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A Syntactico-semantic Study of Kurdish (Sorani dialect) Circumpositions within the framework Nanosyntax[1]

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Extended Abstract

1. Introduction

The complements of Kurdish prepositions λ{ (from), β{/ω{ (to) and βO: (to), take the clitics −{ω{ and −(δ)α; as a result, circumpositions
λ{ ... {ω{, λ{ ... (δ)α, ω{/β{ ...{ω{, λ{ ...(δ)α ανδ βO: ...{ω{ are derived. This paper explores the syntactico-semantic structure of these categories within the framework of nanosyntax (Hereafter NS).

2. Theoretical Framework

NS is a non-lexicalist approach presented in Starke (2009; 2011) and extended in Caha (2009), Taraldsen (2009), Pantcheva (2011). In NS approach, syntax builds structures (from morphemes to sentences) by taking the atomic features and arranging them by Merge into syntactic structures which comply with the hierarchical order determined by the functional sequence. In the derived

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structures, terminal nodes contain semantico-syntactic features that are smaller than morphemes. These features follow the fixed order of Determiner-Head-Complement. They are arranged in a universal hierarchy (functional sequence) and follow the principle one morpho-syntactic property-one feature-one head. In NS, lexicon is post-syntactic and each lexical entry includes a subtree that represents the order of the features and links the form and sound as: <phonological content, tree diagram, conceptual content>. So the lexicon is simply a list of entries where fragments of syntactic trees are combined with a phonological representation and a conceptual content. The Spell-out procedure can then be defined as a replacement of a piece of the syntactic tree by a lexical entry from the lexicon, thus supplying the syntactic structure with the phonological and/or conceptual content of the entry. In choosing the appropriate lexical entry, spell-out is thus concerned with whether it has a matching syntactic specification, i.e., whether the syntactic structure stored in the lexical entry matches the syntactic structure the entry replaces. Shortly speaking, spell-out is an operation through which the derived syntactic trees are identified with the saved subtrees in lexicon.

In spell-out, some principles including Exhaustive Lexicalisation Principle and Superset Principle work. The former states that every syntactic feature must be lexicalized; Otherwise, the syntactic process will crash. The need to lexicalise syntactic features does not require the lexical item used to have any phonological information associated with it. Even though there are certainly restrictions on the use of phonologically empty lexical items, they derive from independent phonological principles and, presumably, learnability conditions, and they are independent from the Exhaustive Lexicalisation Principle. In other words, the Exhaustive

Lexicalisation Principle states that every syntactic feature must be lexicalised by a lexical item, even if this item is phonologically null (Fábregas, 2007:4). Under The Superset Principle, if a lexical entry is the same as or bigger than a derived structure, it can spell it out. On the contrary, if the lexical entry is smaller than the derived syntactic structure, it cannot be spelt out by that lexical entry.

3. Discussion

Based on uniformity principle and mirror principle, Pantcheva (2011) suggests a hierarchical structure of directional prepositions that are composed of syntactico-semantic features and have a containment relationship with one another.

According to Baker, the parallelism between syntactic and morphological derivations strongly suggests a theoretical framework where both morphological and syntactic processes take place in a single module of the grammar (as cited in Pantcheva, 2011:109). In fact, under the mirror principle, the morphological composition of an expression reflects the syntactic structure underlying it.

It is, therefore, preferable to assume that, *in all languages*, the syntactic structure of directional expressions involves a Path projection taking as a complement a Place projection, though in many languages this is not morphologically transparent. Thus, the Uniformity Principle prompts us to postulate that the syntactic structure of the Goal path expressed by the Dutch directional preposition *naar* involves the same heads Path and Place as the syntactic structure for the Macedonian and Tsez Goal paths expressed by *nakaj* and *xor*, respectively, despite the fact that in Dutch there are more syntactic heads (two) than morphemes (one) (Koopman, 2000; den Dikken, 2010, among others).

Based on abovementioned points, it is believed that in Sorani Kurdish λ{ lexicalizes Place head and the optional morpheme -(d)a is the representative of locative case.

Pantcheva (2011: 47-52) also shows that Source element is built by adding a morpheme to the Goal encoding marker and Route phrases are formed by adding a preposition to a PP expressing a Goal Path.

Ultimately, Pantcheva (2011: 60) argues that Terminative paths are formed on basis of non-delimited transitional Goal paths (Cofinal paths) as evident in the composition of the English Terminative expression *up to*, which contains the Cofinal preposition *to*.

The conclusion Pantcheva (2011: 55) reaches is that there is a linear ordering between Goal, Source and Route paths on the basis of the relation of morphological containment. This ordering corresponds to an increasing complexity in the syntactic structure underlying these path expressions. Goal paths are the minimal element, or put informally, the most "simple" paths, Source paths are formed by the addition of a Source head, and finally, Route paths are the most complex ones, as they are built on top of Source paths by the addition of a Route head and the Goal-oriented paths (i.e., Terminative paths) are derived on the basis of Cofinal paths by adding of a special head bound.

Kurdish data show that in the structure of λ{ …{ω{ circumposition, λ{ and –{ω{ lexicalize three features (Place, Goal and Source) and one feature (Bound) respectively.

It is argued that ω{ ανδ –(δ)α ιν ω{ …(δ)α circumposition contain three features (Goal, Source and Route) and one feature (Place) respectively.

ω{ …{ω{ is another circumposition whose both elements lexicalize Place feature.

4. Conclusion

As morphological complexity mirrors syntactic complexity and the relationship between morphemes and syntactic heads/ semantic features representing them is one to one across some languages, this relationship should be induced in the underlying syntactic structure of all languages. Correspondingly, the findings of this research focusing on the circumpositions λ{...(δ)α,λ{...{ω{, ω{/β{...(δ)ααnδω{/β{...{ω{, σηοω τηατ they contain one semantic feature (Place), three semantic features (Place, Source and Bound), four semantic features (Place, Goal, Source and Route), and one semantic feature (Place) respectively; as a result, there are the same number of heads in the syntactic tree. Furthermore, these circumpositions have hierarchical structures that represent the arrangement of the features in tree diagrams.

Keywords: Nanosyntax, Kurdish language, circumposition, semantic feature, syntactic head