

# Verbalization in Sorani Kurdish

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## 1. Introduction

- In Sorani, there are two morphemes, *-an* and *-ja*, which have been argued to index lexical semantic argument structure distinctions such as (non)-agentivity and causation, in line with analyses of the behavior of cognate morphemes in related languages e.g., Persian.
- I will show that what these morphemes really index is transitivity: *-an* is used exclusively with transitive constructions, and *-ja* with intransitive ones, regardless of agentivity and causativity.
- I claim that:

- The morpheme *-an* is a transitive verbalizer i.e., the syntactic structure it introduces is transitive.
- The morpheme *-ja* is an intransitive verbalizer i.e., it occurs with single argument predicates, namely unaccusatives, anticausatives, unergatives, and passives.
- I consider *-an* to have an accusative feature that case-marks the direct object while *-ja* lacks such a feature, a distinction that makes them  $v^*P$  and  $vP$  respectively in the sense of Chomsky (2000).
- Each of these verbalizers (*-an* and *-ja*) has a null morpheme counterpart with the same features.

- My argumentation is based on causative constructions, two different unergative constructions, and data from another variety of Sorani (Chardoli).
- The morphological structure of infinitives in Sorani comes in (1) which is needed to follow the argumentation. Three types of infinitives are observed.

### (1) Root + Verbalizer + Past stem + Infinitivizer

a. xwar-Ø-d-in eat-Ø-PST-INF 'to eat'	b. rîf-an-d-in abduct-V <sub>TRAN</sub> -PST-INF 'to abduct'	c. gor-ja-n change-V <sub>INTR</sub> -INF 'to change'
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## 2. *-an* as a transitive verbalizer

- I claim that *-an* is **not** a causative morpheme. It is a transitive verbalizer.

### Argument 1

- Transitive verbs cannot be causativized by *-an*.

(2) Sara namæ-kæ=j nusi  
Sara letter-DEF=3SG write.PST  
'Sara wrote a letter.'

(3) \*Sirwan Sara=j namæ-kæ nus-an-d  
Sirwan Sara=3SG letter-DEF write-an-PST  
Int. 'Sirwan made Sara write the letter.'

So, there is no separate cause head higher than  $v$  realized as *-an* in Sorani but  $v$  comes in different flavors. One of them is CAUSE.

### Argument 2

- Persian (a neighboring language) shows a different behavior with *-an*.
- (4)
- a. Ali xodesh-o tu parde **pichid**  
Ali self-RA in curtain twisted(turned)  
'Ali twisted himself in the curtain.'
- a'. Mahsa xwæ=j=i naw pærdæ-kæ **petj-an**  
Mahsa self=3SG=3SG in curtain-DEF twist-V<sub>TRAN</sub>  
'Mahsa twisted herself in the curtain.'
- b. Simin kæjk-ro be batje **xor-un-d**  
Simin cake-RA to kid eat-CAUS-PST.3SG  
'Simin forced the kid to eat the cake.'
- b'. \*Simin kæjk-ækæ=j bæ mnal-ækæ **xwær-an-d**  
Simin cake-DEF=3SG to kid-DEF eat-CAUS-PST.3SG  
'Simin forced the kid to eat the cake.'

So, *-an* does show a different behavior in Sorani than what it does in Persian. The comparison in (4) shows that in Sorani, *-an* occurs in transitive constructions.

### Argument 3

- A group of Unergatives occurs with *-an* (5).

(5) mæl-æk-an ?æ=**jan** tfrik-an-d  
bird-DEF-PL IMP=3SG sound-V<sub>TRAN</sub>-PST  
'The birds were chirping.'

- Data in (5) provides evidence that *-an* is not a causativizer in Sorani. Because there is no sense of CAUSE in these unergatives.
- Note that in (5), the subject agreement occurs as clitic doubling. In Sorani, subject clitic doubling happens, only in the **transitive** clauses when there is a past stem of the verb.
- So, *-an* occurs with (syntactically) transitive verbs.

## 3. *-ja* as an intransitive verbalizer

- I claim that *-ja* is an intransitive verbalizer, **not** a licenser of non-agentivity.

### Argument 1

- There are unergative verbs occurring with *-ja*.

(6)

Unergative

Anticausative

a. giɹ-ja-n 'to cry'	a'. kol-ja-n 'to boil'
b. gær-ja-n 'to wander'	b'. rɪʒ-ja-n 'to get poured'
c. toɹ-ja-n 'to huff'	c'. fir-ja-n 'to fly'
d. wes-ja-n 'to stand'	d'. gir-ja-n 'to get blocked'
e. dʒul-ja-n 'to move'	e'. xur-ja-n 'to itch'

### Argument 2

- In Sorani, there are verbs that do not occur with *-ja*, nor do they occur with *-an*. In some Sorani varieties, namely Chardoli, *-ja* occurs with a group of these verbs (7).

(7)

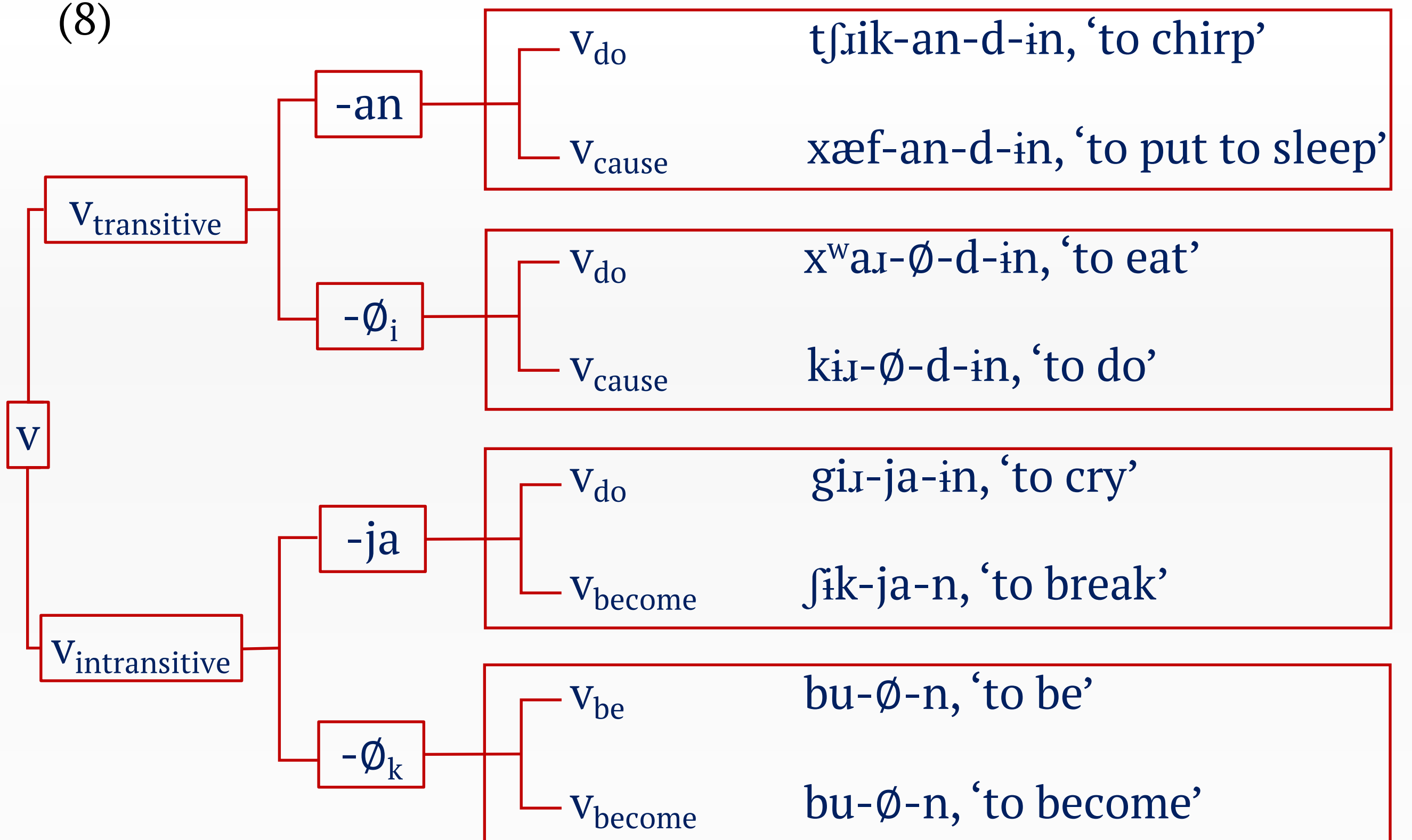
Ardalani	Chardoli
a. qozin, 'to caught' ?æ-qoz-im IMP-caugh.PST-1SG 'I was coughing.'	?æ-qoz- <b>ja</b> -m IMP-caugh.PST-V <sub>INTR</sub> -1SG 'I was coughing.'
b. kænin, 'to laugh' ?æ-kæn-im IMP-laugh.PST-1SG 'I was laughing.'	?æ-kæn- <b>ja</b> -m IMP-laugh.PST-V <sub>INTR</sub> -1SG 'I was laughing.'
c. hæl pærin, 'to dance' hæl ?æ-pær-im up IMP-jump-1SG 'I was dancing.'	hæl ?æ-pær- <b>ja</b> -m up IMP-jump-V <sub>INTR</sub> -1SG 'I was dancing.'

- ja* is observed in passives, (some) unaccusatives, (some) unergatives, and data in (7) shows that it appears in other unergatives in Chardoli too.
- So, *-ja* occurs in single-argument construction.

## 4. Verbalizers in Sorani

- I consider these two morphemes (*-an* and *-ja*) to be verbalizers. Based on the data in (7), I consider a phonetically null verbalizer for the cases that neither of them is observed.

(8)



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