Grammar (Rêziman)

This is a short grammar of Kurmanji Kurdish from Baran Rizgar dictionary of Kurdish-English and English Kurdish [Rizgar 1993]. Baran gives a comprehensive and systematic account of grammar of Kurmanji Kurdish (as speken in Kurdistan region in Turkey). He discusses noun and verb inflection and illustrates the concept of ergativity in Kurmanji Kurdish (Kurdica editor).

Pronouns (Cînav)

Kurmanji has two groups of pronouns:

Simple Pronouns	Oblique Pronouns	English
Ez	Min	I
Tu	Te	You
Ew	Wî	He, it (Masc.)
	Wê	She, it (Fem.)
Em	Me	We
Hun	We	You
Ew	Wan	They

A) Use of the Simple Pronouns

They are used:
a) as the **subject** of the verb in all the tenses except the past tenses of transitive verbs;

çûn (to go) is an intransitive verb.

Ez diçim xwendegehê.	I am going to the school.
Ez ê biçim xwendegehê.	I will go to the school.
Ez çûm xwendegehê.	I went to the school.
Ez çûme xwendegehê.	I have gone to the school.
Ez diçûm xwendegehê.	I was going to the school.
Ez çubûm xwendegehê.	I had gone to the school.

b) as the **object** of transitive verbs in the past tenses.

dîtin (to see) is a transitive verb.

Te ez dîtim.
You saw me.
Te ez dîtime. You have seen me.
Te ez didîtim. You were seeing/used to see me.
Te ez dîtbûm. You had seen me.

B) Use of the Oblique Pronouns

They are used:

a) as the **subject** of **transitive verbs** in the past tenses;

xwarin (to eat) is a transitive verb. I ate an apple.
Min sêvek xwar.

Min sêvek xwariye.	I have eaten an apple.
Min sêvek dixwar.	I was eating an apple.
Min sêvek xwaribû.	I had eaten an apple.

b) as the **object** of transitive verbs in the future and present tenses;

Tu min dibînî.   You see me.
Tu yê min bibînî. You will see me.

c) as the **object** of a **preposition** ;

ji: from
ji min/ te/ wî/ wê/ me/ we/ wan from
me/you/him/her/us/you/them

d) in the **possessive case**.

destê   my/your/his/her/our/your/their
min/ te/ wî/ wê/ me/ we/ wan hand
ê   mine, yours, his, hers, ours,
min/ te/ wî/ wê/ me/ we/ wan yours, theirs.

Object Pronouns

When a **simple pronoun** is used as the **subject**, an **oblique pronoun** is used as the **object** and vice versa.

Ez te dibînim.	I am seeing/see you.
Tu min dibînî.	You see me.
Ew wî/ wê dibîne.	He/she sees him/her.
Em we dibînin.	We see you.
Hun me dibînin.	You see us.
Ew wan dibînin.	They see them.
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Min tu dîtî.	I saw you.
Te ez dîtim.	You saw me.
Wî ew dît.	He saw him/her/it.
Wê ew dît.	She saw him/her/it.
Me hun dîtin.	We saw you.
We em dîtin.	You saw you.
Wan ew dîtin.	They saw them.

Reflexive Pronoun

Reflexive Pronoun is the word **xwe** (own/oneself) for all the persons.

Ez xwe dibînim.	I see myself.
Tu xwe dibînî.	You see yourself.
Ew xwe dibîne.	He/she/it sees himself/herself/itself.
Em xwe dibînin.	We see ourselves.
Hun xwe dibînin.	You see yourselves.
Ew xwe dibînin.	They see themselves.

Possessive Adjectives/ Pronouns
(Rengdêr/ cînavên xwedîtî)

The oblique pronouns are used as possesive adjectives/pronouns. An ending connects the noun to the pronoun:
Definite Endings

-a	feminine singular nouns
-ê	masculine singular nouns
-ên	plural nouns

The letter **y** acts as a buffer between the nouns ending in a vowel and the ending.

Indefinite Endings

-e	feminine singular nouns
-î	masculine singular nouns
-e	plural nouns

The ending of the related noun and the oblique pronoun form the **possessive pronoun.**

Pirtûka min	My book	**a min**	mine (book)
Kevçîyê te	Your spoon	**yê te**	yours (spoon)
Navê wê	Her name	**ê wê**	her (name)
Mala wî	His home	**a wî**	his (home)
Xwenderkarên me	Our students	**ên me**	ours (students)
Mamosteyên we	Your teachers	**ya wan**	theirs (table)

Pirtûk te ji a min baştir e.	Your book is better than mine.
Kevçîyêk te ji yê min dirêjtir e.	Your spoon is longer than mine.
Kêrên te ji ên me girantir in.	Their knives are heavier than ours.

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Kêreke min	A knife of mine
Mamosteyekî we	A teacher (man) of yours
Pirtûkine wan	Some of their books

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Kêreke min ne tûj e.	A knife of mine is not sharp.
Min Mamosteyekî we dît	I saw a teacher of yours.
Pirtûkine wan baş in.	Some of their books are good.

Verbs (Lêker)

bi- is the prefix forming the imperative. In the compound verbs with a non-verbal prefix, the non-verbal part replaces **bi-** .

çûn (biçe), meşîn (bimeşe), dan (bide), rabûn (rabe), veketin (vekeve), hildan (hilde), etc.

The imparative **plural** gets **-in** instead of **-e**.

Biçe!	Go!	(singular)
Biçin!)	Go!	(plural)
Bimeşe!)	Walk!	(singular)

Bidşe!) Give! (singular)

Bidşin!) Give! (plural)

Infinitive

The **infinitive** consists of **past stem** and **-in** (**-n** when the past stem ends in a vowel).

infinitive	past stem	in/n	
hatin	hat	in	(to come)
avêtin	avêt	in	(to throw)
kirin	kir	in	(to do)
bûn	bû	n	(to be, to become)
çûn	çû	n	(to go)
dan	da	n	(to give)
nivîsîn	nivîsî	n	(to write)

Tenses (Dem)
Present Tense (Dema Niha)

The present stem is the part betwen the prefix **bi-** and the ending **-e** of the imperative.

infinitive	imperative	present stem
kirin	bike	k
dan	bide	d
nivîsîn	binivîse	nivîs
çirandin	biçirîne	çirîn
peyivîn	bipeyive	peyiv

The **imperative** of the compound verbs with a non-verbal part acting as prefix includes the non-verbal part instead of the prefix **bi-** . Thus the present stem includes the non-verbal part too.

infinitive	imperative	present stem
rûnivîsîn	rûne	rû-n
vekirin	veke	ve-k
rabûn	rabe	ra-b

The verb **bûn** (to be) is an auxiliary verb which also helps with forming **the present tense.**

The conjugation of **bûn** in the present tense:

After a consonant after a vowel

Ez	im	me	I am
Tu	î	yî	You are
Ew	e	ye	He/she/it is
Em	in	ne	We are
Hun	in	ne	You are
Ew	in	ne	They are

Ez dirêj im.　　　I am tall.

Ez mamoste me. I am a teacher.

Present Tense:= di + present stem + bûn.

Kirin(bike): to do

di + present stem + bûn

Ez dikim	di + k	+ im	I do/am doing
Tu dikî	di + k	+ î	You do
Ew dike	di + k	+ e	He/she/it does
Em dikin	di + k	+ in	We do
Hun dikin	di + k	+ in	You do
Ew dikin	di + k	+ in	They do

Dan(bide): to give

di + present stem + bûn

Ez didim	di + d	+ im	I give/am giving
Tu didî	di + d	+ î	You give
Ew dide	di + d	+ e	He/she/it gives
Em didin	di + d	+ in	We give
Hun didin	di + d	+ in	You give
Ew didin	di + d	+ in	They give

Peyvîn(bipeyive): to speak

di + present stem + bûn

Ez dipeyivim	di + peyiv	+ im	I speak/am speaking
Tu dipeyivî	di + peyiv	+ î	You speak
Ew dipeyive	di + peyiv	+ e	He/she/it speaks
Em dipeyivin	di + peyiv	+ in	We speak
Hun dipeyivin	di + peyiv	+ in	You speak

Ew dipeyivin di + peyiv   + in   They speak

When using a compound verb in the present tense, **di-** is placed in between the non-verbal part and the present stem.

Rûniştin(rûne): to sit

Ez rûdinim I sit/am sitting
Tu rûdinî   You sit
Ew rûdine   He/she/it sits
Em rûdinin We sit
Hun rûdinin You sit
Ew rûdinin They sit

Vekirin(veke): to open

Ez vedikim I open/am opening
Tu vedikî   You open
Ew vedike   He/she/it opens
Em vedikin We open
Hun vedikin You open
Ew vedikin They open

The case is negated by replacing **di-** with **na-** .

Ez diçim   I go
Ez naçim   I don't go
Tu rûdinî   You sit
Tu rûnadnî You don't sit

past Tenses (Demên Borî)
Simple past tense (Dema borîya têdayî)

a) **Interansitive Verbs:** an intransitive verb is a verb which does not take a direct object.
The verb agrees with the subject of the sentence. Therfore the present conjugation of the auxiliary verb **bûn** (to be) is added to the past stem in agreement with the subject.

The past stem is obtained by taking out **-in** or **-n** from the **infinitive.**

Subject + past stem + Bûn

Ez		hat	+ im	I came
Tu didî	hat		+ î*	You came
Ew dide	hat		+ e*	He/she/it came
Em didin	hat		+ in	We came
Hun didin	hat		+ in	You came
Ew didin	hat		+ in	They came

*) **-î** and **-e** are usually omitted. When the past stem ends in a vowel the first vowel of the auxiliary verb is omitted.

Verb   **Past stem** peyivîn (to speak) peyivî

Ez peyivîm
Tu peyivî
Ew peyivî
Em peyivîn
Hun peyivîn
Ew peyivîn

b) **Transitive Verbs:** A transitive verb is a verb which takes a direct object, e.g.: **kirin**(to do), **nivîsîn** (to write), **dan** (to give).

The second (oblique) group of the personal pronouns is used as the **subject** of the sentence while the first (simple) group being used as the **object** .

The verb agrees with the object. Therefore the auxiliary verb **bûn** (to be) is added to the past stem in agreement with the **object.**

Verb   **Past stem**
dîtin (to see) dît

Subject +	Object +	past stem	+ Bûn	
Wî	ez		dît + im	He saw me.
Min	tu	dît	+ î*	I saw you.
Me	ew	dît	+ e*	We saw him/her/it.
We	em	dît	+ in	You saw us.
Wê	hun	dît	+ in	She saw you.
Wan	ew	dît	+ in	They saw them

*) **-î** is frequently ommitted; **-e** is almost always omitted.

Verb	**Past stem**

Avêtin (to throw) avêt

Min ew avêt.	I threw it.
Min ew avêtin.	I threw them.
Te kevir avêt.	You threw the stone.
Te kevir avêtin.	You threw the stones.
Wî/ wê kevirek avêt.	He/she threw the stone.
Wî/ wê kevirin avêtin.	He/she threw some stones.
Me Kevir avêt.	We threw the stone.
Me Kevir avêtin.	We threw the stones.
We Kevirek avêt.	You threw a stone.
We Kevirin avêtin.	You threw (some) stones.
Wan ew avêt.	They threw it.
Wan ew avêtin.	They threw them.

Verb	**Past stem**

dan (to give) da

Min ew da Azad.	I gave it to Azad..
Min ew dan Azad.	I gave them to Azad.

Verb	**Past stem**

nivîsîn (to write) nivîsî

Me ew nivîsî.	We wrote it.
Me ew nivîsîn.	We wrote them.

This tense is negated using the prefix **-ne** .

Ez <u>ne</u>hatim.	I did not come.
Ew <u>ne</u>çûn.	They did not go.
Min ew ve<u>ne</u>kir.	I did not open it.
Min ew <u>ne</u>avêt.	I did not threw it.
Mî navê min <u>ne</u>nivîsî.	He did not write my name.

past progressive (continous) Tense
(Dema borîya berdest)

<u>di- + simple past tense conjugation.</u>

<u>Simple Past</u> <u>Past Progressive</u>

Ez çûm.	diçûm.	I went/was going.
Tu peyivî.	dipeyivî.	You spoke/were speaking.
Wî xwar.	dixwar.	He ate/was eating.
Wê avêt.	diavêt.	She threw/was throwing.
Me Kir.	dikir.	We did/were doing.
Hun hatin.	dihatin.	You came/were coming.
Ew raketin.	radiketin.	They slept/were sleeping.

In Kurmanji, the Past Progressive Tense also indicates a constant or frequent practice in the past such as **used to** in English.

berê: formerly

Min berê cizare dikişand. I used to smoke.
Wî berê pir dixwar.   He used to eat much.

Perfect Tenses
Present perfect tense (Dema borîya dûdar)

It is used when the effects of a past action or event are still felt in the present or when there are no clear indications about the time that the action took place.

a) **Intransitive Verbs**

The present perfect tense is formed by adding the auxiliary verb **bûn** (the present conjugation used after a vowel) to the past stem.

Subject + past stem + Bûn

Ez		çû	+ me	I have gone
Tu	çû		+ yî	You have gone
Ew	çû		+ ye	He/she/it has gone
Em	çû		+ ne	We have gone
Hun	çû		+ ne	You have gone
Ew	çû		+ ne	They have gone

When the past stem ends in a consonant, **i** is placed between the **past stem** and **bûn** .

Subject + past stem + Bûn

Ez		hat	+ i̱me	I have come
Tu	hat		+ i̱yî	You have come

Ew	hat	+ iye	He/she/it has come
Em	hat	+ ine	We have come
Hun	hat	+ ine	You have come
Ew	hat	+ ine	They have come

b) **Transitive Verbs** The same conjugation of **bûn** is used, but unlike the intransitive verb agreeing with the object.

Subject +	**Object +**	**past stem**	**+ Bûn**	
Te	ez		dît + ime.	You have seen me.
Min	tu	dît	+ iyî	I have seen you.
Wî	ew	dît	+ iye	He has seen him/her/it.
Wê	em	dît	+ ine	She has seen us.
Me	hun	dît	+ ine	We have seen you.
We	ew	dît	+ ine	They have seen them
We	ew	dît	+ iye	They have seen him/her/it.

ne- is used as the prefix negating the verb.

Ma te Azad dîtiye?	Have you seen Azad?
Na, min ew nedîtiye.	No, I haven't seen him.
Min pirtûkek daye Azad.	I have given Azad a book.
Wê pirtûk nedane min.	He has not given the books to me.
Wan pirtûk neanîne.	They have not brought the books.

Past Perfect Tense
(Dema borîya çîrokî

The past perfect is formed with the past stem and the past simple conjugation **bûn**.

a) **Intransitive Verbs** The verb agrees with the subject, therefore the conjugation of **bûn** is in agreement with the subject.

+ bûn(simple past)

Ez	+ bûm
Tu	+ bû(yî)*

Ew + bû

Em + bûn

Hun + bûn

Ew + bûn

*) **-yî** is frequently omitted.

Verb	**Past stem**
çûn (to go) çû	

Subject + past stem + Bûn

Ez		çû	+ bûm.	I had gone
Tu	çû	+ bû(yî).	You had gone
Ew	çû	+ bû.	He/she/it had gone
Em	çû	+ bûn.	We had gone
Hun	çû	+ bûn.	You had gone
Ew	çû	+ bûn.	They had gone

When the past stem ends in a consonant, **i** is placed between the **past stem** and **bûn** .

Verb	**Past stem**
hatin (to come) hat	

Subject + past stem + i + Bûn

Ez		hat	+ i + bûm	I had come
Tu	hat	+ i + bû(yî)	You had come
Ew	hat	+ i + bû.	He/she/it had come
Em	hat	+ i + bûn.	We had come
Hun	hat	+ i + bûn.	You had come
Ew	hat	+ i + bûn.	They had come

Gava ku ew hat, hun çûbûn. When he came, you had gone.

Gava ku hun çûn, ew hatibûn. When you went, they had come.

ne- is used as the prefix negating the verb.

Em nehatibûn. WE had not come.

Hun neçûbûn. We had not gone.

b) **Transitive Verbs** The verb agrees with the object, therfore the conjungtion of **bûn** is in agreement with the object.

Verb   **Past stem**

dîtin (to see) dît

Subject +	Object +	past stem	+ I + Bûn	
Te	ez		dît	+ i + bûm.	You had seen me.
Min	tu	dît	+ i + bû(yî).	I had seen you.
Wî	ew	dît	+ i + bû.	He had seen him/her/it.
Wê	em	dît	+ i + bûn.	She had seen us.
Me	hun	dît	+ i + bûn.	We had seen you.
We	ew	dît	+ i + bûn.	They had seen them
We	ew	dît	+ i + bû.	They had seen him/her/it.

Gava ku hun hatin, min ew nedîtibû.   When you came, I had not seen him.

Bilanî (Optative Mood)

Bilanî is the verbal form expressing desire: e.g. in Greek, not in English. It also forms the basis for the **Subjunctive mood** and the **future tense** . a) **Present** It is formed by replacing **di-** in the present tense with **bi-.**

peyivîn: to speak

Present Tense Bilanî

Ez <u>di</u>peyivim.   Ez <u>bi</u>peyivim.
Tu <u>di</u>peyivî.   Tu <u>bi</u>peyivî.
Ew <u>di</u>peyive.   Ew <u>bi</u>peyive.
Em <u>di</u>peyivin.   Em <u>bi</u>peyivin.
Hun <u>di</u>peyivin.   Hun <u>bi</u>peyivin.
Ew <u>di</u>peyivin.   Ew <u>bi</u>peyivin.

bi- is not used with the compound verbs with non-verbal part functioning as prefix.

rabûn: stand up

Present Tense Bilanî

Ez radibim.	Ez rabim.
Tu radibî.	Tu rabî.
Ew radibe.	Ew rabe.
Em radibin.	Em rabin.
Hun radibin.	Hun rabin.
Ew radibin.	Ew rabin.

-ne negates the verb. (Ez nepeyivim, tu ranebî.)

b) **Past Tense** bi + simple tense + a

peyivîn: to speak

Simple Past Tense	Bilanî(Past Simple)
Ez peyivîm.	Ez bipeyivîma.
Tu peyivî.	Tu bipeyivîya.
Ew peyivî.	Ew bipeyivîya.
Em peyivîn.	Em bipeyivîna.
Hun peyivîn.	Hun bipeyivîna.
Ew peyivîn.	Ew bipeyivîna.

kirin: to do

Simple Past Tense	Bilanî(Past Simple)
Min kir.	Min bikira.
Te kir.	Te bikira.
Wî kir.	Wî bikira.
Me kir.	Me bikira.
We kir.	We bikira.
Wan kir.	Wan bikira.

C) **Past Perfect**

Past Perfect tense + a (**ya** when following a vowel.

çûn: to go

Past Perfect Tense	Bilanî(Past Perfect)	Sound Variations	
		1	2
Ez çûbûm.	Ez çûbûma.	çûbiwama	çûbama

Tu çûbû(yî).	Tu çûbûya.	çûbiwaya	çûba(ya)
Ew çûbû.	Ew çûbûya.	çûbiwaya	çûba(ya)
Em çûbûn.	Em çûbûna.	çûbiwana	çûbana
Hun çûbûn.	Hun çûbûna.	çûbiwana	çûbana
Ew çûbûn.	Ew çûbûna.	çûbiwana	çûbana

Ki<u>r</u>în: to buy

Past Perfect Tense	Bilanî(Past Perfect)	Sound Variations	
		1	2
Min kirîbû.	Min kirîbûya.	kirîbiwa	kirîba
Te kirîbû.	Te kirîbûya.	kirîbiwa	kirîba
Wî kirîbû.	Wî kirîbûya.	kirîbiwa	kirîba
Wê kirîbû.	Wê kirîbûya.	kirîbiwa	kirîba
Me kirîbû.	Me kirîbûya.	kirîbiwa	kirîba
We kirîbû.	We kirîbûya.	kirîbiwa	kirîba
Wan kirîbû.	Wan kirîbûya.	kirîbiwa	kirîba

Future Tense (Dema Pêşî)

<u>subject + ê + bilanî</u>

xwarin: to eat

Bilanî	Future Tense	
Ez bixwim.	Ez ê bixwim.	I will eat
Tu bixwî.	Tu yê* bixwî.	you will eat
Ew bixwe.	Ew ê bixwe.	He/she/it will eat
Em bixwin.	Em ê bixwin.	We will eat
Hun bixwin.	Hun ê bixwin.	You will eat
Ew bixwin.	Ew ê bixwin.	They will eat

*) **ê** is replaced with **yê** when following a vowel.

"**tu ê**" is often contracted as **tê** (Tu yê bixwî/Tê bixwî).
"**ew ê**" is often contracted as **wê**.
If the subject is a noun, the future tense indicator **ê** may be replaced with **wê** or **dê** . (Azad ê biçe: Azad wê biçe/Azad dê biçe.)

Conditional (Hekanî)

The conditional is formed by one of the following words (all meaning **if**) and Bilanî.

Hek, Heke, ku, ger, eger, heger: if

a) **Present**

Bilanî	Future Tense	
Ez biçim.	Hek Ez biçim.	If I go
Tu biçî.	Hek Tu biçî.	If you go
Ew biçe.	Hek Ew biçe.	If he/she/it goes
Em biçin.	Hek Em biçin.	If we go
Hun biçin.	Hek Hun biçin.	If you go
Ew biçin.	Hek Ew biçin.	If they go

b) **Simple Past**

Bilanî	Future Tense	
Ez biçûma.	Hek Ez biçûma.	If I went
Tu biçûya.	Hek Tu biçûya.	If you went
Ew biçûya.	Hek Ew biçûya.	If he/she/it went
Em biçûna.	Hek Em biçûna.	If we went
Hun biçûna.	Hek Hun biçûna.	If you went
Ew biçûna.	Hek Ew biçûna.	If they went

Bilanî	Hekanî(Past Perfect)	Sound Variations	
		1	2
Ez çûbûma.	Hek Ez çûbûma.	çûbiwama	çûbama
Tu çûbûya.	Hek Tu çûbûya.	çûbiwaya	çûba(ya)
Ew çûbûya.	Hek Ew çûbûya.	çûbiwaya	çûba(ya)
Em çûbûna.	Hek Em çûbûna.	çûbiwana	çûbana
Hun çûbûna.	Hek Hun çûbûna.	çûbiwana	çûbana
Ew çûbûna.	Hek Ew çûbûna.	çûbiwana	çûbana

Hek ez çûbûma wir, men ê ew kirîbûya.
If I had gone there, I would have bought it.

About the Author:

He was born in Derik, a small town in Merdin province in the North Kurdistan, in 1957. After the basic education in Derik and graduating at the College (also training to become a primary school teacher) in Kirdhehir, he worked as a primary school teacher in Derik and Istanbul for 3.5 years. In 1983, he graduated in Economics in Istanbul. Due to the prohibition of any involvment in Kurdish language and culture in Turkey, he left his country in 1988 and came to Britain. Since then, using the Kurdish name Baran Rizgar, instead of the official M.F. Onen, he has been doing research into the Kurdish language and also teaching Kurdish to adults at Kackney Adult Education Institute in London, as well as writing articles on the Kurdish language. The Kurdish<-> English dictionary and Dersên Kurdi (an illustrated text book on learning and teaching Kurdish) are results of this research.