Contact-driven grammaticalization and drift of new terminal tenses from go-periphrasis in Azeri and Kryz (East Caucasian)

Northern Azerbaijan is home to a dozen East Caucasian languages. High levels of bilingualism in Azeri have prompted many subtle typological shifts in their morphosyntax. As a result of recent and language-particular individual innovations, the rich Tense-Aspect-Mood system of most East Caucasian languages mostly overlaps with the Azeri system. However, unlike Turkic, the East Caucasian languages retain inherited ergative morphology, realized as ergative case marking on the Agent of transitive verbs, and most of them show gender/number agreement of the S or P argument on verbs.

Reminiscent of but different from the 'aspectual compositions' seen in other Turkic languages, which express actionality by using posture and movement verbs (Johanson 2021), spoken Azeri juxtaposes a perfective (witnessed) past tense form of the verb 'go' with the conjugated lexical verb in order to express a 'recent perfect' tense, often glossed by native speakers with the adverbials 'already' or 'quickly' (ex. 1a&b). The construction is biclausal and clearly grammaticalized, as seen in ex. 2 with a transitive verb.

A previously undescribed copy-construction is found in Kryz, spoken in the Quba region. Kryz has two past perfective tense, the aorist and the perfect, matching the the witnessed and unwitnessed perfective past tenses of Azeri (ex. 3). Verbs do not agree in person but in gender/number (human masculine / feminine (including animals and many inanimates) / neuter / human plural) with either the Single argument or the Patient of intransitive or transitive verbs respectively. In Kryz the 'go' periphrasis has fused in the aorist tense into a synthetic paradigm for which elicitation of parallel expanded analytic forms is not available for the univerbated feminine form (ex. 4b), which shows the selection of an archaic ending (*-d* instead of *–d-u* in the current aorist paradigm), while the human plural form (ex. 4d) shows haplology (*-cib+yip-* => *-cip-*). With a transitive lexical verb, the ergative case marking is unchanged (ex. 5 a,b&c).

The Azeri construction is available with most TAMs and persons. In Kryz likewise, the verb 'go' can be used with personal clitics and various tense and moods. But in the derived terminal present tense of a transitive verb (ex. 6a&b), suffixed agreement markers of a transitive lexical verb are replaced by a default (neuter/non-human plural) ending. In other combinations, like the derived terminal imperative, and all forms with personal enclitics, the auxiliary has to be preceded by a typical 'bounder', which is a lexicalized short stem of the verb 'go out', meaning 'away' (ex. 7a&b).

The semantics and pragmatic use of this new 'iamitive' (?) perfect remain to be clarified, but the two constructions, while sharing a similar starting point in Azeri and Kryz (a focus on the endpoint of a process) show both parallel and different outcomes: like the Azeri construction, the Kryz equivalent gained autonomy in spreading to other TAMs, but the originally intransitive auxiliary, whether univerbated or not, assumed the valency and gender/number agreement of the lexical verb, and became more or less fused in all gender-marked third person forms of the new 'immediate perfect' and 'immediate present' paradigms (ex. 4, 5 and 6).

Reference: Johanson, Lars. (2021). Postverbal Constructions. In *Turkic*, pp. 597-617). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Examples :

1.a   *qaç-dı-m   get-di-m.*   1.b   *qoyun qaç-dı   get-di.*
       run-WPST-1SG go-WPST-1SG   sheep run-WPST(3)   go-WPST(3)
       'I have already escaped.'   'The sheep has already escaped.'

2.   *qoyun ye-di-m   get-di.*
       sheep eat-WPST-1SG go-WPST(3)
       'I have already eaten the sheep.'

3.   *eb-ili-r   ʕayal-bi   ula-cib /   ula-ca-b.*
       wolf-OBL-ERG child-PL.NOM eat.PF-AOR.HPL   eat.PF-PERF-HPL
       'The wolf ate / has eaten the children.'

4.a   *gada   k'ul-ca   ʕaxhircixhid < * ʕaxhir-d   yixh-id*
       boy(NOM)   house-OBL.IN   (M)arrive.PF-AOR.M go.PF-AOR.M
       'The boy has already arrived home.'
4.b   *riş   k'ul-ca   ʕaxhurcipdu < *ʕaxhur-d(u)   yip-du*
       girl(NOM)   house-OBL.IN   F.arrive.PF-AOR(F)   go.PF-AOR.F
       'The girl has already arrived home.'
4.c   *vul-bi   ʕaxhircixhic < *ʕaxhr-ic   yixh-ic.*
       sheep-NPL.NOM   (M)arrive.PF-AOR.N(PL)   go.PF-AOR.N(PL)
       'The boy has already arrived home.'
4.d   *ʕayal-bi   k'ul-ca   ʕaxhurcipcib <*ʕaxhur-cib+yip-cib.* (<u>HAPLOLOGY</u>)
       child-PL.NOM house-OBL.IN   F.arrive.PF-AOR.HPL+go.PF-AOR.HPL
       'The children have already arrived home.'

5.a   *riş-ir   fu   ulacixhic <   *ula-c   yixh-ic.*
       girl-ERG   bread(N)   eat.PF-AOR.N   (M/N)go.PF-AOR.N
       'The girl has already eaten the bread.'
5.b   *gada-r   bicah   ulacipdu <   *ula-d yip-du.*
       boy-ERG   pilav(F)   eat.PF-AOR+F.go.PF-AOR.N
       'The boy has already/quickly eaten the plov.'
5.c   *eb-ili-r   ʕayal-bi   ula-cipcib <   *ula-cib+yipcib.*   (<u>HAPLOLOGY</u>)
       wolf-OBL-ERG child-PL.NOM   eat.PF-AOR.HPL+eat.PF-PERF-HPL
       'The wolf quickly ate the children.'

6.a   *a-n-ir   vul-bi   haluca   ula-c   çe-re.*
       DIST-H-ERG   sheep-NPL(NOM)   on_the_spot eat.PF-AOR.N go.IPF-PRS(NPL)
       'She has already eaten the sheep on the spot.'
6.b   *eb-il-ir   ʕayal-bi   ula-c   ça-ba-re-b.*
       wolf-OBL-ERG child-PL.NOM eat.PF-AOR.N go.IPF-HPL-PRES-HPL
       'The wolf has already eaten the children.'

7.a   *bicah ulats'-ryu=zin   ğabç'   çuryu.* = Az. *qoyunu yeyirəm gedir.*
       pilav(F) eat.IPF-PRES.F=1SG F.go_out.PF go.IPF.PRES.F
       'I hurry up eating the plov.'
7.b   *bicah   seyil   ğabç'   yip-i*   = Az. *plovu ye getsin!*
       pilav(F)   eat.IMPER   F.go_out.PF F.go.PF-OPT
       'Hurry up eating the plov !'