

# Distilling the progressive aspect from the imperfective: the case of Melikşay Southern Kurdish

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# Outline

- 1 Introduction
- 2 Background
- 3 A proposal for Melikşay
- 4 A brief Historical Account
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# Introduction: Melikşay

Melikşay Southern Kurdish has a couple of features that set it apart from the rest of (Southern) Kurdish:

- The Melikşay express the progressive aspect with a prefix: *d(i)-*

- (1) *kar di- ker-im* ~ *kar ker-im*  
 work PROG- do.PRS-1SG.A work do.PRS-1SG.A  
 I am working ~ I work

- In the past-tense, the prefix only expresses the progressive aspect when negated.

- (2) a. *kar di- kird-im* ~ *kar kird-im*  
 work IPFV- do.PRS-1SG.A work do.PRS-1SG.A  
 I used to work/was working ~ I worked
- b. *kar nye- di- kird-im* ~ *kar nye-*  
 work NEG- PROG- do.PST-1SG.A work NEG-  
*kird-im* (~ *kar ne- kird-im*)  
 do.PST-1SG.A (work NEG- do.PST-1SG.A)  
 I wasn't working ~ I didn't used to work (~ I didn't work)

# The forms in Melikşay SK compared to the rest of Kurdish

| var                   | PRS.IPFV.1SG                      | PST.IPFV.1SG      | PST.NEG.IPFV.1SG                           |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------|--|
| NK Qamishlo           | <i>di-ke-m</i>                    | <i>di-kir</i>     | <i>ne-di-kir</i>                           |
| CK Mehabad            | <i>de-ke-m</i>                    | <i>de=m-kird</i>  | <i>ne=m-de-kird</i>                        |
| CK Slêmanî            | <i>ŷe-ke-m</i>                    | <i>ŷe=m-kird</i>  | <i>ne=m-ŷe-kird</i>                        |
| SK Qorwe              | <i>ŷe-ke-m</i>                    | <i>ŷe-kird-im</i> | <i>na-kird-im</i>                          |
| SK Kirmanşa           | <i>ke-m</i>                       | <i>kird-ya-m</i>  | <i>nye-kird-ya-m</i>                       |
| SK Mihran             | <i>ke-m</i>                       | <i>di-kird-im</i> | <i>nye-kird-im</i>                         |
| SK Serpol             | <i>ke-m</i>                       | <i>kird-im</i>    | <i>nye-kird-im</i>                         |
| SK Melikşay<br>(PROG) | <i>ker-im</i><br><i>di-ker-im</i> | <i>di-kird-im</i> | <i>nye-kird-im</i><br><i>nye-di-ker-im</i> |

# Proposal

- The idiosyncrasies of the SK Melikşay system are the result of the interplay between marked and unmarked values.
- What looks like the retention of an older  $d(i)$ -[PROG-] is likely a later development through a process of analogy.
- These assertions are supported by the uniqueness of Melikşay in this regard, and the semantics of the progressive.

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# Background: The Imperfective domain I

According to Deo (2015, 14:4), the imperfective domain has (at least) three distinct readings:

- (3) a. the progressive or event-in-progress reading:  
*Şwan (êsta) nan e-ka*  
Shuan (now) bread IPFV-do.PRS.3SG.A  
'Shuan is making bread (right now).'
- b. the habitual or generic characterizing reading  
*Şwan (her řo) nan e-ka*  
Shuan (each day) bread IPFV-do.PRS.3SG.A  
'Shuan makes bread (every day).'
- c. the continuous reading with lexically stative predicates:  
*Şwan le Würzburg=a e-jî*  
Shuan in Würzburg=in IPFV-live.PRS.3SG  
'Shuan lives in Würzburg.'

# Background: The Imperfective domain II

There is a semantically motivated cline by which forms recruited to mark the event-in-progress reading are extended to the rest of the imperfective domain:

- zero-prog state: there is only one marker throughout the imperfective domain;
- emergent-prog state: progressive marking is grammaticalized but is optional;

(4) *le kar-kirdin* =*a* =*m*  
       in work-do.INF =in =COP.PRS.1SG  
       'I am working'

- categorical-prog: progressive and imperfective marking have clearly demarcated sub-domains;
- generalized-prog: a return to the zero-prog state with the progressive marker acting as the only imperfective form.

# Background: Progressive Paradox

Scholars report that the progressive aspect has strange interactions with past-tense and negation (Dowty, 1979; Landman, 1992; Parsons, 1990).

- PST: “Shuan was crossing the street” does not entail that he finished crossing.
- NEG.PST: “Shuan wasn’t crossing the street” may imply that he never started crossing.

Folk wisdom (or prescriptivism): An event-NOT-in-progress is not an event-in-progress at all,  
whereas habitually NOT doing something is still habitual.

# Morphsyntactic incompatibility between PROG and NEG I

This has resulted in a morphsyntactic incompatibility between PROG and NEG in some languages:

## Tamil

- (5) a. *Avar roṭṭi cey-kir-ār* (ippōtu)  
 3SG.M.HON bread do-PROG-3SG.M.HON (now)  
 'He is making bread (right now).'
- b. 'Avar roṭṭi cey-vat-illai'  
 3SG.M.HON bread do-NMLZR-NEG (now)  
 'He isn't making/doesn't make bread.'

# Morphsyntactic incompatibility between PROG and NEG II

## Telugu

- (6) a. *Atanu breḍḍa tayāru cē-stu-nnāḍu* (prastutamī)  
3SG.M bread prepare LV-PROG-3SG.M.PRS (now)  
'He is making bread (right now).'
- b. *Atanu breḍḍa tayāru cēya-tlēdu*  
3SG.M bread prepare LV-NEG-INF-NEG.3SG.M.PRS  
'He isn't making/doesn't make bread.'

## Morphosyntactic incompatibility between PROG and NEG III

## Persian

- (7) a. o     **dasht**     nan  
          3SG PROG [lit. have.PST.3SG] make=IPFV-LV.PST.3SG  
          *darest=mi-kard (dishab)*  
          (last.night)  
          'he was making bread.'
- b. o     (*dishab*)     nan     *darest*  
          3SG (last.night) make=NEG-IPFV-LV.PST.3SG  
          *ne-mi-kard*  
          'he wasn't making/didn't used to make bread.'

# Morphsyntactic incompatibility between PROG and NEG IV

## Chinese (Mandarin)

- (8) a. *Tā zhèngzài zuò miànbāo (xiànzài)*  
3SG PROG make bread (now)  
'He is making bread (right now).'
- b. *Tā méi zài zuò miànbāo*  
3SG NEG IPFV make bread  
'He isn't making/doesn't make bread.'

# Morphsyntactic incompatibility between PROG and NEG V

## Swahili

- (9) a. *A-na-tengenez-a*                      *mkate* (*sasa hivi*)  
 3SG-PRS.PROG-make-AFF bread (right now)  
 'He is making bread (right now).'
- b. *ha-tengenez-i*                      *mkate*  
 3SG.NEG-make-NEG.PRS bread  
 'He isn't making/doesn't make bread.'

## Hawai'ian

- (10) a. *Ke hana nei ia i ka berena* (*i kēia manawa*)  
 PROG make PROG 3SG ACC DEF bread (ACC DEM NOW)  
 'He is making bread (right now).'
- b. *A'ole ia e hana i ka berena*  
 NEG 3SG NON.IND make ACC DEF bread  
 'He isn't making/doesn't make bread.'



# The Melikşay oddity

## SK Melikşay PRS (fully compatible)

- (11) a. (*îse*) *nan drus=di-ker-êg*  
 (now) bread make=PROG-lv.PRS-3SG  
 'He is making bread (right now).'
- b. *nan drus=nye-di-ker-êg*  
 bread make=NEG.IPFV-PROG-lv.PRS-3SG  
 'He isn't making bread.'

## SK Melikşay PST (PROG only marked with negation)

- (12) a. *nan drus=di-kird*  
 bread make=IPFV-lv.PRS.3SG  
 'He is making/used to make bread.'
- b. *nan drus=nye-di-kird*  
 bread make=NEG.IPFV-PROG-lv.PRS-3SG  
 'He isn't making bread.'

# Background: Markedness I

- *Semantic markedness*: a value crosslinguistically considered to be the non-default in the juxtaposition of two values of a given category.

| Category     | Unmarked (Default) | Marked (Non-default) |
|--------------|--------------------|----------------------|
| Number       | SG                 | PL, DL               |
| Gender       | M                  | F, N                 |
| Tense        | PRS                | PST, FUT             |
| Aspect       | PFV                | IPVF, PROG           |
| Mood         | IND                | SUBJ, IMP            |
| Voice        | ACT                | PASS                 |
| Case         | NOM/ABS            | ACC, ERG, GEN        |
| Polarity     | AFF                | NEG                  |
| Definiteness | INDEF              | DEF                  |
| Person       | 3(SG)              | 1, 2                 |
| Animacy      | INAN               | ANIM                 |

# Background: Markedness II

- *Morphological markedness*: a category signified by overt morphology. Generally, semantic and morphological markedness align, but not always:
  - Number:
    - = Central Kurdish: *kuř* 'boy' vs. *kuř-an* 'boys'
    - ≠ Lango (uganda): *ot-woko* vs. 'house' *ot* 'houses'
  - Gender:
    - = Hewramî: *pîr* 'elder (M.DIR)' vs. *pîr-e* 'Elder (F.DIR)'
    - ≠ Lezgian: *k<sup>w</sup>a-n* 'that one (M)' vs. *k<sup>w</sup>a* 'that one (F)'
  - Case:
    - = Zazaki: *laj* 'boy (DIR)' vs. *laj-î* 'boy (OBL)'
    - ≠ Drehu: *e e pinyä* 'the fish (NOM)' vs. *e pinyä* 'the fish (ACC)'
  - Definiteness:
    - = Bulgarian: *kniga* 'a book' *kniga-ta* 'the book'
    - ≠ Persian: *ketab-i* 'a book' vs. *ketab* 'the book'
  - Tense:
    - = CK Slêmanî: *bîn-ê* 's/he sees' vs. *bîn-î-Ø* 's/he saw'
    - ≠ Burushaski: *phiš-um* vs. 's/he sees' *phiš* 's/he saw'
  - Aspect:

# Background: Markedness III

- = Northern Kurdish: *dît* 'saw it' vs. *di-dît* 'used to see it'
- ≠ Russian: *na-pisal* 'he wrote it' vs. *pisal* 'he used to write it'
- Mood:
  - = Pashto: *wīnī* 's/he sees' vs. *wa-wīnī* '(that) s/he sees'
  - ≠ Turkmanî: *gʷid-er* 's/he goes' vs. *gʷid* '(that) s/he goes'
- Polarity:
  - = Shabaki: *me-wîn-o* 's/he sees' vs. *ni-me-wîn-o* 's/he doesn't see'
  - ≠ Welsh: *mī-welais* 'saw (AFF)' vs. *welais* 'saw (NEG)' (additional negative forms required, not dissimilar to German *kein*, e.g., *Welais i mo fo* lit. 'saw I not-him')
- Person:
  - = Balochi: *kapt* 's/he fell' vs. *kapt-un/-ay/-an/-it/-ant* 'I/you/we/y'all/they fell'
  - ≠ English: *jump-s* [3SG] vs. *jump* [non.3SG]

# Background: Realizationalizm I

## Definition: Realizationalizm:

Realizationalizm is a theoretical approach to morphology that holds that morphological structure does not generate words by combining morphemes directly, but instead assigns features to entire word forms, which are then realized by specific morphological exponents (such as affixes or stem changes). (see Stump 2001 on Paradigm Function Morphology, etc.)

- This type of theory performs equally well as traditional morphemes-as-things approaches when dealing with deriving *jump-ed* from *jump*.
- However, it excels when formatives have contextual values, e.g.:

# Background: Realizationalizm II

(13) Central Kurdish: Mukrî

*e=î-nas-im*

vs.

IPFV=3SG.O-know.PRS-**1sg.A**

*e=î-nas-î-m*

IPFV=3SG.A-know-PST-**1sg.O**

‘I know him.’ vs. ‘he used to know me.’

\* A **hypothesis** that follows from Realizationalizm:

The **juxtaposition** of forms alone signifies **unmarked** values in any marked-unmarked pairing.

- Presentness of *bîn-* inferred via contrast with *bînî-* (CK Slêmanî)
- Pastness of *phiš* inferred via contrast with *phišum* (Burrushaski)
- Perfectivity of *dît-* inferred via contrast with *didît-* (N Kurdish)
- Imperfectivity of *pisal* inferred via contrast with *napisal* (Russian)
- Indicativity of *wînî* inferred via contrast with *wawînî* (Pashto)
- Subjunctivity of *g<sup>y</sup>id* inferred via contrast with *g<sup>y</sup>ider* (Turkmani)

# Background: Realizationalizm III

- Third-person singularity of ***kapt*** inferred via contrast with ***kaptun***, ***kaptay***, ***kaptan***, ***kaptit***, and ***kaptant*** (Balochi)
- Non-third-person singularity of ***jump*** inferred via contrast with ***jumps*** (English)

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# The proposal

- Psycholinguistic Plausibility: realizationalism suggests that juxtaposition (the existence of contrastive forms) alone assigns meaning to unmarked categories.
- Morphological Analogy: as new innovative morphology is recruited, the contrasts that are made can change, thereby causing a reassignment of values to both marked and unmarked forms in contrast.
- Melikşay SK has developed progressive marking in the present tense, past affirmative, but not in the past negative because of the realignment of contrasting values.

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# Historical: Foundations I

(this argument is limited to Southern Kurdish where the relationship between these forms is unambiguous)

- SK Sound changes:
  - $*e \rightarrow i / \_ (CV)CV$ :  
SK *imro* vs. CK *emro* 'today,' SK *gizêr* vs. CK *Sine gezêr* 'carrot,' etc.
  - $*d \rightarrow Y / V\_$ :  
SK *xwa* Persian *xuda* 'god,' SK *neya* CK *neda* 'he didn;t give'

- Inherited verbal forms:

|          | AFF           | NEG              |
|----------|---------------|------------------|
| PRS.IPFV | *de-PRS-PN    | *ni-de-PRS-PN    |
| PRS.SBJV | *bi-PRS-PN    | *ne-PRS-PN       |
| PST.IPFV | *de-PST-da-PN | *ni-de-PST-da-PN |
| PST.PFV  | *PST-PN       | *NE-PST-PN       |

# Historical: Foundations II

- Actual with Soundchanges:

|          | AFF             | NEG              |
|----------|-----------------|------------------|
| PRS.IPFV | <i>di-ç-im</i>  | <i>nye-ç-im</i>  |
| PRS.SBJV | <i>bi-ç-im</i>  | <i>ne-ç-im</i>   |
| PST.IPFV | <i>dî-çya-m</i> | <i>nye-çya-m</i> |
| PST.PFV  | <i>çî-m</i>     | <i>ne-çî-m</i>   |

- The suffix form imperfective marker fuses with high-vowel-final stems. These stems remain even in varieties that eventually lose the suffix form generally e.g.:

(14) Bîcar:

*dî-çya-m*

vs. *di-kird-im*

IPFV-go.PST.IPFV-1SG

IPFV-go.PST-1SG

‘I used to go’ vs. ‘I used to do’

# Aspect and Mood in Persian for comparison I

|   | AFF        | NEG           |      |
|---|------------|---------------|------|
| Volitional<br>Conditional<br>Counterfactual | <i>be-</i> | <i>na-</i>    | SBJ  |
| Habitual<br>Iterative<br>Progressive        | <i>mī-</i> | <i>ne-mī-</i> | IPFV |
| Completive<br>Punctual<br>Telic             |            |               | PFV  |

Present-tense stem, e.g., *kon-* 'do'

# Aspect and Mood in Persian for comparison II

|                | AFF        | NEG           |      |
|----------------|------------|---------------|------|
| Volitional     |            |               | SBJ  |
| Conditional    |            |               |      |
| Counterfactual | <i>mī-</i> | <i>ne-mī-</i> | IPFV |
| Habitual       |            |               |      |
| Iterative      |            |               | PFV  |
| Progressive    |            |               |      |
| Completive     | Ø-         | <i>na-</i>    | PFV  |
| Punctual       |            |               |      |
| Telic          |            |               |      |

Past-tense stem *kard-*

- (15) *eger ba iran mī-raft-am, farsī=ra yād=mī-garaft-am*  
 if to Iran IPFV-go.PST-1SG, Persian learn=IPFV-LV.PST-1SG  
 'If I went to Iran, I would have learned Persian.'

# Aspect and Mood in Southern Kurdish

Common in Iranian languages with a suffixal imperfective, e.g., Gorani, Zazaki, (probably) Balochi, the combination of *b-/ne-* forms with the imperfective stem comes to be used for the past-subjunctive/conditional in analogy to the present (imperfective).

|                | AFF       | NEG         | AFF        | NEG        | AFF              | NEG               |      |
|----------------|-----------|-------------|------------|------------|------------------|-------------------|------|
| Volitional     | <i>b-</i> | <i>ne-</i>  |            |            | <b><i>b-</i></b> | <b><i>ne-</i></b> | SBJ  |
| Conditional    |           |             |            |            | ?                | ?                 |      |
| Counterfactual |           |             |            |            |                  |                   |      |
| Habitual       | <i>d-</i> | <i>nye-</i> |            |            | <i>d-</i>        | <i>nye-</i>       | IPFV |
| Iterative      |           |             |            |            |                  |                   |      |
| Progressive    |           |             |            |            |                  |                   |      |
| Completive     |           |             | ∅-         | <i>ne-</i> |                  |                   | PFV  |
| Punctual       |           |             |            |            |                  |                   |      |
| Telic          |           |             |            |            |                  |                   |      |
|                | ç-<br>PRS |             | çî-<br>PST |            | çya-<br>PST.IPFV |                   |      |

# Aspect and Mood in \*Melikşay

In Melikşay and closely related varieties, the imperfective prefixes combine with the simple past stem, and the imperfective stems remain only as part of the conditional, fundamentally altering the contrastive categories.

|                | AFF       | NEG         | AFF       | NEG         | AFF              | NEG               |      |
|----------------|-----------|-------------|-----------|-------------|------------------|-------------------|------|
| Volitional     | <i>b-</i> | <i>ne-</i>  |           |             | <i><b>b-</b></i> | <i><b>ne-</b></i> | SBJ  |
| Conditional    |           |             |           |             | ?                | ?                 |      |
| Counterfactual |           |             |           |             |                  |                   |      |
| Habitual       | <i>d-</i> | <i>nye-</i> | <i>d-</i> | <i>nye-</i> |                  |                   | IPFV |
| Iterative      |           |             |           |             |                  |                   |      |
| Progressive    |           |             |           |             |                  |                   |      |
| Completive     |           |             | ∅-        | <i>ne-</i>  |                  |                   | PFV  |
| Punctual       |           |             |           |             |                  |                   |      |
| Telic          |           |             |           |             |                  |                   |      |
|                | ç-        |             | çî-       |             | çya-             |                   |      |
|                | PRS       |             | PST       |             | PST.IPFV         |                   |      |



# What distinctions exist?

Formative values can only be understood in the context of other markers. Separating PRS, PST, and (IPFV/)<sub>PST</sub>.SBJ stems clarifies which TAM contrasts are signified by overt morphology: (1) polarity is maximally distinguished; (2) mood is only distinguished in the PRS, and (3) there are two aspectual distinctions: PFV vs. IPFV in the PST, and PROG vs. non-PROG in the PRS.

|               | Tense |     | Mood |     | Aspect |      |     | Polarity |     |
|---------------|-------|-----|------|-----|--------|------|-----|----------|-----|
|               | PRS   | PST | SBJV | IND | IPFV   | PROG | PFV | AFF      | NEG |
| <i>biç-</i>   | ✓     |     | ✓    |     |        |      |     | ✓        |     |
| <i>neç-</i>   | ✓     |     | ✓    |     |        |      |     |          | ✓   |
| <i>diç-</i>   | ✓     |     |      | ✓   | ✓      | ✓    |     | ✓        |     |
| <i>nyeç-</i>  | ✓     |     |      | ✓   | ✓      |      |     |          | ✓   |
| <i>biçya-</i> |       | ✓   | ✓    |     |        |      |     | ✓        |     |
| <i>neçya-</i> |       | ✓   | ✓    |     |        |      |     |          | ✓   |
| <i>diçî-</i>  |       | ✓   |      | ✓   | ✓      | ✓    |     | ✓        |     |
| <i>nyeçî-</i> |       | ✓   |      | ✓   | ✓      |      |     |          | ✓   |
| <i>çî-</i>    |       | ✓   |      | ✓   |        |      | ✓   | ✓        |     |
| <i>neçî-</i>  |       | ✓   |      | ✓   |        |      | ✓   |          | ✓   |

# Reassignment of values

- In the present tense, there is a MODAL distinction: *d/nye* SBJV VS. *b/ne* IND.
- In the past, there is no modal distinction.
- In the present, there is an ASPECTUAL distinction: *nye* IPFV vs. *d* PROG.
- In the past, there is an ASPECTUAL distinction: *d/nye* IPFV vs. *Ø/ne* PFV.
- The marker *d-* has a contrastive value PROG- in the present, but IPFV- in the past.
- The great innovation of Melikşay is that the restored value, *d-* PROG-, became an agglutinative affix, leading to innovative analogical forms:

# Aspect and mood innovations in Melikşay

The form *nye-di-* [NEG.IPFV-PROG-] is clear innovation as etymologically both *di-* and the *ye-* in *n-ye-* are from the same source *\*de-*, the former with pretonic reduction and the latter with the lenition of *vost-vocallic* *\*d*. In the past, *d-* always contrasts with *Ø-* [PFV-], causing it to remain imperfective; *\*\*di-di-* is not possible.

|                | AFF       | NEG           | AFF       | NEG           | AFF       | NEG        |      |
|----------------|-----------|---------------|-----------|---------------|-----------|------------|------|
| Volitional     | <i>b-</i> | <i>ne-</i>    |           |               |           |            | SBJ  |
| Conditional    |           |               |           |               | <i>b-</i> | <i>ne-</i> |      |
| Counterfactual |           |               |           |               | ?         | ?          |      |
| Habitual       | <i>Ø-</i> | <i>nye-</i>   | <i>d-</i> | <i>nye-</i>   |           |            | IPFV |
| Iterative      |           |               |           |               |           |            |      |
| Progressive    | <i>d-</i> | <i>nye-d-</i> | <i>d-</i> | <i>nye-d-</i> |           |            |      |
| Completive     |           |               | <i>Ø-</i> | <i>ne-</i>    |           |            | PFV  |
| Punctual       |           |               |           |               |           |            |      |
| Telic          |           |               |           |               |           |            |      |

ç- çî- çya-  
PRS PST PST.IPFV

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# Conclusion

- Markedness: The TAM system of Southern kurdish can be understood as a relationship between marked and unmarked values.
- Contrastive forms: A previously unmarked/default value like indicative mood can become marked as a formative loses other contrasts.
- Morphological analogy: the set of contrastive elements can change as analogy moves forms in and out of paradigmatic alternation.
- Realizationalism: The rules that guide how forms are realized can be rewritten based on the reassignment.
- And thus, my proposal for the development of progressive *d-* in Melikşay SK is born.

# Thank you

Zor supastan ekeîn!  
Gelek supas!

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# Appendix: ERC Statement

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# Appendix: Not an isolated development

It is common for Iranian languages to develop a past conditional from the present-tense subjunctive prefix and the past-imperfective stem (or similar relationship):

|                 | PST.IPFV.AFF    | PST.IPFV.NEG                    |
|-----------------|-----------------|---------------------------------|
| Southern Zazaki | <i>kerd-ê</i>   | <i>bi-kerd-ê</i>                |
| Northern Zazaki | <i>kerd-êni</i> | <i>bi-kerd-êni</i>              |
| Balochi         | <i>=a kurt</i>  | <i>bi-kurt-in</i>               |
| Balochi         | <i>=a kurt</i>  | <i>bi-kurt-ēn</i>               |
| Hewramî Text    | <i>ker-ê(n)</i> | <i>kerd-ε(n) (*kerd-a-ê(n))</i> |