

# Persian Clitics: Doubling and Agreement

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## *Abstract*

In this paper, different functions of Persian pronominal enclitics in verbal domain are discussed. Traditionally, it has been supposed that these enclitics act as arguments, while it is argued here that they act as agreement markers as well. As they have moved from Wackernagel's position toward verb adjacent position in different stages of Persian language history, their functions have also changed. Through grammaticalization, they have acquired a new role as subject agreement markers. They may also act as objects in clitic doubling structures, when the optional NP object acts as topic. The new role of these clitics is explained by the blocking principle, which shows how a language acquires new verbal agreement formatives only for the non-distinctive slots of the agreement paradigm.

Keywords: pronominal clitics, agreement markers, clitic-doubling, grammaticalization, Blocking Principle.

## 1. Persian Clitics and Their Distribution

While there is a vast expanse of literature on clitics, especially in Romance languages (Anderson, 1992, 1993, 2004, 2005; Borer, 1986; Carstairs, 1981; De Cat, 2007; Doborovie-Sori, 1993; Haverkort, 1993; Jaeggli, 1982; Kallulli & Tasmowski, 2008; Kayne, 1989; Klavans, 1982, 1985; Nevis, 1985; Pappas, 2004; Rivas, 1977; Russi, 2008; Stateva, 2002; Strozer, 1976; Zwicky, 1977, 1985; Zwicky & Pullum, 1983, among others), Persian pronominal clitics have not been sufficiently treated. Modern Persian, an Iranian language, is a pro-drop, verb-final language. Inflectional suffixes appear on the verb to mark subject-verb agreement, as in (1).

- (1) a. *man ketāb rā xar-id-am*  
I book-RA buy-Past-1SG  
'I bought the book'
- b. *to ketāb rā xar-id-i*  
You book-RA buy-Past-2SG  
'You bought the book'

These suffixes agree with the subject in person and number and license pro-drop in subject position. As presented in Table 1, the subject agreement marker for 3rd singular in past tense is zero.

Table 1. Verbal suffixes showing subject agreement

Person/Number	Sg	Pl
1	-am	-im
2	-i	-id
3	-ad (present)/ -Ø (past)	-and

Persian has some pronominal enclitics, too, which are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Persian pronominal enclitics

Person/Number	Sg	Pl
1	=m	=mān
2	=t	=tān
3	=š	=šān

In colloquial Persian pronunciations, a vowel ([e], [a] or [u]) is introduced before these special clitics (Zwicky, 1977). These enclitics may use different hosts, in contrast with the verbal agreement suffixes which may never be separated from their verb stem (Lazard, 1957, Barjasteh, 1983, Samvelian & Tseng, 2010). Pronominal clitics appear in five different positions, which could be divided into two main groups, verbal distributions and non-verbal ones. In verbal positions, the clitics appear pre-verbally, as in (I); or post-verbally, as in (II). The non-verbal distributions are presented in (III) to (V). The main purpose of this paper is the study of clitics in verbal positions.

- I. These clitics appear pre-verbally in some structures, called compound verb of experience by Barjasteh (1983). As the following examples show, in these structures the subject agreement marker on the verb is a default / zero morph in past tense third singular subjects, while the presence of clitic is obligatory.

- (2) a. *xoš=am*                      *'āmad-Ø*  
 Like-Enc1SG                      come Past -3SG SU  
 'I liked it'
- b. *xāb=aš*                      *bord-Ø*  
 sleep-Enc3SG                      take Past -3SG SU  
 'S/he slept'

The grammatical status of the clitics in these structures is studied in (ii).

- II. The clitics may also be used post-verbally, after inflectional suffixes used as subject agreement markers. As the feature of special clitics, these pronominal enclitics have a different syntax compared with their corresponding free forms. The free forms of objects appear canonically pre-verbally (as in 3 b, c), while their cliticized forms appear post-verbally (as in 3a). In this usage, clitic doubling is also possible, as these enclitics may be used with the co-referring direct objects (3b & c) (Samvelian & Tseng, 2010).

- (3) a. *(man) did-am=eš*  
 (I) see Past-1SG Su-Enc 3SG  
 ‘I saw him/her’
- b. *(man) Ali rā did-am=eš*  
 (I) Ali-RA see Past-1SG Su-Enc 3SG  
 ‘I saw Ali’
- c. *(man) ‘u rā did-am=eš*  
 (I) s/he-RA see Past-1SG Su-Enc 3SG  
 ‘I saw him/her’

The grammatical status of clitics in this position is discussed in section (3). The main goal of this paper is to provide evidence that clitics in these verbal positions are grammatically distinct, acting as grammatical agreement markers in (I) and as pronominal arguments in (II). The author will attempt to differentiate these different functions by syntactic criteria.

As stated before, these clitics appear in non-verbal positions as well, in which they could be used in three different contexts:

- III. As possessors when attached to nouns. In Persian, the possessor comes after possessed, when both are nouns or full pronouns (4a & b). The same is true when the possessor is an enclitic (4c).

- (4) a. *ketāb-e Ali*  
 book-Poss Ali  
 ‘Ali’s book’
- b. *ketāb-e ‘u*  
 book-Poss s/he  
 ‘His or her book’
- c. *Ketāb=eš*  
 book-Poss-Enc 3SG  
 ‘His or her book’

- IV. After prepositions in PPs, instead of nouns (5a) or full pronouns (5b), with the same function and distribution, as in (5c):

- (5) a. *‘az Ali*  
 from Ali  
 ‘From Ali’
- b. *‘az ‘u*  
 from him/her  
 ‘From him/her’
- c. *‘az=aš*  
 from-Enc 3SG  
 ‘From him/her’

V. These pronominal enclitics are also used in relative clauses (6a) and some left-dislocated structures (6b), acting as resumptive pronouns (Taghavipour, 2005).

- (6) a. *mardi ke did-am=eš dabir bud* (Colloquial Persian)  
 Man that saw-1SG Su- Enc3SG teacher was  
 ‘The man whom I saw was a teacher’
- b. *Ali bābā=š ‘umad* (Colloquial Persian)  
 Ali father-Enc3SG came  
 ‘Ali, his father came’

Persian pronominal enclitics are anchored by the head of the related domain (Anderson, 2005, p. 80), thus appearing after the head in all, but one, distribution. In (I) above, these clitics appear in pre-verbal position. The position of clitics (Klavans, 1982, 1985) in Old and Middle Persian was in Wackernagel’s (1892) position, i.e. they occupied the second position in the sentence (Harris and Campbell 1995, p. 28), but they are, in most positions, attracted to the head in Modern Persian.

From Zwicky (1977) onwards, a vast amount of research has been devoted to determine the properties of clitics cross-linguistically. A substantial amount of work has also been devoted to more syntactic properties of clitics, such as, clitic placement – whether clitic placement, with respect to the host, is base generated, or the outcome of movement, Clitic ‘doubling’ – the possibility for the clitic pronoun of co-occurring with its nominal referent (Russi, 2008, p. 7). While Romance pronominal clitics have been actively and thoroughly investigated in modern linguistics, Persian clitics are not well-discussed.

Clitics in various languages have been argued to have properties of agreement and/or arguments, and for this reason they have been analysed as involving either base generation or movement (Roberts, 2000, p. 78). This paper is mainly concerned with the grammatical status of these clitics when appearing on verb. To reach the aims, in section (2), clitics in the history of Persian are discussed, then, in section (3), the author has analysed the different features of some specific structures in Persian, like those in (I), to argue that enclitics in these structures are acting as subject agreement markers. In section (4), the author provides evidence for the claim that these enclitics in sentences like those in (II), are acting as true arguments, in object clitic doubling. Section (5) tries to give an explanation of the different behaviours of clitics in verbal positions, while section (6) contains the conclusion.

## 2. Clitics from Historical Perspective

Before going to the main task, a look at the historical flow of these clitics from Old to Middle and Modern Persian will be helpful. It has been argued that Old Persian (6-4c BC) was accusative in all tenses. S and A took a uniform case, the Nominative, and the verb agreed with them, while O was marked with a special case, the Accusative (Haig, 2008, p. 23). In Old Persian, the oblique forms of the

personal pronouns could be realized as clitics (clitic forms of the Nominative do not exist).

Table 3 is an overview of pronominal enclitics in Old Persian (Brandenstein & Mayrhofer, 1964, pp. 66-67):

Table 3. Pronominal special clitics in Old Persian (Brandenstein & Mayrhofer, 1964, pp. 66-67).

	Acc.	Gen.		Acc.	Gen.
1Sg	=mâ	=maiy	1Pl		
2Sg		=taiy	2Pl		
3Sg	=šim =dim	=šaiy	3Pl	=šiš , =diš	=šâm

It is argued that these enclitics, as other ancient Indo-European languages (Szemerényi, 1996), are attached to the first word of the clause of which they are syntactically constituents, regardless of the syntactic category of that word. Hence, they are second position clitics (Wackernagel, 1892). Examples of Genitive enclitics are given in (7) and (8), and examples of Accusative enclitics are in (9) and (10) (from Kent, 1953 reproduced in Haig, 2008, p. 42):

- (7) *avaθā = šām hamaranam kartam*  
 thus = 3PL:GEN battle do:PTCPL  
 ‘thus by them battle was done’
- (8) *aita = maiy Auramazdā dadātuv*  
 this = 1s:GEN Ahuramazda may give  
 ‘may Ahuramazda give this to me’ (Kent, 1953, DNa, 53-55; cf. also DPd, 23-24; DPh, 8; DNa, 50-51, 54-55)
- (9) *pasāva = dim manā frābara*  
 after.that = 3S:ACC 1S:GEN bestow:PST:3S  
 ‘after that (he) bestowed it on me’ (Kent, 1953, p. DNa, 33; cf. also DB I, I, 60-61; DPd, 7-8, 13-14; DNa, 33)
- (10) *kāra hya Aθuriya hau = dim abara yātā Bābirauv*  
 People which Assyrian DEM = 3S:ACC brought to Babylon  
 ‘The Assyrian people – it brought it to Babylon’ (Kent, 1953, pp. DSf, 32-33)

Old and Middle Persian differ regarding inflectional morphology. The case system of Old Persian underwent massive syncretism, leaving most nouns without morphological case differentiation. Agreement morphology and pronominal clitics compensate the loss of case morphology (Windfuhr, 1992). Middle Iranian languages had a two-case system, differentiating unmarked direct case from the marked oblique one. This distinction is still present in most of the modern Iranian languages, but not in Persian.

From Middle Iranian onwards, all the languages show split ergativity (Dixon, 1994), in which past transitive clauses exhibit ergative case, differing from all other sentences. Modern Persian does not show such an alignment; though, Haig (2008, p. 81) asserts that it must have passed through such a stage. Clitics are found in different places in Middle Iranian languages. The case

system of Old Iranian is simplified in Middle Iranian, but there is a massive increase in the use of clitics. One important point is that the possible syntactic functions of the clitics are determined by the tense of the governing verb. The clitics in Middle Iranian have five major functions: (a) an A-past cross referencing, (b) an O-present, (c) an indirect participant, (d) an adpositional complement, and (e) an adnominal possessor. The following table from Haig (2008, p. 96) shows these functions:

Table 4. Possible functions of pronominal clitics in different tenses in Middle Iranian

Tenses	A	O	Ind. Participant - Adp. Complement - And. Poss.
Present	No	Yes	Yes
Past	Yes	No	Yes

As it is clear from Table 4, in Middle Iranian, clitics show Tense Sensitive Alignment concerning the core arguments. The clitics system outlined in this table is a general feature of West Iranian languages and has remained in most of them. The forms of the clitics in Middle Iranian (Heston, 1976, p. 142; Sims-Williams, 1981, p. 171) are exactly like those in Modern Persian (see Table 2). The distribution of clitics in Middle Iranian remained as those of Old Iranian. They attached to the first element of the clause (Wackernagle position) (Brunner, 1977).

While the clitic forms of Old Persian were different for Accusative, Genitive/ Dative and Ablative forms, the Middle and Modern Western Iranian languages have a single form for all oblique functions. In Old Persian, the clitic pronouns were optional variants of full pronouns, but in Middle Persian, their syntactic distribution were no longer identical, showing that clitics were becoming something else. As Fuß (2005, p. 129) asserts, “it is commonly assumed that pronouns are the primary historical source of subject-verb agreement morphology,” but “it is a difficult task to decide whether a given clitic has already developed into an agreement marker”. In the remainder of this paper, the author will attempt to show the extent to which this grammaticalization process is completed in Modern Persian.

It could be concluded that, Middle Persian and Old Persian clitics are similarly used in the Wackernagle position, in terms of their placement. What has happened in Modern Persian is rightward drift; similar to Romance languages (Vincent, 2001, pp. 30–31), the move of clitics from clause-initial to verb-adjacent. Of course there has been another tendency in Modern Iranian languages, especially Persian, namely head attraction, in which the clitics have moved towards their governing heads, such as noun, preposition or verb, as pictured in section 1. These tendencies are very similar and sometimes it is not easy to tell them apart. Whatever the tendency, the resulting positions of clitics in Modern Persian are those envisaged in (I) to (V), section (1) (Haig, 2008, p. 308).

### 3. Subject Agreement Markers

In part (1) it was noted that Persian pronominal clitics appear in some special structures (I), in which they are not optional.

- (11) a. *xoš=am*                    *âmad-Ø*  
 Like-Enc 1SG      come Past -3SG Su  
 ‘I like it’
- b. *xâb=aš*                    *bord-Ø*  
 sleep-Enc3SG      take Past -3SG Su  
 ‘S/he slept’

These constructions are classed as impersonal in Persian linguistics literature (Thackston 1983; Ghomeshi, 1996) and Sedighi (2005) called them psychological constructions which always denote a physiological/mental/physical state of the experience, while Barjasteh (1983) called the compound verb of experience in which the initial experiencer acts as subject. In these sentences, a NP could optionally appear in sentence initial/subject position which does not induce usual agreement on the verb with inflectional suffixes introduced in table (1). When the NP in sentence initial position is present, it is always co-referential with a clitic attached to the non-verbal constituent of a compound verb. The verbs in these constructions always appear in third person singular/default form, giving the impression that agreement is not obtained. The following are more examples of these constructions from Sedighi (2005, p. 142).

- (12) a. (*mæn<sub>i</sub>*) *teshn-æm<sub>i</sub>*      *ast-Ø*  
 I            thirsty-1SG      is-3SG  
 ‘I am thirsty’
- b. (*unha<sub>i</sub>*) *xab-eshun<sub>i</sub>*      *gereft-Ø*  
 They      sleep-3PL      took-3SG  
 ‘They got sleepy’
- c. (*Færzin<sub>i</sub>*) *saxt-esh<sub>i</sub>*      *ni-st-Ø*  
 Farzin      hard-3SG      neg-is-3SG  
 ‘(It) is not hard for Farzin’

The verbs in these constructions always appear with 3rdSg/default morphology and seem frozen. They are also limited to a number of verbs, such as *gereftan* (to take), *âmadan* (to come), *bordan* (to take), *šodan* (to become), *zadan* (to hit) and *raftan* (to go). These verbs always denote a non-agentive event. The agreement system in this case is defective, and the author argues that the clitics are grammaticalized to repair this defective agreement paradigm, in line with Fuß (2005, p. 230) who states vividly that “new verbal agreement morphology arises only for those slots of the agreement paradigm where the existing verbal inflection is non-distinctive”.

The important point for the discussion here is that the clitic pronouns in these constructions are obligatory, and obligatorily coreferential with the optional sentence subjects. The agreement is not triggered by usual verbal suffixes, and some linguists argue that these constructions are problematic for agreement relations (Sedighi, 2005, p. 151). The author argue below that in these structures, the clitics act as agreement markers.

As Corbett (2003) stated, agreement markers may co-occur with an NP argument, while clitics are arguments by themselves. We need a set of syntactic and morphological criteria to decide whether the enclitics in this position have already developed into some form of agreement or should rather be analysed as a clitic pronoun.

Fuß (2005, p. 130) stated that “genuine agreement markers may co-occur with a DP argument, while clitics and incorporated pronouns are arguments by themselves and may therefore not co-occur with an argument that receives the same  $\theta$ -role”. For example, in Italian the inflected verb alone may create a well-formed sentence, as in (13), or the subject can be optionally realized as an overt DP, as in (14).

(13) *Mangi-a*  
Eat-3SG  
'He/she eats'

(14) *Lui/Lei mangi-a*  
He/she Eat-3SG  
'He/she eats'

Linguists took this to indicate that in Italian, the person/number marker is a true agreement suffix, which redundantly marks the person/number features of the subject, which may be *pro* (as in 13) (Fuß, 2005, p. 131).

On the other hand, in Macushi, where the inflected verb alone can make a well-formed sentence (15), the person/number markers disappear in the presence of overt NP arguments (16), and their co-occurrence leads to ungrammaticality (as in 17).

(15) *i-koneka-ʔi-i-ya*  
3SG-make-PAST-3SG-ERG  
'He made it'

(16) *t-ekin era ʔma-ʔi paaka esa- ʔya*  
REFL-pet.ABS see-PAST cow owner-ERG  
'The owner of the cow saw his own pet'

(17) *\*uurʔ-ya i-koneka-ʔi-i-ya*  
I-ERG 3SG-make-PAST-3SG-ERG  
'He made it'

So, the person/number markers in Macushi are not agreement markers, “but rather clitic pronouns that have argument status and receive a theta–role from the verb” (Fuß, 2005, p. 131).

The Persian data in (11) and (12) are similar to the Italian. As those examples show, they are grammatical without the overt realization of the subject NP. At the same time, the person/number markers do not disappear in the presence of an overt NP, and they co-occur with the overt subject, as in (18).

- (18) a. *man xoš=am*                      *'āmad-Ø*  
           I            Like-Enc 1SG            come PAST-3SG Su  
           'I like it'
- b. *Ali xāb=eš*                      *bord-Ø*  
           Ali sleep-Enc 3SG            take PAST-3SG Su  
           'Ali slept'

Fuß (2005) introduced some syntactic preconditions for the rise of agreement from pronominal elements. The first precondition is that agreement morphemes do not head their own projection in the syntax and they occur on other functional heads, and the second is that “agreement morphemes may combine with contentful functional categories such as C, T, or v (and maybe others) in one of the following ways. First, the agreement morpheme may attach to its functional host prior to the insertion of that host into the syntactic derivation. Secondly, the agreement morpheme may be added postsyntactically as a dissociated Agr-morpheme, as in the case of complementizer agreement in Germanic” (Fuß 2005, p. 139). These preconditions do not put any restriction on the reanalysis of Persian clitics as agreement markers in compound verbs of experience. Since agreement morphemes do not occupy a definite structural position in clause, they have come into existence as part of another element, namely subject clitics.

The third and fourth preconditions led to the adjacency requirement, defined by Fuß (2005, p. 140) as follows:

- (19) Adjacency requirement:  
 A clitic pronoun can be reanalysed as a bound agreement affix on the verb only if the clitic is string-adjacent to the verb.

This precondition states that for a clitic pronoun to be reinterpreted as an inflectional affix, it should be adjacent to the verb. This restriction is met in Persian, since the clitic is attached to the pre-verbal element of the compound verb. The adjacency requirement says that “a pronominal clitic can only be reanalysed as an agreement morpheme on a functional head X if X combines with the verb prior to Vocabulary Insertion” (Fuß, 2005, p. 140). The presence of the finite verb in Persian compound verbs of experience signals that there should be agreement features, and the suitable morpheme to do that is the clitic adjacent to the verb, reanalysed as agreement marker.

Fuß (2005, p. 141) also argued that “the reanalysis of a pronoun as an agreement marker must preserve the predicate’s argument structure”. This means that according to  $\theta$ -theory, since pronouns carry a  $\theta$ -role, the role should be assigned when the pronoun is acting as agreement marker. This thematic role in Persian can be assigned to the initial experiencer when present, or to the pro. Fuß continues that pro-drop grammar facilitates the reanalysis of pronouns as agreement markers, and Persian is not an exception to this claim. So, it could be concluded that since the usual suffixes marking subject agreement are not at work in these structures, the clitics are reanalysed and act as agreement markers.

There is another structure in Persian which supports that clitics have acquired the agreement role. As it is clear from table (1), the subject agreement

marker in third singular past tense is zero. Interestingly, Persian speakers use the clitic, =eš, compensating the absence of subject agreement marker. This usage of =eš is a new trend, absent in careful speech and writing, suggesting speakers are using it as subject agreement markers. This =eš is used with intransitive predicates, emphasizing its non-argument nature (20).

- (20) *Ali raft=eš*  
 Ali went-3SG Enc  
 ‘Ali went’

If we look at morphological aspects of the rise of this new agreement suffix in Persian, it becomes clear that the grammaticalization of 3sg clitic =eš repairs the verbal agreement paradigm. Prior to this development, the verbal agreement paradigm had no phonological form for 3Sg in past tense, and the grammaticalization of clitic has repaired this ‘defect’ of the paradigm. Table 5 shows the relevant facts:

Table 5. Verbal agreement paradigm’s change in Persian

	Old paradigm	New paradigm
1SG	-am	-am
2SG	-i	-i
3SG	-∅	-eš
1PL	-im	-im
2PL	-id	-id
3PL	-and	-and

It could be concluded that the paradigm change repaired a previously defective agreement paradigm. Fuß (2005, p. 22) asserted that “this observation is a general characteristic of the grammaticalization of agreement markers across languages”. The introduction of new agreement markers is not random, but rule-governed. They appear where there is a defect and the existing paradigm is non-distinctive. Similar observations have been made in other languages (see Fuß, 2005 for a complete discussion).

The grammaticalization of clitics to subject agreement markers in these two instances, examples (11) and (12) in one hand, and example (20) on the other hand, could be explained by Blocking Principle, defined by Fuß (2005, p. 233) (cf. section 4).

This principle explains why Persian speakers are using clitics instead of usual subject agreement markers in the discussed examples, where the existing agreement system is not distinctive enough. There is a slot in the old paradigm in table (5), and the Blocking Principle is fulfilled, since the development of a new marker has affected the underspecified cell. In the old paradigm, -∅ is a default agreement ending and represents the elsewhere case. The reanalysis of =eš as agreement marker, which is specified for person (3rd) and number (Sg), resolves the defective paradigm, leading to a more specified one. (See Fuß, 2005) for similar facts in Bavarian). In both mentioned sentence types, Persian subject clitics are obligatory whenever the verbal forms lack subject agreement features.

#### 4. Object Clitic Doubling

As stated in (II) above, Persian pronominal enclitics can be attached to the verb, appearing after inflectional suffixes. Object markers in Persian could replace arguments, they vary in person and number, and surface postverbally; while the normal object position is to the left of the verb. The question addressed in this section is whether these object markers are arguments or agreement markers, of a kind similar to the agreement suffixes on the verb. In other words, are they true pronominal clitics which act as arguments, or they have developed into agreement markers? Similar discussions related to the status of object markers are done in Romance and Bantu languages (Labelle, 2008). In this section it is argued that these clitics are arguments, and they do not act as agreement markers. In other words, they are syntactic, not morphological elements, keeping their status as clitics (De Cat, 2005). Following are criteria to treat the object markers as clitics, that is, as syntactic elements; contrary to the arguments provided in the previous section, by which the same elements, in another context, have been regarded as agreement markers or ‘morphological elements’.

Clitics, unlike nominal direct objects, do not bear accusative case. Persian has an accusative marker, a postposition, *râ*, which marks the definite direct objects (21a), especially if they are full pronouns (21b) (Karimi, 2003). Clitics in this position appear with definite arguments, as in (21a & b), or the clitic could be used alone, as in (21c).

- (21) a. *man Ali râ did-am*  
 I Ali Acc saw-1SG  
 ‘I saw Ali’
- b. *man ‘u râ did-am*  
 I s/he Acc saw-1SG  
 ‘I saw her/him’
- c. *man did-am=eš*  
 I saw-1SG-3SG Encl  
 ‘I saw him/her’

Generally, clitic doublings resemble the agreement markers in that there is a free phrasal element and a bound element which share  $\phi$ -features (Fuß, 2005, p. 132). Since doubling and agreement configurations are very similar, it is not easy to tell if the clitic has already developed into an agreement marker. The first difference between the two is that doubling is optional, usually based on contextual features; while agreement is obligatory. Fuß asserts that “while the doubling construction is characteristically restricted to certain contexts where the speaker wishes to emphasize the argument expressed by the clitic..., if doubling loses its stylistic force (presumably due to an over-use), it may gain a wider distribution and eventually become obligatory in all contexts” (2005, p. 132). The current status of mentioned Persian pronominal clitics resembles doubling construction. First of all, there is a pragmatic difference between a sentence with overt argument and the clitic and the one with the clitic alone.

Though the clitic alone suffices to express the object in these constructions, a full NP or pronoun may optionally be added to lay stress on the object.

Second, though the clitics in this context have achieved widespread use, it is optional, even in colloquial speech, and it is not widely used in formal speech. This situation in Persian indicates that the doubling configuration is not grammaticalized and the clitics have not gained agreement markers roles.

Although clitics behave like verbal agreement suffixes, insofar as they appear with or without the objects they are referring to (22a & b), as do the verbal suffixes (22a & b), they are different in their morphology; the suffixes are merged with the verb (sometimes) making a fully inflected word, while the clitics are merged with the VP, never inflected as a single word, and they are different syntactically; verbal suffixes are obligatory, clitics are optional in this context.

- (22) a. *man* 'u *râ* *did-am=eš*  
 I s/he Acc saw-1SG=3SG Encl  
 'I saw him/her'
- b. *did-am=eš*  
 saw-1SG=3SG Encl  
 'I saw him/her'

As mentioned in part (1), clitics in Persian may be attached to different hosts (see examples 2 to 6). This property is an indication that these bound morphemes are clitics, rather than affixes. Zwicky and Pullum (1983) argue that clitics select their hosts more freely than the affixes. If clitics undergo grammaticalization and develop into agreement markers, they will be more restrictive in host selection. Persian data indicate that this process has not taken place and the clitics freely attach to different elements. Even in this usage, they could be attached to the verbal element of a complex predicate (as in 23 a), or to the pre-verbal element (23 b) (Dabir-Moghaddam, 1997). If object clitics have gained the status of an affix, like subject agreement suffixes (see Table 1), they should be attached to the verb stem pre-syntactically and in a fixed position. However, as it is clear from the following examples, they are free to be attached to the verbal element or the preverbal element of the complex predicate.

- (23) a. *man* *bečče râ* *gâz* *gereft am=eš*  
 I child-RA bite take-1SG-Clitic 3SG  
 'I bit the child'
- b. *man* *bečče râ* *gâz=eš* *gereft-am*  
 I child-RA bite-Clitic 3SG take- 1SG  
 'I bit the child'

If object clitics are affixed to verb stems in the lexicon, it is not clear why they should be allowed to appear on different positions (see De Cat, 2005 for similar arguments in French).

As another criterion, clitics are usually interpreted as definite or specific. Accordingly, in clitic doubling constructions, the full nominal usually

must be definite /specific. So, “if it is possible for the full nominal to be indefinite/non-specific, then it is rather clear that the relevant construction represents an agreement relation” (Fuß 2005, p. 133), otherwise, it is an instance of clitic doubling. In Persian, clitic doubling is not possible with indefinite NPs, (hence the ungrammaticality of 24), and it is a diagnostics which shows that clitics in these constructions are not acting as agreement markers.

- (24) a. \**man pesar did-am=eš*  
 I boy saw-1SG-3SG Encl  
 ‘I saw a (indefinite) boy’
- b. \**man hič kas ro na- did-am=eš*  
 I nobody-RA Neg- saw-1SG-3SG Encl  
 ‘I saw nobody’

This argument may also be used to show that the presence of an object clitic is interrelated with the information structure of that sentence. Persian direct objects are followed by postposition *-râ*, if they are definite / specific semantically, and if interpreted as topics, pragmatically (Dabir-Moghaddam, 1992; Karimi, 2003). While they are indefinite / non-specific, they act as the focus of the sentence. Hence, the clitics cannot co-refer to the focal element of the sentence, while they could co-refer to the topical element. Such observations approve that clitics do not act as agreement markers, but have pragmatic effects. Bresnan and Mchombo (1987) proposed a series of well-motivated diagnostics to distinguish between agreement markers versus arguments (clitic doubling) in Chichewâ. De Cat (2005) applies the same diagnostics to French subject clitics and concludes that a morphological analysis in terms of agreement marker is not plausible. One of those diagnostics is locality of grammatical agreement markers, requiring the associated NP to appear in the same clause; if not, it is an instance of anaphoric agreement (clitic doubling). Only the anaphoric agreement relations, not the syntactic agreement, can be nonlocal to the agreeing verb, and the relation between clitics and corefering NP could be nonlocal. Hence, it would be expected to find nonlocal relations between these elements. In Persian, it is possible to place the DP in a higher clause and leave the clitic in a lower clause (25). The possibility of non-local relation indicates that clitics in this case are not acting as agreement markers and should be treated as an incorporated pronoun.

- (25) *man ketâb râ dîruz xaridam va ‘emruz xândam=eš*  
 I book-RA yesterday bought and today read=3SG Clitic  
 ‘I bought the book yesterday and read it today’

“A grammatical agreement marker should be present even when the argument it is related with is questioned” (De Cat, 2005, p. 1212). When the related argument in Persian is questioned, the clitic could not be used (as in 26 b); this serves as additional evidence that it cannot act as agreement marker.

- (26) a. *čī xaridi?*  
 What bought?  
 ‘What did you buy?’  
 b. *\*čī xaridi=š?*  
 What bought=3SG Clitic  
 ‘What did you buy?’

Zwicky and Pullum (1983, p. 505) also noted that morpho-phonological idiosyncrasies are more characteristic of affixed words than of clitic groups. In other words, if it is observed that “an alleged clitic has an effect on the shape or morphological structure of its host, this should cast some doubt on its status as a clitic” (Fuß 2005, p. 137). Persian clitics do not affect the form of their hosts, as an indication that they are true clitics in this context, not agreement markers.

It could be argued that object markers and object NPs are in complementary distribution, and in cases of concurrences of an object marker with an NP, the NP is a VP external topic. While Persian free pronouns can be used to introduce new topics or for contrast (as in 27a), the clitics cannot do this, hence the ungrammaticality of (27b). So, as Bresnan (1997; 2001) argues, the reduced pronouns, including clitics, are universally specialized for topic anaphoricity; they are always anaphoric to a preceding discourse referent, while free pronouns are by default used to introduce new or contrastive topics.

- (27) *‘in rā didi yâ ‘un ro?*  
 This-RA saw-2SG or that RA  
 ‘Did you see this or that one?’  
 a. *‘un ro didam*  
 That RA saw-1SG  
 ‘That one, I saw’  
 b. *\*didameš*  
 saw-1SG=Clitic 3SG  
 ‘I saw that’

In this section, a number of diagnostics to decide between clitic doubling and agreement markers were presented. Some syntactic criteria such as obligatory character and specificity of the double have been used to show that the discussed construction in Persian is an instance of double clitic construction. Some morphological criteria which distinguish clitics from affixes were used, too, to emphasize the clitic-status of double clitic construction, as opposed to agreement affixes.

All in all, it may be concluded that the element in question in the above context is actually a clitic and not an agreement marker.

## 5. From Clitics to Agreement Markers

Many linguists have talked about the grammaticalization of clitics into agreement markers. Anderson (2005, p. 83) proposed that clitics are phrasal affixes and they are overt morphological markers of the morpho-syntactic properties of phrases. He (Ibid: chapter 8) discusses pronominal clitics as

agreement markers and regards pronominal clitics as forms of agreement, differing from verbal agreement only in whether the functional content is realized as the morphology of a phrase or a word. Givón (1976) also proposed that, historically, pronouns are incorporated to verbs and are reanalysed as grammatical agreement markers. The development of agreement markers is a very common kind of grammaticalization (Roberts & Roussou, 2003, p. 175). In Indo-European verbs, the personal endings are derived from pronouns (Szemerényi, 1996). Good and Yu (2005) demonstrate that one set of subject agreement markers in Turkish are post-lexical enclitics driven historically from free pronouns. Woolford (2003) argued that clitics and affixes are competing to act as agreement markers.

Fuß (2005) was concerned with the diachronic development of subject-verb agreement from pronominal clitics. He observed that “cross-linguistically, the grammaticalization process under discussion either establishes agreement in languages that previously lacked agreement or serves to repair a defective paradigm” (Fuß, 2005, p. 1). There is a grammaticalization path in which the agreement markers are developed historically from free pronouns, as sketched below (Hopper & Traugott, 1993; Fuß, 2005, p. 4):

- (28) a. Independent pronoun → weak pronoun → clitic pronoun → affixal (agglutinative) agreement marker → fused agreement marker → Ø

Persian clitics are repairing a defective paradigm. The Persian data in this paper show that currently the clitic pronouns, while preserving their original status in some distributions, have developed into agreement markers in a specific context, discussed in section (3) above. The Persian instance is an ongoing process of reanalysis of clitics as agreement markers.

This observation shows that the change from clitics to agreement markers does not replace existing agreement markers in a random fashion. “Rather, it can be shown that the creation of new forms affects only those cells of the paradigm where the existing verbal agreement morphology is not distinctive” (Fuß 2005, p. 229). This means that in Persian, clitics turn into obligatory markers of verbal agreement only in some specific structures (see section 3), and they are optional in other contexts. Clitics are obligatory only in contexts in which the existing agreement morphology fails to signal person and number of the subject in a clear way. This grammaticalization is shaped by Blocking Principle (Fuß 2005, p. 233), operating during language acquisition and requiring new inflectional material to be more distinctive than the previous relevant inflectional formatives.

(29) Blocking Principle

If several appropriate PF-realizations of a given morpheme are attested in the Primary Linguistic Data, the form matching the greatest subset of the morphosyntactic features included in the morpheme must be chosen for storage in the lexicon.

Fuß (2005) took it to be a cognitive economy principle applying during language acquisition and guaranteeing an optimal and non-redundant lexicon. According to this, more specifically, more marked lexical entries are preferred over less marked ones.

It may be concluded that languages acquire new verbal agreement formatives only for the non-distinctive slots of the agreement paradigm (see Fuß, 2005 for discussion and references). Blocking Principle is an economy principle, shaping the acquisition of inflectional morphology, which explains that clitics are acting as agreement markers whenever needed, in underspecified slots of the agreement paradigm.

In Persian examples discussed in Section (3), two forms are competing: the empty morph used as default agreement marker, and the clitics. Both of them are able to mark the agreement, but the more specified one is clitic. In line with Fuß (2005, p. 231), new verbal agreement morphology is acquired by morphological blocking effects. These obligatory clitics have in fact developed into verbal agreement markers, and these grammaticalized agreement markers compensate for the loss of distinctive agreement endings, in line with the Blocking Principle.

## 6. Conclusion

This paper has demonstrated that Persian clitics are fulfilling two different functions, when appearing in verb-adjacent positions. These are called subject and object markers. Using different morphological and syntactic criteria, it was concluded that Persian subject clitics, which obligatorily appear in specific structures, have developed into agreement markers. They are the result of grammaticalization of clitics into agreement markers, and this process could be explained by Blocking Principle. Object clitics are more akin to incorporated pronouns (or anaphoric agreement markers) than to morphemes (or grammatical agreement markers), hence, they are only realized when the object is the topic, and they are not obligatory when the co-indexed NP is present. In conclusion, a morphological analysis of Persian object clitics is untenable.

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