Coding of Background Information in Zazaki Narrative

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(Remark 2018: Zazaki here refers to Southern Zazaki when not mentioned otherwise).

Abstract:
We sometimes wonder what makes a story a good story and what is missing when one is told poorly. In order to answer this question, one should turn to the field of discourse structure.

This paper looks at one aspect of discourse analysis: the coding of background information in contrast to foreground information. Several folktales in Southern Zazaki are analyzed to discuss and present coding devices for different kinds of background information. Besides folktales, four personal narratives with quite different coding material are taken into account.

This study intends to raise awareness of devices that are available in Zazaki to provide orientation between event and non-event information for the audience of a narrative.

Keywords:
background information
foreground information
perfective aspect
imperfective aspect
aspect (change of)
coda
postscript
story setting
flashback
historical present
narrative tense
discourse structure
event (event line)
non-event
1. Introduction

This paper explores some differences between Zazaki folktales and personal narratives with respect to the coding of background information. The study is based on the Southern Dialect of Zazaki (Çermik-Siverek).

1.1 Preliminary Remarks

Examples from folk tale narratives are mainly taken from the book "Mahmesha: Zaza Folktales – Then and Now", by Rosan Hayıg and, where relevant, additional examples are taken from Koyo Berz's story collection "Ewro şori – Meşti bëri". At crucial points the study also includes a comparison with Northern Zazaki, referring to Crandall's study on discourse structure (2002) and Çelker's tales in "Welat ra Şanikê Şani" (2005).

In chapter 3 the examples of personal narratives are the results from my own field work. The full text is given in the text samples in chapter 5. I used orthographic script rather than phonemic script to be consistent throughout the article.

The terminology of verbal tense and aspect may differ from other works but results from the analysis that conjugated verbs are built up from participles and therefore called by aspectual names. Verbal endings are interpreted as a) copula: ken-o, kerd-o, ker-o, b) adjective markers: kerd-i, kerd-i, or c) the invariable ending –ê of Past Time Durative.

Passages of direct speech in the narratives are excluded from this study because tense and aspect are used differently in direct speech than in the narrative tense.

I would like to especially thank the two Zaza speaking friends for providing the personal narratives. I am also grateful to Dr. Inge Egner for her helpful comments on this article and her teaching of Discourse Analysis in 2007.

1.2 The Skeleton and the Flesh

A storyteller builds up a story according to strategies that prove most effective for the audience to comprehend the story. One of these strategies is to make a distinction of

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1 The participles are: indicative imperfective ken-, subjunctive imperfective biker-, indicative perfective kerd-, and subjunctive perfective bikerd-.
two kinds of information:

Foreground information moves a story forward and forms the event line. However, an author also provides non-event or supportive material that is called background information. What the flesh is to the skeleton in a body the background information is to the event line.

Figure 1: Skeleton and Flesh of a Story

![Diagram of Story Skeleton and Flesh]

2. Background Coding in Folktales

This chapter deals with the genre of folktales, which has to be distinguished from the genre of personal narratives, dealt with in chapter 3.

The folktales, including funny anecdotes, have a common style: they are told in imperfective aspect (oşino keye lit. ‘he goes home’), also called "Historical Present". This form has to be distinguished from imperfective progressive (oyo şino keye ‘he is going home’) that is used in oral conversation of daily affairs. Thus the Historical Present indicates the "narrative tense".

2.1 Story Setting

The setting of a story, which is not part of the event line, is invariably coded by devices that are not found otherwise in the story:

- **a)**  _çakê beno, çakê nêbeno_ ‘once upon a time’ or _wexê dê_ ‘at a certain time’ is used exclusively when a setting is unfolded.
- **b)** _est- ‘existing’ is replaced by ben- ‘be’; the negated form çini- is replaced by nêben- (sent. 1b) or çînêben- (sent. 5, possessive).
- **c)** the copula is replaced by _ben- (sent. 4)_

In the table below the story setting of example sentence (1) is contrasted to normal (unmarked) sentences, in order to emphasize the differences.
(1) (Hayig, 2007:65)

*Cakê beno, cakê nêbeno, zew mërdekê beno, ceniya ci bena, wni feqiri benê, tevay ci çinêbeno, zu nalênda nina bena.*

‘Once upon a time there was a man and his wife. They were so poor; they possessed nothing except a calf.’

Table 1: Setting in Contrast to Unmarked Form

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>marked form (setting)</th>
<th>unmarked form</th>
<th>literal translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(a) cakê beno, cakê nêbeno,</td>
<td>cayêesto, cayêçniyo</td>
<td>‘a place exists, a place does not exist,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) zew mërdekê beno,</td>
<td>zew mërdek esto</td>
<td>a man exists,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) ceniya ci bena,</td>
<td>ceniya ci esto</td>
<td>he has a wife,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(d) wni feqiri benê,</td>
<td>wni feqiriyê</td>
<td>they are so poor,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(e) tevay ci çinêbeno,</td>
<td>tevay ci çniyo</td>
<td>they have nothing,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(f) zu nalênda nina bena</td>
<td>zu nalênda nina esto</td>
<td>they have (only) a calf.’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A setting is clearly finished when the event line starts with the adverbial expression *rozê* ‘one day’. An example of a short story setting is presented below (event line starts in the third line).

(2) (Hayig, 2007:15)

*Cakê* is exclusively used in settings and therefore I replaced it by *cayê* ‘one place’.

In Northern Zazaki the settings are constructed similar (Crandall, 2002:41), except that the story opens with *beno, nêbeno* (Çelker, 2005:5) instead of *cakê beno, cakê nêbeno*.

2.2 Flashback

A flashback reports an event line that happened before the time of the main event line in a narrative. Despite one’s expectations, flashbacks in the folktales are not coded by a

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2 *Cakê* is exclusively used in settings and therefore I replaced it by *cayê* ‘one place’.

3 In discourse terminology adverbs that indicate a discontinuity are called "points of departure".
change of time reference, but the Historical Present is applied. Adverbial phrases like wexto ki ‘at the time when’, oxmo ki ‘in the meantime’, or veri ‘before’ serve as signals for a flashback.

The first example below illustrates what happened while the main character Gorma’hmed had departed. It is narrated when G. returned to the palace.

(3) (Hayig, 2007:12)

Oxmo  ki  Gorma’hmed  qonax-i  terk  ken-o.
in.the.mean.time  REL  Gorm.  palace-OB  departure  do.IPF-C.3M

ba’hdê coyà  déw  keyn-an-ê  xo  dan-o
after  that  giant  daughter-PL.OB-EZ  RFX  give.IPF-C.3M

brar-an-dê  Gorma’hmed.
brother-OB.PL-EZ  Gorm.

‘In the mean time, when Gormahmed had departed (lit. departs) from the palace, there after, the giant had given (lit. gives) his daughter in marriage to G.’s brothers.’

The second example reviews back to the sheik's former life as a cowherd. At the time of speaking he already made his fortune and lived as a sheik in Siverek.

(4) (Hayig, 2007:55)

Wext-o  ki  no  gawaney  ken-o  no  dewan-dê  Çermug  di
time-C.3M  REL  he  cow.herding  do.IPF-C.3M  he  villages-EZ  Çermik

roşen-o,  yanê  Çermug  ra  şm-o  Soreg.
live.IPF-C.3M  that.means  Çermik  from  go.IPF-C.3M  Siverek

‘At the time when he had been doing (lit. does) cow herding he had lived (lit. lives) in the villages of Çermik, that means he had gone (lit. goes) from Çermik to Siverek.’

2.3 Argumentative Information

Argumentative information clarifies why something happened and therefore this is non-event as well. Arguments are introduced by conjunctions like çiki ‘because’, qandê coy ‘therefore’, coy ra ‘that’s why’.

The following example explains that two children would not complain to their father about the wicked stepmother because they want to spare him due to his bad condition.

(5) (Hayig, 2007:3)

Ev  né  zi  nê-wetan-ê  kt  pêr-dê  xo  ra
and  they  also  not.dare.IMF-C3PL  SPC  father-EZ  RFX  from

eskera  ker-ê  çiki  dîlê  pêr-dê  nina
open  do.SJ-C.3PL  because  situation-EZ  father.OB-EZ  they.OB

Perfective in subordinated clauses like, nê […] weynênê  kt  bray  ci  kışto  ‘they see that their brother has been killed’ (Hayíg, 2007:47) are not interpreted as flashbacks.
weş nê-ben-o; çiktı hirê serr-i pê sero no
well not-be.IPFC3M because three year-PL each.other upon he
xele karren-o hîma xele nê-ravwen-o
wheat sow.IPFC3M but wheat not-grow.IPFC3M

‘And they didn't dare to reveal this to their father because his situation was so bad; because he had sowed wheat three years in succession, but the wheat didn’t grow.’

2.4 Discourse Irrealis

Another type of non-event information, called discourse irrealis by Dooley/Levinsohn (2000:42), describes happenings that might have taken place, but did not. These are most often introduced by the conjunction hıma ‘but/however’ or labırê (Berz, 1996) and the clause contains the negated verb.

Two examples are given below.

(6) (Hayıg, 2007:4)
Hıma bi xo nê-wetan-a nina bt-kış-o.
however with-self not-dare.IPFC3F they.OB SJ-kill-3S
‘But she didn't dare to kill them herself.’

(7) (Hayıg, 2007:12)
Hıma dew Gorma’hmed-i nê-vinen-o.
however giant G.-OB not-see.IPFC3M
‘But the giant didn't see G.’

2.5 Addressing the Hearer

Quite frequently in Hayıg’s and Berz’s story collections the author interrupts the event line by a sudden turn to the speaker-hearer axis, called by Dooley/Levinsohn performative information (2000:43). The speaker suddenly addresses the hearer in second person to catch his attention. The expression ti nêvanê ‘you don't believe (it)!’ is more frequently found, less frequently ti vanê ‘you (must) believe (it)’.

(8) (Hayıg, 2007:9)
Ti nê-van-ê ki ê déw-i-yê ki Gorma’hmed-i
you not-say.IPFC3M REL those giant-PL-EZ REL Gorm.-OB
kast-ê ê wîrdna zi bura-y nê déw-i-yê
killed-C3PL those both also brothers-EZ this.OB giant-OB-C3PL
qandê coy no déw Gorma’hmed-i silasnen-o.
therefore this giant Gorm.-OB know.IPFC3M

‘You don’t believe it, but those giants that were killed by G. were both brothers of this giant; therefore the giant knew Gormahmed.’
(9) (Hayg, 2007:50)
Na keynek hendik xasek-a
tu van-ê qay asmi-ya pancêš-i-ya.
this girl so.much pretty-C.3F
you say.IP-C.2M likely moon-EZ fifteen-OB-C.3F

‘This girl was so pretty, you (must) believe as pretty as the full moon.’

In the next example the storyteller addresses the audience (or himself) with the rhetorical question ‘why not?’

(10) (Hayg, 2007:16)
Na şin-a zerre ki çi nê-şt-ro
she go.IP-C.3F inside REL why not-go.SJ-C.3S

‘She went inside, why shouldn't she go.’

2.6 Coda

The final stage of a narrative, also called coda is often introduced by the adverbs hîni ‘finally/now’, wîni ‘in that manner’.

(11) (Hayg, 2007:32)
Hîni nê ben-ê zengin-i
finally they become.IP-C.3PL rich-PL

ben-ê wihêr-ê mal-i
become.IP-C.3PL owners-EZ possession-OB

ev nê wîni 'emr-ê xo ramen-ê
and they in.that.manner life-EZ RFX pass.IP-C.3PL

‘Finally they became wealthy and owned much possession and lived their life happily ever after.’

Often a coda is also expressed by the phrase 'and they reached their dreams', introduced by ew 'and'.

(12) (Hayg, 2007:7)
Ew nê resen-ê mîraz-dê xo
and they reach.IP-C.3PL dream-EZ.PL RFX

‘And finally they reached their dreams.’

In Berz's collection the coda is introduced by no hesab a 'in such a manner' (1996:28, 30), or by qandê coy 'therefore' (p.54).

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5 This coda is indirectly performative to the audience: ‘you as well reach your dreams’. Crandall quoted an equivalent coda: ‘They fulfilled [lit. saw] their desires, you fulfill yours’ (2002:57).
2.7 Postscript

Following the coda of several stories Hayıg has added a single rhyme motivated phrase, meaning: ‘My story was a lovely fictional one.’

(13) (Hayıg, 2007:14)

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Istank-} & \quad \text{mm-a} \quad \text{weş,} \\
\text{tale-} & \quad \text{my-EZ} \quad \text{nice} \\
\text{seven} & \quad \text{hills-PL.} \quad \text{back at} \quad \text{become.PFev} \\
\end{align*}
\]

‘My charming tale has turned into a carcass behind seven mountains.’

In Çelker's stories (Northern Zazaki) quite different postscripts are found, some seem to be a blessing, others sound like a poem (2005:233). In contrast to Hayıg's postscript, Çelker's postscripts address the audience in second person.\(^6\)

2.8 Description of Old Custom

Once in Hayıg's stories an old custom, that is no longer in place today, is explained to the audience. This information is given in perfective aspect.

(14) (Hayıg, 2007:65)

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Wext-} & \quad \text{veri} \quad \text{zi,} \quad \text{dewr-dê} \quad \text{veri} \quad \text{zi,} \quad \text{ek} \quad \text{zewê} \quad \text{axa} \quad \text{b-iyê} \\
\text{ew} & \quad \text{ci} \quad \text{dima} \quad \text{sazben-dê} \quad \text{ci} \quad \text{b-iyê}. \\
\text{and} & \quad \text{3ob} \quad \text{after} \quad \text{musicians-EZ} \quad \text{3ob} \quad \text{is-PFdur} \\
\end{align*}
\]

‘In earlier times, when someone had been an agha, he usually had his musicians with him.’

3. Background Coding in Personal Narratives

In stories of personal experience, drawn from our own field work, the devices for marking background information seem quite different from folktales.

The first two reports (Qahwe and Diyarbekir) tell about a conflict between two men about the language issue. Two other reports (Tıxtorê dindana, Qeza) of another author narrate personal experience in first person. (See full text of all personal narratives in chapter 5.)

The stories are told in past time reference and different aspectual forms of perfective are applied: "Past Time Event" (va) is the narrative tense and is applied for foreground information. In contrast to it, the story settings are narrated by "Past Time Durative" (vatê) or "Past Time State" (amey bi).

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\(^6\) Şanke şiyê xo rê, şíma humanê homete rê. ‘The story has gone to rest, but you will stay in your community.’ (Çelker, 2005:123)

\(^7\) Because it is a conditional clause the subjunctive perfective is used.
Most stories finish in foreground coding, however the end of the story Tıxtorê Dındana is coded as evaluative non-event.

Signal words (adverbs or conjunctions) are used, but, except for the temporal adverbs of the settings, they are not obligatory. Note, that the adverbial rozę ‘once’ is used in two stories for the temporal orientation in the setting, not as a signal for starting the event line.

Table 2: Different Aspectual Forms and Signal Words in 4 Personal Narratives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>story</th>
<th>sent.</th>
<th>background</th>
<th>foreground</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Qahwe</em></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>setting: rozę ‘one day’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2-8</td>
<td>telling what happened so far, explanation in (4), (PFdur)(^8),</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
<td>conflict explodes (PFev)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Diyarbekur</em></td>
<td>1-3</td>
<td>setting: rozę ‘one day’, explaining the situation (PFdur)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4-7</td>
<td>event line starts, conflict explodes (PFev)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Tıxtorê Dındana</em></td>
<td>1-4</td>
<td>setting: veri ‘in the past’, explanation in (3), (PFdur).</td>
<td>solution: new doctor consulted (PFev)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5-7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Qeza</em></td>
<td>1-2</td>
<td>setting: vizérka ‘yesterday’ (PFdur, PFst2)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3-4</td>
<td>event line (PFev)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>coda (PFev)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^8\) The sentences (2)-(8) have iterative meaning (discussion is going back and forth).

\(^9\) In this coda the narrator jumped to the actual time of speaking, using Present Time State (PFst1).
A passage from the story *Qahwe* is presented below where the perfective aspect changes from Past Time Durative (*vatê*) to Past Time Event (*va*). This change indicates that the conflict intensifies and leads to the peak of the story.

(From *Qahwe*, see chapter 5, sent. 7-9a)

(15)

\[
\begin{align*}
Ew & \text{ ci ré } tarix ra \text{ vat-ê} \\
\text{and } 3\text{ob to } \text{history from } \text{say-PFdur} \\
\text{‘And he was speaking to him about history.’}
\end{align*}
\]

(16)

\[
\begin{align*}
Hima & \text{ çi } bin-i \text{ tim } \text{vat-ê} \\
\text{but that.OB other-OB always say.PFdur} \\
"ma Kurd-i!", & \text{ çi-na } nê-zana-yê. \\
\text{we Kurd-PL other-thing not-know.PF-DUR} \\
\text{‘But the other (man) was always saying "we are Kurds!" he didn't know another thing.’}
\end{align*}
\]

(17)

\[
\begin{align*}
No & \text{ Zaza } b-i \text{ hêrs, } \text{va} \\
\text{this Zaza become-PF angry } \text{say.PFev} \\
\text{‘The Zaza got angry and said, [...]’}
\end{align*}
\]

4. Summary

Distinctive coding material is used for two different genres, folktales and personal narratives.\(^{10}\) The next two tables summarize the findings from chapter 2 and 3.

Folktales overwhelmingly use signal words like adverbial phrases and conjunctions to code background information. Events and non-events alike are narrated mainly in imperfective aspect (Historical Present).

\(^{10}\) I would like to underline that direct speech passages in folktales and personal narratives are left out from what is said about coding.
Table 3: Coding Strategies in Folktales

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>coded by</th>
<th>verbal aspect</th>
<th>adverbials and conjunctions</th>
<th>other linguistic devices</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>frequency</td>
<td>low</td>
<td>high</td>
<td>high</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>foregr.</td>
<td></td>
<td>rožê, ıza di 'suddenly'</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>backgr.</td>
<td>description of old custom: perfective</td>
<td>flashback: oxmo di, wextê di, veri argument: çik, qandê coy, coy ra discourse irrealis: hıma, labrê coda: hın, wın, no hesaba, ew nê resenê ...</td>
<td>story setting: cakê beno; zu pir bena addressing the hearer: tu nêvanê postscript</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In contrast, stories of personal experience reveal a strict coding by different senses of the perfective aspect.

Table 4: Coding Strategies in Personal Narratives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>coded by</th>
<th>aspectual form</th>
<th>other material</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>frequency</td>
<td>high</td>
<td>low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>foreground</td>
<td>Past Time Event: va 11</td>
<td>ıza di 'suddenly'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>background</td>
<td>setting: Past Time Durative: vatê</td>
<td>rozê, veri, vizêrka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Past Time State: amey bi</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>evaluation: Present Time State: biyo</td>
<td>newe</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4 does not imply that personal stories do not use conjunction and adverbs as devices, but change of aspectual form is the dominant device used to make a contrast between foreground and different kinds of background information. In any case, our

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11 Less frequently imperfective is used, see story Textorê Dındana sentence 7.
present corpus of personal narratives is too small to make further statements. However, it is safe to say that personal narratives have short passages that are coded as foreground information. That means foreground coding is sometimes reserved, not for the main event line, but for the conflict (like in Qahwe) or the solution (like in Tìxtorê dìndana).

Narratives that are told in imperfective aspect (Historical Present), like folktales, fables, and anecdotes, have background information more often coded by other coding material than by change of tense and aspect, because the imperfective aspect does not offer many senses.

In folktales the event line is interrupted by a multitude of different kinds of background information. The scenes are embroidered and decorated far more than in personal narratives because the storyteller takes his audience into a fictitious and magical world.

Another major distinction to personal narratives is that folktales have been handed down over generations. According to Rosan Hayiğ, who in his youth learnt many stories by heart, folktales have fixed scenes and phrases. They intend to indirectly teach a lesson about traditional values that should be understood by the audience.

In this study we have only looked at the coding of background information in two narrative genres. However, the study of other aspects of narrative, such as participant reference, is also needed and should be an interesting topic for future studies.

5. Sample Texts of Four Personal Narratives

Coding material is marked bold. Different aspectual forms are abbreviated by PFev (va), PFst1 (vato), PFst2 (vat bi), and PFdur (vatê). But the verb biyayîş 'be' does most often not signal a distinction between PFev and PFdur.

5.1 Qahwe

\[
\text{Roz-ê, ma qahwe di ronuşte-y b-i.}
\]
\[\text{day-IND we coffeehouse in sitting-PL be-PF.PL}^{13}\]
\[\text{‘Once we were sitting in the coffeehouse,’} \]

\[\text{\footnotesize \textsuperscript{12} Little material is available to compare personal narratives in different Zaza dialects. Finally, the reader may forgive me, I took Çağlayan’s reportage on witnesses of the ‘38 genocide in Dersim to get linguistic insights. Weliyê Aliyê Dewreşi retells a longer passage where he uses two aspects for foreground information: imperfective (vano), and Past Time Event (va). He changes to Past Durative (kerja) for background information (Çağlayan: 2003, 318-319). Çêna Sey Rizay Leyla (p. 11ff) overwhelmingly speaks in Present Time State (vato), probably for non-witness events, and in Historical Present, both marking foreground information. (Contrast between non-witnessed and witnessed events was not subject of this study. Present Time State in the analyzed personal narratives was used for states or events that reached into the present.)} \]

\[\text{\footnotesize \textsuperscript{13} ronuşte-y bi ’was sitting (adj)’ is to be distinguished from ronist-i bi ‘had taken a seat’, the former expresses the state, the latter the motion.} \]
(2) 

Ina politik-a sero qsey ker-dê.

They were talking about politics.

(3) 

Ê jew-dê ci xo Kurd diyê,

The one was calling himself a Kurd,

è jew-i zi va-tê ki "Zaza-y Kurd-i ni-yê."

‘but the other (lit. one) was saying, "Zaza aren’t Kurds".’

(4) 

O-yo kî xo Kurd diyê,

‘The one who said he is a Kurd,’

o parti-yên-da Kurd-an-a guwe-yayê.

‘he was working with/for a Kurdish party.’

(5) 

Nê Zaza-y va-tê kî "pêr-an-ê ma.

‘This Zaza (the other than in sent. 4) was saying that ‘our fathers,’

kalk-an-ê ma xo rê nê-va-tê Kurd.

‘our forefathers weren’t saying to themselves Kurds,’

né-zan-ayê kî Kurd çiči-yo.

‘(they) didn’t know what a Kurd is.’

(6) 

Tî-yê çî van-ê ma Kurd-i-yê?"

‘Why do you say we are Kurds?’
Ew ci ré tarix ra va-tê.
And 3ob to history from say-PFdur
‘And he was telling him about history.’

Híma ê bin-i tim va-tê, "ma Kurd-i!",
but that. other-OB always say-PFdur "we Kurd-PL”
But the other was saying always "we are Kurds!",

.ci-na nê-zan-ayê.
thing-other not-know-PFdur
‘another thing he didn’t know.’

No Zaza b-t hêrs, va,
this Zaza be-PF angry say.PFev
‘This Zaza became angry and said,’

"tewri di ez no-ya,
theory at I this-C.1S
‘in theory I am like this,”

eki ti praktik wazen-ê,
if/when you practice want.PF-C.2M
‘(but) if you want some practice,”

be, ma tevera lez bi-kimi.
come!2S we outside at fight SJ-do.1PL
‘come on, we will fight outside!’

5.2 Diyarbekir

Rozê. ez Diyarbekir di xaraj-dê Çermûg di b-i-ya.
day-IND I Diyarbakir in bus.station-EZ Çermik in be-PF-1S
‘Once I was in Diyarbakir at the bus station for Çermik.’

Mê ker-dê şur-a Çermûg-tê.
I.OB do-PFdur SJ.go-1S Çermik-to
‘I was about to travel to Çermik.’

Üza di zeweri xortum-a aw pîş-tê ‘erdi.
there at one.OB tube-with water splash-PFdur ground
‘There, a man was splash[ing water through a tube to the ground.’
4.

Zew zi ş-t, ey ra bi Türkiy-a aw was-t.
‘One man came, he requested water from him in Turkish.’

5.

Ey cuwab nê-d-a, fina was-t.
‘That man (lit. he) didn't give an answer, (he) requested again,’

6.

Ew Kirdasi-ya va: "Kurmanji bêdên!"
‘Then he said in Kurdish: Speak Kurmanji!’ (direct speech in Kurdish)

7.

Ê bin-i zi va: "Kirdasi nê-zan-a, ez Zaza-ya,
‘The other man said: I don't know Kurdish, I am Zaza,’

8.

Úza di ey xortum d-a ney ro,
‘Suddenly he (the Kurd) directed the tube towards him (the Zaza)’

5.3 Tixtorê Dündana

1.

Veri ez ş-îyê tuxt-i qandê dunan-a.
‘In the past I went to doctors because of my teeth.’
(2) *Va-tê, "ez gayl-a dîndan-an-ê xo rašt-i ker-a."*  
say-PFdur 1 wanting-1S tooth-OB.PL-EZ RFX straight-PL SJ.do-C.PL  
'I said I wanted to have them made straight.'

(3) *Verî çewt-i b-i.*  
earlier crooked-PL be-PF.PL  
'Earlier they were crooked.'

(4) *Ina va-tê, "nê-ben-o,*  
they.OB say-PFdur not-be.IPF-3M  
'They said, "that's not possible,'  
*ba'hdê des ü 'heşt serr-an-a nê-ben-o".*  
after ten and eight year-OB.PL-with not-be.IPF.C.3M  
'beyond the age of eighteen that's not possible'.'

(5) *Mit txtor-ê xo vûrn-a,*  
I.OB doctor-EZ RFX change-PFev  
'I changed my doctor,'  
*ez ş-i-ya 14 jû-na txtor-i.*  
I go-PF.C.1S (ev) one(F)-other doctor-F  
'I went to another female doctor.'

(6) *Ay mi rê çi dîndan-a d-a.*  
she.OB me to thing(-EZ) tooth-OB.PL give-PFev  
'She gave me a thing for the teeth.' (braces)

(7) *Ez şew ken-a xo-ya, rojdhir vejen-a.*  
I night do.IPF.C.1S RFX-with daytime put.out.IPF.C.1S  
'I (usually) put it on at night and take it out during the day.'

(8) *Dîndan-ê mi newe b-iy-ê 15 rašt-i.*  
tooth-EZ.PL my now become-PF.C.PL (PFst1) straight-PL  
'Now my teeth became straight.'

---

14 When replaced with 3.pers.sing. PFev becomes obvious: *o şî jûna txtori.*

15 When replaced with 3.pers.sing. PFst1 becomes obvious: *newe bîyo rašt.*
5.4 Qeza

(1)

\[ \text{Vızêrka } \text{mqeç-i } \text{ber-dê } \text{okül.} \]

yesterday I.OB child-PL take.away-PFdur school

‘It was yesterday when I was taking the children to school.’

(2)

\[ \text{Tiya } \text{dt, } \text{ray-er } \text{sero } \text{qeza } \text{b-i } + \text{ b-i,} \]

here at way-OB.F upon accident be-PFst2

‘Here, on this street had been an accident,’

\[ \text{dt } \text{'erebey } \text{ame-y } + \text{ b-i } \text{pê } \text{ro.} \]

two cars come.PFst2-PL each.other down

‘two cars had bumped into each other.’

(3)

\[ \text{Mı } \text{qeç-i } \text{ber-d-i,} \]

I.OB child-PL take.away.PFev-PL

‘I (actually) took the children (to school)’

\[ \text{ez } \text{a } \text{kışta } \text{ame-y,} \]

I that side come.PF-C.3F (ev)

‘I came from that side,’

\[ \text{hala } \text{ray } \text{kapax } \text{b-i.} \]

still (tk.) way closed be-PF.F

‘then the street was still closed.’

(4)

\[ \text{Erebey } \text{boll-i } \text{b-i } \text{mu } \text{nê-ş-a } \text{bir-a } \text{keye.} \]

car.PL many-PL be-PF.PL I.OB not-can-PFev SJ.come-C.1S home

‘There were so many cars, I could not come home.’

(5)

\[ \text{Ba'hdê } \text{nim-na } \text{si'ät } \text{ray } \text{ab-iyê}^{16}, \]

after half-other hour way open-PF.F

‘After half an hour the road was opened,’

\[ \text{ez } \text{ame-y,} \]

I come.PF-C.3F (ev^{17}) home.

‘I (finally) came home.’

---

16 Because of preverbal a- the verb abiyayış in perfective aspect is abiyê, not *abi.

17 When replaced with 3.pers.sing. PFev becomes obvious: o ame keye.
Abbreviations

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<td>C</td>
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<td>REL</td>
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<tr>
<td>RFX</td>
<td>reflexive pronoun or personal pronoun: xo</td>
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<tr>
<td>SJ</td>
<td>subjunctive suffix (stands for subjunctive imperfective when not marked otherwise)</td>
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References