Why Sequencing Rules?

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This study investigates person and number marking of subject and object in one of the Iranian languages, known as Laki. This language belongs to the Northwestern branch of Iranian languages (Windfuhr 2009). In Laki, person and number properties of the subject and object can both be realized on the verb. These markers are polyfunctional; because they have distinct but related content depending on the context in which they appear. These person and number markers are classified in three groups: one is a set of clitics (hereafter group A) that mark {1 and 2 sg} and {1-3 pl}. The other one is a set of suffixes (hereafter group B) that mark {1 and 2 sg} and {1-3 pl}. The third one is the suffix *–i*, that marks {3 sg} (Taghipour 2017). The distribution of these markers is what is remarkable. Group A marks subject agreement of the preterite transitive verbs, and pronominal object in present tense. Group B marks subject agreement in present tense, and pronominal object in preterite transitive verbs. They also mark subject agreement in preterite intransitive verbs. Suffix *–i* marks subject agreement of {3sg} in preterite transitive and present verbs. It serves as the pronominal object for present verbs as well (illustrated in 1-3)

Group A. {sbj trans pret} ∧ {obj prs}

=em	{1sg}
=et	{2sg}
=man	{1pl}
=tan	{2pl}
=an	{3pl}

Group B. {sbj prs} ∧ {obj trans pret} ∧{sbj intrans pret}

em	{1sg}
in	{2sg}
imen	{1pl}
inan	{2pl}
en	{3pl}

-i: {3sg sbj trans pret} ∧ {3sg obj trans prs} ∧ {3sg sbj prs}

1.di-m=et
see.PRET.OBJ.1SG=SBJ.2SG
'You saw me.'

2. m-own-em=et
HAB.see.PRS-SUB.1SG=OBJ.2SG
'I see you.'

3. ward=n-i
eat.PRET=OBJ.3PL-SBJ**.**3SG
'He ate them.'

Here we need two separate morphosyntactic property sets for subject and object, which must be kept separate from each other. Based on this solution, the verb *din* 'to see', in 1and 2 has the object and subject property sets in *a* and *b* respectively:

a. {OBJ: 1sg SBJ: 2sg} b. {SBJ: 1sg OBJ: 2sg}

These markers (except the one for {3sg}), depending on being combined with {pret/prs} and {trans/intrans} features, will be morphologically realized by different forms either by clitics (Group A), or by affixes (Group B).

Hence having a property set in which there is just person and number feature specification for subject and object, does not help morphology to determine which one of these forms (affixes or clitics) should realize person and number properties of *OBJ* or *SBJ*. As a result, in this study I am going to argue that *SBJ* and *OBJ*, apart form their person and number properties, should be specified with tense and valence values as well. To describe this agreement system, I draw a distinction between intrinsic and positional content (Stump 2017). This solution makes us able to have a single rule for each group of these polyfunctional marker (group A, group B and *-i*). This rule declares these markers as intrinsic exponence of τ: {αPER βNUM}. On the other hand, sequencing rules based on the position of these markers determine their positional content, either as subject or as object. The sequencing rules tell us that for example in block +2, the intrinsic exponence of τ which is an affix, realizes {prs SBJ}. We are now able to distinguish polyfunctional markers in terms of the content they realize depending on where they appear in morphotactics of this language.

-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5
subj	hab		voice	prs SBJ=B	prs OBJ=A	pret trans SBJ=A	prs perf
neg				past subj	pret OBJ=B		
				past perf	pret intrans SBJ=B	pret trans SBJ: *-i*	
				prs SBJ :*-i*	prs OBJ*:* *-i*		

References •Stump. Gregory. 2017. Polyfunctionality and the variety of inflectional exponence relations. In Ference Kiefer, James P. Blevins and Huba Bartos (eds.), *Morphological Paradigms and Functions*. Leiden: Brill. •Taghipour, Sahar. 2017. *Laki Verbal Inflection*. MA thesis. University of Kentucky. •Windfuhr, Gernot. 2009. *The Iranian languages*. London: Routledge.