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Metatypy in Iranian: 2 cases against a typological constraint in language contact

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Outline

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The Issue of Markedness

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- ▶ markedness has frequently been cited as one of the constraints on what is possible in language contact – to one extent or another (Thomason & Kaufman 1988:194, 213; Myers-Scotton 2002:190–1; Heine & Kuteva 2005:256)

BUT no clear definition of what markedness is in this context is standardly provided

AND the supposed markedness constraint is frequently broken

THUS many have called to abandon the notion (Myers-Scotton 2002:231)



What Is Markedness? Ex. I

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Markedness as Semantic Distinction

- ▶ NHG *Hund* ‘dog’ may refer to a canine of any gender
- ▶ NHG *Hündin* ‘bitch’, however, is restricted to female members of the species

THUS the more marked token is that with the narrower frame of reference (cf. Jakobson 1971:3–4)



What Is Markedness? Ex. II

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Markedness as Morphological Difficulty

- ▶ the English plural pattern (e.g. *glove:gloves*) exhibits a correspondence of form (-s) and function ([+plural])
- ▶ other plural formations such as *ox:oxen* or *fish:fish* do so in a non-standard way (plural -en) or lack morphological realisation of the feature [+plural]

THUS the more marked token is that which ‘strain[s] the human language capacity’ more (Wurzel 1998:63)



Is Markedness a Sensible Category? I

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A 'definition' of markedness:

Capturing exactly what markedness means is by no means a straightforward task

and:

Markedness is something about which linguists come to have strong intuitions

(Rice 2003:390, 413)



Is Markedness a Sensible Category? II

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- ▶ markedness is a promiscuously used term, and often opaque
- ▶ does not refer to a single category of concepts or phenomenon
- ▶ accordingly a suggestion from Haspelmath:

[L]inguists can dispense with the term ‘markedness’ and many of the concepts that it has been used to express. It can be readily replaced by other concepts and terms that are less ambiguous, more transparent and provide better explanations for the observed phenomena.

(2006:63)



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Another ‘definition’: in language contact, markedness derives

primarily from typology (more widespread = less marked), and secondarily from first-language acquisition (first learned = less marked)

(Thomason & Kaufman 1988:26–7)

- ▶ markedness as a measure of typological distance



Markedness in Language Contact II

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But there is a problem:

[D]o we determine markedness values [...] by looking at the facts of a single language or the facts of many? And if markedness is both language-particular and universal, are we dealing with different concepts?

(Batistella 1996:89)



Markedness in Language Contact III

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- ▶ Greenberg's Universals are typological observations

BUT they cannot function as a relational model

THUS for language contact, typological distance (or markedness) is relative

- ▶ a pattern A is considered marked in relation to pattern B, iff the language with A also contains B, but not necessarily vice versa (cf. Eckman 1977:320)
- ▶ e.g. French and German have a periphrastic perfect (*Je suis tombé* & *Ich bin gefallen*), but only French has obligatory gender and number agreement in the participle (*Il/Elle est tombé/tombée* & *Er/Sie ist gefallen.*)



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- ▶ typological distance / markedness has been related to L2 acquisition difficulties (Rutherford 1982; Eckman 1996; Eckman 2004)

BUT this is not borne out by more recent psycholinguistic studies (e.g. Pienemann *et al.* 2009)

- ▶ if language learning is unaffected, is language contact?



Markedness in Language Contact V

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- ▶ typological distance / markedness constraint more honoured in the breach than the observance
- ▶ standard example: Cappadocian Greek (Asia Minor Greek)
 - ▶ phonology: added sounds (ɪ ö ü; various fricatives, affricates)
 - ▶ morphophonology: vowel harmony (e.g. 3.Sg.Aor. *düşúntsü* < *düşúntsi* (Malakopi), from Turkish *düşünmek* ‘think’)
 - ▶ morphology: agglutinative structures (*to néka* ‘the woman’, gen. *néka-ju*, pl. *nékes*, gen. *nékez-ju*)
 - ▶ etc. (see Thomason & Kaufman 1988:214ff. with bibliography)
- ▶ some other languages concerned: Ma’a, Šīnā, Mednij Aleut (Verbeke 2013, Thomason 1997)
- ▶ evidence in favour of Thomason (1988, 2003, 2008) that socio-historic factors play the main role in determining what is possible in language contact



Markedness in Language Contact VI

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The evidence we have collected that bears on this point does not permit a firm conclusion about the validity of the general hypothesis [concerning the role of typological distance]. [...] We have solid evidence from cases of heavy structural borrowing (e.g., Ma'a, Asia Minor Greek) and even moderate structural borrowing (e.g., various contact situations in India) that features can and do get borrowed regardless of their typological fit with borrowing-language features.

(Thomason & Kaufman 1988:53)

SO does typology play a role in language contact?



A Suggestion I

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YES typological differences **DO** play into language contact
BUT they do **NOT** constrain it

- ▶ socio-historic factors are the main determinant of what can happen
- ▶ esp. in bilingual code-switching, any L1 feature (lexicon, morphology, syntax) may be spontaneously used in L2

FOR language processing allows access to all patterns available irrespective of primary language appurtenance



A Suggestion II

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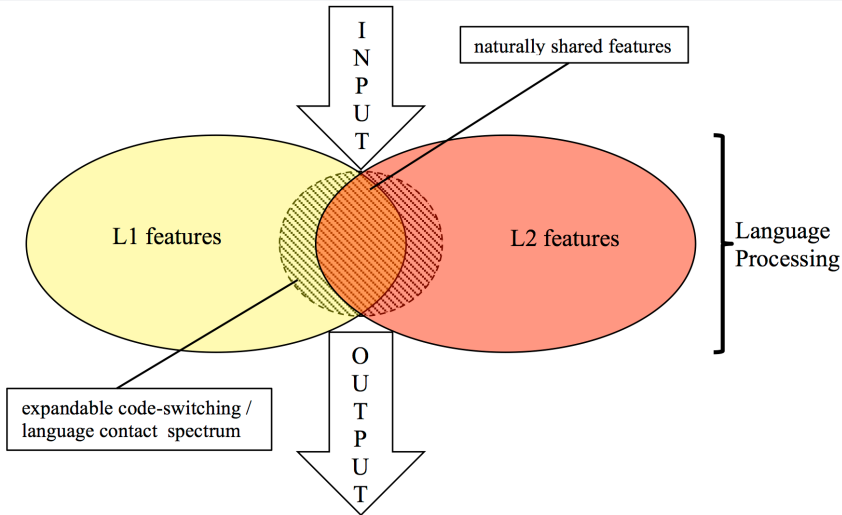
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A Suggestion III

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- ▶ grammaticalisation and retention of such imports therefore depend on:
 - 1 frequency of feature (more frequent, more likely) = centrality
 - 2 maintenance of bilingualism = stability
 - 3 typological fit of import = harmony (cp. Haig 2008)
- ▶ typology acts not as a constraint for borrowing, but as a levelling mechanism



What is Metatypy?

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- ▶ type of contact-induced language change suggested by Ross (1996)
- ▶ most recent definition: Metatypy is a

diachronic process whereby the morphosyntactic constructions of one of the languages of a bilingual speech community are restructured on the model of the constructions of the speakers' other language, such that the constructions of the replica language come to more closely match those of the model language in both meaning and morphosyntax

(Ross 2007:124)



Relevance of Metatypy

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- ▶ metatypy (amongst other things) deals with pattern replication, viz. syntactic borrowings
- ▶ the reality of pattern replication in language contact is not accepted by all researchers (cf. e.g. Meillet 1921:87; Givón 1979:26; Silva-Corvalán 2008:221)
- ▶ evidence speaks overwhelmingly in its favour, however (Matras 2009; Matras & Sakel 2007; Meyer fthc. 2015)
- ▶ another point in favour of the ‘anything is possible’ approach to language contact (Thomason & Kaufman 1988; Campbell & Muntzel 1989; *pace* Myers-Scotton 2002)



Some Cases of (Partial) Metatypy

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- ▶ development of an inclusive/exclusive ‘we’ distinction in Sindhi and Gujarati (Indic) on the basis of neighbouring Dravidian languages (Emeneau 1980:59)
- ▶ Šīnā (Indic) introduced ergative alignment in its imperfect on a Balti (Tibetan) model (Anderson 1977:344; Verbeke 2013:256–7)
- ▶ creation of a gender system in proto-Chinookan under heavy influence from neighbouring languages, probably Salishan (Silverstein 1974, 1977)



Why Consider Metatypy?

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- ▶ typological changes occur naturally in languages
 - ▶ loss of morphological case system in Romance languages
 - ▶ alignment change from Middle to Classical Persian
 - ▶ loss of gender category from Proto-Indo-European to Classical Armenian
- ▶ metatypy is thus an ongoing process maintaining a typologically unbalanced system

QUESTION:

How do cases of metatypy match up with the Centrality, Stability, and Harmony suggestion from above?



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- ▶ Classical Armenian, first attested: early fifth century CE
- ▶ initially (pre-1877) perceived as belonging to Iranian sub-group of Indo-European (IE) languages
- ▶ seminal proof that in fact *independent* branch of IE by HÜBSCHMANN (1877)
- ▶ now thought to form a sub-group with Greek, Albanian, Phrygian, etc. (*Pontic group*)
- ▶ research focus to date: lexicon (matter replication)
- ▶ for further reference: HÜBSCHMANN (1897); BENVENISTE (1957-8); BOLOGNESI (1960); SCHMITT (1983)



Historical Context I

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- ▶ first secure attestation in Behistun inscription of Darius I (late sixth/early fifth century BCE)

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DB II:26

“King Darius says: An Armenian named Dâdarši, my servant, I sent into Armenia, and I said unto him: 'Go, smite that host which is in revolt and does not acknowledge me. ...'”

- ▶ first indication of Iranian connections
- ▶ Armenia remains Achaemenid Satrapy until defeat of Darius III by Alexander the Great (331 BCE)
- ▶ then independent kingdom with ruling class of Iranian origin (GARSOÏAN 1997:46–7)



Historical Context II

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- ▶ little extralinguistic evidence for linguistic situation

Strabo, Geography, XI.14,5

“According to a report, Armenia ... was enlarged by Artaxias and Zariadris, who ... jointly enlarged their kingdoms by cutting off for themselves parts of the surrounding nations, ... ; and therefore they all speak the same language, ...”

Agat'angelos, History of the Armenians, §§18

“The time of the Parthian kingdom came to an end ... [The Sasanians] abandoned, rejected and disdained the sovereignty of the Parthians. ... [BUT:] whoever was king of Armenia had second rank in the Persian kingdom ...”

- ▶ political, cultural, economic, ... affiliation c. 500 BCE - 428 CE



Matter replication: lexicon

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- ▶ mainly nouns, as expected (MATRAS 2009:167; FIELD 2002:153, 206–228)

Examples

ašxarh “world, country” < Pth./MP *šhr*;

dašt “field, plain” < Pth./MP *dšt*;

zawr “army” < Pth. *z’wr* “power, strength”;

t’šnami “enemy” < OIr. **dušmanyu-* (cf. Av. *dušmainiiu-*,
Pth./MP *dušmen*)



Matter Replication: Lexicon

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- ▶ notably, however, verbs, adjectives, basic vocabulary items, and closed-class items are replicated as well

Examples

azat “free, noble” < Pth./MP (ʾ)ʾzʾd;

hramayem “I order” < Pth./MP *prmʾy-*;

seaw “black” < Pth. *syʾw*;

spitak “white” from MP *spʾdg*;

vat “bad” < MP *wṭ*;

bžišk “doctor, physician” < MP *bcšḱ*;

vasn “since, for, because of” < Pth. *wsnʾd*



Pattern Replication

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- ▶ Arm. canonical reflexive *iwr anjn* (lit. “one’s own soul”) modelled on Pth. *xwysš gryw* “id.”
- ▶ pattern inherited from, and exclusive to, Indo-Iranian languages (cp. YAv. *huua- tanu-*, Ved. (*svaya-*) *tanū-*)
- ▶ Arm. *ink‘n* shares same functional distribution of MP *xwd*, Pth. *wxd*: intensifier, anaphora
- ▶ for details, see MEYER (2013)



Metatypy: the Perfect System I

Metatypy in Iranian

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- ▶ transitive perfect (as opposed to intransitive and passive) shows unusual constituent marking
- ▶ structure: GEN-agent ACC-object Perf.Ptcp. be.3.Sg.Prs

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Mk. 12:10 (Armenian)

ʔoč´	<u>z=gir=n</u>	z=ayn
Neg	Obj=writing.Acc.Sg=Def	Obj=Dem.Acc.Sg
ic´ē	ənt´erc´eal	<u>jer</u>
be.3.Sg.Subj	read.Ptcp	2.Pers.Gen.Pl

“Should you not have read this writing?”

- ▶ alignment not attested elsewhere in Armenian, and uncommon in IE languages



Metatypy: the Perfect System II

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- ▶ previous explanations (small selection)
- ▶ MEILLET (1936): *genitivus auctoris* with verbal abstract – doesn't explain why only in transitive verbs;
- ▶ BENVENISTE (1952): *genitivus possessivus* in 'have'-perfect – doesn't explain accusative object;
- ▶ STEMPEL (1983): old passive construction with genitive agent, analogically transformed into active – old genitive agent very unlikely (cp. HETTRICH 1990);
- ▶ SCHMIDT (1992): influence of Kartvelian split-ergative – language contact with Kartvelian almost negligible at the time, different pattern (cp. DJAHUKIAN 2003); but: other languages have split-ergative pattern, too!



Metatypy: the Perfect System III

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- ▶ Parthian and Middle Persian show split-ergative pattern: OBL-agent DIR-object Pst.Ptcp. (non-3.Sg. copula)

MKG 1398–1400 (Parthian)

byc	'w's	<u>cy=m</u>	dyd
but	now	Comp=1.Pers.Sg.Obl	see.Pst
<u>'yy</u>	<u>'w=m</u>	tw	
be.2.Sg.Prs	and=1.Pers.Sg.Obl	2.Poss	
(s)wn	'šnwd		
speech.Dir	hear.Pst		

“But now that I have seen you, and have heard your speech ...”

- ▶ Q1: Why genitive agent?
- ▶ Q2: Why accusative object (if from erg. pattern)?
- ▶ Q3: Why invariable 3.Sg. copula?



Metatypy: the Perfect System IV

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- ▶ ad Q1: genitive agent
- ▶ Pth. distinguishes two cases: direct and oblique
- ▶ oblique is used, *inter alia*, for possession marking – like the Armenian genitive (DURKIN-MEISTERERNST 2014:273)
- ▶ further: some borrowed prepositions like Arm. *vasn*, cp. OP *vašnā* ‘by will of; owing to’ retain original genitive
- ▶ when replicating pattern, analogy in usage was sought and found in genitive



Metatypy: the Perfect System V

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- ▶ ad Q2: accusative object
- ▶ Arm. Nom.Sg. and Acc.Sg. are identical
- ▶ differential object marking (? – cf. SCALA 2011) allows for indef. objects identical in form to Nom.Sg.

Jn. 12:14 (Armenian)

ew	gteal	Yisowsi	<u>ēš</u>	mi
and	find.Ptcp	PN	donkey.Nom/Acc.Sg	Indef

“And Jesus found a donkey”



Metatypy: the Perfect System VI

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- ▶ suggestion: original Arm. pattern had GEN-agent and NOM-object (based on Pth.)
- ▶ ‘shift’ to GEN-agent ACC-object (tripartite alignment) owing to partial *formal identity*, and de-ergativisation tendency – adapting foreign pattern to internal constraints (cp. DORLEIJN 1996; SCHMIDT 1980:165)
- ▶ tripartite alignment often a development stage from ergative to accusative alignment (PAYNE 1980; SKALMOWSKI 1974)



Metatypy: the Perfect System VII

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- ▶ ad Q3: invariable 3.Sg. copula
- ▶ not due to Iranian influence, since it does not occur there

M5569/V/9-11 (Parthian)

'wd	d'd	Ø	'ym	wygh'hyft
and	give.Pst	Ø	Dem	testimony
'wyz'y	'mwcg	'w	hmg	dyn
Uzzi	teacher	Obj	all	community

“And the teacher Uzzi gave this testimony to all the community
...” (cf. DURKIN-MEISTERERNST 2014:397)

- ▶ innovation: to yield a finite verb form? (speculation)
- ▶ invariant copulas or lack of agreement have been seen as an indicator of alignment change in progress (COMRIE 1978:342)



Aspects of Convergence

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- ▶ **POPLACK AND LEVEY (2010)** emphasise importance of ruling out internal motivation for change/unusual patterns – very plausible here
- ▶ other criteria for language convergence (prolonged contact, geographical proximity, matter replication) clearly given
- ▶ type of pattern replication argued for demonstrably occurs elsewhere (see below)
- ▶ esp. plausible if one maintains the position of **ELŠÍK AND MATRAS (2006:154, 159-160)** that frequent and marked features are more readily replicated



Aspects of Convergence II

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Conclusions

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- ▶ no data before 5th century CE
- ▶ lexical matter replication suggests “moderate/heavy borrowing” (THOMASON AND KAUFMAN 1988:50)
- ▶ BUT: do instances of pattern replication have the same origin?
- ▶ OR: ‘language shift’ of Iranian superstratum, thus results of their L2-acquisition mistakes?
- ▶ such cases have been documented (cf. THOMASON 1980:364)
- ▶ further, MATRAS AND SAKEL (2007:849) indicate that ‘shift’ is more likely to have a long-term effect on the replica language
- ▶ potential corroboration by socio-political events (Partho-Sasanian political quarrels since mid-third century CE, adoption of Christianity in c. 301)
- ▶ thus: ‘emblematicity’ of Armenian for (former) Iranian speakers (cf. TAELEMAN 2010)?!



Centrality, Stability, Harmony

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- ▶ tripartite pattern predominant until approx. 8th century CE
- ▶ then replaced by nominative-accusative alignment
- ▶ change of socio-political circumstances: greater independence of Armenia from Sasanians; Arab invasion

THUS loss of Stability: closer contact with Iranian speakers subsides (Parthians had been most central, anyway)

THEN re-establishment of Harmony: tripartite alignment upheld by contact is phased out

- ▶ first signs thereof exist in deviant constructions throughout the ages



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- ▶ Old Aramaic: chancery language of the Achaemenid Empire
- THUS prolonged contact with Old Persian
- ▶ both languages co-occur in multilingual inscriptions (e.g. Behistun)
 - ▶ numerous lexical borrowings from Old Persian into Old Aramaic
 - ▶ to a lesser extent, morphosyntactic calques, e.g.
 - ▶ OA *'ḥr* 'afterwards', based OP *pasāva* 'id.'
 - ▶ replication of OP *haya/taya*-phrases (genitive/possessive relationship between NPs) as OA *zy* instead of a construct chain (cf. Whitehead 1978:128–35)



Old Persian *taya manā kṛtam*

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- ▶ grammatical replication includes that of the *taya manā kṛtam* construction (for various analyses, see Benveniste 1952; Haig 2008; Jügel 2015)

DB I.27–8

ima	taya	manā	kṛtam
Dem.Acc.Pl.N	Rel.Ac.Pl.N	1.Sg.Gen	do.Ptcp
pasāva	yaθā	xšāyaθiya	
after	when	king.Nom.Sg.M	
abavam			
become.1.Sg.Pst			

‘These [are the things] which I did (lit. done of me) after I became king.’

- ▶ construction is limited to the verb *kar-* ‘to do, make’ in OP, but by Middle Iranian times is standard way of expressing the past (ergative alignment)



Old Aramaic *qṭyl l-*

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- ▶ Ciancaglini (2008:32), Pennacchietti (1988:104): Old Aramaic *qṭyl l-* construction based on OP model
- ▶ form: participle + preposition *l-* ‘to, belonging to’ (otherwise indicates indirect object)
- ▶ not a passive (agent marked with *min* ‘by’)
- ▶ construction serves as a resultative perfect, initially restricted to verbs of perception



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- ▶ standardly, no grammatical marking of subject or object

Standard

'r]ṭhy yd' ṭ'm-' znh

PN know.3.Sg.M command-Emph this

'Arṭhaya knows this command.' (TAD A6.10; Driver 7; Pell. Aram. I)

- ▶ but subject (=agent) marking in borrowed construction

Borrowed alignment

w-k'n tnḥ kn ṣmy' l-y

and-now here thus hear.Ptcp to-1.SG

'And now, thus have I heard here, [that] ...' (TAD A6.10; Driver 7; Pell. Aram. I)



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- ▶ this construction also persists in some OA daughter languages: Syriac, Mandaic, Talmudic Aramaic
- ▶ Kutscher (1969:140): still fairly uncommon in the Pešittā
- ▶ later used for verbs not only of perception, and included transitive and intransitive verbs (cp. Nöldeke 1898:§279)

THUS the construction has adapted to OA typology (where transitive and intransitive aren't separated)

AND re-analysis of *l-* argument as subject, object marking also with *l-*

Re-analysis (Syriac)

kaḏ 'asīr l-eh l-sāṭānā b-šēšaltā

Conj bind.Ptcp to-3.Sg.M to-Satan with-chain.PI

‘for he had bound Satan with chains’ (am 3, 595, 13)



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- ▶ this is NOT a case of metatypy
- ▶ the construction never became the standard way of expressing the past in Old Aramaic or Syriac (Ciancaglini 2008:36)
- ▶ no typological change in syntax: the *l-* prefixed agent was neither adopted in other tenses, nor the standard for this tense
- ▶ clearly, Centrality (frequency of usage) in contact was lacking
- ▶ also: indigenous alternatives prevail



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- ▶ Muslim population of Sulemaniyya, founded in 1784, is almost entirely Kurdish speaking
- ▶ Jewish community very close by (until emigration to Israel between 1950 and 1952; cf. Khan 2007:198)
- ▶ numerous borrowings North-Eastern Neo-Aramaic (NENA), e.g.
 - ▶ phonological changes (e.g. [t̪], [d̪] > [l])
 - ▶ loss of grammatical categories (gender in the pronouns)



Alignment in Sulemaniyya Kurdish

- ▶ Sulemaniyya Kurdish has split-ergative alignment (ergative in past)

Sulemaniyya Kurdish (cf. Khan 2008)

Intransitive

mird-ī || mird-in (die.Pst-2.Sg || die.Pst-2.Pl)

‘You died’

a-mir-ī || a-mir-in (Prs-die-2.Sg || Prs-die-2.Pl)

‘You are dying’

Transitive:

kušt-it || kušt-tān (kill.Pst-2.Sg.Obj || kill.Pst-2.Pl.Obj)

‘You killed him.’

a-t-kuž-ē || a-tān-kuž-ē

(Prs-2.Sg.Obj-kill-3.Sg || Prs-2.Pl.Obj-kill-3.Sg)

‘He is killing you’

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Alignment in NENA – replicated

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- ▶ alignment replicated in NENA on the basis of *qṭyl l-* construction from above

NENA

Intransitive:

mīl-et || mīl-etun (die.Pst-2.Sg || die.Pst-2.Pl)

‘You died’

mel-et || mel-etun (die.Prs-2.Sg || die.Prs-2.Pl)

‘You are dying’

Transitive:

qṭil-lox || qṭil-laxun (kill.Pst-2.Sg.Obj || kill.Pst-2.Pl.Obj)

‘You killed him’

qāṭil-lox || qāṭil-laxun (kill.Prs-2.Sg.Obj || kill.Prs-2.Pl.Obj)

‘He is killing you’



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- ▶ significant typological changes have occurred (different alignment), so yes, metatypy

BUT only partial metatypy, however, like in Armenian above, since only one tense is affected (not a whole tense system)

- ▶ also like in Armenian, there are signs of de-ergativisation (but ditto for Kurdish; cf. Dorleijn 1996)



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- ▶ pattern replication does occur across perceived typological boundaries
- ▶ occurrences are restricted to environments of long-lasting, intense contact
- ▶ lack of maintenance, changes in model language, and system pressure may lead to abandonment or adaptation of replicated pattern
- ▶ typological constraints on borrowing are less strong and eminent than socio-historical and frequency factors
- ▶ Centrality, Stability, and Harmony are, very broadly speaking, the key elements

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