

Conjunctions (Girêdek)

English explanations • Kurmanji examples • Extensive examples, exercises and answer key

1. What is a conjunction? — Girêdek çî ye?

Conjunctions link words, phrases and clauses. English and Kurmanji do not always use identical clause patterns. In the examples below, English translations aim to express meaning rather than mirror every word.

2. Coordinating conjunctions — Girêdekên hevbend

These link elements of comparable grammatical status. Some are borrowed or regional; examples show widely encountered forms.

Kurmanji linker	Meaning	Kurmanji example	English
û	and	Ez û tu li vir in.	You and I are here.
û	and	Ez çay û av dixwazim.	I want tea and water.
û	and	Ew dixwîne û dinivîse.	She reads and writes.
lê	but	Ez dixwazim biçim, lê demê min tune ye.	I want to go, but I have no time.
lê	but	Ew ciwan e, lê gelek dizane.	He is young, but he knows a lot.
an	or	Tu çay dixwazî an qehwe?	Do you want tea or coffee?
an	or	Em îro biçin an sibê?	Shall we go today or tomorrow?
yan	or (alternative)	Tu dê were yan li malê bimîne?	Will you come or stay at home?
belê	but / however (context-dependent)	Ez wî nas dikim, belê baş nizanîm.	I know him, but not well.

3. Because, since, therefore — Sedem û encam

Cause and result are related but not identical. **Ji ber ku** introduces a reason; **ji ber vê yekê** introduces a consequence and is a linking expression rather than a simple conjunction.

Kurmanji linker	Meaning	Kurmanji example	English
ji ber ku	because	Ez li malê mam, ji ber ku baran dibariya.	I stayed home because it was raining.
ji ber ku	because	Ew kêfxweş e, ji ber ku hevalên wî hatin.	He is happy because his friends came.
çimkî	because (regional/common)	Ez naçim, çimkî nexweş im.	I am not going because I am ill.
ji ber vê yekê	therefore / for this reason	Baran dibare; ji ber vê yekê em li malê dimînin.	It is raining; therefore we are staying home.
lewra	therefore / because (usage varies)	Ew westiyayî ye; lewra niha radiweste.	He is tired; therefore he is resting now.

4. If and unless — Şert

Use **heke** as the primary teaching form for open conditions; **eger** is an alternative in some varieties. Condition clauses often contain non-indicative forms. English unless is frequently paraphrased as if ... not rather than translated by a single universal conjunction.

Kurmanji linker	Meaning	Kurmanji example	English
heke	if	Heke tu werî, em ê biaxivin.	If you come, we will talk.
eger	if (alternative)	Eger tu werî, em ê biaxivin.	If you come, we will talk.
heke	if	Heke baran bibare, em ê li malê bimînin.	If it rains, we will stay home.
heke ... ne-	if ... not / unless	Heke tu neyê, em ê dest pê bikin.	If you do not come, we will begin.
heke	if	Heke wextê te hebe, alîkariya min bike.	If you have time, help me.
heke	if	Heke ew bixwîne, dê zêdetir fêr bibe.	If she studies, she will learn more.

5. When, while, before and after — Dem

Temporal expressions may introduce subordinate clauses or be used with nouns. Do not treat every time expression as a single conjunction.

Kurmanji linker	Meaning	Kurmanji example	English
dema ku	when	Dema ku ez hatim, ew li malê bû.	When I arrived, she was at home.
dema ku	when	Dema ku tu amade bî, em ê biçin.	When you are ready, we will go.
gava ku	when	Gava ku ez hatim, ew radibû.	When I arrived, he was getting up.
dema ku	while / when	Dema ku ez dixwînim, ew muzîkê guhdarî dike.	While I study, she listens to music.
berî ku	before	Berî ku tu biçî, bi min re biaxe.	Before you go, speak with me.
piştî ku	after	Piştî ku ew hat, em dest pê kir.	After he came, we started.
heta ku	until	Li vir bisekine heta ku ez vegerim.	Wait here until I return.
ji dema ku	since (time)	Ji dema ku ew hat, em li vir in.	We have been here since he arrived.

6. That, so that, in order that — Ku

The multifunctional marker **ku** can introduce complements, relative clauses and purpose clauses. Its interpretation depends on the construction; it is not always the English word that.

Kurmanji linker	Meaning	Kurmanji example	English
ku	that (complement)	Ez dizanim ku ew li malê ye.	I know that she is at home.
ku	that	Ew dibêje ku dê were.	He says that he will come.
ku	that	Ez bawer dikim ku ev rast e.	I believe that this is true.
da ku	so that / in order that	Ez dixwînim da ku fêr bibim.	I study so that I can learn.
da ku	so that	Em zû derketin da ku dereng nemînin.	We left early so that we would not be late.

Kurmanji linker	Meaning	Kurmanji example	English
ku	who / that (relative)	Ev ew kes e ku ez nas dikim.	This is the person whom I know.

7. Although, even though, nevertheless — Dijberî

Concessive expressions indicate an unexpected contrast. **Her çend ... jî** is a useful pattern; dialect and register influence alternatives.

Kurmanji linker	Meaning	Kurmanji example	English
her çend ... jî	although / even though	Her çend baran dibare jî, em diçin.	Although it is raining, we are going.
her çend ... jî	although	Her çend ew westiyayî ye jî, dixebite.	Although she is tired, she works.
dîsa jî	nevertheless / still	Baran dibare; dîsa jî em diçin.	It is raining; nevertheless, we are going.
tevî ku	despite the fact that (usage varies)	Tevî ku ew westiyayî ye, dixebite.	Although he is tired, he works.

8. Both, either, neither — Paired coordination

Paired structures require attention to negation and agreement. The English translation is sometimes more natural than a word-for-word equivalent.

Kurmanji linker	Meaning	Kurmanji example	English
hem ... hem jî	both ... and	Hem ez hem jî tu dixwînin.	Both you and I are studying.
hem ... hem jî	both ... and	Ew hem dixwîne hem jî dinivîse.	She both reads and writes.
an ... an	either ... or	An tu were an ez ê biçim.	Either you come or I will go.
ne ... ne jî	neither ... nor	Ne ez ne jî ew amade ne.	Neither I nor she is ready.

9. Comparison and manner linkers

Some comparison words are adpositions or adverbs rather than conjunctions in every use. Classification depends on what follows.

Kurmanji linker	Meaning	Kurmanji example	English
wek / weke	like / as	Ew wek mamosteyekî diaxive.	He speaks like a teacher.
wek ku	as / as if	Wek ku tu dizanî, em sibê diçin.	As you know, we are going tomorrow.
mîna	like	Ev mal mîna mala me ye.	This house is like our house.
ji ... zêdetir	more ... than	Ev pirtûk ji wê pirtûkê mezintir e.	This book is bigger than that book.

10. Clause order and punctuation

In English and Kurmanji, subordinate clauses can appear before or after a main clause. A comma often improves readability when a long subordinate clause comes first. Compare *Heke tu werî, em ê biaxivin* with *Em ê biaxivin heke tu werî*. Not all linking expressions are conjunctions.

11. Common mistakes — Çewtiyên gelemperî

Do not confuse **û** (and) with **an** (or). Do not use **ji ber ku** (because) and **ji ber vê yekê** (therefore) interchangeably. Do not translate all English that clauses using identical Kurmanji word order. Do not assume **eger** and **heke** are equally frequent in every region. Avoid treating **wek**, **mîna**, **piştî** and **berî** as conjunctions in every context.

12. Mini dialogue — Axaftin

A: Tu îro têyî an sibê? — Are you coming today or tomorrow?

B: Heke wextê min hebe, ez ê îro werim. — If I have time, I will come today.

A: Baş e, lê zû were. — All right, but come early.

B: Ez zû têm da ku em biaxivin. — I will come early so that we can talk.

13. Exercises — Rahênan

- A. Translate: and, but, or, because, if, although.
- B. Fill: Ez dixwazim biçim, ___ demê min tune ye. (but)
- C. Fill: ___ tu werî, em ê biaxivin. (if)
- D. Translate: I stayed home because it was raining.
- E. Translate: We left early so that we would not be late.
- F. Explain the difference between *ji ber ku* and *ji ber vê yekê*.
- G. Give one sentence using both ... and.
- H. Rewrite with *eger*: Heke tu werî, em ê biaxivin.
- I. Identify the linking expression in *Dema ku ez hatim, ew li malê bû*.
- J. Translate: Although it is raining, we are going.
- K. Write one sentence using *berî ku* and one using *piştî ku*.
- L. Is *wek* always a conjunction? Explain.

14. Answer key — Bersiv

- A. û; lê; an/yan; ji ber ku; heke/eger; her çend ... jî.
- B. lê. C. Heke (or Eger).
- D. Ez li malê mam, ji ber ku baran dibariya.
- E. Em zû derketin da ku dereng nemînin.
- F. The former introduces a reason; the latter expresses a result.
- G. Hem ez hem jî tu dixwînin.
- H. Eger tu werî, em ê biaxivin.
- I. dema ku.
- J. Her çend baran dibare jî, em diçin.

K. Berî ku tu biçî, bi min re biaxe. / Piştî ku ew hat, em dest pê kir.

L. No. It can function as a comparison adposition or a linker depending on context.

15. Editorial note and further reading — Çavkanî

Suggested grammar references: W. M. Thackston, Kurmanji Kurdish: A Reference Grammar (2006); descriptive studies by Geoffrey Haig and Ergin Öpengin. This teaching guide is a practical synthesis. Usage of çimkî, belê, lewra, tevî ku and some complex patterns varies by dialect and register. Independent native-speaker proofreading is recommended.

16. Next lesson — Dersa pêş

Lesson 16 — Articles, Demonstratives and Determiners.