

Areal Phenomena Reinforce the Plausibility of Reconstruction: An examination of microvariation in Kurdish and Gorani

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Outline

- 1 Introduction
- 2 Idiosyncratic developments in the KZ
- 3 Conclusion

Outline

1 Introduction

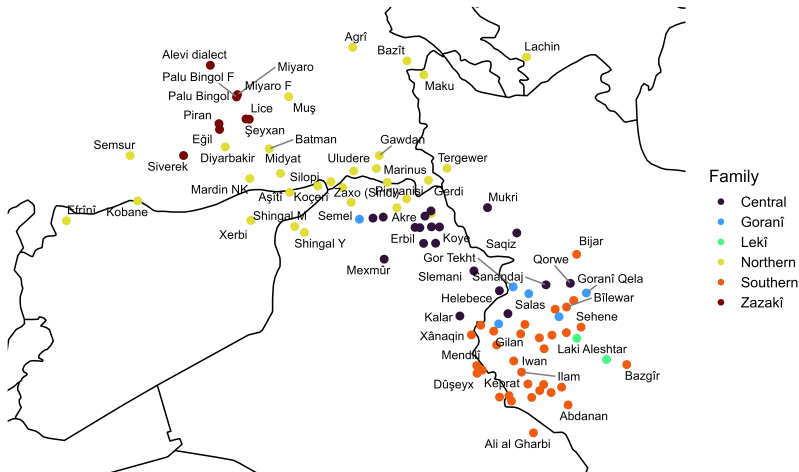
2 Idiosyncratic developments in the KZ

3 Conclusion

Introduction

- Changes
 - Perfective + Imperfective = Conditional
 - Imperfective / Negative > general Imperfective
 - Imperfective / Affirmative > general Imperfective
 - Imperfective > Negative
 - Zero-marking of Imperfective
- Languages examined
 - Northern Kurdish
 - Central Kurdish
 - Southern Kurdish
 - Lekî
 - Goranî
 - Zazaki
- Themes
 - Beware of superficial similarity
 - Microvariation preserves all changes in retention zones
 - All developments transcend genealogical groupings

Kurdish+



Zero-marking of the Imperfective I

The Iranian pattern of Imperfective marking (Karim and Mohammadirad, forthcoming):

			IND	SBJ	IMP/PRH
Kurdish (Mukrî)	<i>kirdin</i>	AFF	de -ke-î	<i>bí</i> -ke-î	<i>bí</i> -ke
		NEG	<i>ná</i> -ke-î	<i>né</i> -ke-î	<i>mé</i> -ke
Persian (Tehran)	<i>kærdæn</i>	AFF	mî -kon-î	<i>bé</i> -kon-î	<i>bé</i> -kon
		NEG	<i>né</i> -mî-kon-î	<i>ná</i> -kon-î	<i>ná</i> -kon
Balochi (Rakhshani)	<i>kirdin</i>	AFF	a -kar-əy	<i>bé</i> -kar-əy	<i>bé</i> -kar
		NEG	(a)- <i>ná</i> -kar-əy	<i>ná</i> -kar-əy	<i>má</i> -kar
Gorani (Zerde)	<i>kerdey</i>	AFF	me -ker-î	<i>bí</i> -ker-î	<i>bí</i> -ker-e
		NEG	<i>ní</i> -me-ker-î	<i>né</i> -ker-î	<i>mé</i> -ker-e

Zero-marking of the Imperfective II

The Goranî pattern of Imperfective marking (MacKenzie, 1966, pp. 37–38):

			IND	SBJ	IMP/PRH
1	<i>kerdey</i> ‘do’	AFF	<i>ker-î</i>	<i>kér-î</i>	<i>kér-e</i>
		NEG	<i>mé-ker-î</i>	<i>né-ker-î</i>	<i>mé-ker-e</i>
2	<i>day</i> ‘give’	AFF	<i>mi-ǵe-î</i>	<i>bi-ǵé-î</i>	<i>bi-ǵ-é</i>
		NEG	<i>mé-ǵe-î</i>	<i>né-ǵe-î</i>	<i>mé-ǵ-e</i>
3	<i>awirdey</i> ‘bring’	AFF	<i>m-ar-î</i>	<i>b-ár-î</i>	<i>b-ár-e</i>
		NEG	<i>ni-m-ár-î</i>	<i>n-ár-î</i>	<i>ni-m-ár-e</i>
4	<i>witey</i> ‘sleep’	AFF	<i>m-us-î</i>	<i>b-ús-î</i>	<i>b-ús-e</i>
		NEG	<i>mé-ws-î</i>	<i>né-ws-î</i>	<i>mé-ws-e</i>

Zero-marking of the Imperfective III

- According to MacKenzie (1987), the lack of imperfective *mi-* cannot be explained by phonology (and must, therefore, be a conservative feature of Hewramî, perhaps representing an earlier semantic incompatibility, i.e., like Farsi (*mī=−) *dāre* 's/he has': cf. (Mohammadirad and Karim, 2025)
 - *mi-zó* 'she gives birth' ~ *bo* 's/he (will) be'
 - *şanó* 's/he scatters' ~ *mi-sanó* 's/he buys'
 - *mi-tawó* 's/he can' ~ *taşó* 's/he shaves'
- No surprise to the historical linguist, all of these idiosyncracies can be explained by historical factors:
 - both the subjunctive and imperfective prefixes *bí-* and *mi-* are preserved on vowel-initial verbs: *maró* 's/he brings' ~ *báro* '(that) s/he bring'
 - stress shifts when trisyllabic: *bizáno* '(that) s/he know' (*bízano)
 - the stress is maintained on the subjunctive prefix *bí-* in disyllabic words and in closed syllables: *bílo* 's/he goes,' *bíjnasó* 's/he hears'
 - the unstressed *i* reduces creating a consonant cluster, resulting in three verb classes: *bi/mi*, *bi/Ø*, and *Ø/Ø*:

Zero-marking of the Imperfective IV

① *bíjnaso/mijnasó, báro/maró*

② *bíđo/*do*

③ *kéro/keró*

- the second class merges with the first class in most varieties:
bíđo/miđó
- the idiosyncracies that confused MacKenzie (1987) were the result of these and other changes:
 - Evidence from related varieties show that the verb 'to be' never hosted the *bí* prefix confirming the existence of a class 2 that was regularized:
Cf. Paweyane *bo/muwo* ~ Lihon *bo/bo* 's/he (will) be'
Likewise, language internal evidence shows that speakers are unsure whether light verbs, which don't take the prefix across Iranian, should have the prefix of not, e.g., *weš-im sy-o* 'I like'

Zero-marking of the Imperfective V

- Evidence from related varieties show that the verb 'to buy' was originally cluster-initial:
Cf. Şebekî *bístano/mestanó* ~ *bísano/misanó*
Likewise, language internal evidence shows the signs of an original cluster, e.g. an prosthetic e- when not prefixed: *esanay* [buy.INF]
Additionally, the reduction of *st clusters is well documented even in borrowed words, e.g., *des* 'hand' (< Farsî)
- Evidence from regional languages shows that the verb 'be able' tends to form an idiosyncratic irregular conjugation class with 'to know', and 'to want' (Chyet, 2024):

Zero-marking of the Imperfective VI

Chyet's Paired Verbs

Language	I know	I want	I can
Hewramî Lihon	*(<i>mi</i>)zanû	weşiş-syû	*(<i>mi</i>)tawû
Hewramî Text	zanû	weşiş-syû	tawû
Northern Kurdish	(<i>*di-</i>)zanim	di-xwazim	(<i>*di-</i>)karim
Western Armenian	(<i>*gə</i>)kid(<i>*an</i>)am	g-uzanam	(<i>*gə</i>)g(<i>*a</i>)r(<i>*e</i>)nam
J. NENA Zaxo	kîrē	gibē	îbe
C. NENA Aradhin	yāḏe	bāye	?
CNA Turoyo	āḏe'	ābe'	?
Akkadian	îde	îše	ile'e

Zero-marking of the Imperfective VII

The same changes that shaped Hewramî also shaped neighboring varieties

	SK ŠK	H Lihon	NENA Sine
'he comes'	<i>t-ye(d)</i>	<i>m-ê</i>	<i>k-e</i>
'he brings'	<i>t-yeri(d)</i>	<i>m-aró</i>	<i>k-me</i>
'he does'	<i>Ø-kê(d)</i>	<i>Ø-keró</i>	<i>k-ól</i>
'he falls'	<i>Ø-kefê(d)</i>	<i>Ø-ginó</i>	<i>Ø-pél</i>

Imperfective > Negative I

The Iranian pattern of Imperfective marking (Karim and Mohammadirad, forthcoming):

			IND	SBJ	IMP/PRH
Kurdish (Mukrî)	<i>kirdin</i>	AFF	<i>de-ke-î</i>	<i>bí-ke-î</i>	<i>bí-ke</i>
		NEG	<i>ná-ke-î</i>	<i>né-ke-î</i>	<i>mé-ke</i>
Persian (Tehran)	<i>kærdæn</i>	AFF	<i>mî-kon-î</i>	<i>bé-kon-î</i>	<i>bé-kon</i>
		NEG	<i>né-mî-kon-î</i>	<i>ná-kon-î</i>	<i>ná-kon</i>
Balochi (Rakhshani)	<i>kirdin</i>	AFF	<i>a-kar-áy</i>	<i>bé-kar-áy</i>	<i>bé-kar</i>
		NEG	<i>(a-)ná-kar-áy</i>	<i>ná-kar-áy</i>	<i>má-kar</i>
Gorani (Zerde)	<i>kerdey</i>	AFF	<i>me-ker-î</i>	<i>bí-ker-î</i>	<i>bí-ker-e</i>
		NEG	<i>ní-me-ker-î</i>	<i>né-ker-î</i>	<i>mé-ker-e</i>

Imperfective > Negative II

The Goranî pattern of Imperfective marking (MacKenzie, 1966, pp. 37–38):

			IND	SBJ	IMP/PRH
1	<i>kerdey</i> ‘do’	AFF	<i>ker-î</i>	<i>kér-î</i>	<i>kér-e</i>
		NEG	<i>mé-ker-î</i>	<i>né-ker-î</i>	<i>mé-ker-e</i>
2	<i>day</i> ‘give’	AFF	<i>mi-ǵe-î</i>	<i>bi-ǵé-î</i>	<i>bi-ǵ-é</i>
		NEG	<i>mé-ǵe-î</i>	<i>né-ǵe-î</i>	<i>mé-ǵ-e</i>
4	<i>witey</i> ‘sleep’	AFF	<i>m-us-î</i>	<i>b-ús-î</i>	<i>b-ús-e</i>
		NEG	<i>mé-ws-î</i>	<i>né-ws-î</i>	<i>mé-ws-e</i>

Imperfective > Negative III

- Superficial similarity wins over the comparative method in the literature (e.g., MacKenzie, 1987; Mann and Hadank, 1930; Christensen and Benedictsén, 1921): negative indicative = prohibitive, so it must have been extended from the prohibitive.

four-part analogy

(1)	a. Persian:	$\frac{\text{bekonî} \quad :: \quad \text{bekon}}{\text{nekonî} \quad :: \quad \text{x}}$
		$\text{x} = \text{nekon} \text{ (*mekon)}$
b. S Kurdish:		$\frac{\text{bikeî} \quad :: \quad \text{bike}}{\text{nekeî} \quad :: \quad \text{x}}$
		$\text{x} = \text{neke} \text{ (*meke)}$
c. Paweyane:		$\frac{\text{pkérî} \quad :: \quad \text{pkére}}{\text{nékerî} \quad :: \quad \text{x}}$
		$\text{x} = \text{nékere} \text{ (*mekere)}$

Imperfective > Negative IV

four-part analogy

(2)	a. Paweyane:	$\frac{pkére}{nékéré} :: \frac{mekerî}{x}$
		$x = \text{nímekerî}$
b. Zerdeyane:		$\frac{bíkere}{mékere} :: \frac{mekerî}{x}$
		$x = \text{nímekerî}$
c. Heramî Lihon:		$\frac{kére}{mékere} :: \frac{kerî}{x}$
		$x = \text{mékérî}$

- The Heuristic of Economy encourages the linguist not to reconstruct unnecessary or redundant steps.
- No surprise to the historical linguist, comparative evidence tells a different story:

Imperfective > Negative V

- the most common negative indicative across the family combines both the negative and indicative markers: Paweyane *ní-me-*
- the stress shift off of the weak vowel *í* is already well documented: Bzlane *n-mé-*
- initial *nm clusters are regularly reduced: Lihon/Text *mé-*
- The result is a cheshirization where the stress on the imperfective marker is the only remnant of the original negation marker.

The same changes that shaped Hewramî also shaped neighboring Southern Kurdish varieties to a different effect

	SK ŠK		H Lihon	
	'he doesn't bring'	'he doesn't'	'he doesn't bring'	'he doesn't'
* stress shift (d-lenit)	* ní-de -eri(d)	* ní-de -kê(d)	* ní-m -aro	* ní-me -kero
nm-reduct (ee-reduct)	* n-yé -eri(d)	* n-yé -kê(d)	* ni-m -áro	* n-mé -kero
analogy	* n-yé -ri(d)	* n-yé -kê(d)	* nim -áro	* mé -kero
	nyéri (d)	nyé-kê (d)	nim -áro	mé -kero

Imperfective > Negative VI

- these changes set up a new four-part analogy:

four-part analogy

(3) Hewramî Lihon:	<i>mékerî</i>	::	<i>mékere</i>
	<i>nimári</i>	::	x
	x = <i>nimáre</i> (* <i>máre</i>), cf. AFF.IND <i>marî</i>		

Sandhi variants extended

Kurdish/Gorani developments

*Kurdish				*Gorani	
<i>de-kem</i>		<i>né-de-kem</i>		<i>me-kerû</i>	<i>né-me-kerû</i>
<i>de-kem</i>		<i>né/í-de-kem</i>		<i>me-kerû</i>	<i>ní-me-kerû</i>
<i>de-kem</i>	<i>ne-de-kem</i>	<i>d(i)-kem</i>	<i>né/í-de-kem</i>	<i>m(i)-kerû</i>	<i>ní-me-kerû</i>
<i>de-kem</i>	<i>ne-e-kem</i>	<i>d(i)-kem</i>	<i>né/í-e-kem</i>	<i>m(i)-kerû</i>	<i>ní-me-kerû</i>

Convergence

	CK Bane	Şebekî?	SK Bijar	SK Abdanan	G Qela
AFF.IND	<i>e-kem</i>	<i>me-kerî</i>	<i>d'-kem</i>	<i>d'-kem</i>	<i>m'-kerû</i>
NEG.IND	<i>ná-kem</i>	<i>ní-me-kerî</i>	<i>nî-kem</i>	<i>nê-kem</i>	<i>ní-m-kerî</i>
	< *ne-e-		< *ní-d-	< *né-d-	

Perfective + Imperfective = Conditional I

Kurdish Imperfective and Conditional patterns

	PST.IPFV	PST.COND	PRF.COND
NK Kolîk	di-ç'û-m	bi-kir-a-n-a/bi-ç'û-n-a	barî-wû-ya
CK Slêmanî	e-çû-n	bi-çû-n-a-ye	çû-bû-n-a
CK Miyandoab	de-kird-Ø	bi-bary-a-ye	barî-b-a-ye
CK Mukrî	de-kird-Ø	bi-bary-a-ye	barî-b-a
SK Kolyay	e-kird-in	bi-kird-a-n	?
SK Sencewî	kird-ya-n	bi-kird-ya-n	?
SK Melikşay	di-kird-in	bi-kird-a-ğ-a-n	?
SK Q Şîrîn	bî-ya-n	bî-ya-n	?

- Once again, superficial similarity dominates Iranistics. The Middle Persian subjunctive stem was *ba-*, therefore, the perfect conditional *-ba* must be the remnant of that, e.g., *baran barîba* 'had it rained.'
- However, this view does not account for the vast majority of varieties where the conditional is marked by *-a* attached to the past-stem.

Perfective + Imperfective = Conditional II

- Furthermore, *-ba* only exists in varieties where **bw* clusters are reduced to *b*, *-bwa* being the combination of past *bû* and conditional *-a*, cf. *řêbwar* ~ *rêbar* 'wayfearer.'
- Southern Kurdish evidence shines some light on these developments
 - Most Southern Kurdish shows (remnants of) the original past imperfective *-a*, e.g., Kirmanşa *biřya* 's/he used to cut'
 - the combination of subjunctive and imperfective results in conditional, e.g., Kirmanşa *bûřya* < **bibiřya* 'had s/he cut'
 - Where ambiguous, the *-a* suffix debonds and is repeated, e.g., Kelhor *büatan* cf. Kirmanşa *büan* 's/he used to be/had s/he been'
 - redundant marking on conditionals causes a reanalysis of *-a* from IPFV > COND

four-part analogy

	<i>büata</i>	::	<i>büa</i>
(4) Southern Kurdish:	<i>bikirda(t)</i>	::	x
	<hr/>		
	x = <i>kird</i> (<i>*kirda</i>)		

Perfective + Imperfective = Conditional III

- This analogical development does not easily work with high-vowel-final verbs:

four-part analogy

	$\overline{b\ddot{u}ata}$::	$\overline{b\ddot{u}a}$
(5) Southern Kurdish:	$\overline{bi\check{c}ya(t)}$::	x
	$\overline{x = (*bi\check{c}y) bi\check{c}ya}$		

- in Northern Kurdish, the debonding is transitivity dependent.
 - Intransitive verbs always agree with the S argument and the suffix follows agreement, e.g., NK Kolîk *biç'û-m=a*, *biç'uw-iy=a*, *biç'uw=a*, *biç'û-n=a* 'had I/you/s/he/we/y'all/they gone.'
 - Transitive verbs agree with the patient, which is most often 3SG. This becomes the base form to which the debonded form is added, e.g., *bikir-a-m=a*, *bikir-a-yiy=a*, *bikir-a*, *bikir-a-n=a* 'had I/you/s/he/we/y'all/they done.'
- These developments are not only supported by Kurdish evidence, but also by other nearby languages.

Perfective + Imperfective = Conditional IV

Iranian Imperfective and Conditional patterns

	PST.IPFV	PST.COND	PRF.COND
NK Kolîk	di-ç'û-m	bi-kir-a-n-a/bi-ç'û-n-a	barî-wû-ya
CK Slêmanî	e-çû-n	bi-çû-n-a-ye	çû-bû-n-a
SK Kolyay	e-kird-in	bi-kird-a-n	?
SK Sencewî	kird-ya-n	bi-kird-ya-n	?
Early NP	kard-am-i	(be-)kard-am-i	
N Zazaki	kerd-êni	bi-kerd-êni	
Hewramî	ker-ên-ê	kerd-εn-ê	
Balochi?	(-a) šut-un	b-šut-ēn-un	

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Conclusions

- When making claims about the historical development of languages, it makes sense to consult even non-genetically related contact languages.
- Reconstruction must be bottom up.
 - Comparison with Older genealogically related languages that are not in the direct line of descent can only provide a confusing approximation of the proto language.
 - Superficial similarity with forms in such a language compounds the problem.
 - Additionally, this can result in the adaptaion of a complex and unmotivated solution to simple problems

Thank You

Zor spastan ekem!

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Appendix: ERC Statement

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