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The Sun Also Rises ***gušt ko-saləq u=yawmo***

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The note deals with future-time readings of the Perfect in Turoyo, an Eastern Aramaic language of south-eastern Turkey. The Perfect of Turoyo is a tense-aspect form whose etymology is not trivial for PERFECT (in the sense of linguistic typology) and whose meaning has not yet been described closely enough.

Keywords: Turoyo, verb in NENA, Perfect in Eastern Aramaic, motion verbs, Perfect with future-time reference

1.

In the current studies of the Turoyo verb, the term “Perfect” refers to the construction *ko*-Pret.¹ The *ko*-Pret collocation consists of the Preterite with the deictic proclitic *ko*-. Within this construction, *ko*- is the same particle that regularly appears with the Inflectum to render the present time.² Sometimes the construction gets “fortified” by yet another deictic element, the presentative particle *kal*-.

¹ This study has benefited considerably from Loesov’s ongoing discussions with Shabo Talay, who has also provided us with important pieces of linguistic evidence. The research has been supported by RFH grant No. 14-04-00374.

² Our term “Inflectum” looks better than “the Present tense” (cf. Otto Jastrow’s *das Präsens*), because in Turoyo it is one of the two conjugated verbal bases: it gets its individual grammatical readings (Present, Future, Imperfect/Habitual, Jussive/Subjunctive, Irrealis, etc.) from the further morphological and syntactic context, first of all from prefixed particles and the suffixed/infixd past-time marker. See also Furman–Loesov 2015:3.

Adolf Siegel (1923:151, with examples) was the first to recognize the existence of this construction in the corpus of Eugen Prym and Albert Socin (PrS). Siegel mentioned that it could also be used for the future.

Hellmut Ritter in his posthumously published grammar (1990:50) notes on the *ko*-Pret the following: “Durch Vorsetzung der deiktischen Partikel *k-*, (Dörfer) *ko-* vor Konsonanten, verstärkt (*kal*) *ko*, kann es³ so nahe an die Gegenwart herangerückt werden, dass seine letzte, übertreibend auch die erste Fase eines gerade anhebenden Geschehens noch beobachtet werden kann. Daher häufig nach Verben der Wahrnehmung.” Ritter correctly interprets certain examples of *ko*-Pret as having future reference (Ritter 1990:50, 756).⁴

Jastrow 1993:153f. was the first to label this construction (without an explicit explanation) “Perfekt” and adduced two past-time examples of it.

Goldenberg 1998:623ff. adduced twelve examples of *ko*-Pret and proposed that *ko*-Pret has an inferential sense, i. e., this form belongs into the domain of evidentiality.⁵

Tomal 2008:33ff. believes that the basic function of the *ko*-Pret in the narrative is “promoting” a personage to the storyline. In addition, Tomal claims that the 1st person forms of *ko*-Pret can render “close (and unavoidable) future” (Tomal 2008:39, 47). All three tokens of the future-time *ko*-Pret he cites happen to be one and the same inflected form *k-azzino* (lit. ‘I have gone,’ meaning ‘I am going to go’ in the respective contexts), of which the writer seems to remain unaware.

Waltisberg 2014:107 believes that *ko*-Pret forms may have in particular inferential (cf. Goldenberg 1998) and mirative nuances.

By way of illustration, we now adduce a few examples of *ko*-Pret with the basic PERFECT semantics:⁶

- (1) *uʕdo kalē b-ʾAlmānya, kal ko-ʕogəl k-awī ʕišēi b-ʾAlmānya*
 ‘Now he is in Germany, he works (there), **he has become** a working man in Germany’ (EL 19).

³ The Preterite (= Ritter’s “Perfekt”).

⁴ Prym and Socin also realized that *ko*-Pret could sometimes encode the future (see, e. g., their translation of a relevant form in PrS 127:36: “gut, ich komme” (Prym–Socin 1881:185).

⁵ “Most of these examples indicate clearly facts realized or presumed inferentially on the part of the persons involved, or related meanings” (Goldenberg 1998:624).

⁶ The Ritter texts are cited by text number:line. The PrS texts are cited by page number:line.

- (2) *hzele ga kalé hawyo komo lifo šal qdole d-u=qašo w-ko-maḥatle feme b-adne*
 ‘He saw: there is a black snake around the priest’s neck, and **it has put** its mouth into his ear’ (RT 47:68).
- (3) *saliqono azzino matyanne, k-omər ašər ko-šafitat ḥa k-omər zayifat*
 ‘I went up and reached them [the husband and the mother-in-law of the speaker], and he [the husband] said: “**You have** indeed **turned pale!** One would think you got scared”’ (JaL 6.10.15).

2.

Now let us consider those examples of *ko*-Pret, which, as we believe, refer to the future. All of them are intransitive verbs of telic motion. They may be divided into two groups. For the first one, we have found only three verbs: *azzé/əzzé* ‘go,’ *ali/ote* ‘come,’ *maṭi/mote* ‘arrive at, reach.’

There follow a few among numerous examples of the first two of them:

- (4) *ḥa m-aḥ=hawronaydi mhadéle-wo-lan kalbo (...). i=naqqa d-kuraxno-wo laf Babak, ubéno-wo-le b-feme ḡazeta twilo, w-ruhat-wo b-qamuli. hani d-huzan-wo huwe w-i=ḡazeta, ummi-wo: “eh! k-ati u=mšallim”*
 ‘One of my friends gave us a dog as a gift (...). When I walked towards Bebek, I would give it (the dog, m.) a folded paper into its mouth, and it would run in front of me. Those who saw it with a paper (in its mouth), would say: “Oh, the professor **is coming**”’ (RT 1:47, 55–56).

The neighbours of the author say “*k-ali u=mšallim*” (lit. “the professor has come”), though they do not yet see him in person. Thus the verb form refers to the imminent future.

- (5) *əmmo ya i=sətt-aydi k-azzino g-nəhtono mfarḡono ašle*
 ‘She said: “My lady, **I am going to go** down and take a look at him”’ (MM 49).

The sequence *k-azzino g-nəhtono* (lit. “I have gone, I will descend”) corroborates the future-time reading of *k-azzino*.

- (6) *omər qum kalé Kandar b-i=bakša yatiwo l-i=heviyaydax ummo zox k-atyono*
 ‘He said: “Come on, Kandar is sitting in the garden waiting for you.” – She said: “Go, **I am coming**”’ (PrS 21:15).

Prof. Dr. Shabo Talay confirms to us that the relevant Pret tokens in exx. (4)–(6) could not refer to the future were it not for the *ko*- prefix. As it turns out, in Turoyo, this is a common way of expressing one’s intention

to come or go. Consider the following example from “Aramaic-online,” an introductory course of spoken Turoyo:⁷

- (7) *Bar̄to: ḥayrina bu gabo ḥreno. hano ko-maḥwe ḥalyo. kazzi mḡarballe.*
 ‘Daughter: “Let’s look at the other side. This (dress) looks sweet.
I am going to go and try it on.”’

This is a conventional shopping episode, current in textbooks of foreign languages. Once more, in the continuation of a *ko*-Pret form we find an Infectum (*mḡarballe* ‘I shall try it on’).

An example of *maṭi/mote* is courtesy Shabo Talay:

- (8) *lo=bodutu b-u=muklo, klawu l-i=ḥeviyaydan, ko-maṭina*
 ‘Do not start eating, wait for us, **we are coming!**’

All examples save (4) are in the 1st person sg. or pl.⁸

The verbs of the second group also belong into the sematic field of intransitive verbs of telic motion. In order to refer to the immediate future, their Pret has to have both *ko*- and a lexical “particle,” a kind of adjunct. Consider the examples:

- (9) *ḥālli, more d-u=bayto-ste aṭi bətri, omər: “itux tax qm-i=ṣopa!” lo=maḡreli.*
i=at̄-ayde, u=abr-ayde w-ḥālli kətle ḡālab d-naṣime w-kalonne noše kad-ḥālāl,
*omanno: “malāva **gušt ko-saləq** u=yawmo, ha, ḥaymən **k-azzino** yo-*
tawno b-u=bayt-ano”
 ‘I saw that the owner of the house also came out to see me. He said:
 “Come here and sit before the stove.” But I did not dare. (Then
 also came out) his wife and his children, and I saw that he had
 many kids and that (these) people were honest. I thought: “Gosh,
 the sun **is about to rise**, and **I will** really **go** to stay in this house”
 (LB 249–251).

A literal translation of *gušt ko-saləq u=yawmo* is ‘the sun has almost risen,’ yet, in view of the other data gathered in the note, the grammatical (not purely contextual!) interpretation ‘the sun is about to rise’ is not far-fetched.⁹

⁷ It is in an advanced stage of preparation by a team of scholars who are speakers of Turoyo, under the guidance of Shabo Talay.

⁸ We have found some twenty examples of the 1st person forms in the published field corpus, as against only two tokens of the 3rd person forms referring to the future.

⁹ Shabo Talay translates in the Edition: “Mein Lieber, bald geht die Sonne auf, ja, wirklich, ich will zu diesen Menschen gehen.” The speaker is a fugitive trying to find an asylum, he thinks about the imminent sunrise, before which he has to figure out where to spend the day in safety.

As for the second token of the *ko*-Preterit in this text, *k-azzino* (lit. ‘I have gone’), it stands in the linear sequence with an outspoken future-time verb form (*yotawno* ‘I will dwell’), and this fact secures a future-time reading for the verb chain ***k-azzino yotawno b-u=baytano***, and cf. similar verb chains in exx. (5) and (7).

The rest of the examples belonging to the second group is courtesy Shabo Talay:

- (10) ***gušt kočiko*** *i=kurfo b-u=naqwo*
 ‘The snake **has almost got** into the hole.’
- (11) ***hāma mar ko-nahət*** *u=dawlo l-arŕe d-u=gubo*
 ‘**Right now**, the bucket **has almost reached** the bottom of the well (= is going to reach it).’
- (12) ***gušt konafəq*** *u čič ək m-i=bəhto*
 ‘The chick **is going to come out** from the egg.’
- (13) ***gušt kofalət*** *u=taŕlo m-i=faho*
 ‘The fox **has almost escaped** from the trap (= most probably is going to escape).’

In all the examples of the second group, the *ko*-Preterit form is used in the third person.

A preliminary explanation is pragmatic for both groups: the future-time situation looks certain to materialize, bound to happen, and *ko*-Preterit is an appropriate vehicle to underline this nuance of imminence.

Yet we admit it is hard to ascertain beyond doubt that all sentences of the second group refer to the future in a real sense, the way the first group does.

3.

Thus, in simple sentences, the Turoyo Preterit can refer to the future only in the case of telic motion verbs in collocation with the *ko*- prefix. It is this observation that constitutes the motivation for writing the present paper. Charles J. Fillmore once noticed that “deictic elements can be used with their deictic centre ‘transferred’ to something other than the speaker of the current utterance ... It is by virtue of an element’s participation in a deictic system that its transfer brings about a particular ‘dramatizing’ effect...” (Fillmore 1982:37f.). In our case, this means that the ability of *ko*-Preterit (but not of the naked Preterit!) to refer to the future reveals its nature as a genuine PERFECT, a “shifter” linguistic entity (in the sense of Roman Jakobson).

This evidence brings to one's mind the data of another Semitic language, Old Babylonian. In Old Babylonian letters, Perfect of motion verbs can refer to the future movement from the writer to the addressee, in particular it describes the future sending of goods, people, and the letter itself (Loesov 2004:130–134, with previous literature). The difference is that in Old Babylonian this “Epistolary Perfect” must have existed only in written communication,¹⁰ while the future-time *ko*-Preterit is a fact of spoken Turoyo. The non-trivial common feature is that in simple clauses of both languages the future-time Perfect is possible only in the context of motion verbs.

Finally, given that the morphosyntactic study of Turoyo is in its infancy, the deictic nature of *ko*-Preterit stands in need of corroboration, because its morphological shape is cross-linguistically not trivial for PERFECT. Bybee et al. 1994:63 observe that PERFECT usually derives “from stative sources (as do resultatives) and dynamic sources – in particular, movement verbs such as ‘come.’”¹¹ The derivation of a genuine PERFECT from a simple past/preterit with the help of a proclitic, a pre-posed presentative particle, looks eccentric.¹² Yet, this “light Perfect” of Turoyo seems – nonetheless – to comply well with its job description.

¹⁰ It is actually a part of the Old Babylonian letter-writing formulary.

¹¹ Bybee et al. 1994 is a reference tool for grammaticalization paths of verb forms expressing tense, aspect, and modality in the languages of the world.

¹² By contrast, the Perfect of NENA derives from the resultative participle conjugated via copulas, which is of course typologically trivial. Cf., e. g., Khan 2008:105: “Most North-Eastern Neo-Aramaic (NENA) dialects have distinct verbal forms to express the preterite and the perfect. A common configuration is <...> for the perfect to be expressed by a compound construction consisting of the resultative participle *qtila* and a form of the verb ‘to be.’”

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