

The Role of Pronominal Suffixes in Punjabi

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1 Introduction

It is well known that languages will incorporate pronouns into the verbal system and that these incorporated pronouns tend to give rise to agreement inflection via intermediate stages of cliticization (e.g., Givón 1976).¹ It is less well known that such pronominal clitics/suffixes are also part of the areal characteristic of South Asian languages. Despite a claim to this effect by Emeneau (1956) and isolated work on languages such as Kashmiri (e.g., Hook and Kaul 1987, Wali and Koul 1994, 1997, Bhatt 1999), Poguli (Hook 1987) or Maithili (Bickel, Bisang and Yādava 1999), pronominal cliticization is not generally considered to be a typical property of South Asian languages. Masica (1976, 1991), for example, makes no mention of pronominal incorporation in his highly regarded and extremely useful survey of South Asian languages.

This paper examines a hitherto puzzling phenomenon of pronominal suffixation/cliticization in Punjabi and relates it to a wider areal and crosslinguistic perspective on pronominal incorporation, particularly by taking into account the Lexical-Functional Grammar (LFG) perspective on the interaction between pronominal incorporation, agreement and discourse factors that has been developed over the years (e.g., Bresnan and Mchombo 1987, Austin and Bresnan 1996, Bresnan 2001).² The analysis proposed here also builds on Butt and King's (1996, 1997) analysis of Urdu information struc-

¹See Corbett 1995 for a comprehensive overview of the issues.

²At this point, I would like to thank Joan Bresnan for the linguistic guidance she has provided me with over the years. I first encountered Joan in the late 1980s at a conference in Worcester, Massachusetts just after I had graduated from college and when I already knew that I would be going to Stanford as a graduate student. The conference presented "Women at the Frontiers of Science" and I found Joan's talk on linking galvanizing. I knew then and there that I had made the right decision to go to Stanford. While life as a graduate student was often frustrating, it was more than compensated by those days when one had been in Joan's office, presented one's ideas more or less incoherently, had them impatiently sorted through, partly destroyed and then shown how to make a watertight case for what one thought the analysis should be. On those days I knew that **this** is what linguistics was about — sorting through data and arguments to come to an analysis that rang so true it could not but stand the test of time, as has the bulk of Joan's work over the decades.

ture. The Punjabi pronominal clitics are analyzed as being primarily motivated by discourse considerations in that they are used to background referential information. This analysis also picks up on Givón’s (1976) original idea that one source for pronominal agreement is the *after-thought* structure by which known topics/information are repeated via right dislocation.³

2 Some Initial Data

In this section, I introduce the relevant Punjabi data as it was introduced to me, namely, as a puzzle seemingly without a coherent or natural explanation. Before proceeding on to the data, however, a few general remarks on Punjabi and South Asian languages in general are in order.

Punjabi is an Indo-Aryan language spoken mainly in Pakistan and North India (in the Punjab provinces). There are several different dialects within Punjabi, so the situation is potentially quite complicated. The data reported on here have been provided by speakers from Lahore, Pakistan. Punjabi is closely related to Urdu/Hindi. Some differences between the two languages are that Punjabi is a tone language while Urdu/Hindi is not (only some of the examples include tonal markings—this is due to differing transcription practices in the sources), and that the split-ergative pattern in Punjabi is confined to third person subject pronouns and nouns, whereas it encompasses all subject pronouns and nouns in Urdu/Hindi.

South Asian languages include the Indo-Aryan, Dravidian and Tibeto-Burman language families. These languages are genetically unrelated but have entered into a regional *Sprachbund* or linguistic area (Masica 1976). Some (relevant) well known areal characteristics are: non-nominative subjects, split-ergativity, object agreement and rampant pro-drop.

In investigating the nature of complex predicates and linking in Punjabi, Akhtar (1997, 1999) came across some verbal morphology that he could not place and finally categorized as “argument-replacing morphemes”, because

³Further thanks for feedback and comments are due to an anonymous reviewer, Elena Bashir, Balthasar Bickel, Dan Everett, Peter Hook and the audiences at the workshop on *Case, Valency and Transitivity* held in June 2003 in Nijmegen as well as the workshop on *Evolution of Syntactic Relations* held in February 2004 as part of the annual DGfS (German Linguistics Society) meeting. In particular, I would like to thank Helen de Hoop and Christian Lehman and Stavros Skopeteas for organizing these workshops, respectively, and inviting me to participate in them. Nayyara Karamat not only checked the data presented in this paper, but also came up with additional data and generalizations that shed further light on the underlying Punjabi system. I would like to thank her for her valuable linguistic insights.

these morphemes seem to cooccur with pro-drop in Punjabi. Some examples are shown in (1).

- (1) a. xat lk^hia=i?
letter.M.Sg.Nom write.Past=2.Sg
‘Have you written the letter?’ (Akhtar 1999:282) Punjabi
- b. jandra k^hʊl gi-a=jē?
lock.M.Sg.Nom open go-Past.3.Sg-2.Pl
‘Has the lock been opened by you?’ (Akhtar 1999:284) Punjabi
- c. pʊtar=ne koṭiã pejã=jē
son.M=Erg jumper.M.Pl.Nom send-Past.M.Pl=2.Pl
‘(Your) son has sent jumpers for you (plural).’
(Akhtar 1999:284) Punjabi
- d. fawad=ne ditti=s(u)
Fawad.M.Sg=Erg give.Past.F.Sg=3.Sg
‘Fawad gave this to her.’ (Akhtar 1997:3) Punjabi
- e. xat lk^hia=ne
letter.M.Sg.Nom write.Past=3.Pl
‘They wrote a letter.’ (Akhtar 1999:283) Punjabi

Akhtar observes that these morphemes are not restricted to core arguments, but can also refer to adjuncts ((1b)) or beneficiaries not specified by the subcategorization frame of the verb ((1c)). Furthermore, they do not account for all of the arguments that are dropped ((1d)). Data from the interaction with negation suggests that these morphemes are in fact clitics which cannot form a prosodic word on their own, but must cliticize onto a preceding prosodic word. This is demonstrated by a comparison of the data in (1d) and (2), which show that the =s(u) can either appear on the main verb, or on the negative element preceding the main verb.

- (2) fawad=ne ne=s(u) ditti
Fawad.M.Sg=Erg not=3.Sg give.Past.F.Sg
‘Fawad did not give this to her.’ (Akhtar 1997:7) Punjabi

There seems to be no clear reason for the existence of these clitics. That is, none of the generally established ideas on the close link between pro-drop and agreement, pro-drop and pronominal incorporation, and case and

agreement can account for the distribution of the Punjabi pronominal clitics (see section 3). Furthermore, while the generalizations with respect to pro-drop, agreement and case assignment are entirely parallel in Punjabi and Urdu/Hindi, Punjabi sports a set of these pronominal clitics, but Urdu/Hindi does not. It is therefore not clear what these pronominal clitics in Punjabi really are good for.

Very little information about the clitics is available in the literature. They have gone unreported in modern descriptions of Punjabi (e.g., Bhatia's 1993 reference grammar or Masica's 1991 overview of the Indo-Aryan languages).⁴ One has to reach back to Bailey's (1912:82–86) hard to find grammar of Punjabi before coming upon an in-depth discussion of pronominal clitics in standard Punjabi. Before moving on to discuss the relevant data, I briefly summarize the currently available analyses as to pro-drop, agreement and case which were alluded to above, and then introduce the basic LFG approach employed in this paper.

3 Pro-Drop, Agreement, Case and Pronominal Incorporation

In a classic paper, Rizzi (1986) suggested a correlation between pro-drop and rich verb agreement. This correlation was shown not to hold exactly, but the general idea that agreement licenses pro-drop is still generally accepted in the literature. For example, Alexiadou and Anagnostopoulou (1998) link pro-drop to the feature [+D], which allows agreement affixes to have independent entries in the lexicon. The postulation of independent lexical entries for agreement affixes is correlated with the idea that these affixes stem from pronominal incorporation, and therefore had been associated with independent lexical entries in the past.

The original pro-drop proposal was made for Italian, a language in which only subjects can be dropped. Given subject agreement on verbs, the correlation is therefore clear. However, the correlation cannot be upheld for South Asian languages in even a weak form. Consider the Punjabi data in (3), which is representative of the broader South Asian pattern (see (4)–(6)). Generally, every single argument in the sentence can be dropped. In (3a),

⁴Bhatia (1993:228–229) does report on a secondary pronoun system of clitics, but only for the Shahpur Doabi dialect of Punjabi (spoken in India, east of Amritsar). The forms he gives are =*s*, =*m*, =*se*, =*ē*, =*ū*, =*ne* and =*r*. He denies the existence of pronominal clitics in the standard Majhi form of Punjabi, spoken in Lahore and Amritsar.

subject and the verb shows agreement with this unrealized subject. However, in (7b), the overt realization of ‘they’(=pigeons) would be ergative and the verb does not show subject agreement, but object agreement. Thus, the verbal morphology is not licensing pro-drop, nor is structural nominative Case being licensed via any sort of agreement. Note that while I have used a Hindi example here, the corresponding Punjabi monolog would be structurally exactly parallel to the Hindi one in (7). The correlation between case, agreement and pro-drop therefore cannot be used to account for pro-drop in Hindi and in South Asian languages in general (see Butt and King 1997 for more discussion).

A somewhat different perspective on pro-drop has recently been proposed by Neeleman and Szendrői (2005), who argue that attempts at associating pro-drop directly with licensing via case and/or agreement represents a misunderstanding of the phenomenon. They instead seek to explain the presence of pro-drop via heuristics for the spell-out of the morphological features associated with the pronominal paradigm of a language. By invoking Kiparsky’s (1973) Elsewhere Principle, they are able ensure that some feature bundles may be realized as a zero spell-out of the pronoun, thus giving rise to what looks like pro-drop. Their focus on the pronominal paradigm of a language predicts that rampant pro-drop as in South Asian languages or Chinese, another well known case which does not allow for an direct association of case, agreement and pro-drop (Huang 1984), can only occur if: 1) case morphology in the pronominal paradigm is agglutinating (i.e., as in Turkish); 2) the pronominal forms do not vary for case (i.e., as in Chinese or Japanese). Neeleman and Szendrői (2005) analyze the pronominal paradigm of Urdu/Hindi as fundamentally agglutinative for case and so the possibility of pro-drop in Urdu/Hindi follows from their account. If one accepts their argumentation for Urdu/Hindi, then, given that the pronominal paradigms of Urdu/Hindi and Punjabi are fairly close (see Butt and King 2005 for an in-depth discussion of case and the Urdu/Hindi pronominal paradigm), their analysis can also be extended to Punjabi. The core Punjabi pronominal paradigm is shown in (8).

	NOM	ERG	ACC/DAT	GEN
1.Sg	mē	mē	mε=nũ	mer-a/i/e
1.Pl	asī	asā	sa=nũ	saḏḏ-a/i/e
2.Sg/Disresp.	tũ	tũ	tε=nũ	ter-a/i/e
2.Pl/Resp.	tusī	tusā	tuha=nũ	tṷhaḏḏ-a/i/e
3.Prox.Sg	e	es=ne	es/e=nũ	es/e=d-a/i/e
3.Prox.Pl	e	enā=ne	enā=nũ	enā=d-a/i/e
3.Dist.Sg	o	os=ne	os/o=nũ	os/o=d-a/i/e
3.Dist.Pl	o	onā=ne	onā=nũ	onā=d-a/i/e

However, the Punjabi data presented in section 2 falls out of the scope of Neeleman and Szendrői’s (2005) account. For one, they do not address the interaction of pronominal cliticization with pro-drop. For another, they explicitly state that adjuncts are not assumed to be part of the phenomenon, but as the Punjabi data in (1) showed, adjuncts and arguments seem to behave alike with respect to pronominal cliticization and pro-drop.

Another interesting proposal with respect to pro-drop and pronominal incorporation goes back to Jelinek (1984), who suggested that pronominal incorporation into the agreement system gives rise to the ability of agreement morphology to satisfy a predicate’s argument slots. The idea is that the agreement morphology retains the ability of the former pronouns to satisfy the predicate’s argument slots. Overt NPs, which are in a sense “doubling” the pronouns/agreement morphology, are analyzed as adjuncts. Under this analysis, missing or omitted NPs are therefore not a case of pro-drop, but represent situations in which syntactically unnecessary adjuncts are not expressed (the adjuncts may be expressed for semantic or discourse purposes). This analysis is particularly attractive for languages with relatively free word order: if the NPs are actually adjuncts, then their relatively free distribution in the clause follows automatically.

However, Austin and Bresnan (1996) show that despite the initial attractiveness of this proposal, it need not be right for all languages. They focus particularly on Warlpiri and Jiwari and show that despite a wide spread acceptance of Jelinek’s initial proposal for Australian languages, the correlation does not hold up in light of a closer look at the facts. It should also be clear from the South Asian facts discussed so far that the pronominal argument hypothesis cannot account for all of the Punjabi data either.

4 The LFG Perspective

Austin and Bresnan (1996) propose an alternative analysis that is embedded in a more differentiated view of the interaction between phrase structure properties, predicate-argument structure and discourse considerations (see Bresnan 2001 for a comprehensive discussion). Free word order characteristics are taken to be independent of whether or not incorporated pronouns can satisfy the argument slots of a predicate. The synchronic distribution of incorporated or bound pronouns vs. independent NPs is considered to be governed by discourse factors such as topic or focus. As per Givón's (1976) original idea, verbal agreement morphology in languages can be derived from initial pronominal incorporation, which in turn is fed by the discourse backgrounding of full pronouns. In particular, several stages of historical change can be differentiated and modeled quite cleanly.

Full pronouns, like full NPs, are subject to word order variation due to discursal factors: topicalization, afterthought backgrounding, etc. When pronouns are positioned immediately adjacent to the verb, cliticization often results because of the generally unstressed nature of pronouns, compounded with discourse considerations such as de-emphasis, etc. Cliticization in turn can give rise to incorporation, which feeds into a potential reanalysis of these pronouns as “mere” agreement inflections.

The reanalysis of a pronoun with referential force into agreement morphology entails the loss of the referential contribution of the pronoun. A logical step on the path of this reanalysis is that the referential contribution of the pronoun be realized *optionally* before being lost altogether. And indeed, the full range of possibilities have been attested crosslinguistically.

In Navajo, for example, the incorporated pronouns satisfy the argument positions of the verb, as well as indicating topicality (Bresnan 2001). In Warlpiri and Jiwari, on the other hand, the former incorporated pronominals no longer have a function that goes beyond verb agreement. In Chicheŵa, the subject and object markers can both be shown to be descended from former incorporated pronouns. However, there is an asymmetry between the behavior of the subject vs. the object marker. The subject marker is functionally ambiguous in that it can either serve as a “mere” agreement marker, or as a referential predicate that satisfies the verb's argument slot. The object marker, on the other hand, is always referential and cannot be used in conjunction with an overt NP object. The presence of an NP that is coreferential with the object marker triggers an adjunct interpretation of that NP. The distribution of object marker vs. object NP is governed by the discourse factors of topicality or contrastive focus (Bresnan and Mchombo

The next sections present a closer look at the data available with respect to Punjabi pronominal clitics. Section 5 seeks to establish that these clitics indeed show some pronominal behavior. Evidence in favor of a pronominal status of these clitics is adduced from both synchronic patterns of distribution and diachronic data. Section 6 discusses data which point to an analysis by which discourse backgrounding has led to pronominal cliticization and, in some cases, an absorption of the former pronouns into the verbal paradigm as agreement morphemes.

5 Pronominal Clitics in Punjabi

This section takes a closer look at the form of the clitics and their synchronic distribution. The synchronic data in section 5.1 reveals some pronominal behaviour, as well as indications that a progressive reanalysis into the verbal paradigm may indeed be under way. The diachronic and comparative evidence discussed in section 5.2 serves to strengthen the synchronic evidence.

5.1 Synchronic Form and Distribution

Akhtar (1997, 1999) describes four “argument replacing” suffixes/clitics for Punjabi ((1)). The dialect he describes is spoken in the Gujrat District of the Punjab in Pakistan. He had his data confirmed by 3 native speakers from Lahore, Pakistan where standard Punjabi is spoken. The *-u* of the *-su* form is optional. Akhtar claims that the *su* form is predominantly used in Lahore, the *-s* form in Gujrat. Generally, though, the *-s* seems more common.

(10)

Form	Person/Number	Tense
=i	2.Sg	
=je	2.Pl	
=s(u)	3.Sg	
=ne	3.Pl	Past

Bailey (1912:82–86) in his grammar of Punjabi includes an explicit discussion of “pronominal suffixes” and provides the forms shown in (11).

(11)

Person	Number	
	Singular	Plural
2	-ũ, -i, -a, -ĩ	je
3	s-, -sũ	ne, ɳe

The older data from Bailey and the newer data provided by Akhtar show some overlap, as well as some differences. It seems clear that there are no first person pronoun clitics in Punjabi. But where Akhtar provides only one form for the 2nd person singular, Bailey has four. Some checking in Lahore yielded the information that the forms *-a* and *-ũ* are still attested, though infrequent.⁶ In general the use of these pronominal clitics tends to be associated with older speakers and the Punjabi spoken in rural villages.⁷

Bailey further provides some nasalized and retroflex forms and notes that the *ne* is used when it forms a separate “word”. Bailey also sees the *je* and *su* forms as acting non-affixally in certain contexts, but the others as generally acting affixally, thus indicating a possible progressive process of cliticization. The retroflex and nasalized forms no longer seem to be part of the Punjabi reported on here. An exception is the future tense, where the pronominal clitics appear to be infixes (used as affixes under Bailey’s analysis), as shown in (12).

- (12) a. *mẽ mar-ũ-g-a*
 I beat-2.Sg-Fut-M.Sg
 ‘I will beat you.’ (Bailey 1912:82) Punjabi
- b. *mẽ tənũ mar-ã-g-a*
 I you.Acc beat-1.Sg-Fut-M.Sg
 ‘I will beat you.’ (Bailey 1912:82) Punjabi
- c. **mẽ tənũ mar-ũ-g-a*
 I you.Acc beat-2.Sg-Fut-M.Sg
 ‘I will beat you.’ (Bailey 1912:82) Punjabi

The *-ũ* in (12a) is analyzed as a pronominal infix and indicates the 2nd person object.⁸ In (12b), in contrast, the infix morphology is that of the regular future paradigm, which shows simple agreement with the subject.⁹ This contrast is established quite clearly by the unacceptability of (12c), where the pronominal infix could only be understood as doubling the overt pronominal object. This is not permitted in Punjabi, showing that the

⁶These and other supplementary data were provided by Nayyara Karamat, who lives in Lahore and comes from a Punjabi speaking family originally from Hafizabad.

⁷Thanks to Elena Bashir and Nayyara Karamat for this information.

⁸Bhatia (1993:248) lists the *ũ* form as a dialectal variant.

⁹Since the inflectional future *-g* in Urdu and Punjabi is derived from a former *go* (Sanskrit *gam*) auxiliary, the “regular” future agreement morphology may actually also be derived from former pronominal clitics. This remains to be investigated in more detail, but see Butt and Lahiri (2003) for some discussion of the Urdu facts.

pronominal clitics/infixes have referential force and are not functioning as simple agreement markers.

Another example along the same lines taken from modern Punjabi is shown in (13), where the *s* could refer to the subject or object (preferentially the subject), but since its referential contribution would then clash with one of the full pronouns, the sentence is ungrammatical.

- (13) *o=ne o=nũ ak^he=s
 Pron.3=Erg Pron.3=Acc say.Past=3.Sg
 ‘He/She told him/her.’ Punjabi

However, it is difficult to find/construct such examples because the pronominal clitics could actually refer to all sorts of other non-argument participants as well. An example is shown in (14), where the verb is intransitive and the *je* points to the non-argument addressee. The plural form is used because plurals generally also double as polite forms in the language.

- (14) mẽ aea je
 I come.Past 2.Pl
 ‘(I say to you) I have come/am coming.’ (Bailey 1912:85) Punjabi

Interestingly, in modern Punjabi, it is possible to double the *je* form with a full pronoun, as shown in (15), where the *je* is interpreted as referring to the 2nd person subject.

- (15) tũsi_i kam karya je_i
 you work.Nom do.Imp.Pol 2.Pl
 ‘Could you please do the work.’ Punjabi

An initial hypothesis (due to Nayyara Karamat) is that the *je* may actually be in the process of being reanalyzed as a polite form of the regular present tense auxiliary *e* ‘is’. This conforms with intuitions of native speakers and is also very likely under a scenario of historical change in which these former pronouns are gradually absorbed into the verbal paradigm in one form or another.

One final point to address is Akhtar’s confinement of *ne* to the past tense. This observation has not been confirmed by further checking, but Bailey’s list of when to use the pronominal clitics, rendered here in (16), perhaps provides a useful clue to why Akhtar classified it as such.

- (16) **Use of Pronominal Clitics** (Bailey 1925:82):
- (i) to indicate the object, direct or indirect
 - (ii) to indicate possession or connection
 - (iii) with the past tenses of transitive verbs to indicate the agent or subject of the verb
 - (iv) for the second person, singular and plural, to indicate the person addressed

We had so far established that the pronominal suffixes can be used to “replace” or refer to any argument or adjunct (section 2). Bailey (1912) provides a more differentiated picture in that he confines the usage to objects in general ((16i)) and to subjects in the past tense ((16iii)). However, Bailey is careful to note that these rules are not inviolable, but must be seen as governing the “regular usage” of these clitics. An example of (16iv) has already been presented in (14), some examples of (16ii) are shown in (17).

- (17) a. *mē kam ne=s kita*
 I work.M.Sg.Nom not=3.Sg do.Past.M.Sg
 ‘I didn’t do his work.’ Punjabi
- b. *munde kam karde=s(u)*
 boy.M.Pl.Nom work.M.Sg.Nom do.Pres.M.Pl=3.Sg
 ‘His/her sons work.’ (based on Akhtar 1997:4) Punjabi

In section 6, this and the other established properties of pronominal clitics are analyzed as being due to the discourse backgrounding of former full pronouns. Before moving on to an analysis, some diachronic evidence in favor of progressive pronominal incorporation is adduced in the next section.

5.2 Historical Origin — Pronominal Incorporation

Emeneau (1965) provides a survey of languages he was aware of that showed pronominal suffixes. They include Pashtu, Balochi, Brahui (a Dravidian language pocket in an otherwise Indo-Aryan area), Sindhi, Lahanda, Kashmiri, Shina, Shumashti, Pasahi, Bashgali (Kati), Waigali, Ashkun.¹⁰ Emeneau concludes that pronominal suffixation is in fact an areal characteristic. He sees the origin of pronominal suffixation as being due to language contact with neighboring Iranian languages. However, he believes that the ground for this ready borrowing must already have been structurally inherent in the languages.

¹⁰For a discussion of Siraiki see Shackle (1976:101–107).

A different perspective on the matter is taken by Grierson (1895a), whose investigation of the Kashmiri pronominal clitic system (e.g., Hook and Kaul 1987, Wali and Koul 1994, 1997, Bhatt 1999, Sharma 2001) led him to accumulate comparative evidence from other languages and attempt to find a language internal explanation for the phenomenon by tracing the possible origin of the construction. Some examples from Kashmiri, Lahanda and Sindhi¹¹ are given in (18)–(20) by way of comparison with the Punjabi data.

- (18) *tsi chu-h-an vucha:n*
 you-NOM be-2.SG.NOM-3.SG.ACC see-PRES.PPL
 ‘You are looking at it.’ Kashmiri
 (Sharma 2001:226, with correction by Peter Hook)
- (19) a. *kitu-s*
 do.Part-3.Sg.Obl
 ‘It was done by him.’ (Grierson 1895a) Lahanda
- a. *kitō-vē*
 do.Part-2.Obl
 ‘It was done by you.’ (Grierson 1895a) Lahanda
- (20) a. *chaddiā-ī-se*
 left-3.Sg.Obl-3.Sg
 ‘He gave him up.’ (Grierson 1895a) Sindhi
- b. *chaddiā-ī-va*
 left-3.Sg.Obl-2.Pl
 ‘He gave you up.’ (Grierson 1895a) Sindhi

The table in (21) reproduces the full set of forms as recorded by Grierson (1885a:345) (as well as I can read them) for these three languages.¹² Grierson traces the pronominal clitics/suffixes to enclitic pronouns in Sanskrit and some pronouns Prākṛit. This reconstruction is of interest for the purposes of this paper because it fits in with the idea that pronominal clitics are derived from deemphasized and therefore generally also destressed pronominal forms. As indicated by the name, Sanskrit enclitic pronouns could not stand alone, but cliticized onto another prosodic word.

¹¹Lahanda and Sindhi are languages of Pakistan, the province of Kashmir is divided between India and Pakistan.

¹²Peter Hook notes that some of the Kashmiri forms must be wrong, however, in the context of this discussion, I cannot do more than provide Grierson’s original data.

Grierson (1895b) reconstructs pronominal incorporation of the same type for Nepali, Maithili, Assamese, Bengali, Oṛiya and Marathi. Present day Marathi, Bengali, Assamese and Oṛiya show no signs of pronominal clitics as far as I am aware, indicating that in these languages the former pronominal clitics may have been entirely absorbed into the verbal paradigm. Maithili, in contrast, still has a flourishing system of pronominal suffixes/clitics (Bickel, Bisang and Yādava 1999).

(21)

	Kashmiri		Lahanda		Sindhi	
	Pron.	Suffix	Pron.	Suffix	Pron.	Suffix
1.Sg.Dir	<i>bo</i>	<i>m</i> or <i>s</i>	<i>mā:ī:</i>	<i>m</i> or <i>s</i>	<i>ā:ū:</i>	<i>se</i> or <i>me</i>
1.Sg.Obl	<i>me</i>	<i>m</i>	<i>mai</i>	<i>m</i>	<i>māhū</i>	<i>me</i>
1.Pl.Dir	<i>asi</i>		<i>assā:</i>	<i>sē</i>	<i>asī:</i>	<i>sī:, sū:</i>
1.Pl.Obl	<i>asi</i>		<i>assā</i>	<i>sē</i>	<i>asā:</i>	<i>ū:, sū:</i>
2.Sg.Dir	<i>tsa</i>	<i>h</i>	<i>tū:</i>	<i>vē:</i> or <i>ō</i>	<i>tū:</i>	<i>ē:, e</i>
2.Sg.Obl	<i>tse</i>	<i>t</i> (dat <i>y</i>)	<i>tai</i>	<i>ēī</i> (dat <i>ī</i>)	<i>tō</i>	<i>e, (ēī)</i>
2.Pl.Dir	<i>tohi</i>	<i>va</i>	<i>tussā:</i>	<i>vē</i>	<i>tavhī:</i>	<i>u, va</i>
2.Pl.Obl	<i>tohi</i>	<i>va</i>	<i>tussā:</i>	<i>vē</i> or <i>o</i>	<i>tavhā:</i>	<i>va</i>
3.Sg.Dir.M	<i>su</i>	<i>u</i>	<i>ū, sō</i>	<i>s</i>	<i>ū, sō</i>	(<i>se</i>)
3.Sg.Obl.M	<i>tami</i> (inst)	<i>n</i>	<i>ū:, taī:</i>	<i>s</i>	<i>una, tāhē</i>	<i>se</i> (inst <i>ī:</i>)
	<i>tas</i> (dat)	(dat <i>s</i>)				
3.Pl.Dir.M	<i>tim</i>	<i>h</i>	<i>ū, sō</i>		<i>hū, sē</i>	(<i>ne</i>)
3.Pl.Obl.M	<i>timau</i> (inst)	<i>h</i>	<i>ū:hā:, tindhā:</i>	<i>hē:</i> or <i>nī</i>	<i>hune,</i> <i>tane</i>	<i>ne</i> (inst <i>ū:</i>)

The particular reconstructions Grierson proposed are as follows. The first person forms are derived from original Sanskrit enclitic pronouns *mā* (acc, sg), *me* (dat/gen, sg). These correspond to Prākṛit *mā* and *me*. The *s* forms are traced to the oblique forms of full plural pronouns in Prākṛit.¹³ For the second person, the Sanskrit enclitics are *tvā* (acc, sg), *te* (dat/gen, sg), *vas* (acc/dat/gen, pl). The corresponding Prākṛit is *te* (sg), *vo* (pl). The forms in *t-* and some of the *v-* forms are derived from these. The *h*, *ī*, *ēī* and some of the *v-* forms are traced back to the Prākṛit second person pronouns *bhē* and *uyhē*, which relate to old dual forms (see Pischel 1955:§420 for a complete list of second person pronouns in Prākṛit, Whitney 1889:§491 for Sanskrit). Finally, for the third person, the forms in *n* are derived from a

¹³The Prākṛit pronouns are derived from Sanskrit *aṣmad* (e.g. **assahū*, **assahī*). The derivations proposed by Grierson are quite intricate and involve complex arguments by Hoernle and Brugmann (Grierson 1895a:345).

defective Sanskrit pronominal which had *ena* as a stem. The forms in *s* are derived via Sanskrit *asya* (3sg, gen) and Prākṛit *sē*. The *u* forms may be associated with an instrumental version.

Ascertaining whether Grierson’s reconstructions are indeed correct would take us well beyond the scope of this paper. However, his ideas are usefully suggestive. Grierson himself does not investigate Punjabi,¹⁴ but we can reasonably pose the question whether the pronominal clitics found in Punjabi could be amenable to Grierson’s reconstruction. It is quite clear that the set of pronominal clitics in Punjabi cannot be related directly to the current set of full pronouns: 2nd person singular *tū, tē* vs. *ū, a, i, ī*; 2nd person plural *tvūsī, tvha* vs. *je*; 3rd person singular *e, o, enā, onā* vs. *s(u), ne*.

However, in analogy to the Lahanda *ī, ēī* forms, the Punjabi *i* and *je* forms could be traced back to the Prākṛit second person pronouns *bhē* or *uyhē*, as Grierson has suggested. The third person forms *ne* and *s(u)* also seem to be amenable to the type of reconstruction Grierson proposes: they could be related to defective Sanskrit *ena* and a locative form in *-u*. Though these reconstructions await confirmation via serious historical work, they provide, at the very least, a suggestive and interesting clue towards their synchronic analysis.

Finally, as to the absence of first person pronouns in Punjabi, this could be attributed to a more general trend within South Asian languages. Bickel, Bisang and Yādava (1999) note that there are no first person pronominal suffixes in Maithili and attribute this to the pressure on self-effacement in the social context. In terms of an information-structural analysis, as presented in the next section, the pressure to omit first person pronouns makes sense: they tend to be topical and therefore prone to be dropped entirely, rather than backgrounded postverbally.

6 An Analysis in Terms of Information Structure

This section first presents Butt and King’s (1996, 1997) existing analysis of the interaction between discourse functions and word order in Urdu/Hindi (section 6.1) and then applies this analysis towards motivating pronominal postverbal cliticization. The idea is that information-structural backgrounding (Givón’s 1976 afterthought backgrounding) accounts for the postverbal placement of pronouns. Because these pronouns represent backgrounded information, they also tend to be destressed and therefore also tend to cliticize

¹⁴Grierson treats Lahanda as a form of Punjabi, namely Western Punjabi. Whether this is a correct classification continues to be a matter of some dispute.

(cf. the Sanskrit enclitic pronouns). Over time, this cliticization can feed into a further reanalysis of the pronouns into the verbal paradigm (e.g., as agreement morphology).

Section 6.2 presents some more synchronic evidence in support of an information-structural analysis. Taken together with the synchronic and diachronic data discussed in the previous sections, the picture that emerges fits in nicely with Bresnan’s (2001) analysis of pronominal incorporation.

6.1 Discourse Functions and Word Order

Butt and King (1996, 1997) investigate the relatively free word order of the SOV language Urdu/Hindi from an information-structural perspective (cf. Vallduví 1992) and conclude that Urdu/Hindi must be classified as a *discourse configurational* language along the lines of Hungarian (É Kiss 1995). That is, while the main constituents of a sentence can be scrambled quite freely from a syntactic perspective, the placement of the constituents relative to one another makes a difference as to the information-structural content of the utterance (see Gambhir 1981, Kidwai 2000 for similar ideas on Hindi, but in different frameworks, also cf. King 1995 for Russian).

Butt and King assume a four-way distinction for discourse functions that is based on two features: $[\pm\text{New}]$ and $[\pm\text{Prom}(\text{inent})]$. This four-way distinction is inspired and adapted from Choi 1999—Vallduví 1992, for example, only assumes a three-way distinction.

- (22) Discourse Functions
- | | |
|-------------------|---|
| $[\text{+New}] =$ | focus $[\text{+Prom}]$ |
| | completive information $[\text{−Prom}]$ |
| $[\text{−New}] =$ | topic $[\text{+Prom}]$ |
| | background information $[\text{−Prom}]$ |

Butt and King use the terms *topic* and *focus* in a way that is presumably familiar to the reader: topics indicate prominent but old information, focus is used for information that is both new and prominent. It can be shown that these information-structural notions find a rough positional correlation in Urdu/Hindi (again, cf. Gambhir 1981, Kidwai 2000). Topics tend to be clause initial, while focus tends to be immediately preverbal. This positional placement is typical of discourse configurational languages (cf. É Kiss 1995).

The terms *completive information* and *background* are not as widely used in the literature as *topic* and *focus*. Backgrounded information is taken to be both old and non-prominent. It could in principle be left out of the sentence

altogether, hence the sense that this information has the nature of an *afterthought* (cf. Givón 1976). Backgrounded information occurs postverbally and tends to be preceded by an intonational break (this break occurs after the verbal complex). Finally, Butt and King coined the term *completive information* for the material that is not prominent, but new. In a sense, this is the “other” category, i.e., material that is included in the clause because it is new and furthers an understanding of the situation, but one which is not foregrounded or backgrounded in any special way. This information occurs between the clause-initial topic and the preverbal focus.

The constructed example in (23) illustrates all four types of discourse functions. Urdu/Hindi *to* ‘indeed’ has a general emphasizing function and a specific function as a topic marker (see Kidwai 2000 for some discussion). The focus in this sentence, ‘market’, is marked by a high tone in the immediately preverbal position, the backgrounded information is deemphasized and has falling intonation.

- (23) [nadya]_T (to) [ab^hi]_{CI} [tɔfi]_{CI} [bazar=se]_F xarid
 Nadya.F.Nom indeed just now toffee.F.Nom market.M=from buy
 rah-i t^h-i [mere=liye]_B
 stay-Perf.F.Sg be.Past-F.Sg I.Gen.Obl=for
 ‘Nadya was just buying toffee at the market for me.’ (Urdu)

Butt and King’s (1997) particular interest lay in uncovering the conditions for pro-drop in Urdu/Hindi. Since pro-drop in Urdu/Hindi and other South Asian languages is not licensed by agreement or case, Butt and King (1997) explored a discourse driven hypothesis for the rampant pro-drop found in South Asian languages. Based on a study of Hindi movie dialogs, Butt and King (1997) found that a discourse-based hypothesis is indeed plausible in that only old information is dropped. In particular, continuing topics or backgrounded information were good candidates for pro-drop. Butt and King’s general findings have been confirmed by a more extensive corpus study conducted by Prasad (2000), who furthermore showed that it is mainly subjects which are pro-dropped.

From an information-structural point of view, backgrounding and pro-drop thus both emerge as a method of dealing with old and non-prominent information. One difference between backgrounding and pro-drop lies in the degree of (de)emphasis. Backgrounded information is still recoverable within the clause, pro-dropped information is wholly context-dependent. A reasonable hypothesis would be that subjects are more prone to pro-

dropping, because these tend to be easy to recover from the context.¹⁵

Backgrounding thus emerges as a good strategy to deemphasize non-subjects. Given the hypothesis that the pronominal clitics are originally backgrounded information, two observations about the data fall out immediately. For one, it would be expected that the clitics are oblique (non-nominative) forms of the pronouns. Recall that Grierson's (1895a) reconstruction of the pronominal forms involved only oblique forms. For another, it would be expected that first person pronouns are generally absent from the paradigm, since a first person reference is generally eminently recoverable from the discourse context and would therefore tend to be pro-dropped, rather than being backgrounded.

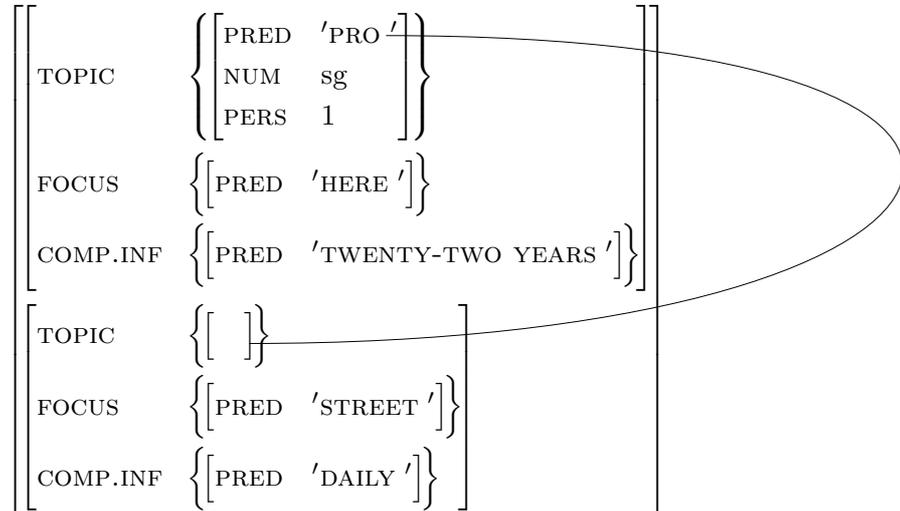
6.2 Information Structure and Pronominal Clitics

This section applies the information-structural analysis towards an explanation of the distribution and properties of Punjabi pronominal clitics. For the sake of clarity and completeness, I first provide a sample analysis of the interplay between word order, grammatical relations and information structure. Butt and King (1997) provide an analysis of this interplay in terms of LFG's projection architecture. In addition to the usual f(unctional)-structure, an i(nformation)-structure is assumed to project from the c(onstituent)-structure. This allows a clean separation of predicate-argument information from information structure and predicts that any grammatical function or adjunct could in principle take on any of the available discourse functions.

Furthermore, it allows an account of verbal or predicate focus, which is problematic in an account that integrates discourse functions directly into the f-structure (e.g., Bresnan 2001). In such an account, when the main predicate of the sentence is focused, it is impossible to represent just the focusing of that element. Instead, the nature of the f-structure representation entails that when the main predicate is identified with the focus discourse function, the entire f-structure must be interpreted as being focused: because the main predicate heads the f-structure, anything contained as part of that f-structure is automatically in focus as well (King 1997). Thus, there is no way to distinguish between predicate and sentential/clausal focus, an

¹⁵Subjects are often also topics and in some languages this connection is made very explicitly. One prominent analysis within LFG has therefore been to integrate the discourse functions TOPIC and FOCUS with the grammatical functions (Bresnan 2001:94–96) and represent them as part of the f-structure. Butt and King do not favor such an analysis, preferring instead to keep distinct levels of representation for functional and information structure, see the discussion in section 6.2.

(26) **Information-structure** for (24a) and (24b):



There is no backgrounded (postverbal) information in these utterances, so this discourse function is absent from the representation in (29).¹⁶ If there were any backgrounded information, it would be represented as part of the i-structure on a par with the other discourse functions that are assumed.

Turning back to the main proposal of this paper, I propose that the Punjabi pronominal clitics should be analyzed as backgrounded material. The information-structural analysis of (27), for example, would thus include the clause-initial subject as a topic, the immediately preverbal object as a focus, and the postverbal pronominal clitic as backgrounded information.

(27) [sūmbal=nū]_T [katab]_F ditti=[s(u)]_B
 Sūmbal.M.Sg=Dat book.F.Sg.Nom give.Past.F.Sg=3.Sg
 ‘S/he gave the book to Sūmbal.’ (Akhtar 1997:2) Punjabi

The following sections provide some evidence for this view; however, as the anonymous reviewer rightly points out, a full discussion of the discourse conditions which result in the use of full pronouns vs. pronominal clitics vs. pro-drop needs to be presented. Sadly, such a discussion goes well beyond the scope of this paper and will have to be the subject of another paper.

¹⁶The i-structure and f-structure are related to each other via LFG’s projection architecture. The fact that ‘here’ is both an adjunct and a focus is thus recoverable from the representation.

6.2.1 Supporting Synchronic Evidence

Akhtar (1997:6) notes that the arguments $s(u)$ stands for are unstressed and not the focal part of the sentences. He also shows that the pronominal clitics cannot stand for *wh*-words ((28)–(29)). This makes sense under the information-structural analysis since *wh*-words tend to be in focus and are therefore not candidates for backgrounding.

- (28) a. fawad=ne kīs=nũ maria
 Fawad.M.Sg=Erg who.Obl=Acc beat.Past
 ‘Whom did Fawad beat?’ (based on Akhtar 1997:5) Punjabi
- b. fawad=ne maria=s(u)
 Fawad.M.Sg=Erg beat.Past=3.Sg
 ‘Fawad beat him/her.’ Punjabi
 but not ‘Whom did Fawad beat?’ (based on Akhtar 1997:6)
- (29) a. kīs=ne munde=nũ maria?
 who.Obl=Erg boy.Obl=Acc beat.Past.M.Sg
 ‘Who beat the boy?’ (based on Akhtar 1997:5) Punjabi
- b. munde=nũ maria=s(u)
 boy.Obl=Acc beat.Past.M.Sg=3.Sg
 ‘S/he beat the boy’, not ‘Who beat the boy?’ Punjabi
 (based on Akhtar 1997:5)

The clitics also cannot stand for nominative arguments ((30)). This fact seems odd at first sight, but again receives a straightforward explanation under the analysis proposed here. Butt and King (1997) note that nominative arguments tend to be semantically incorporated or focused (see Mohanan 1995, Dayal 2003 for further discussion and motivation), both of which makes them unavailable for discourse backgrounding and therefore unavailable for pronominal cliticization.

- (30) a. fawad=ne katab paṛi
 Fawad.M.Sg=Erg book.F.Sg.Nom read.Past.F.Sg
 ‘Fawad read the/a book.’ (based on Akhtar 1997:5) Punjabi
- b. fawad=ne paṛi=s(u)
 Fawad.M.Sg=Erg read.Past.F.Sg=3.Sg
 ‘Fawad read (his/her something).’
 but not ‘Fawad read it.’ Punjabi
 (where it=book, based on Akhtar 1997:5)

Finally, recall that pronominal clitics can refer to possessive specifiers as well ((17)). This property again falls out from general considerations of word order and discourse. Given that genitive specifiers are in principle able to scramble independently (cf. Mohanan 1994 for Hindi), they can also be placed in the postverbal backgrounding position and there become candidates for pronominal cliticization and incorporation.

The currently available synchronic data thus more than supports an information-structural analysis of pronominal cliticization. The next section turns to a discussion of the diachronic predictions that go along with the information-structural analysis.

6.2.2 Supporting Diachronic Evidence

Recall that according to Givón’s (1976) original suggestions and according to LFG’s view on pronominal incorporation (section 4), several stages of historical change are predicted:

- (31) i. Pronouns are backgrounded for discourse reasons.
- ii. These pronouns could either be full pronouns and then develop cliticized forms, or they could already be enclitics.
- iii. The cliticized forms are reanalyzed as part of the verbal paradigm. This can include a stage in which the referential content of the pronoun is optional.

With respect to (31ii), Grierson’s (1895a) reconstructions would seem to suggest that a majority of the backgrounded pronouns have been enclitics at least since Sanskrit: the ancestors of the current forms are often traced to old accentless enclitic pronouns. Consider Whitney’s (1889:§500) description of *ena*, one of the possible ancestors of the current forms: “There is a defective pronominal stem, *ena*, which is accentless, and hence used only in situations where no emphasis falls upon it.” This indicates that the pronouns the modern Punjabi clitics were derived from already served a deemphasizing (non-focal) function.

With respect to (31iii), there is some evidence that the Punjabi pronominal clitics are beginning to be absorbed into the regular verbal paradigm. Consider the observation that the 2nd plural *je* can cooccur with overt full pronouns in situations of polite requests ((15)). Given the paradigm for the present tense of the ‘be’ auxiliary (Bailey 1912:50) in (32), it is highly plausible that both the 2nd person plural *je* and the third person plural *ne* could

be assimilated into this paradigm. The *je* would extend the paradigm as a polite form, whereas the *ne* could be reanalyzed as actually being part of this paradigm. Note that the pronominal clitic *ne* is not nasalized, whereas the 3rd person plural in (32) is.

(32) **Present of Punjabi *be*** (Bailey 1912:50)

	Singular	Plural
1st	\tilde{a}	\tilde{a}
2nd	$\tilde{e}/\tilde{\epsilon}$	o
3rd	e/ ϵ	n \tilde{e}

Interestingly, Bhatia (1993:243) in his grammar of Punjabi provides a non-nasalized form as the third person plural of ‘be’. Given that nasalization in both Punjabi and Urdu/Hindi also serves as a marker of politeness, it is entirely plausible that the pronominal clitic *ne* has recently been collapsed with auxiliary *n \tilde{e}* , whereby the nasalization has been reanalyzed as part of the politeness marking. This scenario is accordance with native speaker intuitions, who, when first confronted with the pronominal clitic *ne*, assume that it is part of the paradigm in (32).

Finally, recall that Grierson (1895b) reconstructed pronominal incorporation for a number of other languages besides Kashmiri, Lahanda and Sindhi. Some of these other languages are Bengali, Oṛiya, Assamese, and Maithili. In their current form, Bengali, Oṛiya, and Assamese do not employ pronominal clitics: the former pronouns have been entirely absorbed into the verbal paradigm as agreement markers. For Maithili, Bickel, Bisang and Yādava 1999 also argue that the pronominal suffixes are on their way to being integrated as agreement morphemes.¹⁷

Given these data and observations, I propose that the singular *i* (also \tilde{i} , \tilde{u} , *a*) and *s(u)* forms be analyzed as enclitic pronouns with referential force. They contribute a PRED ‘PRO’ and are incompatible with full pronouns or NPs that designate the same grammatical function. In contrast, the plural forms *je* and *ne* are in the process of being absorbed into the verbal paradigm. Their referential force is optional, that is, they only optionally contribute a PRED ‘PRO’. This is entirely in parallel with the situation described for Chicheŵa in section 4. A diachronic prediction is that the *je* and *ne* are currently at an intermediate stage and that they will lose their referential force entirely. The singular pronominal clitics will presumably also

¹⁷Some intriguing historical data remains to be uncovered with respect to the behavior of the future, cf. (12), however, a discussion of these data would lead us too far afield.

be absorbed into the verbal paradigm via an intermediate stage, however, at the moment they retain their full referential force.

7 Conclusion

In conclusion, this paper has tried to establish that standard Punjabi shows pronominal cliticization as part of an areal phenomenon (Emeneau 1965). The presence of pronominal clitics is related to pro-drop in that both are discourse strategies. The evidence suggests that pronominal cliticization is the result of postverbal discourse backgrounding, while pro-drop applies to old information that is wholly recoverable from the context.

The synchronic and diachronic evidence furthermore points to a gradual absorption of these clitics into the verbal paradigm, a process whose successive synchronic stages can be accounted for elegantly under an analysis which combines the standard LFG account of pronominal incorporation (Bresnan 2001) with the information-structural analysis proposed by Butt and King (1996, 1997). In particular, the data and analyses put forward in this paper lend support to Givón's (1976) original idea that discourse backgrounding can feed into the development of a verbal agreement system.

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