

# SUBJECT-VERB AGREEMENT IN KISAR

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Subject-verb agreement in Kisar, an Austronesian language spoken on the island of Kisar in Southwest Maluku, is discussed. Although most closely-related languages encode subject-verb agreement with a person-number prefix on the verbs, Kisar appears to be different in that consonant-initial verbs do not show this prefix in their surface forms. However, this paper proposes that the person-number prefixes do exist in the underlying representation. In the surface representation, the prefixes may reassociate to the end of the preceding word of the verb phrase; specifically, the subject pronoun, the negator **ka**, the first verb of certain serial verb constructions, a numerical quantifier, or one of several other words in this position. In the case that the preceding word in the verb phrase ends in a consonant, the person-number prefix is lost entirely (i.e., is not manifested in the surface representation). The loss of the person-number prefix also occurs in cases where the preceding word is inaccessible because it is not in the same phonological phrase.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

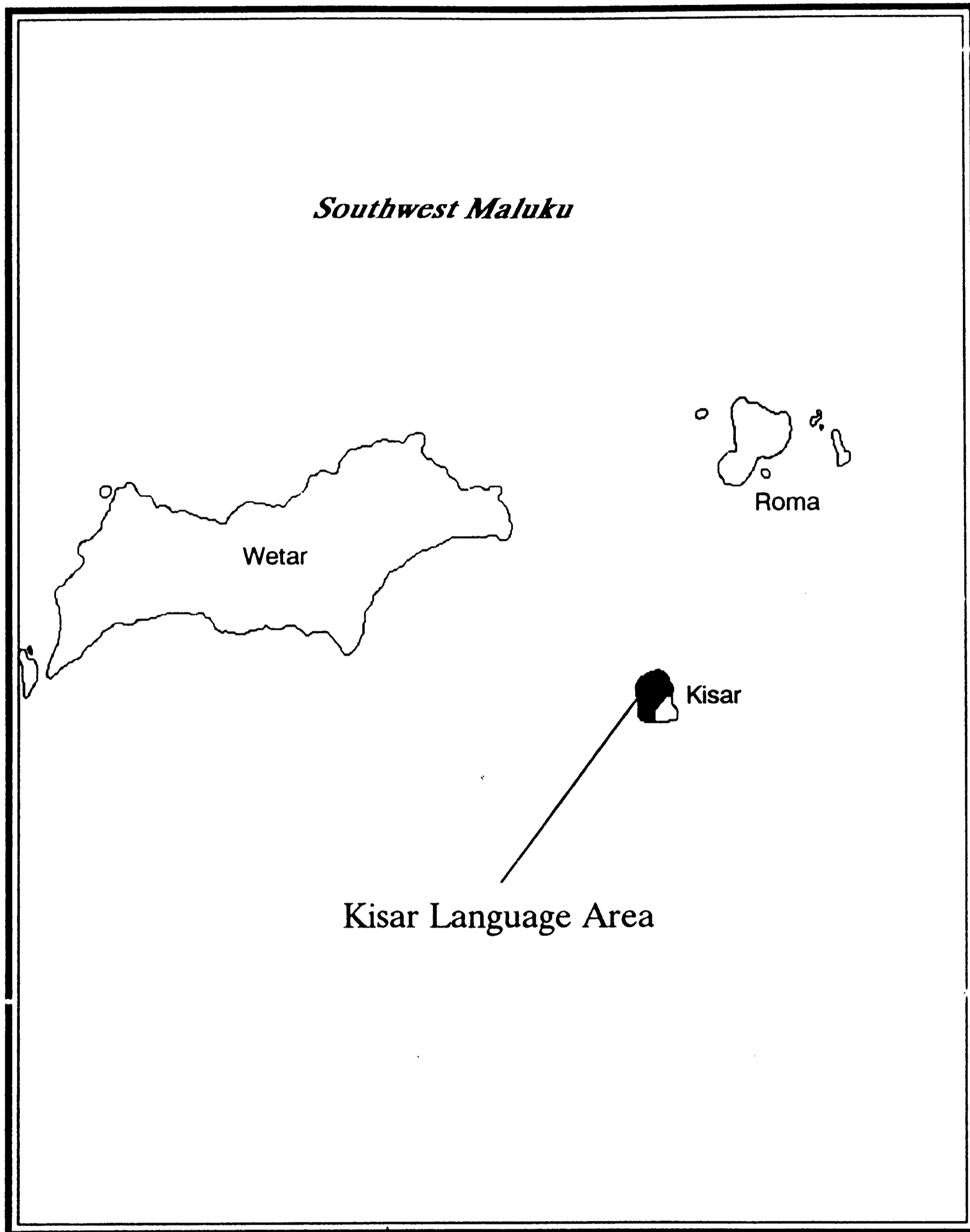
This paper describes subject-verb agreement in Kisar,<sup>1</sup> an Austronesian language spoken by the majority of people on the island of Kisar.

The island of Kisar is located in Eastern Indonesia, in the southwestern corner of the province of Maluku. The Austronesian languages in this area of Maluku have person-number prefixes on verbs showing agreement with the subject. At first glance, it appears that Kisar is an exception in that the consonant-initial verb stems do not have person-number prefixes on their surface forms. However, it is proposed in this paper that the person-number prefixes do in fact exist, although only in underlying representation. It is shown that, due to CV constraints, the person-number prefix of a consonant-initial verb may either associate with the preceding word of the verb phrase (being manifested as a suffix of that preceding word in the surface representation) or it will be lost.

The data are interesting also in that they show clearly that the language is in the process of change, especially in the patterning of a certain serial-verb construction, and the use of the word **suk** 'like' that apparently had been used earlier as a possessed noun, but is now being used by many speakers as a verb.

## 2 SUBJECT PERSON-NUMBER PREFIXES

Of a sampling of approximately 270 Kisar verbs, 112 have person-number prefixes on their surface forms. These are subject agreement prefixes, referred to here as subject person-number prefixes. The verbs which show



Map 1: Kisar Language Area

these prefixes all have a vowel-initial stem. The person-number prefixes are given in the table below.<sup>2</sup>

Table 1. Subject Person-number Prefixes

	<u>Singular</u>	<u>Plural</u>
1st person excl.	'u- <sup>3</sup>	m-
1st person incl.		k-
2nd person	m-	m-
3rd person	n-	r-

Notice that there may be under-differentiation when just the verb and person-number prefix occur in isolation. First-person plural exclusive, second-person singular and second-person plural all have the same person-number prefix, m-. They can be disambiguated by the context or by the use of the subject pronouns, as is demonstrated in Section 3.

The first-person singular prefix is given above as 'u-. The /u/ of this prefix is deleted when the verb stem is vowel-initial. This cannot be analyzed as purely a phonological rule, however, due to the presence of words such as **paku-ala** 'help-TAM' and **ko'u-ala** 'far-TAM', where /u/ followed by a vowel-initial morpheme is not deleted. One can state that there are two allomorphs of 'u-. The form '- is used when it actually does affix to the front of the verb (which is only for vowel-initial verb stems); the form 'u- occurs elsewhere. The use of the '- allomorph when the person-number marker attaches to the front of the verb makes it follow the pattern of the other person-number prefixes, which are all single consonants. Presumably this is the motivation behind this allomorph.

## 2.1 Vowel-initial Verb Stems

Given below are some simple clauses illustrating the use of the person-number prefixes on vowel-initial verbs. Where possible, the examples have a noun phrase identifying the subject. However, in both first-person and second-person, a clause without a subject pronoun is rare, so I have included some examples with pronouns as well. The person-number prefix is underlined in each example.

- (1) 1s **Ya-'-amaka riuk wolima noho-ro-ro-po.**  
 I-1s-awaken strike five island-DUP-before dawn  
 'I wake up at five a'clock in the morning.'
- (2) 1pe **Ai m-akni'ir, am ho'ir.**  
 we 1pe-sick we cover up  
 'When we are sick we cover up.'
- (3) 1pi **Yo-'-oro Mam Fia k-ala'a wewere.<sup>4</sup>**  
 I-1s-with Mrs.(Syl)via 1pi-walk together  
 'Sylvia, let's walk together.'
- (4) 2s **Idi, m-apali ai me'e, kaun?<sup>5</sup>**  
 Idi 2s-cook already not yet  
 'Idi, have you cooked yet?'
- (5) 2p **Inai, Pa'a, mai mi m-a'ak here.**  
 girl boy come you 2p-eat now (Imperative)  
 'Girl! Boy! Come eat now!'
- (6) 3s **Dedi n-ahere mamani.**  
 Dedi 3s-cry continuously  
 'Dedi cries continuously.'

- (7) 3p Woro'o r-amhar-edi iskole me'e.  
 two 3p-leave-TAM school TAM  
 'Two (of my siblings) are out of school already.'

## 2.2 Consonant-initial Verb Stems

As mentioned above, it is the vowel-initial verbs which show the person-number prefixes in their surface forms. Given below are some simple clauses with consonant-initial verb stems to compare and contrast with the clauses in Section 2.1. The verb for comparison in each case is underlined.

- (8) 1s Ya'u hamlinu.  
 I forget  
 'I forget.'
- (9) 1pe Yo--oro Mam Fia 'aku horok, la ai-ni-m mama.  
 I-1s-with Mrs.(Syl)via send letter to we-POSS-2p mother  
 'Sylvia and I sent letters to our mothers.'
- (10) 1pi Ik ha'a la au tilu.  
 we climb to tree top  
 'We climbed to the top of the tree.'
- (11) 2s Om hi'i sus ya'u me'e.  
 you make difficult I TAM  
 'You've made problems for me.'
- (12) 2p Yon mim hari nika kalo'o ahu mai n-a'an mi.  
 don't you open door later dog come 3s-eat 2p  
 'Don't open the door or a dog will come and eat you.'
- (13) 3s Lisi wauru.  
 Lisi dance  
 'Lisi is dancing.'
- (14) 3p Mama Mia n-oro Beti min Larihi.  
 Mrs. Mia 3s-with Betty live Larihi (name of house)  
 'Mrs. Mia and Betty live at Larihi.'

It may appear that the apparent presence or absence of these prefixes can be explained simply by saying that the initial consonant of the verb does not allow a consonant prefix to attach. This would be consistent with the syllable structure constraint in Kisar which does not allow for complex onsets. However, the correct analysis is somewhat more complicated. As the observant reader may have already noted, the forms of the subject pronouns appearing with vowel-initial verbs are different from those appearing with consonant-initial verbs. This difference is significant, and key to a proper understanding of the Kisar system. In Section 3, I discuss both sets of forms in detail. In Section 4, I show that these two sets can be collapsed by a simple generalization. Section 5 gives further evidence for this analysis.

## 3 SUBJECT PRONOUNS

As previously mentioned, there are two sets of surface forms of the subject pronouns. The set which occurs with vowel-initial verbs I call "Subject Pronouns" because they are the basic forms. The other set, given

for expository purposes only, I call "Complex Forms of Subject Pronouns". The reason for this nomenclature should be apparent from the discussion in Section 4.

I present first the simple case of subject pronoun plus main verb, with vowel-initial verbs. Whenever vowel-initial verbs are directly preceded by the subject pronoun, the following forms of the subject pronouns are chosen.

Table 2. Subject Pronouns

	<u>Singular</u>	<u>Plural</u>
1st person excl.	ya-	ai
1st person incl.		i-, ik, 'ika
2nd person	o	mi
3rd person	ai	hi

Notice that the first-person singular form ya-, is always phonologically bound to the verb that follows it. This pronoun assimilates to the initial vowel of the verb stem.

Also note that for the first-person plural inclusive pronoun, there are three forms. The form 'ika, though rarely used, is of interest because it is clearly a reflex of the protoform \*kita.<sup>6</sup> The two more common forms are i-, which is phonologically bound to the following verb, and the free form ik.

The first-person plural exclusive and the third-person singular pronouns are both ai. They are disambiguated by the person-prefix occurring on the following verb.

Below is a paradigm illustrating these subject pronouns and their corresponding person-number prefixes, with the verb amkuru 'to sleep'.

Table 3. Verb Paradigm

	<u>Subject pronoun</u>	<u>Person marker</u>	<u>Conyugated verb</u>	<u>Gloss</u>
1s	ya-	'u-	ya-'-amkuru	'I sleep' <sup>7</sup>
1pe	ai	m-	ai m-amkuru	'we sleep'
1pi	ik	k-	ik k-amkuru	'we sleep' <sup>8</sup>
1pi	i-	k-	i-k-amkuru	'we sleep' <sup>8</sup>
2s	o	m-	o m-amkuru	'you sleep'
2p	mi	m-	mi m-amkuru	'you sleep'
3s	ai	n-	ai n-amkuru	'he sleeps'
3p	hi	r-	hi r-amkuru	'they sleep'

Notice that all ambiguities disappear with both the subject pronoun and the person-number prefix; no two forms in Table 3 are identical.

The assimilation process for ya- is not apparent in the above example because the verb is /a/ initial. Below are two examples which show the assimilation of the vowel in the first-person singular pronoun.

(15) /ya + ' + esne/  
 ye + ' + esne  
 [ye'esne]  
 Ye'esne manu. 'I' + '1s' + 'kill'  
 V-assimilation  
 'I'-ll kill a bird.'

(16) /ya + ' + olu/  
 yo + ' + olu  
 [yo'olu]  
 Yo'olu me'e. 'I' + '1s' + 'go in front'  
 V-assimilation  
 'I'll go ahead of you.'

Of the verbs analyzed for this paper, over half have consonant-initial stems. These consonant-initial stems include a group of over 15 verb stems

which have a phonemic glottal stop word-initially.<sup>9</sup> Considering the forms of the subject pronouns which occur with consonant-initial verbs sheds light on the apparent absence of person-number prefixes on these verbs.

The paradigm below shows each of the free subject pronouns that occur immediately preceding these consonant-initial verbs.

**Table 4. Complex Forms of Subject Pronouns**

	<u>Singular</u>	<u>Plural</u>
1st person excl.	ya'u, i-	am, aim
1st person incl.		ik
2nd person	om	mim
3rd person	an, ain	hir

Notice that the first-person plural exclusive **am** and the third singular **an** both have alternate, longer forms. The shorter forms are by far the more commonly used forms in present-day speech; the longer forms seem to be somewhat more archaic, in that they are rarely used by anyone under 40 years of age.<sup>10</sup> It may be assumed that the shorter forms have evolved fairly recently as a reduction of the longer forms.

The following is a paradigm which illustrates the use of the complex forms of the subject pronouns in a clause.

(17) 1s **Ya'u wakunu wanakunu Yotowawa.**  
 I speak language Kisar  
 'I speak the Kisar language.'

1pe **Am wakunu wanakunu Yotowawa.**  
 we speak language Kisar  
 'We speak the Kisar language.'

1pi **Ik wakunu wanakunu Yotowawa.**  
 we speak language Kisar  
 'We speak the Kisar language.'

(18) 2s **Om wakunu wanakunu Yotowawa.**  
 you speak language Kisar  
 'You speak the Kisar language.'

2p **Mim wakunu wanakunu Yotowawa.**  
 you speak language Kisar  
 'You all speak the Kisar language.'

(19) 3s **An wakunu wanakunu Yotowawa.**  
 he speak language Kisar  
 'He speaks the Kisar language.'

3p **Hir wakunu wanakunu Yotowawa.**<sup>11</sup>  
 they speak language Kisar  
 'They speak the Kisar language.'

The prefix **i-** is often used before consonant-initial verbs for first-person singular. The unbound complex form **ya'u** may also be used on the same verbs. The reason for using **i-** in some contexts is not clear yet. Consider the following example:

(20) **Ler-one mulai i-wakuku i-po'on mama ni-n-a honoli.**  
 day-that begin I-study I-watch mama POSS-3s-? life  
 'That day I began studying and watching my mother's life.'



#### 4 GENERALIZATION

Insight into the subject-verb agreement system can be gained if one compares the complex forms of the subject pronouns (which directly precede consonant-initial verbs) with the subject pronouns which directly precede vowel-initial verbs. They are given side by side below, comparing the forms which best illustrate the generalization to be made.

Table 5. Subject Pronouns and Complex Forms

	<u>Subject Pronoun</u>	<u>Complex form</u>
1s	ya-	ya'u
1pe	ai	ai <u>m</u>
1pi	i-	ik <u>̄</u>
2s	o	om
2p	mi	mi <u>m</u>
3s	ai	ai <u>n</u>
3p	hi	hi <u>r</u>

Notice that the complex forms can be analyzed as the basic subject pronoun plus a person marker (cf. Table 3). Consider that the last segment (or last two segments in the case of the first-person singular form) of these complex forms is identical to the person-number prefixes that occur on vowel-initial verbs. (This is one reason why I have chosen 'u- as the underlying form of the first-person singular prefix even though the u never appears in the surface form when it is prefixed to a verb.)

Given these facts, it can be argued that every verb has an obligatory person-number prefix. This morpheme appears on the surface form of vowel-initial verbs as a prefix. If, however, the verb begins with a consonant, the person-number prefixes can not associate with the verb as they normally would, due to the syllable structure constraint prohibiting intra-syllable consonant clusters in Kisar (Christensen and Christensen 1991). There are three possibilities: the person-number prefixes could be reassociated to the final position of the preceding word; or they could be lost, having no surface realization, if the preceding word ends in a consonant, or a vowel could be inserted between the prefix and the consonant-initial stem. This third possibility does not occur in Kisar, but the other two do.

In Kisar the person-number prefixes reassociate to the end of the preceding word within the same phonological phrase, if that preceding word ends in a vowel. It is important here to note that I have analyzed the subject pronoun as part of the verb phrase since there are two forms of subject pronouns which are bound to the verb; specifically, I do not consider the subject pronoun to belong in a separate SUBJECT position in the clause. This follows Wolff's analysis of Fijian predicates in his discussion of Proto-Austronesian verbal morphology (Wolff 1980). He rejects the terms subject, verb, and object as they are used in Latin and English grammars, stating:

... for...every Austronesian language which I have examined, NPs in no way occur in constructions which mark role. Role is marked exclusively by the predicate in these languages. Thus in a Fijian sentence such as the following, au is not subject. It is the agent marker and is part of the verb phrase.

- (24) Au aa raica na gone.  
 1s past see him marker child  
 PREDICATE NP ADJUNCT  
 'I saw the child.' (Wolff 1980:163)

Wolff further states that any NP occurring before the predicate is the adjunct marked as theme or topic. The common occurrence of a NP preceding a subject pronoun in Kisar further substantiates this analysis.

Under this analysis, the subject pronoun is considered to be part of the verb phrase. If it immediately precedes a consonant-initial verb, as in examples (17), (18), and (19), the form of the pronoun chosen is the complex form, with incorporated person-marker endings. These endings may be referred to as pseudo-suffixes. On the surface they appear to be suffixes on the subject pronoun, but underlyingly they are person-number prefixes associated with the following verb. Examples (17), (18), and (19) are shown again below with the underlying morphemic representation (labeled 'MR') directly under the phonemic representation.

(21) 1s Ya'u wakunu wanakunu Yotowawa.  
 MR ya 'u-wakunu wanakunu Yotowawa  
 I 1s-speak language Kisar  
 'I speak the Kisar language.'

1pe Am wakkunu wanakunu Yotowawa  
 ai m-wakunu wanakunu Yotowawa  
 we lpe-speak language Kisar  
 'We speak the Kisar language.'

1pi Ik wakunu wanakunu Yotowawa.<sup>12</sup>  
 MR ik k-wakunu wanakunu Yotowawa  
 we lpi-speak language Kisar  
 'We speak the Kisar language.'

(22) 2s Om wakunu wanakunu Yotowawa.  
 MR o m-wakunu wanakunu Yotowawa  
 You 2s-speak language Kisar  
 'You speak the Kisar language.'

2p Mim wakunu wanakunu Yotowawa.  
 MR mi m-wakunu wanakunu Yotowawa  
 you 2p-speak language Kisar  
 'You all speak the Kisar language.'

(23) 3s An wakunu wanakunu Yotowawa.  
 MR ai n-wakunu wanakunu Yotowawa  
 he 3s-speak language Kisar  
 'He speaks the Kisar language.'

3p Hir wakunu wanakunu Yotowawa.  
 MR hi r-wakunu wanakunu Yotowawa  
 the 3p-speak language Kisar  
 'They speak the Kisar language.'

## 5 SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

There are other patterns in Kisar which support this analysis. As evidence, I present data involving the following: the word *suk*, 'like', a certain serial-verb construction, the auxiliary *bisa* 'can', and the negator *ka*.

### 5.1 The Word *suk* 'like'

The word *suk* 'like', when patterning as a verb, follows the



generalization described in Section 4. The subject pronouns preceding **suk** have the person-number prefix from **suk** reassociated to the end of them.

**Suk** usually occurs before another verb, asserting "subject likes to do X". One can see from the examples below that the pseudo-suffixes on the pronouns are not from the main verb **a'ak** 'to eat', which is vowel-initial and therefore has its own prefixes, but from the verb **suk** which directly follows the subject pronoun.

(24) 1s    Ya'u    suk        '-a'ak.  
 MR    ya        'u-suk    '-a'ak  
       I        1s-like 1s-eat  
       'I like to eat.'

(25) 1pe    Ai ro-m    suk        m-a'ak.  
 MR    ai ro    m-suk    m-a'ak  
       we two 1pe-like 1pe-eat  
       'We both like to eat.'

(26) 1pi    Ik ro-k    suk        k-a'ak.  
 MR    ik ro    k-suk    k-a'ak  
       we two 1pi-like 1pi-eat  
       'We both like to eat.'

(27) 2s    Om    suk        m-a'ak.  
 MR    o    m-suk    m-a'ak  
       you 2p-like 3s-eat  
       'You like to eat.'

(28) 2s    Om    suk        m-a'ak.  
 MR    mi    m-suk    m-a'ak  
       you 2p-like 2p-eat  
       'You all like to eat.'

(29) 3s    An    suk        n-a'ak.  
 MR    ai    n-suk    n-a'ak  
       He 3s-like 3s-eat  
       'He likes to eat.'

(30) 3p    Hir    suk        r-a'ak.<sup>13</sup>  
 MR    hi    r-suk    r-a'ak  
       they 3p-like 3p-eat  
       'They like to eat.'

The word **suk** is also interesting in that it is quite often used with possessive pronouns, as shown in the examples below. Older speakers claim that this is the only correct usage, and that people who use the word **suk** as a verb do not know the proper grammar of their language.

(31) 1s    Ai-nu-'u    suk        '-a'ak.  
       ?-POSS-1s like 1s-eat  
       'I like to eat.'

(32) 1pe    Maiyai    ai-ni-m    suk    m-a'ak.  
       all of us we POSS-1pe like 1pe-eat  
       'All of us like to eat.'

(33) 1pi    Ik-ni-k    suk    k-a'ak.  
       we-POSS-1pi like 1pi-eat  
       'We like to eat.'

(34) 2s    O-nu-m    suk    m-a'ak-e,    ka?  
       you-POSS-2s like 2s-eat-?    INT  
       'You like to eat, don't you?'

- (35) 2p **Mi-ni-m suk m-a'ak-e, ka?**  
 you-POSS-2p like 2p-eat-? INT  
 'You all like to eat, don't you?'
- (36) 3s **Ni-n-a suk n-a'ak.**  
 POSS-3s-? like 3s-eat  
 'He likes to eat.'
- (37) 3p **Ri-r-a suk r-a'ak.**  
 POSS-3p-? like 3p-eat  
 'They like to eat.'

These possessive pronouns are the same ones used with nouns which are alienably possessed. (The *-a* at the end of *nina* and *rira* is sometimes at the end of the other possessives as well; it is not known what function the *-a* serves.) This suggests that the word *suk* 'like' was originally a noun in Kisar. The use of *suk/suka* as a noun is fairly widespread in the languages of Maluku.<sup>14</sup> In Nuaulu, a language in Seram which has *suka* as a noun, the speakers do not ever use it as a verb. This change in Kisar towards using *suk* as a verb is probably due to extensive contact with Malay in which *suka* is used as a verb.

It is not totally unexpected, therefore, that in examples (31)-(37), *suk* seems to pattern as a noun. However, note that the endings of the possessive pronouns preceding *suk* are identical to the person-number prefixes given in Table 1. This fact further substantiates the choice of 'u- as the underlying form of the first-person singular person-number prefix. In addition, it also provides another example of a construction in which these same person markers have been incorporated into words where they do not function as surface prefixes.

## 5.2 Serial Verbs

There are several different types of multiple-verb constructions in Kisar. Some, like those involving *suk* as a verb, may best be analyzed as examples of complementation. It is outside the scope of this paper to discuss and analyze all of these multiple-verb constructions. However, as I wish to present one particular serial-verb construction as evidence for the underlying presence of the person-number prefixes on consonant-initial verbs, I include a brief discussion of serial verbs in Kisar.

Durie's definition of serialization (Durie 1985:3), given below, reflects the relationship seen in many of the verb series in Kisar.

...serialization is what happens when two or more verbs are juxtaposed in such a way that they act as a single predicate, taking a unitary complex of direct argument. The verbs are bound together syntactically and/or morphologically on the basis of sharing one or more core arguments, and neither verb is subordinate to the other. Typically in a serial construction there is no marker of subordination or coordination, no dividing intonational or morphological mark of a clause boundary, and the verbs cannot have separate scope for tense, mood, aspect, illocutionary force, and negation (underlining mine).

Note how the following examples illustrate this. The serial verbs in each case are underlined.

- (38) **Idedinamene Dedi n-amkuru n-amaka.**  
 just now Dedi 3s-sleep 3s-awaken  
 'Dedi just woke up from his sleep.'

- (39) Hir hi'i yak-edi au hanan.  
 MR hi r-hi'i r-yak-edi au hanan  
 they 3p-make 3p-bad-TAM wood branch  
 'They ruined the branch of the tree.'

In example (38) both verbs have the person-number prefix on their surface forms as both are vowel-initial. Note that in example (39) the two verbs share one tense/aspect/modality clitic. Also in example (39), the first verb's person-number prefix reassociated with the word immediately preceding it, yielding the complex form of the subject pronoun. However, the second verb does not exhibit any person agreement on the surface even though the preceding word ends with a vowel. I suggest that this is because the word directly preceding it is in a separate phonological phrase.

Durie, in his grammar of Acehnese gives some examples which exhibit what he calls weak serialization which "does not require the two verbs to be joined as one phonological phrase" (Durie 1985:242). He further states:

In Acehnese there are various kinds of serialisation, some involving a stronger weld than others. The strongest type of serialisation combines two verbs so that they are pronounced as one phonological phrase. They are treated syntactically as one predicate, with a single set of arguments and adjuncts (Durie 1985:242).

The first examples of strong serialization that Durie gives are those in which the first verb is a posture or motion verb. In Kisar a similar serial-verb construction which has a "stronger weld" than the examples (38) and (39) above, involves a verb of motion followed by another verb. It is this construction which gives further evidence for the underlying presence of the person-number prefix.

The verbs *la* 'go', *mai* 'motion toward the speaker', and *ki* 'motion away from the speaker' all can be the first member of a serial-verb construction or they can occur independently with the goal as a possible complement. The examples given below show them independently in order to provide easier comparison.

- (40) Ya'u la pasar.  
 MR ya 'u-la pasar  
 I 1s-go market  
 'I go to the market.'

- (41) Leremene ya'u mai Awa Kemor.  
 MR lere-eni-mene ya 'u-mai Awa Kemor  
 day-this-just I 1s-motion toward Awa East  
 'This is the first time I've come (here) to East Awa.'

- (42) Ma'anana Mama Di ki Pahuriwawan wakuku?<sup>15</sup>  
 MR ma'anana Mama Di m-ki Pahuriwawan m-wakuku  
 when Mrs. Dee 2s-motion from Pahuriwawan 2s-study  
 '(Cin)dy, when are you going to Pahuriwawan to study?'

Notice that when they function as the main verb in the clause, subject-verb agreement is shown as it is on all the other consonant-initial verbs. If the verb directly follows a subject pronoun the person-number prefix reassociates with the subject pronoun, thus giving the complex form.

When the verb *la* 'go' is used as the first verb in a series, the person-number prefix from the following verb reassociates with *la* if necessary. Below is a paradigm illustrating the use of *la* as the first verb in this "strongly welded" serial construction.

- (43) 1s Ya'u la'u pahar.  
 MR ya 'u-la 'u-pahar  
 I 1s-go 1s-wash (clothes)  
 'I'm going to wash clothes.'

- (44) 1pe Am lam pahar.  
MR ai m-la m-pahar  
we 1pe-go 1pe-wash (clothes)  
'We're going to wash clothes.'
- (45) 1pi Ik lak pahar.<sup>16</sup>  
MR ik k-la k-pahar  
we 1pi-go 1pi-wash (clothes)  
'We're going to wash clothes.'
- (46) 2s Om lam pahar.  
MR o m-la m-pahar  
you 2s-go 2s-wash (clothes)  
'You're going to wash clothes.'
- (47) 2p Mim lam pahar.  
MR mi m-la m-pahar  
you 2p-go 2p-wash (clothes)  
'You're going to wash clothes.'
- (48) 3s An lan pahar.  
MR ai n-la n-pahar  
he 3s-go 3s-wash (clothes)  
'He's going to wash clothes.'
- (49) 3p Hir lar pahar.<sup>17</sup>  
MR hi r-la r-pahar  
they 3p-go 3p-wash (clothes)  
'They're going to wash clothes.'

Of course, if **la** precedes a verb with a vowel-initial stem the person-number prefixes are not blocked from associating with the verb itself and thus **la** does not have the person-marker endings it appears to have in the above examples. Below is an example of **la** used as the first verb in a series preceding a vowel-initial verb. I do not show the morphemic representation here because the only difference involves the pronouns and that reassociation has been described in previous sections.

- (50) 1s Ya'u la '-apali ai.  
I-is go 1s-cook  
'I'll go cook.'
- (51) 1pe Am la m-apali ai.  
we-1pe go 1pe-cook  
'We'll go cook.'
- (52) 1pi Ik la k-apali ai.  
we-1pi go 1pi-cook  
'We'll go cook.'
- (53) 2s Om la m-apali ai.  
you-2s go 2s-cook  
'You'll go cook.'
- (54) 2p Mim la m-apali ai.  
you-2p go 2p-cook  
'You'll go cook.'
- (55) 3s An la n-apali ai.  
he-3s go 3s-cook  
'He'll go cook.'
- (56) 3p Hir la r-apali ai.  
they-3p go 3p-cook  
'They'll go cook.'

The two other verbs of motion previously mentioned also show remnants of this pseudo-suffixation, although to varying degrees depending on the idiolect. Many speakers when saying, "I came to do X." reassociate the person-number prefix 'u- from the following consonant-initial verb to the end of the verb **mai**. But the same speaker may not reassociate any of the other person-number prefixes.

- (57) **Ya'u mai Yotowawa, ma'u wakuku wanakunu Yotowawa.**  
 MR ya 'u-mai Yotowawa ma 'u-wakuku wanakunu Yotowawa  
 I 1s-come Kisar come 1s-study language Kisar  
 'I came to Kisar, I came to study the Kisar language.'

Notice when 'come' is the only verb in the clause, and is followed by the goal of the motion, the word **mai** is used, with an /i/ at the end. When this verb is the first-verb in a series and has the pseudo-suffix, just **ma-** appears on the surface, followed by the person marker.<sup>18</sup> Perhaps the -i is lost when the person marker attaches to the end, as the 1pe and 3s pronouns **ai** become **am** and **an** respectively when the person-number prefix reassociates with them before a consonant-initial verb.

Though some speakers only reassociate the person-number prefix for first-person singular onto the verb **mai**, there are other speakers who also reassociate the person-number prefixes for some of the other persons as well. These examples below are from a different speaker of the same dialect as the speaker who gave the above example. Notice that this speaker does not use the pseudo-suffixed form with third-person plural.

- (58) **Ya'u mai '-aukani taran.**  
 MR ya 'u-mai '-aukani taran  
 I 1s-come 1s-ask little  
 'I came to ask you a few questions.'

- (59) **Ya'u ma'u wakuku.**  
 MR ya 'u-mai 'u-wakuku  
 I 1s-come 1s-study  
 'I came to study.'

- (60) **Ai rom mam pahar.**  
 MR ai ro m-mai m-pahar  
 we two 1pe-come 1pe wash (clothes)  
 'We both came to wash clothes.'

- (61) **Inai, mam wakuku.**  
 MR inai m-mai m-wakuku  
 girl 2s-come 2s-study (Imperative)  
 'Girl, come study!'

- (62) **Mam Fia man wakuku wanakunu Yotowawa.**  
 MR mam fia n-mai n-wakuku wanakunu Yotowawa.  
 Mrs. Via come-3s study language Kisar  
 '(Syl)via come to study the Kisar language.'

- (63) **Hir mai wakuku wanakunu Yotowawa.**  
 MR hi r-mai r-wakuku wanakunu yotowawa  
 they 3p-come 3p-study language Kisar  
 'They came to study the Kisar language.'

Comparing examples (58) and (59) clearly shows that the 'u at the end of **mai** in (59) is the person-number prefix from the following verb. In (58) the person-number prefix was able to attach to the verb, resulting in its absence on the word **mai**.

When the verb **ki** 'motion away from speaker' is used as the first word in a verb series, a few speakers reassociate the person-number prefix from the following consonant-initial verb onto the **ki**, as shown in the following examples.

- (64) Taran-edi ya'u ki'u ka'ar-ale.  
 MR taran-edi ya 'u-ki 'u-ka'ar-ale  
 shortly I 1s-go 1s-visit-TAM  
 'In a while I'll go visiting.'
- (65) Ri n-akni-ir, ik musti kik ka'ar.  
 MR ri n-akni'ir ik musti ki k-ka'ar  
 person 3s-sick we must go 1pi-visit  
 'If someone is sick we must go visit them.'
- (66) Fera ni-n Mama kin ka'ar haenhi.  
 MR Fera ni-n Mama ki n-ka'ar haenhi  
 Fera POSS-3s mother go 3s-visit also  
 'Fera's mother is also going visiting.'

I suspect that both *mai* and *ki* once had a complete paradigm of these pseudo-suffixed forms, but that the pseudo-suffixation is now being lost. This is even happening to a small extent with the auxiliary, *la*. There are some speakers who do not reassociate certain person-number prefixes in their use of *la*. One speaker uses all the pseudo-suffixed forms except first-person plural exclusive; several other speakers use all the pseudo-suffixed forms except in the third-person plural.

### 5.3 The Auxiliary *bisa* 'can'

The Malay borrowing *bisa* 'can' has become an integral part of Kisar vocabulary. It is often rendered *bis*, especially at the beginning of questions. Sentences with the auxiliary *bis* show clearly that the pseudo-suffixes on the pronouns actually originate from the following verb.

In some statements the word *bisa* 'can' follows the subject pronoun and precedes the verb. In these cases, as expected, the subject pronoun preceding *bisa* is one of the complex forms with the person-number prefix from *bisa* reassociating with it as a pseudo-suffix.

- (67) Ya'u bisa wakunu wanakunu Yotowawa tarana.  
 MR ya 'u-bisa wakunu wanakunu Yotowawa tarana  
 I 1s-can speak language Kisar little  
 'I can speak a bit of the Kisar language.'

However, *bisa* usually precedes the subject pronoun, in which case the surface form of the subject pronoun is selected by the phonological shape of the following verb. If the following verb has a vowel-initial stem and thus has the person-number prefix on the verb, the subject pronoun does not have the person marker ending. Consider the following example.

- (68) Ya, yo-'or ya-'an-'u-he bisa ai m-o'on kele'uk.  
 MR ya ya 'u-or ya-'an-'u-he bisa ai m-o'on kele'uk  
 yes I-1s-with my-child-1s-PL can we 1pe-eat corn  
 'Yes, my children and I can eat corn.'

In interrogative sentences, *bisa* always precedes the subject pronoun. In the examples below, we see two different questions with the word *bisa*, each having different surface forms of the subject pronoun.

- (69) Bis ya-'-aukani taran, ka?  
 MR bis ya 'u-aukani taran ka  
 can I 1s-ask little INT  
 'Can I ask you a few questions?'



- (70)        Bisa ya'u paku,        ka?  
 MR        bisa ya        'u-paku ka  
           can    I        1s-help INT  
           'Can I help?'

#### 5.4 Negation

Negation is shown by the morpheme **ka** immediately following the subject pronoun, if there is a subject pronoun. Thus the negator **ka** governs the surface form of the subject pronoun. It is significant that **ka** occurs with the simple subject pronouns instead of with the complex forms incorporating the person-number prefixes which precede consonant-initial verbs. **Ka** is not a verb and therefore does not have a person-number prefix which would reassociate to the preceding pronoun.<sup>19</sup>

##### 5.4.1. Consonant-initial Verbs

The forms of the negative word **ka** occurring with consonant-initial verbs have the same pseudo-suffixes as those which occurred with the word **ia** when it preceded another verb. The examples given below show the use of negation with all of the persons. In most communication the subject is understood so there are few unelicited examples of a subject pronoun occurring with **ka**. The sentences below with the verb **pahar** 'wash (clothes)' are an elicited paradigm.<sup>20</sup>

- (71) 1s    Ya'u ka'u    pahar.  
 MR    ya'u ka    'u-pahar  
       I        NEG 1s-wash (clothes)  
       'I didn't wash clothes.'
- (72) 1pe    Ai kam pahar.  
 MR    ai ka    m-pahar  
       we NEG 1pe-wash (clothes)  
       'We didn't wash clothes.'
- (73) 1pi    Ik kak pahar.  
 MR    ik ka    k-pahar  
       we NEG 1pi-wash (clothes)  
       'We didn't wash clothes.'
- (74) 2s    O kam pahar.  
 MR    o ka    m-pahar  
       you NEG 2s-wash (clothes)  
       'You didn't wash clothes.'
- (75) 2p    Mi kam pahar.  
 MR    mi ka    m-pahar  
       you NEG 2p-wash (clothes)  
       'You all didn't wash clothes.'
- (76) 3s    Ai kan pahar.  
 MR    ai ka    n-pahar  
       he NEG 3s-wash (clothes)  
       'He didn't wash clothes.'
- (77) 3p    Hi kar pahar.  
 MR    hi ka    r-pahar  
       they NEG 3p-wash (clothes)  
       'They didn't wash clothes.'

## 5.4.2 Vowel-initial Verbs

The negative word **ka** does not exhibit this pseudo-suffixation if it precedes a verb that is vowel-initial since the vowel-initial verb has the person-number prefix on it already. Below are some examples from an elicited paradigm using the verb **apali ai** 'to cook'.<sup>21</sup>

- (78) 1s    **Ya'u ka '-apali ai.**  
           I        NEG 1s-cook  
           'I didn't cook.'
- (79) 1pe   **Maiyai ai ka m-apali ai.**  
           us all we NEG 1pe-cook  
           'We didn't cook.'
- (80) 1pi   **Ik ka k-apali ai.**  
           we NEG 1pi-cook.  
           'We didn't cook.'
- (81) 2s    **O ka m-apali ai.**  
           you NEG 2s-cook  
           'You didn't cook.'
- (82) 2p    **Mi ka m-apali ai.**  
           you NEG 2p-cook  
           'You all didn't cook.'
- (83) 3s    **Ai ka n-apali ai.**  
           He NEG 3s-cook  
           'He didn't cook.'
- (84) 3p    **hi ka r-apali ai.**  
           they NEG 3p-cook  
           'They didn't cook.'

## 5.4.3 Exceptions

When the negative word **ka** precedes the word **bisa** the only form it can have is **kan**, even if the semantic subject of the sentence is not third-person singular. Thus it cannot be analyzed as showing agreement with the semantic subject of the sentence. Consider these examples:

- (85) **Pap Jon ka-n bisa n-ala'a ko'u ono Mam Fia n-akni'ir.**  
       Mr. Jon NEG-3s can 3s-walk far since Mrs.Sylvia 3s-sick  
       'John can't go very far since Sylvia is sick.'
- (86) **Ka-n bis ya-'-ankuru de ya'u wakuku.**  
       NEG-3s can I-1s-sleep so I study  
       'I couldn't sleep so I studied.'
- (87) **Lerenienia ka-n bisa ya'u la.**  
       Today NEG-3s can I go  
       'I can't go today.'
- (88) **Ka-n bisa an po'ono ha-ha me'e.**  
       NEG-3s can he see DUP-thing TAM  
       'He can't see things anymore.'
- (89) **Maiyai ka-n bis am weli haid-ha-ida.**  
       all of us NEG-3s can we buy DUP-thing-one  
       'We can't all buy anything.'

This seems to present a problem in analysis. However, the **kan bisa** in these instances occurs before the subject pronoun. I suggest that **kan bisa** is fronted here because it is actually modifying the statement, saying "It is not possible that..." Thus the translation of (87) might be more accurately rendered, "Today it is not possible that I go."

### 5.5 Other Pseudo-suffixation

It is interesting to note that there are also other words within the verb phrase which can take the person-number prefixes as pseudo-suffixes, but only if these words precede a consonant-initial verb. **Mehe** 'alone' is one such word.

(90) **Om mehe-m holi nakar eni.**  
 MR o m-mehe m-holi nakar eni  
 you 2s-alone 2s-live house this  
 'You live in this house alone.'

(91) **Naomi mi-n suka mehe-n tori ni-n muruk.**  
 MR Naomi ni-n suka mehe n-tori ni-n muruk  
 Naomi POSS-3s like alone 3s-cut POSS-3s hair  
 'Naomi likes to cut her hair by herself.'

These person suffixes also occur when a pronoun is made to refer to two people by the addition of the morpheme **ro** 'two'. This construction for referring to two people occurs in first person, both inclusive and exclusive, as well as in second person. See examples (25), (26), and (60), as well as the following:

(92) **Ik ro-k la-k pahar.**  
 MR ik ro k-la k-pahar  
 we two 1pi-go 1pi-wash (clothes)  
 'Let's us two go wash clothes.'

(93) **Mi ro-m la-m wakuku.**  
 MR mi ro m-la m-wakuku  
 you two 2s-go 2s-study (Imperative)  
 'You two go study!'

This pseudo-suffixation can occur even on the interclausal connective **de** 'so', if it is the word directly preceding the consonant-initial verb, though this is not common.

(94) **...an ha'a la loi wawan den hopol.**  
 MR ...ai n-ha'a la loi top so sail  
 ...he 3s-climb to sailboat top so sail  
 '...he climbed up onto the sailboat and sailed off.'

## 6 SUMMARY

Kisar has underlying person-number prefixes on the verb which show agreement with the subject. If it is phonologically allowed, as is the case for vowel-initial verbs, these prefixes attach to the verb. If the verb is consonant-initial, the prefix cannot associate with the verb due to syllable structure constraints. It may then be lost if the preceding word ends in a consonant or is inaccessible because it is not in the same phonological phrase. Otherwise, the person-number prefix of the consonant-initial verb reassociates to the end of the immediately-preceding word in

that verb phrase; this may be either the subject pronoun, the negator *ka*, an initial verb of motion in a serial-verb construction, a numerical quantifier, or one of the other words occasionally occurring in this position.

#### NOTES

1. Although the people themselves often refer to their language as "Yotowawa" (their name for the island of Kisar), they sometimes call the language Meher to further distinguish it from the other language on the island, Oirata.
2. Unless otherwise specified, all examples are written phonemically, in accordance with their surface forms. The symbol ' is used throughout the paper to represent glottal stop. The letter *d* represents a retroflexed voiceless alveolar stop. See Christensen and Christensen (1991) for a description of Kisar phonology. Abbreviations used in this paper include:

1s	first person singular
1pe	first person plural exclusive
1pi	first person plural inclusive
2s	second person singular
2p	second person plural
3s	third person singular
3p	third person plural
DUP	reduplication
excl	exclusive
incl	inclusive
INT	interrogative marker
NEG	negative marker
PL	plural marker
POSS	possessive
TAM	tense/aspect marker

3. The reason for analysing the first-person exclusive singular form as 'u- (rather than '-) is made apparent in subsequent sections, where it is shown that 'u- is the form used in all other environments, and that throughout the language all other person markers are consistent in their occurrence.
4. Notice that the word *oro* 'with, and' is marked for person and number as a verb. This is the only way to say 'and' in Kisar, and it always shows agreement.
5. **Apali ai** is an idiom with the meaning 'build a fire', that is also used as a general intransitive verb for cooking. When one says *wnai* one is cooking a more specific word is used, as in:

Ya'u huni wuru.  
I boil oil  
'I am boiling oil.'

Or, the verb **apali** can be used alone with an object as in:

R-apali bubur hi'ihewi?  
3p-cook porridge how?  
'How do you cook porridge?'

6. Kisar reflexes of Proto-Austronesian \*k and \*t are /'/ and /k/ respectively.

7. For a more thorough treatment of the morphophonemic processes involved in the first-person forms of these verbs, see Christensen and Christensen (1991).
8. In fast speech, the pronoun and verb become one phonological word, with one /k/ lost through degemination. The form shown, i-, is the most common for the first-person plural inclusive pronoun.
9. See Christensen and Christensen (1991) for a discussion of phonemic word-initial glottal stops in Kisar.
10. The people who use the longer forms use them only occasionally. I suspect that their use is governed by something at the discourse level, perhaps marking a new referent, but the specifics of this remain unclear.
11. Below is another, unelicited example of the use of hir from a story about a mother goat and her seven kids:

**Lere manha hir mina ro'o-raram.**  
 day hot they stay corral-inside  
 'In the heat of the day they stayed in their corral.'

12. Here we see the loss of one /k/ due to syllable structure constraints. Another analysis of the morphemic representation would be using the pronoun form i-:

MR i- k-wakunu wanakunu Yotowawa  
 we lpi-speak language Kisar

13. An unelicited example:

**Hir suk min Leppla'u.**  
 they-3p like live Lebelau  
 'They like living in Lebelau.'

14. This is true of languages spoken in Seram, Aru, Luang, and Kisar, to name just a few.
15. Note here that neither **ki** nor **wakuku** have personmarking on their surface forms because the preceding word is not within the same phrase.
16. This example, similar to the one discussed in footnote 12, has two possible analyses.
17. There are some speakers who do not use this surface form **lar**. One speaker told me that it sounds like the verb **lari** 'to run'.
18. David Coward has found the same pattern with verbs of motion in Selaru, an Austronesian language spoken in southeastern Maluku. In his description of Selaru (Coward 1990:69-71) he suggests that the **-i** comes from the Proto-Austronesian verb suffix **\*-i**, a type of transitive suffix according to Pawley (1973:120). While this may have been the origin of the **-i** in Kisar as well, this suffix is no longer productive in Kisar. If a speaker has a lacuna in his paradigm for the pseudo-suffixed forms, or does not need to reassociate the person-number prefix because the following verb is vowel-initial, the word 'come' is rendered **mai**, not the **ma** we would expect if the **-i** was still functioning as a transitivizing suffix.
19. There is an apparent exception in that when the subject is first-person singular the pronoun preceding **ka** is **ya'u**. This is presumably because **ya-** is a form that is phonologically bound to the verb. The only free form of the first-person singular pronoun is **ya'u**.

20. Included here are several examples taken from natural texts which illustrate the use of the negative morpheme **ka** preceding consonant-initial verbs:

1s **Ya'u ka-'u la.**  
 1s NEG-1s go  
 'I didn't go.'

1pe **Kalo oreki riuku wohi ai ka-m ki makunu,**  
 If tomorrow o'clock 9 1pe NEG-1pe come yet  
 'If we're not here yet by 9:00,

**lo'o ler mamal mene am ki.**  
 maybe late afternoon before we come  
 maybe we won't come till late afternoon.'

3s **ka-n mai makun.**  
 NEG-3s come yet  
 'He didn't come yet.'

3p **Ka-r weli haid-ha-ida.**  
 NEG-3p buy DUP-thing-one  
 'They didn't buy anything.'

21. Unelicited examples of the negative **ka** preceding vowel-initial verbs:

1s **Ya'u ka '-auroin wuku muruk.**  
 I-1s NEG 1s-know tie hair  
 'I don't know how to make a bun in my hair.'

ipi **...ik ka k-a'an.**  
 1pi NEG 1pi-eat  
 'we didn't eat.'

2s **Meri, alhi'ihepe ka m-ahinara-e?**  
 Mary, why NEG 2s-sing-INT  
 'Mary, why aren't you singing?'

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