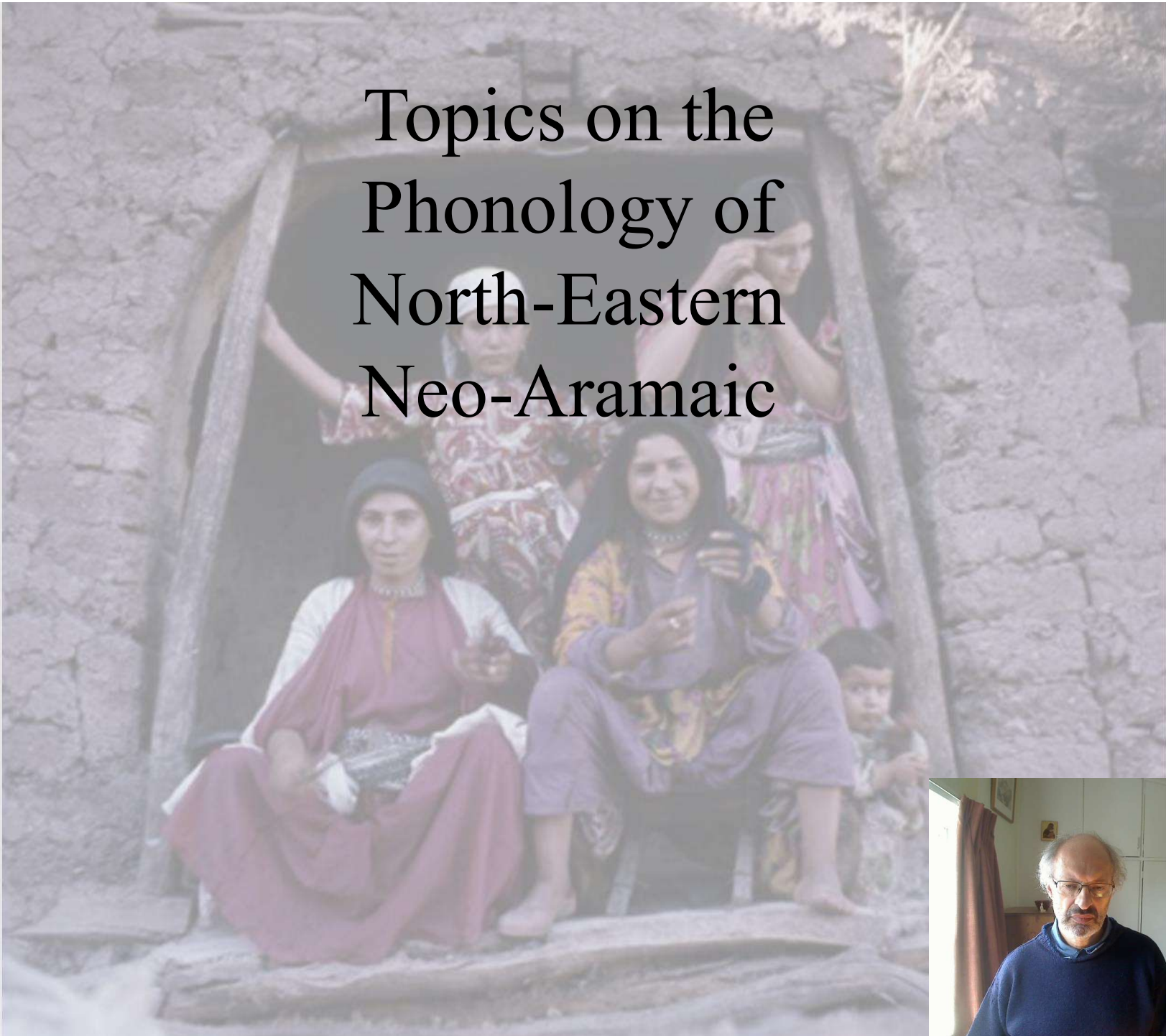


Topics on the Phonology of North-Eastern Neo-Aramaic



NENA dialect area



Communal dialect split:

Christian dialects

Jewish dialects

Reflects role of communal identity in linguistic change



Languages in contact with NENA dialects

Kurdish (Kurmanji, Sorani)

Gorani

Armenian

Arabic

Turkic

Persian



Historical layering of contact languages

Central Kurdistan:

Gorani > Sorani

Urmi region (Iran):

Kurdish > Turkic



QARAQOSH: CONSONANT PHONEME INVENTORY

	Labials	Dental/ Alveolar	Palato- alveolar	Velar	Uvular	Pharyngeal	Laryngeal
Stops/affricates							
Unvoiced aspirated	<i>p</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>č</i>	<i>k</i>	<i>q</i>		ʔ
Voiced	<i>b</i>	<i>d</i>	<i>j</i>	<i>g</i>			
Emphatic		<i>ṭ</i>					
Fricatives							
Unvoiced	<i>f</i>	<i>θ</i>		<i>x</i>		<i>ħ</i>	<i>h</i>
Voiced		<i>s</i>	<i>ʃ</i>	<i>ɣ</i>		<i>ʕ</i>	
Emphatic		<i>ð</i>					
		<i>z</i>					
		<i>ʒ</i>					
		<i>ð̣</i>					
Nasal	<i>m</i>	<i>n</i>					
Lateral		<i>l</i>					
Tap/trill		<i>r</i>					
Approximant	<i>w</i>		<i>y</i>				



Changes in interdentalals induced by contact

**baytā* 'house'

Gramun *báyθa*

Barwar *béθa*

C. Zakho *béyta*

J. Zakho *bésa*

Upper Ṭiyare *béša*

J. Arbīl *belá*

Baz *beya*

Jilu *biya*



Contact with Arabic

Mosul Arabic

/t/, /θ/

/d/, /ð/

Qaraqosh

/t/, /θ/

/d/, /ð/

C. Urmī

/t/

/d/



DEVELOPMENT OF UNASPIRATED STOPS

C. Urmi

unvoiced aspirated

/p^h/

/t^h/

/č^h/

/c^h/

unvoiced unaspirated

/p̂/

/t̂/

/č̂/

/ĉ/

voiced

/b/

/d/

/j/

/ʒ/



Proto-NENA C. Urmi E. Armenian Kurmanji

labials

voiceless aspirated	$*p^h$	/p ^h /	/p ^h /	/p ^h /
voiceless unaspirated	—	/p̂/	/p̂/	/p̂/
voiced	$*b$	/b/	/b/	/b/

dental/alveolar

voiceless aspirated	$*t^h, *θ$	/t ^h /	/t ^h /	/t ^h /
voiceless unaspirated	—	/ṭ/	/ṭ/	/ṭ/
voiced	$*d, *ð$	/d/	/d/	/d/



	C. Urmi	Qaraqosh	
* <i>b-ʔida</i>	> <i>ḥ-ida</i>	<i>b-ida</i>	‘by hand’
* <i>d-ʔilə</i>	> <i>ṭ-ilə</i>	<i>d-ilə</i>	‘that he is’

Anticipation of glottal closure resulting in unaspirated stops, i.e. assimilation, is facilitated by existence of unaspirated stops in contact languages.

The unaspirated stops also coincide with a morpheme boundary.



		C. Urmī	Qaraqosh
*x-p ^h -r	>	/x̂p̂ərrə/	/xp ^h ərrə/
‘to dig’		[x̂p̂ərrə]	[xp̂ərrə]
		‘he dug’	

		/x̂ap̂ər/	/xap ^h ər/
		[x̂ap̂ər]	[xap ^h ər]
		‘he digs’	

C. Urmī:	[x̂p̂]	>	/x̂p̂/	[x̂p̂]	/xp ^h /
	/p ^h /		[p ^h]		/p ^h / [p̂, p ^h]
	/p̂/		[p̂]		



Unaspirated stops are exploited for **sound symbolism** to express smallness or endearment, e.g.

C. Urmi

ṭəlpa ‘eyelash’ < **ṭəlpa* (cf. Syriac *tallīpē*, Țuroyo *tlafine*)

šap̣ira ‘beautiful’ < **šap̣ira*

suṛta ‘small’ (f.) cf. +*jurta* ‘big’



PHARYNGEALIZED CONSONANTS

In some of the NENA dialects of Iraq the pharyngealized consonants *ṭ and *ṣ of earlier Aramaic have been preserved as pharyngealized segments, e.g.

Qaraqosh: *ṭina* (< *ṭīnā) ‘mud’, *ṭarpa* (< *ṭarpā) ‘leaf’, *ṣəpra* (< *ṣəprā) ‘sparrow’, *ṣliwa* (< *ṣlībā) ‘cross’



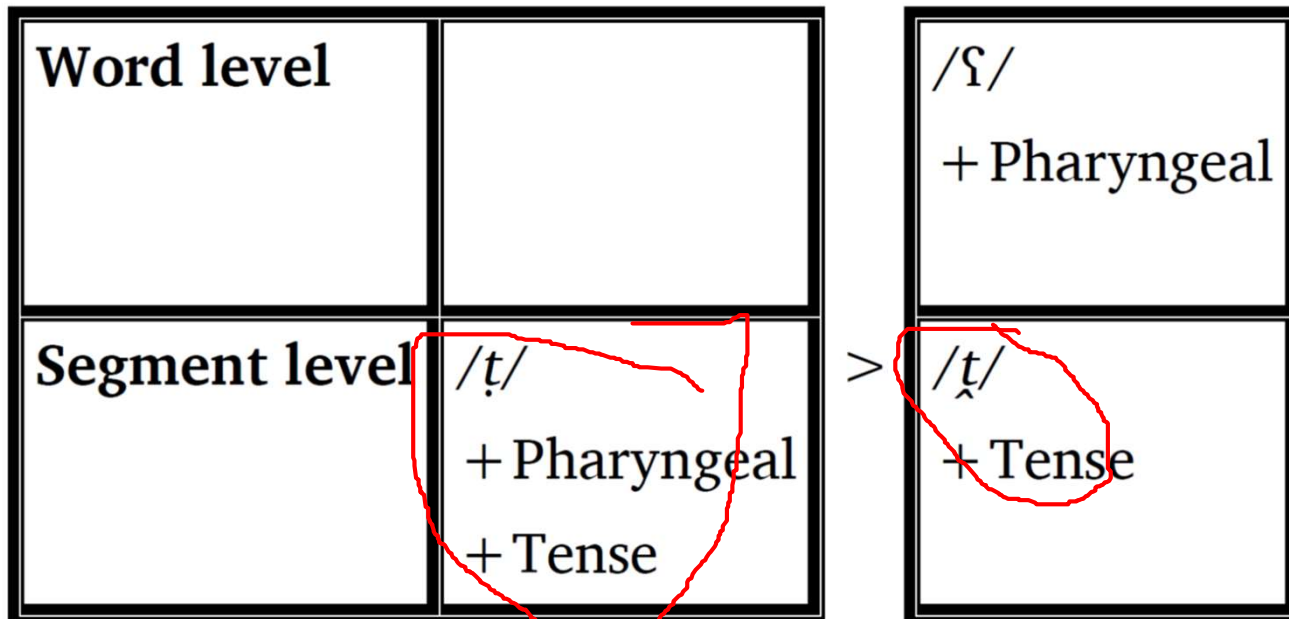
In the Urmi region pharyngealization is a suprasegmental phenomenon, e.g.

C. Urmi

⁺*tamər* 'he buries' < **ṭamər*.



On a phonological level there has been a reanalysis, which can be represented thus:



This has taken place by phonologizing coarticulatory pharyngealization:

Word level: /ʁ/
Segment level: /ṭa/ [^ʁt^ʁɑ] > /ṭa/

The development of the suprasegmental feature was facilitated by contact with harmonic phonology of Azeri Turkish.



Segmentalization of suprasegmental pharyngealization in Jewish dialects on the eastern periphery of NENA

J. Sanandaj (Khan 2009)

The original pharyngeals have been preserved in some words and verbal roots of Aramaic stock that contain, or contained at some point of their development, a pharyngealized consonant, e.g

<i>taˈna</i>	‘load’	< *ṭaˈnā
<i>tamˈa</i>	‘she tastes’	< *ṭāmˈa
<i>dāmˈe</i>	‘tears’	< *dāmˈe < *dāmˈe

The process involves **the conversion of flat resonance into a pharyngeal segment**, which results in the conversion of emphatic consonants that produce flat resonance into plain consonants.



In some words a non-etymological voiced pharyngeal /^h/ has developed within a pharyngealized long /a/ vowel:

<i>tma^hnísár</i>	‘eighteen’	< * <i>tṃṃanisar</i>
<i>tma^hní</i>	‘eighty’	< <i>tṃṃaní</i>



Gorani (Sanandaj) [Masoud Mohammadirad]

‘əna [ʕəˈnæ]	‘buttock’	cf. K. <i>qəŋ</i> (Sanandaj), <i>qun</i> (elsewhere in Central and Northern Kurdish), P. <i>kun</i>
--------------	-----------	---

<i>saʕ</i> [sæʕb]	‘morning’	< Arab. <i>ṣabāḥ</i>
<i>wáʕza</i> [ˈwæʕzæ]	‘situation’	< Arab. <i>waṣʕ</i> < <i>wadʕ</i>

Kurdish (Sanandaj) [Masoud Mohammadirad]

<i>səḥb</i> [səḥb]	‘morning’	< Arab. <i>ṣabāḥ</i>
--------------------	-----------	----------------------



Similar processes in Northern Kurdish (Urmi) (Kahn 1976, 49–52;
Barry 2019)

Alternance

ṭaza ~ *taʿza* ‘fresh’



STRESS

Most dialects have canonical penultimate stress. Jewish trans-Zab dialects have canonical final stress, e.g.

C. Urmi: *béta* ‘house’ (Khan 2016)

J. Urmi: *belá* ‘house’ (Khan 2008)



There are complex stress rules relating to inflections of verbs, e.g.

C. Urmi

The stress has to remain on a syllable that contains a radical of the verbal base.

ptáx-loxun
patáx-va-lə

‘you (pl.) opened’

‘he used to open it (m.)’



DEVOICING

In many dialects word-final voiced stops, fricatives and affricates consonants are devoiced. Voiced stops are devoiced to aspirated unvoiced stops.

C. Urmi

<i>mággəb</i>	[¹ mayɣɪp ^h]	‘he loves’
<i>ʔávəd</i>	[¹ ʔa:vɪt ^h]	‘he does’
<i>bárəz</i>	[¹ ba:rɪs]	‘it dries’
⁺ <i>sárbaz</i>	[¹ s ^ʰ a ^ʰ r ^ʰ b ^ʰ a ^ʰ s ^ʰ]	‘soldier’



CLITICS

+ *sárbaz*

‘soldier’

+ *sárbaz = ilə*

‘he is a soldier’



The domain of suprasegmental pharyngealization includes any following enclitic elements, but the domain of the word-final devoicing rule and the word-stress placement rule recognize boundaries between the main word and clitics, e.g.

⁺*sárbaz* = *ilə* [¹s^ɾa^ɾr^ɾb^ɾa^ɾs^ɾə^ɾl^ɾə^ɾ] ‘he is a soldier’



References

- Barry, Daniel. 2019. “Pharyngeals in Kurmanji Kurdish: A Reanalysis of Their Source and Status.” In *Current Issues in Kurdish Linguistics*, edited by Songül Gündoğdu, Ergin Öpengin, Geoffrey Haig, and Erik Anonby, 39–71. Bamberg Studies in Kurdish Linguistics 1. Bamberg: University of Bamberg Press.
- Kahn, Margaret. 1976. “Borrowing and Variation in a Phonological Description of Kurdish.” Michigan: University of Michigan dissertation.
- Khan, Geoffrey. 2008. *The Jewish Neo-Aramaic Dialect of Urmi*. Gorgias Neo-Aramaic Studies. Piscataway: Gorgias.
- . 2009. *The Jewish Neo-Aramaic Dialect of Sanandaj*. Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press.
- . 2016. *The Neo-Aramaic Dialect of the Assyrian Christians of Urmi*. 4 vols. Studies in Semitic Languages and Linguistics 86. Leiden-Boston: Brill.

