The typology of verbal person/number syncretism in Western Iranian languages

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Outline

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Definitions

- Syncretism:

	PRS		PST	
	SG	PL	SG	PL
1	*come*	*come*	*came*	*came*
2	*come*	*come*	*came*	*came*
3	*comes*	*come*	*came*	*came*

- Baerman, Brown, and Corbett (2005) systemic effects of syncretism:

- Neutralization:

	PST		SBJV	
	SG	PL	SG	PL
1	*was*	*were*	*were*	*were*
2	*were*	*were*	*were*	*were*
3	*was*	*were*	*were*	*were*

- Uninflectedness:

	PRS		PST	
	SG	PL	SG	PL
1	*hit*	*hit*	*hit*	*hit*
2	*hit*	*hit*	*hit*	*hit*
3	*hits*	*hit*	*hit*	*hit*

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Research Questions

i. What are the **most frequent** syncretic patterns within Western Iranian?

ii. What is the effect of **tense** on verbal person-number syncretism across Western Iranic?

iii. What is the effect of **number** (singular and plural) on the diversity of syncretic patterns in the dataset?

iv. Which **directional effects** are there in the developments of the syncretic patterns?

v. What are the major **diachronic themes** that lead to the development of syncretism in Iranic (e.g., sound change and morphological analogy)?

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174 language varieties: 423 paradigms

Dialect Groups

- 1 Northern Kurdish
- 2 Central Kurdish
- 3 Southern Kurdish
- 4 Zazaki
- 5 Gorani
- 6 Laki
- 7 Central Plateau
- 8 Luri
- 9 Fars
- 10 Southern Tati
- 11 Central Tati
- 12 Northern Tati
- 13 Gilaki
- 14 Mazandarani
- 15 Talyshi
- 16 Semnan
- 17 Tat
- 18 Persian
- 19 Balochi
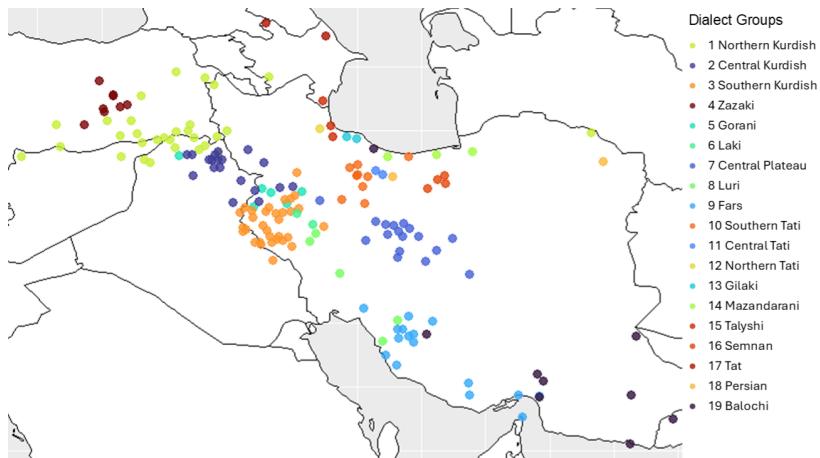
Illusttrative examples

	Sari	Davani	Qohrudi	Semnan	NK Akrê	NK Mûş	NK Aşîtî
1SG	-em	-e	-ūn	-un	-im	-im	-im
2SG	-i	-e	-e	-æy	-î	-î	-e
3SG	-e	-et	-e	-æ	-ît	-e	-e
1PL	-im	-u	-ēme	-in	-în	-in	-in
2PL	-in	-i	-ēge	-in	-in	-in	-in
3PL	-en	-en	-ande	-än	-in	-in	-in

Table 1: Syncretic patterns in the present indicative—sample paradigms

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Diachrony of Person Marking in Kurdish
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Syncretic types

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Present indicative I

Presnet indicative II

	Langu	0	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VIII	X	XIII	XV	XVI	XVIII	XIX
1	N Kurdish					30%	40%	3%				3%	20%	3%	
2	C Kurdish					53%						47%			
3	S Kurdish	50%				50%									
4	Zazaki					6%				38%	6%	12%	12%	25%	
5	Gorani	50%	50%												
6	Laki	100%													
7	C Plateau	65%	12%	24%											
8	Luri	100%													
9	Fars	69%	12%					12%							6%
10	S Tati	100%													
11	C Tati	100%													
12	N Tati	100%													
13	Gilaki	50%				50%									
14	Mazani	67%										33%			
15	Talyshi	100%													
16	Semnan	25%	25%		50%										
17	Tat	50%		50%											
18	Persian	100%													
19	Balochi	100%													

Figure 1: Syncretic trends in the present indicative

Past intransitive I

Past intransitive II

	Langu	0	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VIII	IX	X	XVI	XVII	XVIII	XX
1	N Kurdish					33%	50%		3%			10%		3%	
2	C Kurdish	5%		5%		89%									
3	S Kurdish	47%				53%									
4	Zazaki					19%	6%			6%	38%		25%	6%	
5	Gorani	86%	14%												
6	Laki	100%													
7	C Plateau	85%	10%	5%											
8	Luri	100%													
9	Fars	69%	12%					12%							6%
10	S Tati	100%													
11	C Tati	100%													
12	N Tati	100%													
13	Gilaki	50%				50%									
14	Mazani	67%				33%									
15	Talyshi	100%													
16	Semnan	50%	25%		25%										
17	Tat	100%													
18	Persian	100%													
19	Balochi	100%													

Figure 2: Syncretic trends in the past intransitive

Aspectual splits

	Kumzari	
	SG	PL
1	-sum	-sim
2	-si	-sē
3	-sē	-sin

Table 2: Type VII— past perfect

	W Gilaki	
	SG	PL
1	-im(i)	-im(i)
2	-i	-id(i)
3	-i	-id(i)

Table 3: Type XXI — past imperfective

Gender splits

	Type X		Type XVII		
	Piran, Eğil	Miyaro	Siverek (F)	Palu Bingol (F)	Piran (F)
	M	M			
1SG	-a	-o	-a	-a	-a
2SG	-î	-î	-a	-a	-a
3SG	-Ø	-Ø	-i	-Ø	-i
1PL	-î	-î	-î	-î	-î
2PL	-î	-î	-î	-î	-î
3PL	-î	-î	-î	-î	-î

Table 4: —Gender splits in past intransitive paradigm of Zazaki

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What are the most frequent syncretic patterns?

The effect of tense

	G. Zarda		CK Hewlêr		CK Kelekchi Goran	
	PRS.	PST.	PRS.	PST.	PRS.	PST.
1SG	-î	-anê	-im	-im	-im	-im
2SG	-î	-î	-î	-î	-î	-ît
3SG	-o	-Ø	-î	-Ø	-ê	-Ø
1PL	-mê	-îmê	-în	-în	-în	-man
2PL	-dê	-îdê	-in	-in	-in	-tan
3PL	-an	-î(n)	-in	-in	-in	-in

Table 5: The effect of tense on syncretism

TAM	n. paradigms	n. syncretism	%
Present indicative	182	101	55%
Past intransitive	186	94	51%

Table 6: Number of syncretic patterns per TAM category

The effect of number (singular and plural) on syncretism

- The typological literature suggests that syncretism is more common in the plural than in the singular (Baerman, Brown, and Corbett, 2005, p. 59)

Description	N	%
Syncretism only in plural	143	60%
Syncretism only in singular	21	9%
Mixed: Syncretism across singular and plural	29	12%
of which full plural vertical homophony	18	62%
Total with any plural syncretism	211	89%
Total with any singular syncretism	66	28%

Table 7: Distribution of Syncretism in Paradigms

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Common-Kurdish

*Proto-forms: Past-Intransitive

(1)   *-m   *-î   *-Ø   *-îm   *-îd   *-n
     -1SG -2SG -3SG -1PL -2PL -3PL

+ Zagros *d*, i.e., common-Kurdish

(2)   *-m   *-î   *-Ø   *-îm   *-î   *-n
     -1SG -2SG -3SG -1PL -2PL -3PL

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The law of Zeros

Recall that in common-Kurdish, the third-person past-tense intransitive
formatives are thus (with similar juxtapositions in the rest of Iranian):
-Ø [-3sg] vs. -n [-3pl]

Law of Zeros

Whenever a morphologically unmarked form bears cumulative exponence
and shares an exponent with a marked form, the marked (non-zero) form
can be reanalysed as marking the semantically marked exponent, with
zero marking the shared exponent.

Two parsings

   (3)   -Ø   vs. -n   or   -Ø   vs. -Ø-n
         -3SG   -3PL   -3(SG)   -3-PL

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2SG/2PL Syncretism

- Recall that due to regular sound change, the *-î [-2SG] merged with *-îd [-2PL], resulting in uninflectedness *-î [-2].[1]

- The number distinction was restored in the second person due to analogy with the third person.

Restoration

-∅	:	-∅-n	::	-î	:	X
-3		-3-PL		-2		2-PL

$$\textbf{X} = \textit{-î-n}$$

---

[1]Note the 2SG/2PL distinction was alive and well in the past-transitive paradigm, e.g., =t vs. =tan.

Southern Kurdish -î-n [-2-PL] pattern

	Sincawî 'do'	Mihran 'come'	Şêrwan K 'bring'
1SG	kird-im	hat-im	hawird-im
2SG	kird-î	hat-î	hawird-î
3SG	kird-Ø	hat-Ø	hawird-Ø
1PL	kird-îm	hat-îm	hawird-îm
2PL	kird-în	hat-în	hawird-în
3PL	kird-in	hat-in	hawird-in

1SG/1PL Syncretism

- A different type of uninflectedness occurs when a root ends with a î:
  î → ∅ / î_
- Given this rule, *-m [-1SG] merged with *-îm [-1PL] when attached to î-final roots, resulting in uninflectedness *-î-m [-STEM-1].[2]
- The number distinction was restored in the first person due to analogy with the third person.

Restoration

-∅	:	-∅-n	::	-î-m	:	X
-3		-3-PL		-STEM-1		-STEM-1-PL

$$X = \text{-}\hat{\imath}\text{-}m\text{-}in$$

---

[2]Note the 1SG/1PL distinction was alive and well in the past-transitive paradigm, e.g., =m vs. =man.

Southern Kurdish -(î)m-in [-1-PL] pattern

| | Şêrwan K | Wermizyar | | Îlam | Qorwe |
	'be'	'be'	'kill'	'come'	
1SG	bî-m	bî-m	kuṣt-im	zanis-im	hat-im
2SG	bî-d	bî-t	kuṣt-în	zanis-î	hat-îd
3SG	bî-Ø	bî-Ø	kuṣt-Ø	zanis-Ø	hat-Ø
1PL	**bî-min**	bî-min	kuṣt-îmin	zanis-îmin	hat-în[3]
2PL	bî-n	bî-n	kuṣt-în	zanis-in	hat-in
3PL	bî-n	bî-n	kuṣt-in	zanis-in	hat-in

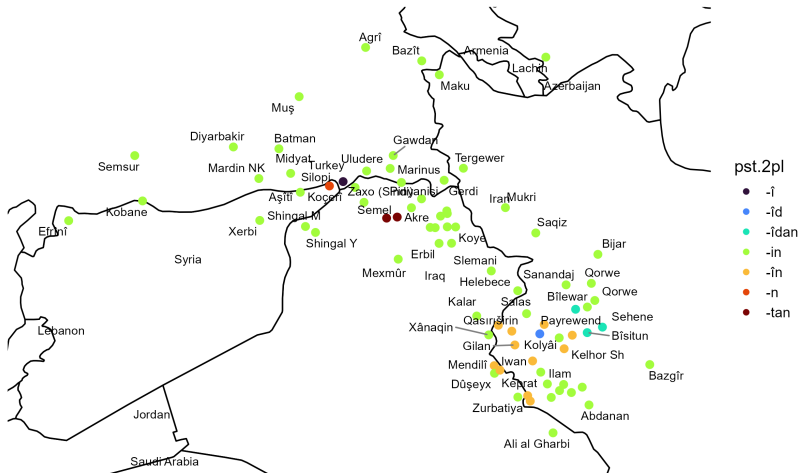---

[3]m → Ø / nV_: zanis-îmn=î > zanis-în=î 'We knew it'

Uninflectedness in Northern Kurdish

| | SK Bîlewar | | CK Slêmanî | | NK Mûş |
	'drop'	'be'	'fall'	'not be'	'fall'
1SG	*da na-m*	*bü-m*	*kewt-im*	*nî-m*	*ket-im*
2SG	*da na-îd*	*bü-d*	*kewt-î*	*nî-t*	*ket-î*
3SG	*da na-Ø*	*bü-Ø*	*kewt-Ø*	*nî-ye*	*ket-Ø*
1PL	*da na-în*	*bü-n*	*kewt-în*	*nî-n*	*ket-in*
2PL	*da na-n*	*bü-n*	*kewt-in*	*nî-n*	*ket-in*
3PL	*da na-n*	*bü-n*	*kewt-in*	*nî-n*	*ket-in*

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Allomorphs of the 2PL

pst.2pl

- -î
- -îd
- -îdan
- -in
- -în
- -n
- -tan

Allomorphs of the 1PL
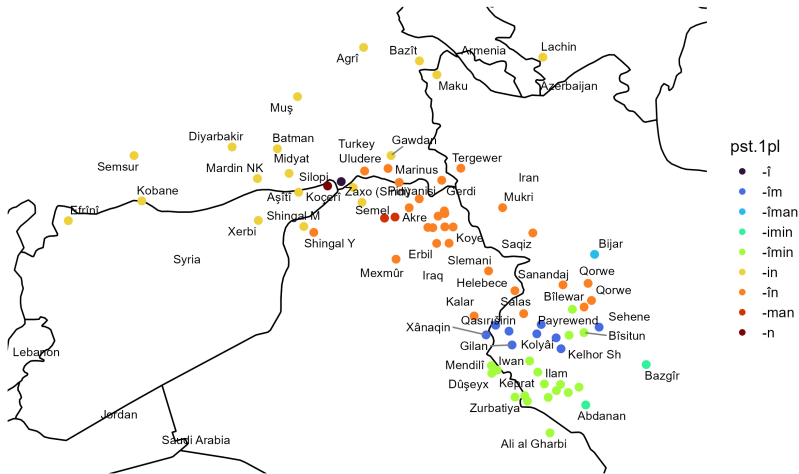
Thank you

Zor supastan ekeîn!
Gelek supas!
Desta weş bo!
Fre memnûn!
Gelek menûn!
Təšəkkor!
Manana!

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