

The NENA variety of Nudiz

Some NENA languages/dialects initially spoken in Turkey got full-fledged grammatical descriptions (Jilu (Fox 1997), Bohtan (Fox 2009), Sat (Mutzafi 2008), etc.), or at least partial descriptions (Talay 2008), while some other are lacking any linguistic documentation. It is crucial to record and study these varieties, as they are on the verge of extinction, utterly threatened due to their relatively lower sociolinguistic status within the Assyrian community.

One of unexplored varieties is the Christian NENA variety of *nudəznáya* Assyrians, originally spoken in kaza Nudiz (Norduz), in South Eastern Turkey. In the talk, I will give a preliminary overview of the sociolinguistic background and some prominent linguistic features of this variety as spoken nowadays in the Russian village of Urmiya. The data were collected via fieldwork within the project for documentation of NENA in Russia (2019-).

Based on the initial geographical location, *nudəznáya* is expected to make up one dialect cluster with the Hakkari and the Van varieties, as well as the Salamas dialect in northwestern Iran (Khan 2018: 191). Some *nudəznaya* features are delineated in (Ovsjannikova et al., in print), I will focus on those presumably common with Van, or unique for Nudiz.

1. The fricative *t̪ in Nudiz is often lost between vowels or merged with /t/, just as in other varieties of the Hakkari cluster, but at least in some lexemes *t̪ shifts to /š/, cf. Upper Tiyari and Tsuma dialects (Talay 2008: 68-69), and Van varieties (Tsereteli 1958: 236):

Table 1. Ø-t-y/ y-t-y ‘come’ in Urmi, Shapat (Hakkari) and Nudiz dialects of Urmiya, Van (Tsereteli 1963) and Tall Tammər < Upper Tiyari (Talay 2008: 68-69)

| | Urmi | Shapat | Nudiz | Van | Tall Tammər |
|------------------|---------------|--------------|----------------|-----------------|--------------------------|
| Present (stem) | <i>atə</i> | <i>ɬay</i> | <i>ɬay/ tɛ</i> | <i>ɬay/ tɛ</i> | ? |
| Progressive | <i>bitaya</i> | <i>biya</i> | <i>bəšša</i> | <i>biša(ya)</i> | <i>bišay<-elɛ></i> |
| Preterite-LS.3PL | <i>ti-le</i> | <i>hi-le</i> | <i>ši-le</i> | <i>ši-le</i> | <i>še-le</i> |

Cf. also Urm., Shap. *mita*, Tall Tammər *miša* and Nud. *məšša* [die.RES.M] ‘dead’.

2. The reflex of an original long *ō in open stressed syllables is often /o/ rather than /u/: *sora* ‘small’ < *sōrā (as well as o < *ab, *gora* ‘big’ < *gora < *gabrā) (cf. Urm. *sura*; *gura*; Shap. *sura*; *gora*, Van *sora*; *gora*). The same reflex is attested in Jilu (Fox 1997: 62), Tiyari (Talay 2018: 49), Barwari Bala (Khan 2008: 410), Timur, Gəssa, Čāl, Halmun, Walto, Qočanəş (Talay 2008: 142, 412, 421), Maha Khtaya d-Baz (Mutzafi 2000: 301), etc.

3. Another characteristic feature is regular apokope of the final /ə/, in Van it is reported to be frequent for verb forms and rare for noun forms (Tsereteli 1958: 245):

| | | |
|-------------------|------------------|---------------|
| (1) | boil.PROG | person.PL |
| Urmi: | + <i>marduxə</i> | <i>našə</i> |
| Shapat (Hakkari): | + <i>murduxə</i> | <i>naš(ə)</i> |
| Nudiz: | + <i>murdux</i> | <i>naš</i> |

4. In a *kam-patəxlə* verb form, the 3PL S-suffix cross-referencing the subject in Nudiz is -*é* instead of -*í*, identical to the preterite base 3PL object marker.

(2) Urmi/Shapat: *kam-+kaɬl-i-lə* [PRF-kill.PRS-SS.3PL-LS.3SG.M] ‘they killed him’

Nudziz: *kam-+kaṭl-é-lə* [PRF-kill.PRS-SS.3PL-LS.3SG.M] ‘they killed him’

Urmi/Nudziz: *dvik-é-lan* [grab.PST-SS(O).3PL-LS.1PL] ‘we grabbed them’

It is not possible to claim with certainty that this feature is unique for the Nudziz variety, as *kam-* forms are not attested in the Van texts.

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