical problems with clitic placement, and clitic and affix combinations in Central Kurdish. However, as it stands, we should still strive for a unified and satisfactory analysis of the remaining facts. In what follows, I propose an analysis of both sets of questions by looking more closely at the facts of prosody in Central Kurdish.

3.2 A prosodic analysis of the clitic and affix combinations

In my analysis below on the problems relating to the ordering of clitics in clitic/affix combinations in Central Kurdish, I argue that the verbal PMs are clitic-like, since they attach non-phonologically to their host. Once this is established, the occurrence of the clitic PMs between verb stem and verbal PMs follows from more general clitic placement principles as described above. We should then first look into the stress assignment rules in the language in order to demonstrate the non-phonological attachment of the verbal person markers.

The unmarked lexical stress is on the final syllable in Central Kurdish, as shown in (8) (the dots separate syllables and the sign (') indicates the syllable carrying the lexical stress):

- (8) *hawîn* [ha.'win] 'summer'
bāyinjān [ba.jin.'dʒan] 'tomato'
gelāwird [gæ.ʔa.'wird] 'tiny leaf'

Regular inflectional affixes do not cause any change in this pattern, since they form a prosodic/phonological word with their host, as illustrated in Table 4 for definiteness (cf. MacKenzie 1961: 48), plural, participle suffixes:

Table 4: Assignment of lexical stress with affixes

Syllabic	Morphemic	Gloss	Translation
ti.rē.ye.'ke	<i>tirē-eke</i>	grape-DEF	'the grape'
kē.'lān	<i>kē-lān</i>	gravestone-PL	'gravestones'
mir.'dū	<i>mird-ū</i>	die.PST-PTCP	'dead'
kir.'dū.e	<i>kird-ūw-e</i>	do.PST-PTCP-COP.3SG	'has done'

In the same vein, the verbal person markers of Set₁ follow this stress assignment pattern and receive word-final lexical stress, as shown in Table 5 with various person forms and verb stems:

Table 5: Assignment of lexical stress in verb forms with present tense verbal PMs

Syllabic	Morphemic	Gloss	Translation
dē.'nim	<i>de-hēn-im</i>	IND-bring.PRS-1SG	'I shall bring (it).'
de.zā.'nī	<i>de-zān-ī</i>	IND-know.PRS-2SG	'You know (it).'
de.zā.'nē	<i>de-zān-ē</i>	IND-know.PRS-3SG	'S/he knows (it).'
de.'keyn	<i>de-ke-yn</i>	IND-do.PRS-1PL	'We shall do ...'
de.gi.'rin	<i>de-gir-in</i>	IND-keep.PRS-3PL	'They keep ...'

Although formally almost identical with the Set₁ verbal PMs, the Set₂ verbal PMs differ from the latter by not receiving the unmarked word-final lexical stress of their host. They cause a change in the stress assignment pattern of the host verb to which they attach, such that the stress falls on the preceding (penultimate) syllable. This is visible in the intransitive and transitive verb forms in Table 6, where the stress systematically falls on the syllable immediately preceding the verbal PMs fulfilling various functions:

Table 6: Assignment of lexical stress in verb forms with past tense verbal PMs

Syllabic	Morphemic	Gloss	Translation
'nūs.tim	<i>nūst-im</i>	sleep.PST-1SG	'I slept.'
gē.'řā.me.we	<i>gēřā-m-ewe</i>	relate.PST-1SG;R-ASP	'He narrated it to me.'
de.'gir.tī	<i>de-girt-ī</i>	IPFV-keep.PST-2SG;R	'I would respect you.'
kir.'dū.wim	<i>kird-ūw-im</i>	do.PST-PTCP-1SG;O	'You invited me.'

To restate the facts, in Central Kurdish, lexical stress is typically assigned to the last syllable of a phonological word. An affix attaching to a word would be expected to conform to this stress pattern, since it becomes part of the phonological word to which it attaches. This is the case for various well-known affixes in Central Kurdish (cf. Table 4 and Table 5), including the verbal person markers used with the present tense stem of verbs. However, the verb forms with verbal PMs of the Set₂ (i.e. those used with past tense verb stems) do not conform to this final-syllable stress assignment pattern. Instead, the stress pattern is altered such that the stress occurs on the syllable immediately preceding the verbal PM (cf. Table 6). What all these facts show

is that the Set₂ verbal PMs do not compose a phonological (or prosodic) word with their host, and as such, they are un-affix-like and more clitic-like in this most important respect.

Finally, there is highly relevant historical ground for such different behaviour of these person forms: The past tense verbal PMs (Set₂) most probably derive from the contraction of the verb stem *ha-* ‘to be’ and verb agreement suffixes. Compare the Middle Persian example in (9), where the past transitive verb construction is periphrastic, consisting of a past participle and the verb ‘to be’, which in its turn carries the verb agreement marker (glosses adapted):

- (9) *'w=t'n dryst (q)yrđ hym (or hy-m)*
and=2PL healthy do.PTCP COP.1SG

‘and you have cured me.’

(MacKenzie 1999 [1979], cited in Haig 2008: 124)

Now that we have established the clitic-like behaviour of verbal person markers, the occurrence of the clitic person markers internal to verbal person markers no more poses a conceptual problem, since the resulting sequence involves two clitic or clitic-like elements. To the contrary, their placement follows from the more general placement principles of the clitic PMs in CK. As I have briefly noted above (and extensively discussed in Öpengin 2013: Ch. 5), the clitic PMs in CK occur after the first stressed element in the verb, which, in this case, is the verb stem. Apart from conforming to this prosodically-defined “second-position”, the placement of clitic PMs before the verbal person markers reflects two other more general facts. First, it conforms to “argument hierarchy”, as the index marking the higher argument (A > P) comes first in combination. Second, it reflects the divergent grammatical status of the two sets of person markers, namely that the clitic person markers as grammaticalised “agreement” markers come before the non-obligatory “pronominal” verbal person markers.

4 Idiosyncrasies with the order and form of person markers in combination

The analysis above suggested that the verbal PMs are essentially clitics (or clitic-like), as they are only non-phonologically attached to their host verbs. If this is the case, the question still remains as to why, in past transitive constructions, the ordering of a 3SG subject clitic and object verbal PMs is excep-

tionally reversed to become one in which the clitic PM follows the verbal PM, hence violating the “second-position” clitic placement principle. This and an additional two analogical processes are dealt with in this section.

4.1 Idiosyncratic ordering with a 3SG subject clitic

As stated above, the regular order of clitic and verbal person markers is clitic PM preceding verbal PM, as in Table 7 – the paradigm of the verb *birdin* ‘to take’ conjugated with 3PL A-past clitic and all verbal person markers coding P:

Table 7: Regular order in clitic and verbal PM combinations (*birdin* ‘to take’ with 3PL A-past clitic)

		A		P
SG	1	<i>bird</i>	= <i>yān</i>	- <i>im</i>
	2	<i>bird</i>	= <i>yān</i>	= <i>it</i>
	3	<i>bird</i>	= <i>yān</i>	- \emptyset
PL	1	<i>bird</i>	= <i>yān</i>	- <i>in</i>
	2	<i>bird</i>	= <i>yān</i>	- <i>in</i>
	3	<i>bird</i>	= <i>yān</i>	- <i>in</i>

However, with a 3SG subject, this order is reversed to one in which the clitic PM follows the verbal PM, as in Table 8 – the paradigm of the verb *birdin* ‘to take’ conjugated with 3SG A-past clitic and all verbal person markers coding P:

Table 8: Exceptional (reverse) order in clitic and verbal PM combinations with a 3SG A-past clitic (*birdin* ‘to take’)

		P		A
SG	1	<i>bird</i>	- <i>im</i>	= <i>ī</i>
	2	<i>bird</i>	= <i>it</i>	= <i>ī</i>
	3	<i>bird</i>	- \emptyset	= <i>ī</i>
PL	1	<i>bird</i>	- <i>in</i>	= <i>ī</i>
	2	<i>bird</i>	- <i>in</i>	= <i>ī</i>
	3	<i>bird</i>	- <i>in</i>	= <i>ī</i>

I argue that this order of the forms in combination is exceptionally reversed due to OCP²-like phonological constraints that require the elements in a combination to be distinct (Yip 1998). That is, the paradigmatically expected ordering of the clitic PMs before verbal PMs blurs the morpho-phonological identity of the forms in sequence, thereby blocking the expression of the morphosyntactic information (i.e. roles of clausal arguments) encoded by those forms.

This blurring of the forms occurs principally because of a reduction in the number of syllables in the combinations of person markers. Notice that the regular clitic and verbal PM combinations are systematically bi-syllabic (except with the zero-form 3SG verbal PM), cf. Table 2 and Table 7. The idiosyncratic ordering with 3SG A-past clitic (Table 8) likewise results in sequences consisting of bi-syllabic units. However, the hypothetical “regular” or “paradigmatically expected” order with the 3SG A-past clitic preceding the verbal PM, as in Table 9, systematically leads to sequences of person forms that are chunked into mono-syllabic units.

Table 9: Expected “regular” order with a 3SG A-past clitic

			A	P
SG	1	*bird	=ī	-im
	2	*bird	=ī	-y
	3	*bird	=ī	-∅
PL	1	*bird	=ī	-in
	2	*bird	=ī	-in
	3	*bird	=ī	-in

The 3SG clitic PM is the only member of the paradigm of clitic PMs which does not contain a consonant in its form. Thus, when it is combined with the verbal PMs in the putative expected manner [HOST=CLITIC PM-VERBAL PM], the distinct formal identity of the forms (especially that of the clitic PM) is lost. For a better illustration, the form sequences resulting from the expected hypothetical and actual (idiosyncratic) orders are given in Table 10.

As it can be noted in Table 10, the expected clitic-affix sequences do not conveniently reveal the morpho-phonological identity of the forms in combination. This is so because, on the one hand, the two forms in combination are merged into mono-syllabic units, and, on the other hand, the resulting

²Obligatory Contour Principle

form sequences are either identical or similar to single person forms (such as *in*, which is identical with 1PL verbal PM). Thus, given that the person forms in combination are unidentifiable as distinct elements, they cannot express the morphosyntactic information of A and P roles, respectively, that they encode in the input. To avoid such an inefficient construction (“identity avoidance” in the sense of Yip 1998), the order of the respective person forms is swapped, with the clitic following the affix, as in Table 8. The combinations obtained through this paradigmatically irregular ordering transparently reveal the morpho-phonological identity of the person forms in combinations (except for the combination with 2SG verbal PM, which results in another exceptional outcome, see further below), as it can also be seen in Table 10 and Table 8. That is, the elements in the combinations are still distinct, decomposable into definite individual person forms, and thus fully capable of expressing the morphosyntactic information they carry in the clause.

Table 10: Morpho-phonological form of clitic and affix combinations

Expected clitic-affix order	Actual affix-clitic order
*= <i>im</i>	- <i>im̄</i>
*= <i>iy</i>	*= <i>iy</i>
*= <i>i</i>	- <i>ī</i>
*= <i>in</i>	- <i>in̄</i>
*= <i>in</i>	- <i>in̄</i>
*= <i>in</i>	- <i>in̄</i>

In short, there are principally two crucial and interrelated conditions that are not met in the expected combinations of the 3SG clitic PM with verbal PMs. These are morphological and phonological distinctiveness of the person forms in combination, and the identifiability of the morphosyntactic information expressed by the person forms. Both of these conditions are met by swapping the positions of the person forms such that the clitic PM follows the verbal affix PM in combination. This violates the “second-position” clitic placement principle working in the rest of the clitic PM paradigm. However, in this instance, the distinctive and unambiguous expression of the person forms in question – and thus the transfer of the morphosyntactic information they encode – ranks higher than the clitic placement principles.³

³For an account in terms of ranking hierarchies within Optimality Theory for these and similar problems in the morphosyntax of Central Kurdish, see Öpengin (2013: Ch. 6).

4.2 Idiosyncratic ordering of 3SG clitic and 3SG copular PMs

In parallel to their interaction with verbal PMs, clitic PMs may occur in combination with copular personal endings in a number of constructions, such as present perfect tense (10) and predicative possession (11). With all persons except a 3SG clitic PM, the order within combination is [HOST=CLITIC PM-COPULAR PM], as illustrated in (10a) and (11a). However, when a 3SG clitic PM enters into play, whether in A-past function (10b) or as the possessor (11b), the order is reversed such that the copular PM comes before the clitic PM within the sequence.

- (10) a. *ew xezîne-î dizî-w=mān-e*
 DEM treasure-EZ steal.PST-PTCP=1PL-COP.3SG
 ‘(This treasure that) we have stolen’ (MK.298)
- b. *nûsî-w-yet=î*
 write.PST-PTCP-COP.3SG=3SG
 ‘He has written (as: ...)’ (MK.143)
- (11) a. *le ew pârçe-ān-e-î he=mān-e*
 from DEM fabric-PL-DEM1-EZ exist=1PL-COP.3SG
 ‘[...] (out of these fabrics that) we have’ (HF.062)
- b. *dû ser meř-e-y ke he-yet=î*
 two CLASS sheep-DEM1-EZ REL exist-COP.3SG=3SG
 ‘the two heads of sheep that he possesses’ (FN)

This reversal in the order of person forms is likewise morpho-phonologically motivated: The regular and expected combination of a 3SG clitic PM with a 3SG copular ending would be *=î-(y)e*, with the clitic coming first within the sequence. This would systematically change the vowel <î> ([i]) to a glide <y> ([j]), giving the sequence *=ye* (analysed as *=y-e*) with the clitic first and the copular ending second. However, the phonological form of the sequence, on the one hand, does not preserve the distinctive input form of the clitic PM (i.e. <î>) and, on the other hand, is principally identical with the form of the 3SG copular ending *-(y)e*. The reversal of the order of the person forms steps in to avoid identity. That is, the reversal of the order of the person forms in sequence resituates the distinctive form of the clitic PM as *=î*. This is enabled by the resurfacing of a (historical) final <t> (preceding a vocalic element) in the form of the 3SG copular ending, giving a distinctive *-(y)et* form

to it, which in combination with a 3SG clitic yields the complex form $-(y)et\bar{i}$. (The resulting $-(y)et\bar{i}$ form is not usually correctly analysed by native speakers and native grammarians as consisting of a copular ending plus a clitic PM. However, in light of the motivation provided here and observed elsewhere in the morphosyntax of the language, its analysis and decomposition here is rather straightforward.)

4.3 Disformation of 2SG verbal PM into clitic PM

It was seen in the discussion above, for instance in Table 8, that the combination of a 3SG subject clitic with 2SG verbal PM expressing the object results in a change in the form of the latter (though not in all dialects). That is, a sequence of 2SG verbal PM $-\bar{i}$ and 3SG clitic PM $=\bar{i}$ would normally give $-\bar{i}\bar{y}$ (analysed as: $-\bar{i}=\bar{i}$), as in (12a). However, as we can see in (12b), and in Table 8, the resulting sequence is $=it\bar{i}$, analysed as $=it=\bar{i}$, namely the sequence of a 2SG clitic PM and a 3SG clitic PM.

(12) a. EXPECTED VERB FORM	b. OBSERVED VERB FORM
<i>bird</i> - $\bar{i}=\bar{i}$ (> <i>bird</i> $\bar{i}\bar{y}$)	<i>bird</i> = $it=\bar{i}$
take.PST-2SG=3SG	take.PST=2SG=3SG
‘S/he took you.’	‘S/he took you.’

In this case, the 2SG verbal PM $-\bar{i}$ is “disformed” into the corresponding 2SG clitic PM $=it$. This formal change is again motivated by a concern to avoid identity and keep the two input person forms morpho-phonologically distinct. While the expected combination $-\bar{i}\bar{y}$ (/ij/), consisting of two vocalic dorso-palatal segments⁴, may not straightforwardly achieve this task, the sequence resulting from “disformation” of the verbal PM into its corresponding clitic PM quite unambiguously achieves it.

In this section, I have discussed three instances of exceptional or paradigmatically irregular orderings and person form realizations. These were the reverse ordering of a third person singular clitic with verbal person markers and copular personal endings, and the disformation (or “suppletion”) of the second person singular verbal person marker into corresponding clitic person marker. All three phenomena were shown to be motivated by a concern

⁴Note that, in some circles, for their features the glides are considered to be identical with their vowel counterparts. The distinctions are considered to be at the phonetic level. See, for instance, Padgett (2008).

to keep the morpho-phonological distinctiveness of the person forms when they form a sequence or combination. Central Kurdish data is by no means unique in this respect. A number of parallel phonological and morphological constraints on the organization of clitic sequences have been documented in Gerlach (2002), where the author shows, for instance, that phonologically similar elements may result in the dissimilation, suppletion, or deletion of a clitic within clitic combinations.

5 Summary and conclusion

In this paper, I have dealt with a number of theoretical and practical questions concerning the concatenation of person markers from different categories in the past tense transitive constructions in Central Kurdish. These questions were (i) the ordering of clitic person markers before verbal (affix) person markers, (ii) the idiosyncratic placement of a third person singular clitic after verbal and copular person markers – which otherwise come before the clitic person marker – and, finally, (iii) the disformation of a second person singular verbal person marker into a corresponding second person singular clitic person marker.

The first problem was accounted for by postulating that the verbal person markers, although historically deriving from verb agreement suffixes, are synchronically clitic-like in that they only non-phonologically attach to their host verb. Evidence for this analysis came from the facts of stress assignment in the language: The unmarked stress pattern in the language is on final syllable. The affixes of diverse sort were illustrated to conform to this pattern when attaching to their host words. However, the verbal person markers were shown to cause a change in the final-syllable stress pattern by ousting the stress onto the immediately preceding syllable. This proved that the verbal person markers, unlike typical affixes, only non-phonologically attach to their host verb, and, as such, are clitics or clitic-like elements in this respect. Once this was established, the placement of clitic person markers in between the verb stem and the verbal person markers follows from more general clitic placement principles according to which the latter occur after the first stressed element in the verb (e.g. a prefix, preverb, or verb stem).

The paradigmatically exceptional placement of a third person singular clitic person marker with verbal person markers and copular personal endings was accounted for by constraints that required the forms in sequence to preserve their morpho-phonological identity, which, in turn, is necessary for the ex-

pression of the encoded morpho-syntactic information. Finally, the disformation of a second person singular verbal personal marker to a corresponding clitic person marker, when followed by a third person singular clitic, was again shown to be motivated by “identity avoidance”, that is, to avoid a sequence of two homophonous person forms, which would fail to keep the morpho-phonological identity of the person forms and, accordingly, fail to express the encoded morpho-syntactic piece of information.

The above discussion reveals two important aspects of more general importance. First, a closer and holistic look into the language material (e.g. prosody) may provide a more straightforward and, hopefully, convincing answer to apparent problems. Second, although the categories – such as clitic and affixes – have prototypical properties that are predictive of certain types of behaviour, the categorial restrictions can be – and often are – overridden when higher-ranking requirements of efficient expression of encoded morpho-syntactic information are at stake.

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