

On violations of the Person-Case Constraint in Kurdish

Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to unravel the intricacies brought about by systematic violations of the Person-Case Constraint (PCC) in Kurdish¹ Ergative constructions. Probing into the structure of Kurdish Ergative construction with concentration on the nature of quirky dative subjects and nominative objects and their associated dative and nominative clitics, on the one hand, and comparing our findings from Kurdish to other similar recalcitrant cases reported from languages like Basque and Catalan, on the other hand, we argue for a refinement of the precise formulation of PCC as currently assumed. We propose that the proper application of PCC should be made sensitive to contexts where both dative and nominative/accusative clitics/agreement markers involved in an agreement cluster refer to arguments entering into Multiple Agree with a probing head. At an explanatory level this work provides corroborative evidence in favor of syntactic treatments of the PCC and argues against any attempt to derive the effects of PCC in purely morphological terms.

Key words: Ergative construction, Person-Case constraint, Multiple Agree, inherent case, intervention

1. Introduction

Since its first formulation in Bonet (1991,1994), Person-Case Constraint has enjoyed theoretical interest, as a universal constraint prohibiting first or second person agreement with a direct object in the presence of dative agreement. Bonet's (1994) precise formulation of the PCC is:

(1) Person-Case Constraint: If Dative then Accusative-3rd.

According to this statement, only third person agreement with a direct object is allowed when there is also dative agreement. The following example from Catalan illustrates the application of this constraint (taken from Bonet (1994)):

¹ The Kurdish dialect under analysis is called '*Sorani*' which is spoken in the Kurdish areas across the border of Iran and Iraq limited to Kurdistan and Azarbaijan-e Gharbi provinces in Iran and Suleymania and Arbil provinces in Iraq.

The following abbreviations are used in this paper: 1= first person, 2= second person, 3= third person, ABS=absolute, ACC= accusative, ALL=allocutive, AUX=auxiliary, CL=clitic, DAT=dative, DEF= definite(ness), ERG=ergative, ETH=ethical, GEN= genitive, IMPERF=imperfective, INDEF=indefinite(ness), NOM= nominative, PART=participle, PASS=passive, PAST=past tense, PL= plural, PRES=present tense, REFL=reflexive, SG= singular.

- (2) * **Me** **li** ha recomanat la senyora Bofill.
 1.SG.ACC 3.SG.DAT has recommended the Mrs. Bofill
 “Mrs. Bofill has recommended me to her/him.”

No problem, however, arises when the agreement with the direct object is third person, as the example in (3) from Basque shows (taken from Bonet (1994)):

- (3) Zuk niri liburua saldu **d** -i **-da** -zu.
 You.ERG me.DAT book.ABS sold 3.ABS-AUX-1.SG.DAT-2.SG.ERG
 “You have sold me the book.”

Bonet (1994) holds that nothing syntactic, in principle, rules out the contexts where the PCC is applicable, but rather the PCC should be perceived as a morphological constraint disallowing the co-occurrence of a dative agreement marker with a first or second person accusative marker.

Boeckx (2000) reports evidence from Icelandic that the same effects are observed with *seem*-type predicates which assign an inherent dative case to the experiencer argument and nominative case to the subject of the embedded clause. Boeckx (2000) adopts a morphological approach to derive the PCC effects in Icelandic data; moreover, he argues that, generally, quirky case-marked arguments enter into Agree with T° probe and accordingly come to bear a structural case as well. The essence of his argument is that nothing syntactically bars the co-occurrence of dative-1/2 person.nom/acc clitic combination, but rather a morphological constraint, that is PCC, prohibits such an amalgam. Building on work by Uriagereka (1995a, 1995b), he speculates that dative arguments encode Person/Point of view features on the agreement cluster and assuming that each agreement cluster has a single slot for Person, the dative argument’s agreement occupies this slot and what remains to be filled is Number slot. 1/2 person nominative arguments, being specified for person feature, are not allowed to fill the number slot, hence the violation of PCC. It should be noted that this pattern is not restricted to *seem*-type predicates; all simplex clauses in Icelandic which have a quirky dative element as their subject and a nominative object are subject to the PCC. Shown in (4) is an example of the implementation of the PCC effects in Icelandic (taken from Boeckx (2000)):

- (4) *Henni leiddumst/leiddust/leiddist við.
 her.DAT bored.1.PL/3.PL/default US.NOM
 “She was bored with us.”

Ormazabal & Romero (2007) consider data from a wide variety of languages of diverse areal or genetic families where PCC effects obtain. Double object and applicative constructions constitute the canonical configurations where PCC seems to be operative. In such constructions, two internal arguments are always present which are licensed by the v*-V heads in the v*P domain. Convincingly, Ormazabal & Romero (2007) argue that in the relevant constructions the dative argument is licensed structurally, hence maintaining that dative is a structural case in v*P domain. Given this basic underlying assumption, they attempt to account for the observed PCC effects in their data in terms of

a more general syntactic generalization, which they refer to as Object Agreement Constraint (OAC) whereby all contexts where two internal arguments agree with the verb are ruled out.

Kurdish, a pro-drop SOV language with dominant nominative-accusative alignment, has developed a marked alignment pattern in past transitive clauses which has come to be called “split Ergativity” in this language. The precise nature and structure of Ergativity in Kurdish will be detailed upon later in section 4. Of particular interest to our purposes are the Ergative agreement contexts where the co-occurrence of a dative clitic and a nominative agreement referring to a direct object, regardless of person and number, is always grammatical. Given the universality of PCC, these patterns are unexpected and pose a problem for the proper formulation of PCC. The following examples from Kurdish illustrate this point:

- (5)a. brd -əm -it.
 take.PAST-1.SG.DAT-2.SG.NOM
 “I took you away.”
- b. brd -t -in.
 take.PAST-2.SG.DAT-1.PL.NOM
 “You took us away.”

In this paper we try to cast light on the proper nature of the PCC and unravel the thread of intricacies raised by the recalcitrant patterns observed in Kurdish. In so doing, we will argue for a syntactically-driven treatment of the PCC effects, expanding upon the previous approaches which have sought to derive its effects in terms of syntactic principles (Adger & Harbour (2007), Ormazabal and Romero (2007)).

The organization of this paper is as follows: in section 2 the basic properties of pronominal clitics and clause structure in Kurdish will be laid out. In section 3 we present descriptive evidence from Kurdish Ergative construction which suggests that the current formulations of PCC in morphological or syntactic terms are either too strong or too weak to account for the unexpected pattern of Kurdish Ergative agreement. The detailed illustration of the structure of Kurdish Ergative construction, concentrating on how subject dative clitics, nominative objects and subject NPs are derived, is the topic of section 4. In section 5 we argue for the refinement of formulations of PCC as currently assumed and based on further data from Basque and Catalan we present a proposal which readily accommodates the observed obstinate cases in these languages. Section 6 constitutes the concluding remarks

2. Kurdish pronominal clitics

In addition to independent personal pronominals, Kurdish employs two sets of clitics which perform functions of subject-verb agreement, direct/indirect object marking and possession. Depending on their function, these clitics fall into two categories, which we will refer to as nominative versus dative clitics. In what follows, the basic distributional properties of these clitics will be laid out.

The following tables display nominative and dative clitics, respectively:

əm	1.SG.NOM	in	1.PL.NOM
it	2.SG.NOM	ən	2.PL.NOM
ā/e/Ø	3.SG.NOM	ən	3.PL.NOM

əm	1.SG.DAT	man	1.PL.DAT
(ə)t	2.SG.DAT	tan	2.PL.DAT
i	3.SG.DAT	yan	3.PL.DAT

2.1. Nominative-accusative alignment

Nominative clitics are the typical subject agreement morphemes, which invariably show up on the verb as suffixes. Distributionally, however, these clitics are restricted to occurring on the verbs of the present transitive/intransitive and past intransitive types. Examples in (6)-(8) illustrate this:

- (6) a -ro -n.
IMPERF-go.PRES-2.PL.NOM
“You(PL) go”
- (7) sew a -xw -ā.
apple IMPERF-eat.PRES-3.SG.NOM
“He eats the apple.”
- (8) hāt -əm.
come.PAST-1.SG.NOM
“I came.”

In present transitive clauses, when the object is not a full NP or independent pronominal, it may be represented as a dative clitic (independent pronominal in the object position receives contrastive stress):

- (9)a. Hiwa a -əm -ba -ā bo madrasa.
Hiwa IMPERF-1.SG.DAT-take.PRES-3.SG.NOM to school
“Hiwa takes me to school.
- b. Hiwa mîn a -ba -ā bo madrasa.
Hiwa I IMPERF-take.PRES-3.SG.NOM to school
“Hiwa takes ME to school (not somebody else).”

The same independent pronominal/clitic alternation obtains with respect to indirect objects:

- (10)a ba to n -a -le -əm Hiwa chi a -ka -ā.
to you NEG-IMPERF-tell.PRES-1.SG.NOM Hiwa what IMPERF-do.PRES-3.SG.NOM
“I shall not tell YOU what Hiwa is doing.”

- b. pe-t n -a -le -əm Hiwa chi a -ka -ā
to-2.SG.DAT NEG-IMPERF-tell.PRES-1.SG.NOM Hiwa what IMPERF-do.PRES-3.SG.NOM.
“I shall not tell you what Hiwa is doing.”

2.2. Ergative alignment

In past transitive clauses, dative clitics serve as subject agreement markers, whereas, nominative clitics represent non-contrastive objects; precisely, this behavior is the reverse of what obtains in present transitive clauses:

- (11) trsand -man -it
frighten.PAST-1.PL.DAT-3.SG.NOM
“We frightened you.”

In the example above, the clause minimally consists of the verb stem and the subject/object agreement clitics. However, the picture changes when preverbal constituents are added to the clause; in such cases, as a rule, the subject agreement dative clitic moves off from the verb and appends to the earliest non-subject constituent of the clause (Friend(1985), McCarus(1958)). The following examples illustrate the behavior of subject agreement dative clitics when there is a full NP object, an independent pronominal object, an adverb, or a non-verbal element in a light verb construction, respectively:

- (12) a. sew-ek-əm xward.
apple-INDEF-1.SG.DAT eat.PAST
“I ate an apple.”
- b. to-man bini.
You-1.PL.DAT see.PAST
“We saw you.”
- c. chāk-əm krd.
good-1.SG.DAT do.PAST
“I did it well.”
- d. Hero nān-i =krd
Hero bread-3.SG.DAT do.PAST
“Hero baked bread.”²

² The placement pattern of dative clitics should not be taken to be an instantiation of Wackernagel’s Law (P2) in Kurdish, because, apart from subjects, temporal adverbials and prepositional phrases may precede the object, yet not hosting the dative clitic:

- (i) mn dwene hiwa-əm bini.
I yesterday Hiwa-1.SG.DAT see.PAST
“Yesterday I saw Hiwa.”

In fuller generality, while nominative and dative clitics function as subject and object markers (agreement) in present transitive clauses, respectively, the reverse holds in past transitive clauses. This situation is what has come to be termed morphological Ergativity in Kurdish. In other words, the Ergativity pattern in Kurdish is conditioned by the past tense encoded in verb stems. Whereas agreement with subject of past intransitive and object of transitive is established by nominative clitics, agreement with subjects of past transitive is represented by dative clitics. Of immediate relevance to the topic of this paper is the behavior of nominative and dative clitics in past transitive constructions whose effects will have implications for the proper formulation of the Person-Case Constraint.

3. Kurdish and the PCC

Our point of departure is Bonet's (1994:38) contention that "*...PCC is violated whenever there is a first or second person agreement element related to a direct object and, in addition, there is another agreement element which gets dative case, regardless of the source of this element.*" The canonical pattern subject to Bonet's generalization includes double object constructions where an accusative-marked object and a dative-marked indirect object trigger agreement on the verb. Most previous work exploring PCC have concentrated on such constructions, as well as, causative and applicative constructions.

Another context involving the co-occurrence of object agreement clitics and dative clitics is where Ergativity obtains in Kurdish. However, the distinction between the previously studied constructions and that of Kurdish is that the dative clitic in the Ergativity pattern of Kurdish does not refer to an internal argument, but rather to an external one, namely, the subject³. As originally observed by Bonet (1991,1994), the source of the dative clitic is of no consequence for PCC to hold, therefore, the clitic clustering pattern of Kurdish Ergative construction constitutes the eligible body of data against which we would strive to assess the validity of PCC. The thrust of our argument, based on Kurdish data, is to reject Bonet's claim regarding the irrelevance of the source of the dative argument to the proper formulation of PCC. It will be argued that, the appropriate characterization of PCC requires allusion to how the dative argument is licensed and that the dative argument will enter into the formulation of PCC only if it is licensed structurally, whereas dative clitics referring to lexically licensed arguments do not induce the combinatorial restriction of the PCC type.

3.1. Recalcitrant cases

As was shown in the previous section, Kurdish past transitive constructions display what has come to be called Ergativity. In Kurdish, Ergativity can be characterized as having inherently case-marked subjects, nominative objects and pseudo-agreement of the object with verb. Shown in (13a-d) are examples of past transitive constructions displaying the above mentioned properties:

³ Boeckx (2000) is, to our best knowledge, the first attempt to implement the PCC effects in Icelandic where dative refers to an inherently case-marked subject, as in Kurdish.

- (13) a. Hiwa liwān-aka-i škānd.
 Hiwa glass-DEF-3.SG.DAT broke.PAST
 “Hiwa broke the glass.”
- b. to du helka-t xwārd-(n)⁴.
 You two egg-2.SG.DAT eat.PAST.PL
 “You ate two eggs.”
- c. awān kteb-aka-yan dā ba ema.
 They book-DEF-3.PL.DAT give.PAST to we
 “They gave us the book.”
- d. kur-ak-ān mār-aka-yan kušt.
 boy-DEF-PL snake-3.PL.DAT kill.PAST
 “The boys killed the snake.”

It is evident from the data that dative clitic agrees in number and person with the subject NP, a pattern which is reminiscent of clitic doubling in Romance languages. We take these clitics to be licensors of subjects. As the data above reveal, the dative clitic attaches to the object, if there is any, however, the distribution of dative clitics is not restricted to appending to objects. Generally speaking, dative clitics attach to the earliest non-subject constituent of the clause. As already illustrated by the examples in (12a-d), vP-adjoined adverbs and non-verbal elements of light verb constructions may also host dative clitics. The distributional pattern of dative clitics suggests that the domain where these clitics are operative is vP and the elements hosting these clitics are vP-edge constituents. However, when there is no preverbal non-subject constituent in the clause, the clitic tends to attach to the verb as an instantiation of last resort:

- (14) a. xwārd -m -Ø.
 eat.PAST-1.SG.DAT-3.SG.NOM
 “I ate it.”
- b. brd -yan -it.
 take.PAST-3.PL.DAT-2.SG.NOM
 “They took you away.”

Of particular relevance to our discussion are constructions where both the subject and the object are *pro*, hence no preverbal constituent present in the clause, resulting in subject dative clitics and object agreement suffixes attaching to the verb. Descriptively speaking, of logically possible combinations of subject dative clitics and object nominative agreement suffixes, semantically anomalous ones aside, all clusters are

⁴ In Sorani, though not in other dialects such as Hawrami and Kurmanci, verb agreement with the object has vanished, or at least has lost its morphological manifestation. However, in dialects where object-verb agreement obtains, verb agrees only in number with the object, no person agreement is involved. We ascribe this partial agreement to the defectiveness of past transitive verbs in not having the full complement of uφ-features. This issue will be taken up in section 4.1.

attested in Kurdish⁵. This descriptive fact, by itself, is in conflict with the prediction of all previously formulated versions of PCC (Bonet 1994, Ormazabal & Romero 2007). The following is a selective set of data exemplifying situations where PCC is violated.

- (15) a. brd -əm -it.
 take.PAST-1.SG.DAT-2.SG.NOM
 “I took you away.”
- b. brd -əm -ən.
 take.PAST-1.SG.DAT-2.PL.NOM
 “I took you away.”
- c. brd -ət -əm.
 take.PAST-2.SG.DAT-1.SG.NOM
 “You took me away.”
- d. brd -ət -in
 take.PAST-2.SG.DAT-1.PL.NOM
 “You took us away.”
- e. brd -in -i.
 take.PAST-1.PL.NOM-3.SG.DAT
 “He took us away.”
- f. brd -ət -i
 take.PAST-2.SG.NOM-3.SG.DAT
 “He took you away.”
- g. brd -tān -əm
 take.PAST-2.PL.DAT-1.SG.NOM
 “You (PL) took me away.”
- h. brd -yān -əm.
 take.PAST-3.PL.DAT-1.SG.NOM
 “They took me away.”

Although, in the interests of space, the dative-nominative combinations illustrated by the examples above do not exhaust all the logically possible clusters, however, pertinent to the purpose of this paper is the emergent descriptive generalization that there is no

⁵ As is suggestive from the data, in each clitic combination of the sort alluded to in Kurdish, the subject dative clitic precedes the object nominative agreement suffix, except for one paradigm where the subject dative clitic is singular third person. In this case, the order of the clitics is reversed:

- (i) a. * xwārd-i-in
 b. xwārd -in -i
 eat.PAST-1.PL.NOM-3.SG.DAT
 “ he annoyed us” [Lit. he ate us]

restriction, imposed by the PCC, on the combinatorial possibilities of dative-nominative clitics in Kurdish. No doubt this set of data from Kurdish undermines the validity of Bonet's (1994) formulations⁶ of the PCC in terms of a constraint, operative in Morphology (PF), blocking the co-occurrence of the relevant clitics.

However construed, Kurdish data would not be accommodated by the Bonet's (1994) conception of the PCC, or at best, they would be considered as obstinate counterexamples to such a formulation. Accordingly, based on empirical facts from Kurdish, it sounds most plausible to reject any conception or formulation of PCC in terms of a morphological restriction. Another avenue of pursuit would be taking Ormazabal & Romero's (2007) approach which attempts to derive the PCC from more general syntactic constraints. This issue will be taken up later in this paper. So far we have considered approaches that seek to resolve the intricacies of PCC effects in double object and applicative constructions. However conceived, neither morphological nor syntactic approaches of the kind just reviewed in the introduction to this paper are adequate enough to accommodate the obstinate case of Kurdish which calls into question the adequacy of formulations or conceptions of the PCC so far presented. As clarified since the inception of this paper, the aim of this paper is to re-conceptualize or modify the PCC as formulated in the literature by illuminating the subtle environments where PCC would be supposed to hold in Kurdish, while this is not the case, and, in this light, explain why this is so. In the next section the characteristics of the configurations where the PCC seems to be operative will be closely investigated so that an overall picture emerges against which the Kurdish case is analyzed.

4. A probe into Ergativity in Kurdish

According to Bonet (1994) and Ormazabal and Romero (2007), the canonical construction where the PCC holds is the double object construction, schematically:

$$(16) [_{CP} \quad [_{TP} \quad [_{v^*P} \quad v^* \quad DO.ACC \quad V \quad IDO.DAT}]]].$$

The above schema represents, in the most appropriate way, the Spanish cases which these authors discuss with respect to the PCC.

The *seem*-type configuration analyzed by Boeckx (2000) as the environment inducing PPC effects can be, generally, depicted as the following:

$$(17) [_{CP} [_{TP} [_{VP} \quad V \quad EXPR.DAT \quad V \quad [_{TP} \quad SUBJ.NOM \quad \dots \quad]]].$$

Upon closer inspection of the above configurations, it would be revealed that no phase boundary could be delineated between the two arguments whose associated clitic combination leads to the application of PCC. In other words, the relevant arguments in all such constructions, at the point of agreement, are within a single phase. Moreover, dislocation of an argument by the EPP, if any, still does not transcend the boundary of the relevant phase. Keeping these properties of the above structures in mind, we will investigate where and how Ergativity arises configurationally in Kurdish wherein PCC

⁶ Bonet (1994:41), based on further data from some dialects of Spanish, suggests another formulation of PCC which she calls "weak PCC", whereby: if DAT-3rd then ACC-3rd.

effects would be expected to be implemented. Coming up with a realistic configuration which suitably reflects the intricacies presented by the Ergative agreement pattern in Kurdish requires us to closely investigate its anatomy. Using the example in (18), in a step by step fashion, we will give an account of the derivation of a typical Ergative clause in Kurdish.

- (18) Hiwa sewa-aka-i xwārd.
 Hiwa apple-DEF-3.SG.DAT eat.PAST
 “Hiwa ate the apple.”

Beginning with *xwārd* “ate”, this verb, very naturally, as a transitive merges with an object, *sewa-aka* “the apple” in this case. Owing to the fact that herein lies the main cause of Ergativity in Kurdish, a long important digression proves necessary.

4.1. Suspension of the accusative case assignment

Kurdish past transitive verbs are like unaccusative and passive verbs in more familiar languages, in that they are not associated with a full complement of ϕ -features, therefore, are not capable of valuing the uCASE of the object; in more traditional words, they can not assign accusative case to their object. Evidence for this peculiarity comes from considerations of a) the historical evolution of such verbs b) corresponding verbs in Hawrāmi, a dialect of Kurdish close to Sorani and c) constructions, other than past transitive, where pseudo-Ergativity shows up.

Historically, Kurdish Ergative construction has evolved out of a past perfect construction with a stative interpretation, whereby the event encoded by the proposition is expressed as a result seen in present of the past event. Although examples of past perfect construction in the extinct Old Persian⁷ are abundant in the diachronic literature, we make do with the following example, taken from Skjærvø (2005), to give a general view of the construction:

- (19) ...ima taya manā kartam (astiy)...
 this.NOM what 1.SG.DAT do.PART be.3.SG.NOM
 “.. this is what I have done..[Lit. this is [done of mine]].”

However, for ease of illustration, the following simplex clause, reconstructed in accordance with the structure of past perfect in Old Persian, will be elaborated upon:

- (20) The apple.NOM [PrTP my.DAT eaten] be.3SG.NOM
 “I have eaten the apple.”

It is clear from the glosses that the past perfect construction has much in common with passive in more familiar languages. What is of interest to our purposes is that Kurdish

⁷ As far as we know there is no extant written archaic document which directly bears on *Sorani*, but to the extent that Iranian languages have had some close ancestors, we will be drawing on Old Persian written texts.

past transitive verbs have evolved from participles involved in the construction of past perfect of the older stages of the language. One common property of participles, generally, in natural languages is that they do not have the ability to assign Accusative case, and this may, in turn, be derived from their dual status as having both verbal and nominal properties. These participles, being like adjectives as in adjectival passives, have developed into verb stems in modern Kurdish; however, they are still in a state of transition to become fully-fledged transitive verbs of the type with case assigning properties.

The (past transitive) Ergative construction in Hawrāmi has a lot in common with its corresponding counterpart in Sorani. One of the differences between the morphological properties of the two dialects is that Hawrāmi has retained the accusative case marker on the objects (Holmberg and Odden (2004)) whereas Sorani has not; this is illustrated by the following Hawrāmi examples (taken from Holmberg and Odden (2004)):

- (21) pyā-k-e asp-aka-i ma-win-a.
 people-DEF-PL horse-DEF-ACC INFL-see-3.PL
 “The people see the horse.”
- (22) Ahmal asp-aka-i ma-win-o.
 Ahmad horse-DEF-ACC INFL-see-3.SG
 “Ahmad sees the horse.”

As seen in (21) and (22), the direct object NP bears accusative case; notice that the examples above depict present transitive, hence non-Ergative constructions; however:

- (23)a. asp-aka-əm bini.
 horse-DEF-1.SG.DAT see.PAST
 “I saw the horse.”
- b. * asp-aka-i-əm bini.
 horse-DEF-ACC-1.SG.DAT see.PAST
 “I saw the horse.”
- (24)a. asp-əš bini.
 horse-3.SG.DAT see.PAST
 “He saw a horse.”
- b. * asp-i-əš bini.
 horse-ACC-3.SG.DAT see-PAST
 “He saw a horse.”

The examples in (24) and (25) give further evidence to our claim that past transitive verbs, involved in Ergative constructions in Kurdish, do not have the accusative case assigning property.

Our last piece of evidence is elicited from non-past constructions in Kurdish where properties of Ergativity seem to obtain. The first construction we will consider is the passive of double object construction. Passive in Kurdish involves the morphological change of the corresponding active verb by adding a passivization suffix, *-re* to the present stem and *-rā* to the past stem. The by now widely held view is that Passivized verbs do not assign accusative case to the direct object. Capitalizing on this simplex theoretical assumption, we will show how double object constructions in Kurdish are passivized. Example (25) illustrates an active present ditransitive clause:

- (25) mn kteb-aka a-d-əm ba Hiwa.
 I book-DEF IMPERF-give.PRES-1.SG.NOM to Hiwa
 “I give the book to Hiwa.”

Shown in (26) is the passive of (25) with the direct object raised to subject position:

- (26) kteb-aka a-d-re-Ø ba Hiwa.
 book-DEF IMPERF-give.PRES-PASS-3.SG.NOM to Hiwa
 “The book will be given to Hiwa.”

In (26), the direct object, having no case, raises to subject position to be assigned nominative case, hence agreement with the passivized verb. The indirect object is licensed by the preposition *ba* “to”. The following example shows when the indirect object is raised.⁸

- (27) **Hiwa** kteb-aka-i pe=a-d-re-Ø
 Hiwa book-DEF-3.SG.DAT to=IMPERF-give.PRES-PASS-3SG.NOM
 “Hiwa will be given the book.”

The preposition *ba* “to” incorporates into the verbal stem, therefore, the indirect object bearing no case, raises to subject position to be assigned case. This construction provides the appropriate environment for the Ergative pattern to show up: the passive verb can not assign accusative case to the direct object.

Apart from the passive of double object constructions, two other structures in Kurdish take the form of Ergative in present tense. This happens when the head of the verb phrase in the present tense clause is “to have” or “to want”. These verbs in Kurdish *s/c*-select for a NP in complement position.

- (28) mn kteb-əm haya
 I book-1.SG.DAT be.PRES.3SG
 “I have a book.”

- (29) to mn-t n-a-we
 You I-2.SG.DAT NEG-IMPERF-want.PRES
 “You don’t like me [lit. You don’t want me.]”

⁸ The preposition *ba* “to” attaches to the passivized verb stem, with the concomitant allomorphic change into *pe*, which is reminiscent of the applicative construction in incorporating languages.

Without going into details of the historical development of these two types of verbs, we note that “to want” and “to have” are fused with a copulative “to be”, or derived from the “to be” itself. Of particular interest to our discussion is the point that these verbs, having been derived from “to be”, constitute the appropriate condition for the Ergative pattern to manifest itself, since these verbs take a NP in complement position while have no accusative case to assign.

4.2. Argumental clitics and topicalized subjects

Having established that Kurdish past transitive verbs are defective in terms of assigning accusative case to the object, we now turn back to the derivation of the clause in (18). On a par with unaccusative and passive verbs, we assume that the head v° , disassociated with a full complement of $u\phi$ -features is, then, merged. We, then, assume that v° projects its agent theta role to Spec, v° . But the argument is licensed inherently as part of the lexical specification of the head v° of past transitive verbs in Kurdish. This move has two promising results: on the one hand, inherently case-marked arguments are invisible/inactive to further computation, therefore, do not induce intervention effects, on the other hand, the argumental status of the by now assumed subject dative clitics is retained. Van de Visser (2006), drawing on observations by Baker (1995,1996) and Speas (1990), strongly argues that it is the doubled dative clitic that is base generated in Spec, v° rather than the subject NP. The argumental status of dative clitics is most evident in Kurdish possessive constructions where these clitics behave as the reduced form of possessive pronouns:

- (30)a. ketb-aka-əm
 book-DEF-1.SG.DAT
 “My book”
- b. kār-aka-yan
 job-DEF-3.PL.DAT
 “Their job”

Assuming that subject dative clitics are arguments inherently licensed by v° in Spec, v° , the resultant structure so far would be like this:

- (31) [_{VP} CL(3.SG.DAT) v° [_{VP} sew-aka(OBJ) (V $^\circ$) xward]]

The derivation proceeds along as the head T° is merged with vP. Probing for a matching goal to value its $u\phi$ -features, the head T° enters into Agree relation with the object NP associated with full ϕ -features. The object NP values the $u\phi$ -features of T° and in turn, T° , being ϕ -complete, values the uCASE of the object as nominative. Notice, we have assumed that inherently case marked arguments, the subject dative clitics in our case, are no longer active to establish Agree, therefore, do not induce minimality effects for T° -object Agree. That the agreement is not morphologically manifested on the past transitive verb has to do with a Kurdish language-particular rule whereby morphological

instantiation of agreement obtains only when the subject has entered into the Agree with T° , regardless of tense of the clause or the Case of the arguments. What remains to be accounted for is the status of the subject NP in the clause. Van de Visser (2006), in terms inspired by Baker (1994, 1995) and Speas (1990), argues that subject NPs assume an adjunction position; that is, they are generated adjoined to TP. However, we depart from van de Visser (1996) in this respect and, based on a historically logical trajectory of the development of Ergative construction from past perfect construction, establish that subject NPs in Kurdish Ergative constructions are base generated in Spec,FOCP, in the left periphery of clause. As previously discussed, Kurdish Ergative construction has evolved from the past perfect construction of the older stages of the language. For ease of exposition, example (20) is repeated as (32) below:

- (32) the-apple.NOM [P_{TP} my.DAT eaten] be.3SG.NOM
 “I have eaten the apple.”

Experts on Old Iranian languages studies (Bynon, 1979, Kent 1953, Skjærvø 2005) hold that the past perfect constructions in Old Iranian languages had two basic properties. First, these constructions, at a propositional level, express in the present time the result of a past action which takes the form of a stative. Second, the logical theme, being in subject position, gives a passive-like flavor to the whole construction where contrastive focus is conferred to the theme. Given the gradual change of Old Iranian Languages from highly inflectional to analytic type, together with the restricted interpretive possibilities of the construction, the past perfect, very plausibly, underwent configurational changes along the following path. At a discourse level, it is a common idea that giving prominence to the Agent increases the eventive construal of the clause. Agents, generally, being instigators of actions expressed by the verb, contribute enormously to the dynamic reading of the action of the verb. Objects in topicalized positions tend to force a resultative/stative interpretation of the action expressed by the verb. To this effect, it would be a plausible conjecture that the dative logical subject in (32) has been fronted, for stylistic considerations, to a Topic position; that is the left most position of the clause:

- (33) My.DAT_i the-apple.NOM [P_{TP} *t_i* eaten] be.3.SG.NOM
 “I (emphasis) have eaten the apple.” (Lit. the apple has been eaten **BY ME**)

It seems that the marked past perfect clause of the type depicted in (33), with the topicalized dative logical subject, has enjoyed more popularity in subsequent stages than the corresponding unmarked one. Notice that this is a stage when the inflectional endings of NPs have been in full force; therefore, it was readily available for the system to keep track of the underlying position of the topicalized agent, as it bears an inherently assigned dative case. The typological change of the Old Iranian Languages into an analytic type had the dropping of inflectional endings entirely from the system as its concomitant result. The language, very naturally, calls for compensatory strategies to fill the gaps induced by the inflectional loss, that is, nouns phrases no longer bear a morphological case, be it inherent or structural. So in a structure like (33) it would not be readily evident how the topicalized agent could be retrieved as bearing an inherent dative case. Modern

Kurdish accomplishes this task by doubling the subject NP as a clitic. Kurdish has retained case distinctions in its pronominal/clitic paradigm. The subject NP, bearing no overt case marker, is doubled by a dative clitic as a means of retrieving the underlying thematic/case properties.

Let's return to the derivation of (18). Building on the leading insights originated in Chomsky (2006, 2007), Hiraiwa (2005) and Pesetsky and Torrego (2001, 2004), we assume that EPP is an edge feature residing on C° , which is percolated down to T° , if needed. Furnished with this assumption, EPP can be satisfied by a DP either at Spec, T° or Spec, C° . Our overall conception of the matching system so far is that $u\phi$ -features are percolated down to T° , while EPP remains on C° and the subject NP is inserted there right from the numeration⁹. The emergent structure of a typical past transitive clause in Kurdish so far would be as follows:

$$(34) \quad [_{\text{FOCP}} \text{SUBJ}_i [_{\text{FOC}^\circ} [_{\text{CP}} [_{\text{TP}} [_{\text{VP}} \text{CL.DAT}_i [_{\text{V}^\circ} [_{\text{VP}} \text{OBJ.NOM } \text{V}^\circ]]]]]]]$$

Following van de Visser (2006), we assume that the relation between the subject NP in the Spec, C° ¹⁰ and its associate dative clitic in Spec, v° is that of binding through co-indexation¹¹. We find further motivation for the peripheral position of the subject NP in the past transitive construction from the behavior of these NPs in raising-like structures.

There are raising-like constructions in Kurdish which in some respects resemble the corresponding ones in the more familiar languages. In these constructions a finite CP is selected by a *seem*-type verb as complement. The subject of the *seem*-type verb is always *pro*.3.SG.NOM which agrees in person and number with the matrix verb. The following example displays the case in point:

$$(35) \quad \begin{array}{llll} \textit{pro} & \textit{w\ddot{a}-dy\ddot{a}r-a} & [_{\text{CP}} \textit{Hiwa} & \textit{sewa-aka-i} & \textit{xw\ddot{a}rd-be}]. \\ & \text{thus-seem-3.SG.NOM} & \textit{Hiwa} & \text{apple-DEF-3.SG.DAT} & \text{eat.PAST-SUBJN} \\ & \text{"It seems that Hiwa has eaten the apple."} \end{array}$$

⁹ An alternative line of pursuit would be to follow the more standard view in terms of merging of agents in Spec, v° . Assuming this view, the derivation would proceed as follows: the subject NP is merged in Spec, v° , receiving the agent theta role and an inherent dative case by v° . Inherently case-marked, it will not induce minimality effects for the T° -object Agree. Following Chomsky (2006) and Hiraiwa (2005), the subject NP simultaneously raises to spec, T° and Spec, C° to satisfy the EPP and EDGE/TOPIC features, respectively. Having lost morphological distinctions in its case system, Kurdish resorts to clitic doubling strategy to retrieve the source of the topicalized subject. However, according to this view, it is not a clitic which doubles the subject NP, but rather, given the copy theory of movement, a partial copy of the moved subject NP will be spelled out as a dative clitic, retaining the inherent case of the subject NP. Nothing, in principle, hinges on these derivational alternatives; what is of importance for our purposes is the fact that once the derivation is over, the subject NP is in a CP edge position.

¹⁰ Hereafter, for ease of reference, we use Spec, C° instead of Spec,FOC $^\circ$. What matters is the fact that the subject NP is base generated in the left periphery of clause.

¹¹ Alternatively, it can be assumed that past transitive subjects are dislocated as in English left-dislocation constructions where co-indexation relates the left-dislocated argument to its corresponding resumptive pronoun.

Given the finiteness of the CP complement of the *seem*-type verb, a straightforward consequence is that the complement is a phase. Proceeding along the derivation, the next and final phase would be the matrix CP. Once the derivation reaches the matrix C°, the lower Phase would be sent to the Spell-out, hence no longer available for further computation. Only the edge of the embedded CP can be accessible to the higher computation. Now, consider the same clause with the subject NP topicalized:

- (36) [_{CP} Hiwa_i [_{TP} *pro* wā-dyār-a [_{CP} *t_i* [_{TP} swekaka-i xwārd-be]]]].
 Hiwa thus-seem-3.SG.NOM apple-DEF-3.SG.DAT eat.PAST-SUBJN
 “As for Hiwa, it seems that he has eaten the apple.”

If the subject NP were to be positioned in Spec,T° of the embedded clause, there would be no way to topicalize the subject without violating Phase Impenetrability Condition. However, given our argument for the base-generation of the subject NP in Spec,C°, namely the edge of the lower CP, the topicalization of the subject NP and raising to the next Spec,CP receives a straightforward explanation.

5. Back to the PCC

In the sections to follow we will take up again the PCC effects and seek to account for the regular violations of PCC observed in Kurdish past transitive constructions.

5.1. A proposal

As illustrated in (16) and (17) the canonical environments where PCC effects show up are double object constructions of the type Bonet (1994) and Ormazabal & Romero (2007) report in their studies and raising constructions of Icelandic as observed by Boeckx (2000); for ease of reference, (16) and (17) are repeated below, as (37) and (38):

- (37) [_{CP} [_{TP} [_{v*P} v* DO.ACC V IDO.DAT]]].

- (38) [_{CP} [_{TP} [_{vP} v EXPR.DAT V [_{TP} SUBJ.NOM]]]].

As is evident from the above abstract configurations, the domain of the application of PCC is a single phase. In other words, the arguments whose related agreement morphemes induce PCC effects are within one phase; in double object construction both the direct object and indirect object are in a v*P phase, while in the Icelandic case, the embedded subject and the experiencer are in a CP phase. The concomitant consequence of these geometric properties is that both arguments enter into Agree relation within a single phase and with a single head, that is Multiple Agree with v* or T°. In much fuller generality, the two arguments in the double object construction enter in to Multiple Agree with v* in a mirror-symmetric fashion (see Hiraiwa (2005) for details of mirror-symmetric Multiple Agree). The same procedure is invoked with respect to raising constructions in Icelandic; both the experiencer and embedded subject enter into Multiple Agree with the matrix T°.

The overall upshot of this investigation, very conceivably, suggests that whatever really underlies the PCC, the proper formulation of PCC should incorporate the fact that

only the combination of clitics/agreement markers which refer to arguments entering into Multiple Agree within the phase can induce PCC effects. This in turn gives an initial plausibility to those approaches to PCC that seek to derive its effects in terms of syntactic constraints. To unravel the intricacies posed by Kurdish data with respect to the PCC, we begin by illustrating the abstract configuration in (35), repeated below as (40):

(39) [_{FOCP} SUBJ_i [_{FOC°} [_{CP} [_{TP} [_{vP} CL.DAT_i v° OBJ.NOM V°]]]]].

The Kurdish configuration in (39) which apparently constitutes the appropriate environment for the PCC to hold is similar to (37) and (38) in some respects and differs in some others. Both arguments are within a single CP phase. Being a defective head in not having a full complement of uφ-features, v° does not form a phase. There is just one head probing, T°, hence valuing uCASE of the object as nominative. However, following the derivation of the clause, we assumed that the dative clitic is base generated in the Spec,v° and would be related to the subject NP, positioned in Spec,C°, through a co-indexation algorithm. Herein lies the crux of matter.

Our auxiliary statement predicts that in contexts where one of the agreement morphemes involved in a verbal complex does not refer to a structurally licensed argument, the issue of PCC simply does not arise. This prediction is born out when the apparently recalcitrant cases reported from Kurdish and other languages are closely analyzed.

The motivation behind our treatment of Kurdish data with respect to the apparent violations of PCC is that the direct object enters into Agree relation with T°, valuing its uCASE as nominative and matching the uφ-features of T°. However, on empirical grounds, we argued that the subject dative clitic assumes an argument-like status by merging in Spec,v° and is assigned an inherent case by the head v°. It, then, is linked to the subject NP by indexation. Given our proposed auxiliary assumption for the PCC, the dative clitic showing up in combination with the object nominative agreement in the following examples is not the instantiation of a syntactically established Agree relation with its associated subject NP. Therefore, the problem of the violation of PCC simply does not arise (examples (15a-h), repeated here as (40a-h)):

- (40) a. brd -əm -it.
 take.PAST-1.SG.DAT-2.SG.NOM
 “I took you away.”
- b. brd -əm -n.
 take.PAST-1.SG.DAT-2.PL.NOM
 “I took you(PL) away.”
- c. brd -ət -əm.
 take.PAST-2.SG.DAT-1.SG.NOM
 “You took me away.”
- d. brd -ət -in.

take.PAST-2.SG.DAT-1.PL.NOM
 “You took us away.”

e. brd -in -i
 take.PAST-1.PL.NOM-3.SG.DAT
 “He took us away.”

f. brd -ət -i.
 take.PAST-2.SG.NOM-3.SG.DAT
 “He took you away.”

g. brd -tan -əm.
 take.PAST-2.PL.DAT-1.SG.NOM
 “You (PL) took me away.”

h. brd -yan -əm.
 take.PAST-3.PL.DAT-1.SG.NOM
 “They took me away.”

5.2. More violations

Bonet (1994) and Ormazabal & Romero (2007) report that in some cases the combination of dative clitics and 1/2 person accusative clitics does not give rise to the violation of PCC. The following examples illustrate such cases (Catalan, taken from Bonet (1994)):

(41) sempre **me** li diu mentides, a l’ Enric.
 always ETH.1.SG.DAT 3.SG.DAT tells lies, to the Enric
 “S/he always tells lies to Enric on me.”

Example (41) represents a construction where the combination of the relevant clitics does not induce PCC effects. The dative clitic in boldface is an Ethical dative clitic. By definition “*Ethical datives refer to discourse participants that are not part of the argument structure of the sentence, but are affected by the event it denotes* (Ormazabal & Romero 2007, footnote4). Another different case is exemplified in (42) (Catalan, taken from Bonet (1994)):

(42) si veig en Pere, **me** li declararé.
 If see(1.SG) the Pere, INH.REFL.1.SG 3.SG.DAT will-declare(1.SG)
 “If I see Pere, I will declare my love to him.”

The first person clitic in boldface refers to an inherent reflexive dative clitic serving to restrict the meaning of the verb *declarar* “to declare”. Similar cases are also found in Basque (taken from Ormazabal & Romero (2007)):

(44) Peruk ni kalean ikusi na- -i **-k** -Ø.
 Peter-ERG me-ABS street-DEF-in see 1.ABS-AUX-2.SG.DAT(ALL)-3.SG.ERG

“Peter saw me in the street (I am addressing you-male).”

Ormazabal & Romero (2007) report that “*in addition to the three grammatical markers, the auxiliary in Basque shows an optional extra-argumental second person agreement, the so-called allocutive agreement, which refers to the addressee in the discourse*”. The boldfaced dative morpheme in (44) is an allocutive clitic.

In all above cases, the dative clitic refers to a non-argumental NP in the clause. In other words, the NP constituents to which the dative clitics refer are not part of the argument structure of the matrix verb in each clause. The crucial emergent generalization over the above cases would be to maintain that for the dative clitic to bring about PCC effects in combination with an objective clitic, it would have to be structurally linked to an argument. Although adequate to capture the Catalan and Basque facts, this generalization falls short of accounting for Kurdish data where the dative clitic doubles the subject NP; that is an argument of the verb. We would, rather, propose another generalization improving upon the above generalization, which accounts for Kurdish data as well, to this effect: only the combination of clitics/agreement markers which refer to arguments entering into Multiple Agree within the phase can induce PCC effects. In all above cases, the dative clitic, be it Ethical, reflexive, allocutive or subject NP-double, is merely a morphological marker of the NP it refers to.

This generalization, although not explanatory in nature, lends further credence to approaches that seek to derive PCC effects in terms of syntactic constraints.

6. Conclusion

The purpose of this paper was to unravel the intricacies brought about by the systematic violations of PCC in Kurdish Ergative constructions. In so doing, we presented a fairly detailed description of the Ergative construction in Kurdish which helped us illuminate the nature of quirky dative subjects and nominative objects and their associated dative and nominative clitics. A considerable variety of evidences were provided to establish that the dative subject clitics were, in essence, base generated in argument position and reject the contention that they are the morphological make-up of the subject NP’s agreement with T°. Unifying the agreement pattern of Kurdish Ergative construction, obstinate to PCC effects, to other systematic violations of PCC reported from other languages, we were able to sharpen the precise formulation of PCC so as to accommodate the apparent violations of the PCC in both Kurdish and other languages. We argued for a syntactic approach to PCC in the sense that the proper application of PCC should be made sensitive to contexts where both dative and nominative/accusative clitics/agreement markers involved in an agreement cluster refer to arguments entering into Multiple Agree with a probing head. In contexts where the agreement/clitics are merely morphological markers doubling the main arguments, the issue of applicability of the PCC simply does not arise.

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