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1 Polysemy of English "But" and Challenges in its Translation into 2 Kurdish

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7 Abstract

8 This study demonstrates an innovative method/ practice of utilizing translation to study the
9 linguistic phenomena, connectives (cf. Moeschler, 1989; Degand, 2009;). Based on the
10 Relevance Theoretic Framework and polysemy approach, this paper consolidates research that
11 examines the polysemy of English but (cf. Wilson and Sperber, 2004; Fischer, 2006) and
12 rejects the ambiguity account by Anscombe, and Ducrot (1977) and Hall (2004), and also
13 establishes a paradigm of correspondences for but in Kurdish. Data for this study consists of
14 50 opinion articles from English and Kurdish online newspapers. All the occurrences of but
15 and its equivalents in Kurdish are examined and translated, in order to build the paradigm of
16 correspondences. The study suggests that there are four different interpretations of a general
17 procedure encoded by but, namely; contrary to expectations, contrast, correction and
18 dismissal, and that these procedural meanings are translated into Kurdish as: ke?i, be?am, be
19 pêçewanewe and be?kû respectively.

21 *Index terms*— discourse analysis, relevance theory, connectives, translation.

22 1 Introduction

23 n between the two possible ways of dealing with the multi-functionality of connectives (monosemy and
24 homonymy), the polysemy approach assumes that 'there are different distinct readings of a connective and
25 that these different senses are related' (Fischer 2006: 13). I will adopt this latter position in this paper with
26 respect to the analysis of but and its Kurdish equivalences. The current study explores the various meanings
27 encoded by the connective but in English such as 'contrary to expectations', 'contrast', 'correction' and 'dismissal'
28 (Lakoff 1971 (Blakemore 1987, 2002; all 2007 (Horn 1989, Bell 1998 and Iten 2005)). This study suggests
29 that but is not an ambiguous connective and to argue the ambiguity account of but claimed by Anscombe and
30 Ducrot (1977) and Horn (1989). Based on the Relevance Theory's (RT) procedural meaning, the paper gives
31 a unified account of the meaning encoded by but. Then it argues that but encodes a general procedure that
32 can be implemented in four different situations to generate four different meanings. This is illustrated by its
33 translation into Kurdish. Thus, but is not ambiguous but it is rather a linguistic expression with a general sense.
34 The argument is supported by data from Kurdish language. The data show that there are four different linguistic
35 expressions that can translate but in Kurdish. These are ke?i, be pêçewanewe, be?kû and be?am which represent
36 the four different procedural meanings of 'contrary to expectations', 'contrast', 'correction' and 'cancellation'
37 respectively. I.

38 2 Theoretical Background

39 The English connective but has been dealt with widely by several researchers such as Lakoff (1977), Fraser
40 (1995), Blakemore (1987, 2002), Iten (2000) and all (2007). It has been described with various
41 labels such as 'discourse marker', 'connective', 'pragmatic marker' and 'cohesive device'. I will be drawing on

42 the existing accounts of but and show how translation can disambiguate the polysemy of connectives especially
43 the case of but in light of the Relevance Theory (RT). According to Wilson and Sperber, relevance theory is
44 'an inferential theory of communication, which aims at explaining how the audience infers the communicator's
45 intended meaning. ?? (1995: 176). In this sense, human cognition is thought to be directed towards the
46 maximization of relevance between two inputs, in a way that the information an input carries has a relation
47 with information already stored in the cognitive system to strengthen an existing assumption or to contradict
48 and eliminate an assumption, and 'the higher cognitive effects the input has, the more relevant it is' (Ibid: 177).
49 Thus, relevance can be thought of as a positive function of effects achieved, and a negative function of effort
50 incurred. That is, the relevance needs to be achieved with minimum efforts. This is in line with Wilson and
51 Sperber's claim that 'use of an obvious stimulus may create precise and predictable expectations of relevance
52 not raised by other stimuli.' ??Wilson and Sperber, 2004: 617). For instance, successful communication is a
53 matter of the reader recognizing the writer's communicative intentions, typically by utilizing suitable connectives
54 in order to help the reader get to the point faster.

55 The meanings associated with the connectives are context-dependent, thus connectives should not be examined
56 in isolation. For instance, it is very difficult to answer a question like: What does but mean? Whereas it is easier
57 to answer a question such as: How is but used in a given context? Schiffrin claims that 'discourse markers'
58 -here named connectives-could have semantic, syntactic, and pragmatic roles simultaneously but they are not
59 'structural or semantic components in the sentence ?? (1987: 190). Nonetheless, this multifunctionality is
60 different based on the categories of the DM group. For example, conjunctions have pragmatic effects that are
61 closely associated with the type of meaning they signal, such as the case of but which reflects a difference between
62 two text segments S1 and S2. The semantic meaning implied by the connection could be contrary to expectation,
63 contrast, correction or cancellation as proposed previously in the text. ??lakemore (1987) analyses but and
64 regards it as a linguistic expression that does not contribute to the content of the sentence. Adopting the RT
65 framework, she focuses on two different specific relations, namely 'denial' and 'contrast'. Blakemore argues that
66 but means 'and + something else'. I will attempt to explain the 'something else' through translating but into
67 Kurdish. The different procedures; denial of expectation (S2 denies an expectation forwarded in S1), contrast
68 (S2 contrasts a state of affair or an action in S1), correction (S2 corrects a proposition in S1) and dismissal (S2
69 cancels what has been mentioned in S1), as shown in Figure ??, in which but plays a role as a connective, have
70 been translated into four Kurdish adversative connectives; ke?i, be?am, be pêçewanewe and be?kû.

71 3 II.

72 4 Translation and Linguistics

73 As far as translation and linguistics are concerned, the assumption is that translation data contain texts that
74 are intended to express the same meanings and have identical or at least very similar textual functions in the
75 two languages concerned, here English and Kurdish. Dyvik was one of the first to argue in favour of the use of
76 translation data to establish the precise semantic values of words. He suggests that 'by successively using the
77 source and target language as a starting-point, we can establish paradigms of correspondences: the translations
78 can be arranged as a paradigm where each target item corresponds to a different meaning of the source item'
79 (1998: 12). Simon-Vandenberghe likewise states that 'translations of pragmatic markers can serve as a heuristic
80 for discovering contextual dimensions or for making more fine-grained divisions in these dimensions, because the
81 translations force one to account for the contextual factors that lead to particular choices. ?? (2006: 111). These
82 choices would pose a challenge for translators when translating a polysemous connective such as but into Kurdish.
83 As of yet, there is little linguistic research regarding Kurdish connectives and hence there is no recognised list of
84 Kurdish connectives from which to select an equivalent connective to but. The four choices available to translators
85 are described in detail in sections (4-1, 4-2, 4-3 and 4-4).

86 5 III.

87 6 Data and Methodology

88 The data comprise of translation of all occurrences of but in 30 English newspaper opinion articles along with
89 all the equivalents' occurrences in 30 Kurdish newspaper opinion articles. These examples result in a corpus
90 that can be used to identify the possible meanings of but in Kurdish. However, using translation corpora as
91 base for analysis seems to be biased, because of the diversity of results and according to Degande 'not only is
92 there a problem of context and typological differences, one should also be careful not to generalize individual
93 instances of language use' (2009: 178). Nonetheless, in terms of the correspondence paradigms, it is possible to
94 obtain suggestive results in assigning certain meanings to words, especially connectives. Aijimer et al argue that
95 'such semantic fields can be established by checking back and forth ?? (2006: 111). Thus, the correspondence
96 paradigm is built by double checking the equivalences, i.e, through translation and back translation we can assign
97 correspondence values to the functional equivalences. For instance, if but in English is translated by be?kû and
98 keçi in Kurdish, then using Kurdish as a source language, we should be able to check for the translation of be?kû
99 and keçi in English, which will become the target language. Such an analysis, Aijimer et al state would allow us

100 'to show how the pragmatic marker X is related to other pragmatic markers, or to other linguistic items such as
101 modal particles or response words, in the same language' (Ibid.: 112).

102 Also, Dyvik states, in favour of this approach, that 'translators have no theoretic concern in mind, evaluate
103 the interpretational possibilities of linguistic expressions [?], and then try to recreate the same interpretational
104 possibilities in a target text serving a comparable purpose in another language' (1998: 7). Finally, a translation
105 approach to examining linguistic phenomena seems to meet the criteria for most of the demands of contemporary
106 linguistics, as Noël states that 'it is corpus-based, it is contrastive and thus has typological relevance [...], it is
107 task-based, in as much as it treats translation data as a collection of informants' judgments about the meanings
108 of the linguistic forms in the source text' (2003: 759). Thus, I will adopt Degand's approach which she calls
109 'mirror analysis' which takes 'back-and-forth translation as a way of establishing semantic field of equivalents in
110 one language or across languages' (2009: 179). This will help me establish what is the most suitable Kurdish
111 equivalent for English but, subject to relevant context, and also what semantic values can be linked to each
112 connective.

113 7 IV.

114 8 But in Translation

115 This paper suggests that there are four distinct Kurdish connectives corresponding to these four implementations
116 of the general procedure encoded by but which are: keçî, be?kû, be pêçewanewe and be?am. These findings are
117 in line with Simon-Vandenberg's claims that 'translations of connectives can serve as a heuristic for discovering
118 contextual dimensions or for making more fine-grained divisions in these dimensions, because the translations
119 force one to account for the contextual factors that lead to particular choices. ?? (2006: 111). This paper seeks
120 to answer questions such as: Is the English connective but polysemous? What can translation add to linguistic
121 studies? How are the Kurdish equivalences for the English connective but accounted for by a relevance-theoretic
122 approach?

123 Figure ??: Procedural meanings of but One way of accounting for the functions of but and its meanings is to
124 analyse it as encoding a procedural meaning rather than as a concept or conceptual representation. According
125 to Hall the 'function of but is to guide the hearer to the intended interpretation of the utterance' (2007: 200).
126 The type of the implementation of but constrains the type of implicatures to be communicated in the text. I
127 agree with Hall concerning the assignment of a superordinate meaning of but as 'contrast', because the other
128 meanings seem to be more complicated and that all of the other three meanings of but have some degree of
129 contrastive meaning in common apart from their main, more specific, procedural meaning. So, based on the
130 general procedure encoded by but which creates the superordinate meaning as:

131 Treat the proposition communicated by the but-clause as contrasting with the assumption explicitly or
132 implicitly communicated by the utterance of the preceding clause. ??Iten, 2005: 147) The next sections are going
133 to examine the different implementations of this general procedure of but and will translate each implementation
134 into Kurdish in order to disambiguate but and establish the Kurdish equivalences systematically.

135 9 a) 'Contrary to expectation' but

136 Allerton states that the connectives signaling the sense of contrary to / denial of expectations 'show that the
137 sentence has to be seen as detracting from what went before and thus either reducing the impact of the previous
138 point or replacing it with a different one ?? (1979: 277). The typical connectives that signal this subtype of
139 adversative relations in English is but and its equivalence in Kurdish is ke?i. The implementation of the general
140 procedure for this type is: what follows but denies and replaces an assumption or expectation communicated by
141 what precedes it.

142 1) Watching al-Jazeera television, it might appear that heroic rebel militiamen had overthrown a tyrant but,
143 in reality, military victory was almost wholly due to the Nato air assault. (Online 1) Katêk saîrî kana?î telefzyonî
144 aljaziîre dekeî, wa pêde ?êt ke pyawe pa ?ewane mili?yakan zordarêkyan leser dese?at ladawe, ke?i le ?astîda
145 serkawî?ni mili?yakan tenha behoy hêr?e asmanyekani Nato bû.

146 10 ke?i (but)

147 According to Tofiq's (2002) claim, there is no difference between ke?i and other adversative connectives. However,
148 he had studied the 'conjunction particles', as he labels them, in a rather general sense and does not give detailed
149 accounts for each connective. The data from opinion articles suggest that ke?i signals a different relation from
150 other adversative connectives such as be?am, be pêçewanewe depending on the different procedures implemented
151 in the text. The Kurdish connective corresponding to the 'contrary to Depending on the RT framework,
152 Blakemore states that but means denial, because 'it encodes a constraint that triggers an inferential route
153 involving contradicting and eliminating an assumption' (2002: 95). However, this claim is not entirely true and
154 it does not apply to diverse uses of but (See sections 4-1, 4-3, and 4-4). The S1 message in 1 (below) implies
155 that 'the rebels' heroic actions were the cause of overthrowing the tyrant'. So, the reader expects the writer to
156 elaborate on that. However, this expectation is denied in S2, as it is contrary to the expectations to see that
157 'Nato had overthrown the tyrant'. This sense of 'contrary to expectations' is introduced by but as in 9.

158 expectations' meaning of but is ke?i as shown in 2. None of the other adversative connectives can substitute
159 ke?i in a procedure such as in 2.

160 2) Eger anjûmen azadbûaye deitûani le bûdjey emsa ? (4 ta 5) hezar ganj dabmeZRênêt, ke?i ?êgri bo
161 drûstk?rawe.

162 (Online 2)

163 if council-of governorate free was-it would-able-it in budgetof this-year (4 to 5) thousand youth employ-would-it
164 on budget-of development-of regions-the, but obstacle for it made-has-been

165 If the provincial council was independent, they could employ 4 to 5 thousand youths on the regional
166 development budget. But there were obstacles.

167 Thus, the implementation of the general procedure for keçi is: what follows keçi denies and replaces an
168 assumption or expectation communicated by what precedes it.

169 11 b) 'Contrastive' but

170 According to Schwenter, 'contrast' is different from the other subtypes of adversative relations, as it guides the
171 reader to find 'incompatibility between P and Q' (2000: 260) and indicates the writer's viewpoint as the only
172 relevant one. Looking at the relation signaled in 3a, it is not about denial of / contrary to expectations. However,
173 by using but, the writer guides the reader in S2 to interpret the relation between S1 and S2 as a contrast between
174 two states: 'unrepresentative' and 'representative'. The implementation for the general procedure in this case
175 is: what follows but contrasts a proposition communicated by what precedes it. 3a) ?the problem with Iowa is
176 not that it's unrepresentative of the party's mindset but that it's too representative... (Online 3) The connective
177 but in 3a is represented in Kurdish as be pêçewanewe, because it is the typical connective to be used to convey
178 contrast between S1 and S2 in Kurdish texts, such as 3b. 3b) Kê?ey Iowa ewe niye ke nwênerayeti bîru?ai
179 ?izbeke nakat, be pêçewanewe zor nwêneraneye. Lakoff claims that when but is used in these contexts; showing
180 contrasting ideas or features, it can only signal 'semantic opposition'(1971:133), and it is simply a contrastive
181 relation between S1 and S2, which is also signaled by be pêçewanewe in 3b.

182 12 be pêçewanewe (but)

183 According to Tofiq, be pêçewanewe is the typical 'conjunction particle' that signals contrast between two sentences
184 (2002: 230). His claim is based on the fact that the word is a prepositional phrase consisting of (be = with,
185 pêçewanewe = contrast). However, there are reasons why it is considered as a connective and to suggest that it
186 signals a contrastive relation. The data from Kurdish opinion articles suggest that be pêçewanewe operates in a
187 procedure where S2 contrasts S1 by presenting incompatibility between two view points as in 4.

188 4) Serçawekani opozisyon prupagandei ewe dekan ke sarokayati heremi Kurdistan basi le jyabûneweî Kurdistan
189 k?rdûe le Êraqda. Be pêçewanewe le çendîn boneda seroki harem jexti leser yek parçeî Êraq k?rdotewe. (Online
190 4) Source-of opposition propaganda this make-they that presidency of region Kurdistan talk about separation-of
191 Kurdistan has-done in Iraq. But in many occasions president-of region Kurdistan insisted on one-piece-of Iraq
192 have-done-he. The opposition sources argue that the Kurdistan Region presidency intends to detach Kurdistan
193 from Iraq. But, in several occasions, the Kurdistan Region's president has insisted on a unified Iraq.

194 In 4, be pêçewanewe signals an incompatibility between two viewpoints; opposing unity' and 'supporting
195 unity'. This incompatibility is a sense of contrast as it can be stressed contrastively with the presence of negation.
196 Thus, there is a contrastive relation between S1 and S2 in 4, and it is explicated by using be pêçewanewe. So,
197 the implementation for this Kurdish connective will be: what follows be pêçewanewe contrasts a proposition
198 communicated by what precedes it.

199 13 c) 'Correction' but

200 Correction relations are recognised in the procedure such as: S1 is a misconception or a misunderstanding and is
201 corrected by the correct information in S2. Hall claims that the correction may be in the conceptual content of the
202 assumption in S1 and/or 'some aspect of the linguistic form used to express it' (2007: 201). The connectives that
203 signal correction relation and replace the previous proposition in discourse with another include: but, in English
204 and be?kû, in Kurdish. The English connective but can also signal correction relation as a subtype of adversative
205 relations. For instance, the procedure implemented in 5a is; what follows but (S2) corrects an assumption put
206 forward in what precedes it (S1). That is S1 is a false assumption and S2 is a correction of this false assumption
207 with the help of but. Regarding the procedure in 29a, S2 'Hockey has hatrick' corrects a proposition in S1
208 (Only football has hatrick'. Contrary to Fraser's claim that but 'cannot signal a corrective contrast ?? (2005:
209 18) between S1 and S2, it is observed in the translation data that but does signal correction between two text
210 segments and as such it is translated into Kurdish as be?kû. Kurdish be?kû operates in a similar procedure to
211 the one of 'correction but' as in 5b: 5b) Lem ?o?gareda, le hemû jore yariek yarizan detwanê sê go?i leser yakt?r
212 tomar b?kat, nek tenha le yari topi pê be?kû le hoki?.

213 14 be?kû (but)

214 The Kurdish connective corresponding to 'correction' but is be?kû. The adversative relation signalled by be?kû
215 is specifically correction. That is, S1 presents an assumption which is ordinarily false and S2, with the help of

216 be?kû, corrects that false assumption, such as in 6: Be?kû has been studied in ??hwani's (2003) work. He states
217 that 'be?kû is a conjunction particle that has the function of signalling contrast between two sentences' (2003:
218 99). According to the data in this study, however, be?kû signals a correction of a previous statement. That is,
219 the procedure in which be?kû operates is as such (S2 corrects a misunderstanding in S1). For instance, S2 in 6
220 which is introduced by be?kû is forms a correction to a misunderstood situation. Thus, the implementation of the
221 general procedure is also applicable to be?kû such as: what follows be?kû corrects an assumption communicated
222 by what precedes it.

223 15 d) 'Dismissal' but

224 The implementation of the procedure in which but signals dismissal or cancellation is: what follows but (S2)
225 cancels and dismisses the importance of what precedes it (S1). This type of relation is typically signaled by but
226 in English and the Kurdish equivalence is be?am.

227 Consider but in the translation procedure implemented in 7a, in which S2 cancels or dismisses the importance
228 of the topic forwarded in S1. The proposition expressed by S1 in 7a and indirectly contradicted and dismissed by
229 S2, and it is introduced by but. So, in terms of RT's procedural approach, but can also signal dismissal in English
230 texts. This claim is supported by the fact that in such contexts but is translated into Kurdish as be?am as in 7b.
231 This type of relation is not found in other procedures in which but signals other subtypes of adversative relation.
232 Bach (1999) claims that the different interpretations of but have proven but to be ambiguous. However, these
233 different readings of but should not be considered as ambiguous, because each interpretation can be attributed
234 to different procedures.

235 16 be?am (but)

236 The procedure in which belam is used is similar to the one where 'dismissal' but is used. S1 is cancelled and
237 dismissed by a more important statement in S2. For instance, be?am in 8 introduces a positive statement 'the
238 region is now trouble free' which dismisses a negative statement put forward in S1 'catastrophic events happened'.
239 7a) Our troops will be stuck in the front line of a strategy that has an end date but has no clear end game.
240 (Online 7) 7b) Hêzkanman le hê?i pê?ewei strati?iyêk gir dexon ke kotai heye be?am çoniyeti kotayekei ?ûn
241 nîye. 8) Ew ?ûdawane zor karesatbar bûn, be?am êsta doxi herêmakeman zor arame. (Online 8) that events very
242 unpleasant were-they, but now situation-of region-the-our very quiet-is-it. Those events were catastrophic, but
243 now our region enjoys tranquility.

244 Considering the procedural meaning of be?am in 8, it is obvious that implementation of the general procedure
245 in 8 is: what follows be?am cancels an assumption communicated by what precedes it. Thus, be?am is the most
246 suitable Kurdish equivalent for dismissal but.

247 V.

248 17 Conclusions

249 The claims about the 'ambiguity' of the English connective but are not entirely true ??Anscombe and Ducrot,
250 1977: 26). Based on a relevance-theoretic approach and according to the different translation options, this paper
251 concludes that but is a polysemous connective and that it has four distinct, yet interrelated, procedural meanings.
252 These meanings shall cause minimal ambiguity when translating from English into Kurdish, because each of the
253 four distinct meanings fits into a specific interpretation of the general procedure. However, having no detailed
254 research about Kurdish connectives would pose a challenge to translators, as they need to be aware of the textual
255 functions of each connective and the contexts in which they are used in order to have a flawless final product in
256 their translation. Based on the Relevance Theory's procedural account, there are four distinct interpretations
257 of the general procedure associated with but, namely; denial, contrast, correction and cancellation, which are
258 translated into Kurdish as ke?i, be pêçewanewe, be?kû and be?am respectively as shown in Figure 2.

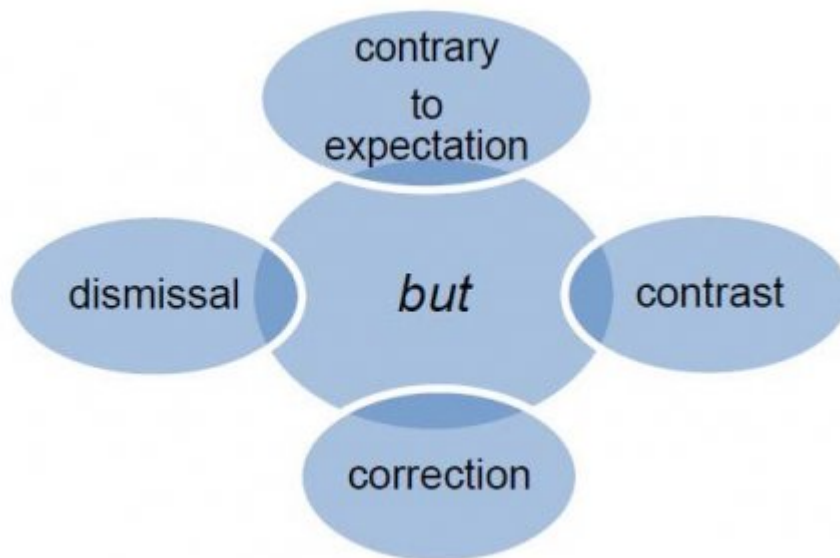


Figure 1:



6

Figure 2: 6)

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- 259 [? id=13606z=4l=1 (2012)] [http://xebat.net/detail_articals.php ? id=13606&z=4&l=1](http://xebat.net/detail_articals.php?id=13606&z=4&l=1), February
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