

A diachrony of Kurdish imperfective affixes

Shuan Osman Karim

karim.56@osu.edu

Ohio State University

Motivation

The long-standing issue I

- In Northern, central and Southern Kurdish there are at least two common imperfective prefixes *e-* and *de-*.

“While all dialects from Bin., Piž. northwards have a modal prefix *da-*, or *t- < di-*, Sul. and War. have *a-*. This must be taken as a separate entity, and not as a form of *da-*, since initial *d* is not lost completely in any dialects. Moreover, the two prefixes appear together in Rdz., Sur. where *d* is quite stable, but *a-* may be a later borrowing.”

(Mackenzie, 1961, 223)

The long-standing issue II

- There are similar formatives in other Iranian languages.

“There is another possible connection between the Balochi and Kurdish verbal systems. The Balochi present-durative element *a-* may have an etymological cognate in the prefix *a-* of similar function(s) that occurs in certain southern Kurdish dialects. A similar *a-* exists also in Lari and in certain Central Iranian dialects like Anaraki.”

(Paul, 2003, 70)

The long-standing issue III

- Some scholars have proposed an etymon ultimately related to the Persian *mī-* prefix.

“*ham-ayawa-, e.g., early New Persian *hamē* (contemporary NPers. *mī-*), to which functionally corresponds *hadā “same time/place,” reflected in dialectal variants *de-*, *a(d)-* (Kurdish etc.).” (Windfuhr, 1995)

“[T]here is good reason to hypothesize that [*e(t)-*] developed in a similar process, ... by which *mi-/hami* (< Mid. Pers. *hamē*) became part of the verbal paradigm of Modern Persian ... Like *hamē*, *e(t)-* may derive from some adverbial word—a typical source for the creation of new verbal tense and aspect markers (Heine and Kuteva, pp. 144-47)” (Stilo, 2007)

MacKenzie's Problem

Reflexes of *d (following Mackenzie, 1961, 3)

- $d \rightarrow \varnothing$ or \emptyset / $V_:$
 - *amade* [a:ma:əa] ‘ready’
 - *mewlû* < Ar. *mawlūd*
- $d \rightarrow C_{[+CNT]} / C_{[+CNT]}_:$
 - *diṭṭar* < *diṭdar* ‘lover’
- $d \rightarrow d$ (elsewhere):
 - *dest* ‘hand’
 - *kird* ‘do.PST’

The imperfective markers

- The implication of Mackenzie (1961)'s description of the reflexes of *d:
 - e- cannot be *de-* featuring the loss of *d* as *d* is not regularly lost word initially.
 - Forms like *yaye* (Mackenzie, 1961, 3) 'give[.PST] to' should not exist.

Zagros /d/

The canonical understanding of Zagros /d/

“As a widespread regional feature, termed the “Zagros d” (Windfuhr), postvocalic *d* is softened to glide-like *-i-*, or *-w-*, and contracts with adjacent high vowels: *a-da-m* ~ *a-ia-m* ‘I give’; *nadir* ~ *nair* ‘Nadir’ (masc. proper name); *bad* ~ *bai* ‘bad’; *xwa* ~ *xuwa* ‘God’ [$< *xuda$].”

(McCarus, 2009, 597)

Zagros /d/ re-imagined

1. $d \rightarrow y, w, \emptyset / V_$ (shared all Kurdish varieties)
2. $d \rightarrow \emptyset / C_{[+CNT]}_$ (not shared by all Kurdish varieties)
3. Paradigm leveling: allomorphy due to Zagros /d/ occurring as a sandhi phenomenon across word or morpheme boundaries is eliminated. (irregular like all types of analogy)

Imperfective systems within Kurdish

Imperfective systems I

Data from Matras et al. (2016) and Fattah (2000).

	PRS		PST		
	AFF	NEG	AFF	NEG	
N	di-	na-	di-	nedi-	Kobanê
N	ti-	na-	ti-	na-	Beroj
C	de-	na-	de-	nede-	Mehabad
C	e-	na-	e-	ne[ʔ]e-	Slêmanî
S	di-	nî-	di- (-ya)	nî- (-ya)	Bicar
S	e-	na-	e- (-ya)	na- (-ya)	Qorwe
S	Ø-	nye-	e-	nee-	Xaneqîn
S	Ø-	nye-	Ø- -ya	nye- -ya	Kirmaşan
S	Ø-	nye-	di-	nye-	Mihran
S	Ø-	nye-	Ø- (-ya)	nye- (-ya)	Serpol

- An adverbial origin explains “mobile” position of affixes but not circumfixes.
- *ne-di*, *ne-de*, and *ne-ʔe* are not predicted by rules of Zagros /d/.
- There are many negative markers: *na-* and *neye-* < **ne-de-*; *nî-* < **ni-d(i)-*; *nê-* and *ney-* < **ne-d(i)-*; and *nye-* < **ni-de*.

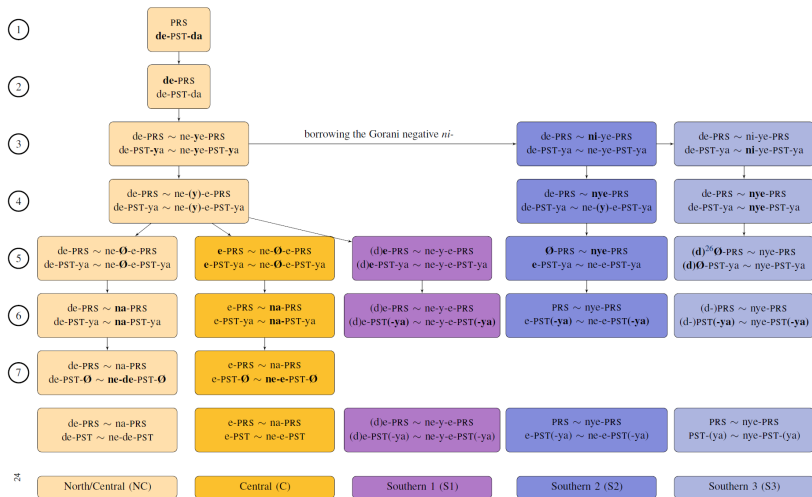
A new etymon

A locative origin

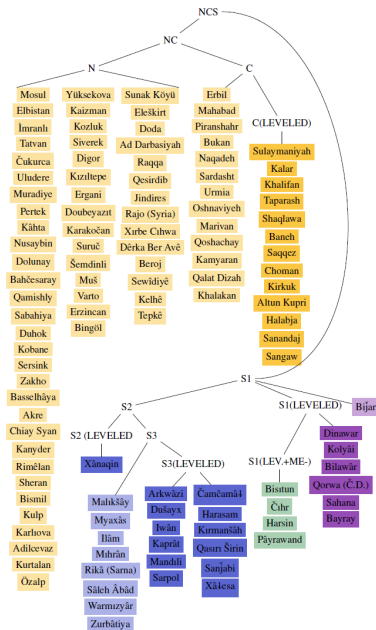
- One of the most common way a periphrastic progressive is created.
 - A locative is recruited for the act-in-progress reading.
 - This construction grammaticalizes (becomes mandatory).
 - This construction becomes a generalized imperfective.
- The locative circumposition *de* NP=*da*
 - *=da* becomes *=a* in many varieties
 - *de* appears as *e* in some varieties, and is conspicuously missing from others.

The clines

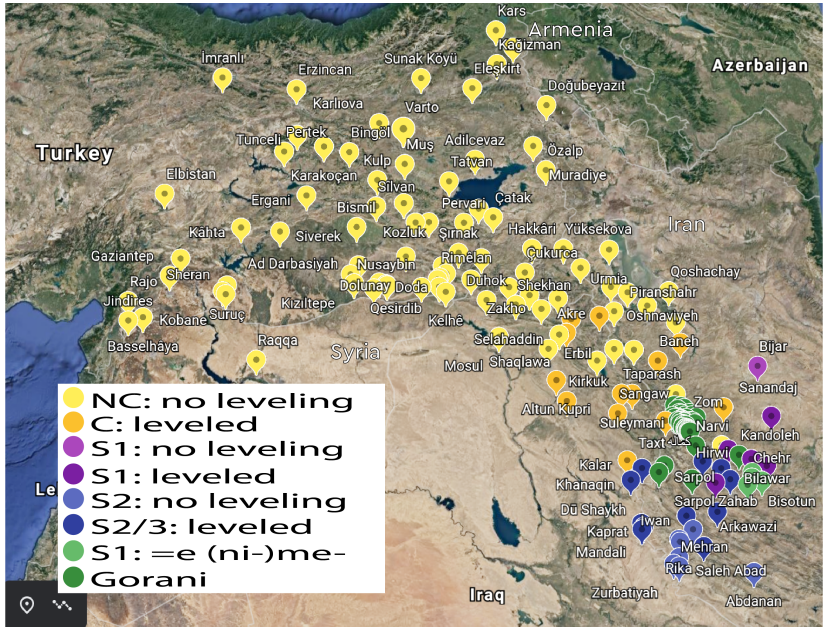
Development of imperfectives



Distribution of varieties I



Distribution of varieties II



Thoughts and Conclusions

Thoughts and Conclusions

- All Kurdish imperfective markers share a single etymon, the locative circumposition
 - This goes against Mackenzie (1961)'s assertion that *de-* and *e-* are unrelated.
 - This explains both ambifixes and forms featuring multiple exponence.
- One need not propose an unattested Persian-like development.
- Paweyane: *ni-me-* ~ S2 & S3: *nye-* **ni-de* is another sign of Kurdish-Gorani contact.

Zor supastan ekem!

- Axenov, Serge. 2006. *The Balochi language of Turkmenistan a corpus-based grammatical description*. Uppsala: Uppsala University dissertation.
- Fattah, Ismaïl Kamandâr. 2000. *Les dialectes kurdes méridionaux: étude linguistique et dialectologique (Iranica 37)*. Leuven: Peeters.
- Mackenzie, David N. 1961. *Kurdish dialect, studies 1-2. studies 1-2*. London; New York: Oxford University Press.
- Matras, Yaron, et al. 2016. The dialects of Kurdish.
<http://kurdish.humanities.manchester.ac.uk/>.
- McCarus, Ernest. 2009. Kurdish. In Gernot Windfuhr (ed.), *The iranian languages*, 587–633. London and New York: Routledge.

- Nourzaei, Maryam & Carina Jahani. 2012. The Distribution and Role of the Verb Clitic =a/a=in Different Balochi Dialects. *Orientalia Suecana* 61. 170–186.
- Paul, Ludwig. 2003. The Position of Balochi Among the Western Iranian Languages: The Verbal System. In Carina Jahani, Agnes Korn & Paul Titus (eds.), *The baloch and their neighbors: Ethnic and linguistic contact in balochistan in historical and modern times*, 61–71. Wiesbaden: Reichert.
- Stilo, Donald. 2007. Isfahan xxi. PROVINCIAL DIALECTS.
<https://iranicaonline.org/articles/isfahan-xxi-provincial-dialects>.

- Vafaeian, Ghazaleh. 2018. *Progressives in use and contact: A descriptive, areal and typological study with special focus on selected Iranian languages*. Stockholm: Stockholm University.
- Windfuhr, Gernot. 1995. DIALECTOLOGY.
<https://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/dialectology>.

Appendix

Paul's suggestion about Balochi I

- The suggestion that Balochi *a-* could be related to Kurdish *e-* is not a strong claim.
- My claim that they are unrelated based on a peculiarity of the way they combine with -h-initial roots.
 - In most ergative varieties of Kurdish, the prefix *de-* combines with the present-tense of *hatin* 'to come' usually devoicing the /d/:
e.g. Kerkuk: *dêm*, Xaneqîn: *têm*, Îwan: *tyam* 'I come.'
 - In some Southern Kurdish varieties the transitive verb *hawirdin* also belongs in this group:
e.g. Kirind: *têrim* 'I bring.'

Paul's suggestion about Balochi II

- For some varieties the /t/ becomes an unsegmentable part of the imperfective stem to which the regular e-marker is added:
e.g. Şerwan Zürî: *etyarim* 'I bring.'
- The same is true of other Western Iranian languages (assuming a similar origin):
e.g. Fini: *a-g-am* 'I say' ~ *at-ā-m* 'I come,' Bandari: *a-zan-om* 'I hit' ~ *at-a-m* 'I come,' Bidšahri (Lāri) *a-ger-am* 'I take' ~ *ad-ia-m* 'I come,' *ad-ār-əm* 'I bring.'
- The /t/ even becomes a stem vowel regardless of aspect or mood:
e.g. Qohrudi: *a-tengis-un* 'I look[IPFV]' ~ *bá-tengis-un* 'I look[SBJ],' where the /t/ is not etymological.

Paul's suggestion about Balochi III

- Looking at the same (h-initial) verbs in Balochi and assuming a similar process suggests a different etymon:
Balochi: =a *kāīn* 'I come[IPFV]' ~ *āīn* 'I come[SBJ],' =a *kārīn* 'I bring[IPFV]' ~ *ārīn* 'I bring[SBJ].'
- Given this, the likely etymon has a /k/: perhaps a variant of the "KAR" construction found in the Caspian (Vafaeian, 2018).