



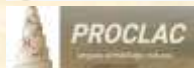
IMPERFECTIVE MODALITIES IN THE CAUCASUS AND BEYOND

SIMILARITY IN DIFFERENCE: IMPERFECTIVES IN TWO IRANIAN LANGUAGES OF AZERBAIJAN

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Murad Suleymanov
murad.suleymanov@inalco.fr
PSL–EPHE–ILARA / Inalco /
OSRJL / UMR 7192

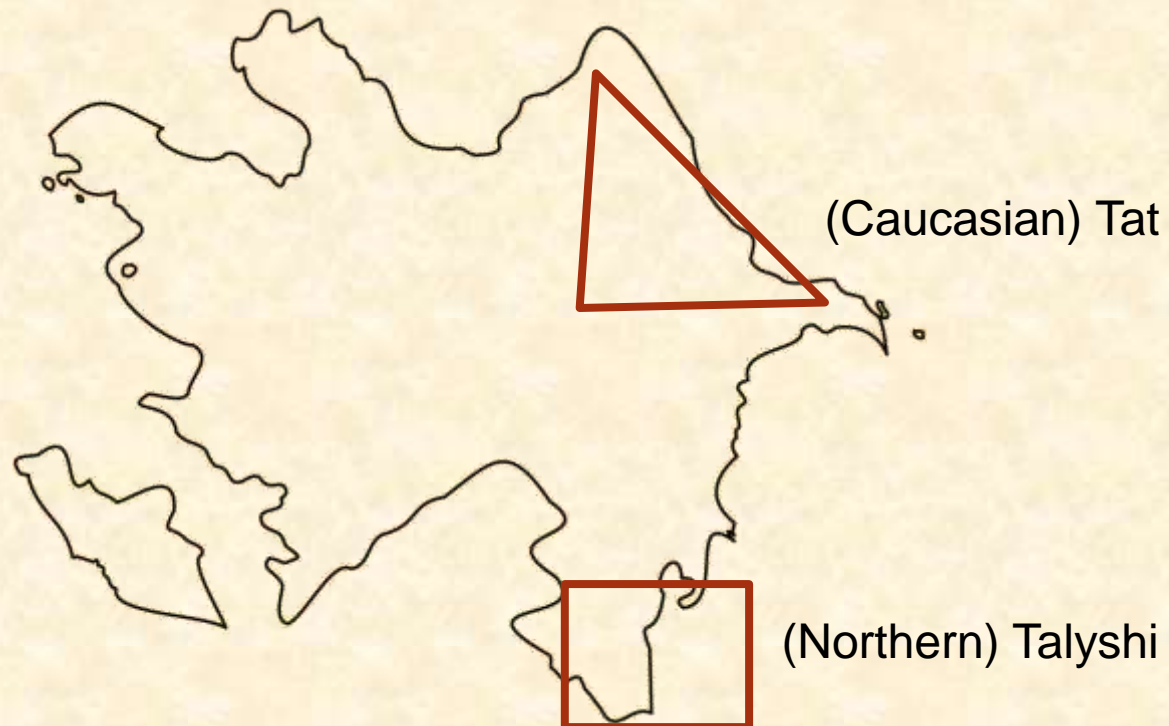
Steven Kaye
s.kaye@surrey.ac.uk
Collège de France



INTRODUCTION



- Two Iranian languages of Azerbaijan



INTRODUCTION



Tat

- Traditionally “SW” Iranian
- <100K speakers
- Severely endangered (UNESCO)
- Nominative alignment

Northern Talyshi

- Traditionally “NW” Iranian
- Several 100K speakers
- Potentially vulnerable (UNESCO)
- Split-ergative > nominative alignment

- All speakers in Azerbaijan bilingual in Azeri
- Limited written tradition
- Not in contact
- ...or at least not recently

INTRODUCTION



- In some ways verb forms very similar
- ...or are they?
- Comparison reveals an interesting pattern of similarity *and* difference

INTRODUCTION



Iranian verb stem opposition

- Stem 1
 - Descendant of Old Iranian present stem
 - Used to form present tense in Middle & New Persian → “present stem”
- Stem 2
 - Descendant of Old Iranian verbal adjective
 - Grammaticalisation yielded perfective forms → “past stem”
- Opposition largely preserved in Tat (Suleymanov 2023)
- ...but significantly eroded in Northern Talyshi (Kaye 2013)
- Terms “present” and “past” no longer applicable

INTRODUCTION



➤ (Muslim) Tat

➤ Verb form in *bä-* with present reference

- (1) *nä-bä-dir-än-i* *káčäl=ä* *dandun=i* *xird* *bir-e,* *bä-girēst-än?*
NEG-IPFV-see₂-PRS-2 bald=OBL tooth=POSS:3 broken be₂-PRF:2/3 IPFV-cry₂-PRS:3

‘**Don’t** you **see** that the Bald Man has broken a tooth and **is crying**?’ (*Bald Man*, 16)

➤ Verb form in *mi-* with future reference:

- (2) *kile=män=ä* *be* *näve=tī* *mi-t-um* *vo* *ye* *šärt=i.*
girl.BS=POSS:1=OBL LOC grandchild.BS=POS:2 EVT-give₁-1 with one condition=IDF

‘I **will let** my daughter marry your grandson on one condition.’ (*Dəm.*)

INTRODUCTION



➤ Northern Talyshi

➤ Verb form in *bä-* with future reference

(3) *äv=e* *ki,* *dävuš,* *az* *maštä* *bä-š-e=m* *bä* *misir.*
3.DIR=COP.3 COMP dervish 1.DIR morning FUT-go-INF=COP.1SG to Egypt

'So, dervish, I'll go tomorrow to Egypt.' (*Bəhram bəy*, 35)

➤ Verb form in *-dä* with present reference:

(4) *xäbä=š* *sa-y:* *-bo* *čič-i* *näv-ey-dä=š?*
news=3SG.CL take₂-PRET -for what-OBL search-INF-PROG=COP.2SG

'He asked: –What are you looking for?' (*Three lies*, 90)

INTRODUCTION



- Forms in *bä-* have the same structure in both languages
 - spatial preposition *bä* + stem + infinitive suffix + copula marking person-number
- Clearly innovative in the Iranian context
- Functions are different



INTRODUCTION

- Explanation?
 - Scholars aware of areal effects in verbal inflection in this region (Noorlander & Stilo 2015, Stilo & Noorlander 2015, Vafaeian 2018)
 - Areal effects clearly responsible for similarity, but what about the difference?
- This presentation
 - A well-known diachronic principle underlies this situation (Haspelmath 1998)
 - Precise story of these forms has not been established before

TAT



Haspelmath (1998)

- When new PRS grammaticalises, pre-existing may be marginalised without disappearing
 - e.g. becomes restricted to semantically special lexemes, or FUT, or SBJV
- Tat an interesting example, where this process has happened *twice*.

*mi-xar-üm

'I am eating'
PRS:PROG

*xar-üm

'I eat'
PRS

'I will eat'
EVT

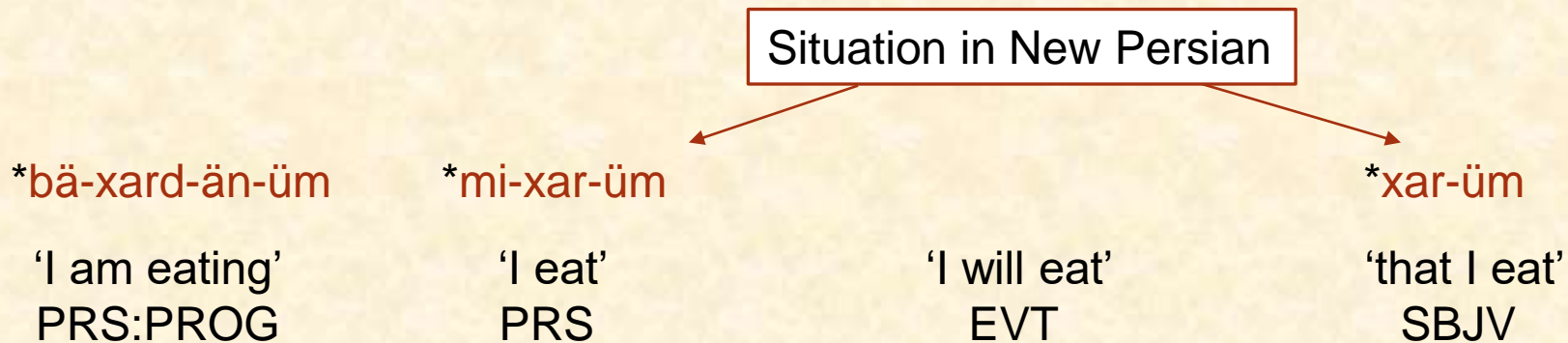
'that I eat'
SBJV

TAT



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- When new PRS grammaticalises, pre-existing may be marginalised without disappearing
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- Tat an interesting example, where this process has happened *twice*.
- Evidence that process can happen cyclically

*bä-xard-än-üm

'I am eating'
PRS:PROG

'I eat'
PRS

*mi-xar-üm

'I will eat'
EVT

*xar-üm

'that I eat'
SBJV

TAT



- Haspelmath (1998) does not explain what grammaticalisation process is involved
- Only looked at a dialect where <*bä-* + infinitive> replaced by <*mi-* + infinitive>, e.g. *mi-xard-än-üm* → later development
- Involves spatial preposition *bä* ‘to, in’
- Same process affecting imperfect

**mi-xard-üm*

‘I was eating’
IMPF

‘I would eat’
EVT:PST

TAT



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- Involves spatial preposition *bä* ‘to, in’
- Same process affecting imperfect

**bä-xard-än(-)bir-üm*

‘I was eating’
IMPF

**mi-xard-üm*

‘I would eat’
EVT:PST

NORTHERN TALYSHI



- Northern Talyshi verb system unusual vis-à-vis other Iranian
 - Binary stem opposition often abandoned
 - Two main non-past TAM descend from grammaticalised spatial expressions (Noorlander & Stilo 2015)
- Present: <infinitive + *-dä* (← postposition =*ädä* 'in') + copula>
 - *näv-ey-dä=š* <search-INF-PROG=2SG> 'I search / I am searching'
- Future: <*bä-* (← preposition *bä* 'to, at') + infinitive + copula>
 - *bä-š-e=m* <FUT-go-INF=1SG> 'I will search'

NORTHERN TALYSHI



- Reminder: *bä-* in Tat associated with present
- What is the disagreement?
- From the point of view of Northern Talyshi, two possible scenarios:
 - (1) each grammaticalised directly into its current function, independently
 - plausible since *bä* is primarily directive
 - (2) <*bä-* + INF> originated as “broader non-past”; future when <INF + *-dä*> later grammaticalised into present
 - per Haspelmath (1998)
- Evidence favours scenario (2)

NORTHERN TALYSHI



➤ <*bä-* + INF>: contexts where future reference not salient

➤ e.g. general truths

(5) *odäm-i* *piä* *qur-i* *joğo* *bä-sut-e=n.*
person-OBL father grave-OBL like_this FUT-burn-INF=COP.3PL

‘That’s how they(’ll) burn a man’s father’s grave’

[= that’s how to teach someone a lesson!] (*Honourable*, 272)

➤ Present meaning for *bä-* seen in certain “fossilised” items

➤ e.g. modal *bäpe* ‘must’ < *bä-p(i)y-e* ‘*it wants’

➤ e.g. *bäne(=m)* ‘behold’ < *bä-z(i)n-e(=m)* ‘*X knows/thinks’

➤ Harzandi (related) has cognates of both but preserved as PRS

➤ *bööt=en* ‘I say’ (Stilo 2018: 718), habitual, cf. Talyshi *bävotē=m* ‘I will say’

➤ *ötd=en* ‘I am saying’ (Stilo 2018: 733), progressive, cf. Talyshi *votedä=m* ‘I say’

CONCLUSION



- Result: <*bä-* + infinitive + copula> underwent the same grammaticalisation in both Tat and Northern Talyshi
 - In Tat: pushed an earlier <*mi-* + stem 1> grammaticalisation to margins
 - In Talyshi: grammaticalisation pushed to margins itself, by *-dä*

	Tat	Northern Talyshi
PRS	<i>bä-</i> + INF + COP	INF + <i>-dä</i> + COP
FUT	<i>mi-</i> + stem 1 + Agr	<i>bä-</i> + INF + COP

CONCLUSION



- Thanks to dialect material, Tat provides better evidence for Haspelmath's (1998) scenario
- Northern Talyshi appears to have undergone a similar process of layering to that already established for Tat
- Differences in IPFV domain largely result from same areal developments but 'offset'

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THANK YOU!

