

The use of Translation in Linguistic Studies: The Case of But

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Abstract

This study demonstrates an innovative tool of utilizing translation to study linguistic phenomena; connectives (cf. Moeschler, 1989; Degand, 2009;). Based on the Relevance Theoretic Framework and polysemy approach, this paper not only consolidates the polysemy of English but (cf. Wilson and Sperber, 2004; Fischer, 2006) and rejects the ambiguity account by Anscombe, and Ducrot (1977) and Hall (2004) but it also establishes a paradigm of correspondences to but in Kurdish. Data for this study has been built from 50 opinion articles from English and Kurdish online newspapers. Then, all the occurrences of but and its equivalents in Kurdish are examined and translated, in order to build the paradigm of correspondences. The study proves that there are four different interpretations of a general procedure encoded by but, namely; contrary to expectations, contrast, correction and dismissal, and that these procedural meanings are translated into Kurdish as: ke?i, be?am, be pêçewanewe and be?kû respectively.

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

1 I. Introduction

n between the two possible ways of dealing with the multi-functionality of connectives; monosemy and homonymy, there is the polysemy approach which assumes that 'there are different distinct readings of a connective and that these different senses are related' (Fischer 2006: 13). It is this latter position that I will follow in this paper with respect to the analysis of but and its Kurdish equivalences. The current study explores the various meanings encoded by the connective but in English such as 'contrary to expectations', 'contrast', 'correction' and 'dismissal' (Lakoff 1971 (Lakoff 1971), Blakemore 1987;2002 (Blakemore 1987, 2002), Hall 2007 (Hall 2007), Horn 1989, Bell 1998 and Iten 2005). It is an attempt to prove that but is not an ambiguous connective and to argue the ambiguity account of but claimed by Anscombe and Ducrot (1977) and Horn (1989). Based on the Relevance Theory's (RT) procedural meaning, the paper gives a unified account of the meaning encoded by but. Then it argues that but encodes a general procedure that can be implemented in four different situations to generate four different meanings. This is proven by its translation into Kurdish. Thus, but is not ambiguous but it is rather a linguistic expression with a general sense. The argument is supported by data from Kurdish language. The data show that there are four different linguistic expressions Author: English Linguistics at the College of Languages in Salahaddin University-Hawler. e-mail: rashwan.salih@yahoo.com that can translate but in Kurdish. These are ke?i, be pêçewanewe, be?kû and be?am which represent the four different procedural meanings of 'contrary to expectations', 'contrast', 'correction' and 'cancellation' respectively.

2 II. The Retical Background

The English connective but has been dealt with widely by several researchers such as Lakoff (1977), Fraser (1995), Blakemore (1987, 2002), ten (2000) and all (2007) and it has been given various labels such as 'discourse marker', 'connective', 'pragmatic marker' and 'cohesive device'. I will be drawing on the existing accounts of but and show how translation can disambiguate the polysemy of connectives especially the case of but in light of the Relevance Theory (RT).

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

55 The meanings associate with the connectives are context-dependent, i.e, 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 but is used? However, according to Schiffrin connectives are 'independent of
58 sentential structure' and that 'the structure and meaning of arguments can be preserved even without markers
59 ?? (1987:32). She claims that 'discourse markers' -here named connective-could have semantic, syntactic, and
60 pragmatic roles simultaneously but they are not 'structural or semantic components in the sentence' (ibid:
61 190). Nonetheless, this multi-functionality is different based on the categories of the DM group. For example,
62 conjunctions have pragmatic effects that are closely associated with the type of meaning they signal, such as the
63 case of but which reflects a difference between two text segments S1 and S2. This difference could be contrary to
64 expectation, contrast, correction or cancellation proposed previously in the text. ??lakemore (1987) analyses but
65 and regards it as a linguistic expression that does not contribute to the content of the sentence. Adopting the
66 RT framework, she focuses on two different specific relations, namely 'denial' and 'contrast'. Blakemore argues,
67 that but means 'and + something else'. I will attempt to explain the 'something else' through translating but
68 into Kurdish.

69 The different procedures; denial of expectation (S2 denies an expectation forwarded in S1), contrast (S2
70 contrasts a state of affair or an action in S1), correction (S2 corrects a proposition in S1) and dismissal (S2
71 cancels what has been mentioned in S1), as shown in Figure ??, in which but plays a role as a connective, have
72 been translated into four Kurdish adversative connectives; ke?i, be?am, be pêçewanewe and be?kû.

3 III. Translation and Linguistics

74 As far as translation and linguistics are concerned, the assumption is that translation data contain texts that are
75 intended to express the same meanings and have identical or at least very similar textual functions in English
76 and Kurdish. Dyvik was one of the first to argue in favour of the use of translation data to establish the precise
77 semantic values of words, as he suggests that 'by successively using the source and target language as a starting-
78 point, we can establish paradigms of correspondences: the translations can be arranged as a paradigm where
79 each target item corresponds to a different meaning of the source item' (1998: 12). Then, Simon-Vandenberg
80 states that 'translations of pragmatic markers can serve as a heuristic for discovering contextual dimensions or
81 for making more fine-grained divisions in these dimensions, because the translations force one to account for
82 the contextual factors that lead to particular choices. ?? (2006: 111). These different meanings would pose a
83 challenge for translators when translating a polysemous connective such as but into Kurdish, because there is
84 very few linguistic research in terms of Kurdish connectives and there is no recognised list of connectives from
85 which to select an equivalent connective to but. This issue is dealt with in detail in sections (4-1, 4-2, 4-3 and
86 4-4).

4 IV. Data and Methodology

88 This paper adopts both qualitative and quantitative approaches towards the analysis of but and its equivalences
89 in Kurdish. The data comprise of translation of all occurrences of but in 30 English newspaper opinion articles
90 along with all the equivalents' occurrences in 30 Kurdish newspaper opinion articles. All these occurrences fall
91 into four main contexts. The idea behind this is to build a corpus in order to find out the possible meanings
92 of but in Kurdish. However, using translation corpora as base for analysis seems to be biased, because of the
93 diversity of results and according to Degande 'not only is there a problem of context and typological differences,
94 one should also be careful not to generalize individual instances of language use' (2009: 178). Nonetheless, in
95 terms of the correspondence paradigms, it is possible to obtain solid results in assigning certain meanings to
96 words, especially connectives. Aijmer et al argue that 'such semantic fields can be established by checking back
97 and forth ?? (2006: 111). Thus, the correspondence paradigm is built by double checking the equivalences, i.e,
98 through translation and back translation we can assign correspondence values to the functional equivalences. For
99 instance, if but in English is translated by be?kû and keçi in Kurdish, then using Kurdish as a source language, we
100 should be able to check for the translation of be?kû and keçi in English, which will become the target language.
101 Such an analysis, Aijmer et al state would allow us 'to show how the pragmatic marker X is related to other
102 pragmatic markers, or to other linguistic items such as modal particles or response words, in the same language'
103 (Ibid.: 112).

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

115 5 V. But in Translation

116 This paper proves that there are four distinct Kurdish connectives corresponding to these four implementations
117 of the general procedure encoded by but which are: keçî, be?kû, be pêçewanewe and be?am.

118 These findings are in line with Simon-Vandenberg's claims that 'translations of connectives can serve as a
119 heuristic for discovering contextual dimensions or for making more fine-grained divisions in these dimensions,
120 because the translations force one to account for the contextual factors that lead to particular choices. ?? (2006:
121 111). This paper seeks to answer questions such as: Is the English connective but polysemous? What can
122 translation add to linguistic studies? How are the Kurdish equivalences for the English connective but accounted
123 for in relevance-theoretic approach?

124 Figure ?? : Procedural meanings of but One way of accounting for the functions of but and its meanings is to
125 analyse it as encoding a procedural meaning rather than as a concept or conceptual representation. According to
126 Hall the 'function of but is to guide the hearer to the intended interpretation of the utterance' (2007: 200). The
127 type of the implementation of but constrains the type of implicatures to be communicated in the text. I agree
128 with Hall concerning the assignment of an umbrella meaning of but as 'contrast', because the other meanings
129 seem to be more complicated and that all of the other three meanings of but have some degree of contrastive
130 meaning apart from their main procedural meaning. So, based on the general procedure encoded by but 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 Almost all existing studies on but recognize
135 its 'contrary of expectation' use at least (cf. Lakoff 1971, Blackmore 2002, ??all 2007). Depending on the RT
136 framework, Blakemore states that but means denial, because 'it encodes a constraint that triggers an inferential
137 route involving contradicting and eliminating an assumption' (2002: 95). However, this claim is not entirely true
138 and it does not apply to diverse uses of but (See sections 4-1, 4-3, and 4-4). The S1 message in 1 implies that 'the
139 rebels' heroic actions were the cause of overthrowing the tyrant'. So, the reader expects the writer to elaborate
140 on that. However, this expectation is denied in S2, as it is contrary to the expectations to see that 'Nato had
141 overthrown the tyrant'. This sense of *leser dese ?at ladawe, ke?i le ?astîda serkawt?ni mili?yakan tenha behoy*
142 *hêr?e asmanyekani Nato bû.*

143 6 ke?i (but)

144 According to Tofiq's (2002) claim there is no difference between ke?i and other adversative connectives. However,
145 he had studied the 'conjunction particles', as he labels them, in a rather general sense and does not give detailed
146 accounts for each connective. The data from opinion articles suggest that ke?i signals a different relation from
147 other adversative connectives such as be?am, be pêçewanewe depending on the different procedures implemented
148 in the text. The Kurdish connective corresponding to the 'contrary to expectations' meaning of but is ke?i as
149 shown in 2. None of the other adversative connectives can substitute ke?i in a procedure such as in 2. 2. Eger
150 *anjûmen azadbûaye deitûani le bûdjey emsa ? (4 ta 5) hezar ganj dabmezzrênêt, ke?i ?êgri bo drûstk?rawe.*
151 (Online 2) if council-of governorate free was-it would-able-it in budget-of this-year (4 to 5) thousand youth
152 employwould-it on budget-of development-of regions-the, but obstacle for it made-has-been If the provincial
153 council was independent, they could employ 4 to 5 thousand youths on the regional development budget. But
154 there were obstacles.

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

157 7 b) 'Contrastive' but

158 According to Schwenter, 'contrast' is different from the other subtypes of adversative relations, as it guides
159 the reader to find 'incompatibility between P and Q' (2000: 260), and indicates the writer's viewpoint as the
160 only relevant one. Looking at the relation signaled in 3a, it is not about denial of / contrary to expectations.
161 However, by using but, the writer guides the reader in S2 is also signaled by be pêçewanewe in 3b. be pêçewanewe
162 (but) According to Tofiq, be pêçewanewe is the typical 'conjunction particle' that signals contrast between two

163 sentences (2002: 230). His claim is based on the fact that the word is a prepositional phrase consistinf of (be =
164 with, pêçewanewe = contrast).

165 However, I believe there should be solid reasons why it is considered as a connective and that it signals a
166 contrastive relation. The data from Kurdish opinion articles suggest that be pêçewanewe operates in a procedure
167 where S2 contrasts S1 by presenting incompatibility between two view points as in 4.

168 8 Serçawekani opozisyon prupagandei ewe dekan ke sarokayati 169 heremi Kurdistan basi le jyabûnewei

170 Kurdistan k?rdûe le Êraqda. Be pêçewanewe le çendîn boneda seroki harem jexti leser yek parçei Êraq k?rdotewe.
171 (Online 4)

172 Source-of opposition propaganda this make-they that presidency of region Kurdistan talk about separation-of
173 Kurdistan has-done in Iraq. But in many occasions president-of region Kurdistan insisted on one-piece-of Iraq
174 have-done-he.

175 The opposition sources argue that the Kurdistan Region presidency intends to detach Kurdistan from Iraq.
176 But, in several occasions, the Kurdistan Region's president has insisted on a unified Iraq. In 4, be pêçewanewe
177 signals an incompatibility between two viewpoints; opposing unity' and 'supporting unity'. This incompatibility
178 is a sense of contrast as it can be stressed contrastively with the presence of negation. Thus, there is a contrastive
179 relation between S1 and S2 in 4, and it is explicated by using be pêçewanewe. So, the implementation for this
180 Kurdish connective will be: what follows be pêçewanewe contrasts a proposition communicated by what precedes
181 it.

182 9 c) 'Correction' but

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

196 10 be?kû (but)

197 The Kurdish connective corresponding to 'correction' but is be?kû. The adversative relation signalled by be?kû
198 is specifically correction. That is, S1

199 presents an assumption which is ordinarily false and S2, with the help of be?kû, corrects that false assumption,
200 such as in 6:

201 6. Her ?tek bedihatbêt bo Kûrd xer w sedeqe nebûe.

202 Be?kû beri mandûbûni xoyane deidûrnewe. (Online

203 11 6)

204 Any think-a achieved for Kurds charity was-not-it. But product hard work-of theirs-was-it harvest-itthey.

205 All achievements of the Kurds are not given by charity. But the Kurds are harvesting their hard work.

206 Be?kû has been studied in Shwani's (2003) work. He states that 'be?kû is a conjunction particle that has
207 the function of signalling contrast between two sentences ?? (2003: 99). According to the data in this study,
208 however, be?kû signals a correction of a previous statement. That is, the procedure in which be?kû operates is
209 as such (S2 corrects a misunderstanding in S1). For instance, S2 in 6 which is introduced by be?kû is forms a
210 correction to a misunderstood situation. Thus, the implementation of the general procedure is also applicable to
211 be?kû be?am (but) The procedure in which belam is used is similar to the one where 'dismissal' but is used. S1
212 is cancelled and dismissed by a more important statement in S2. For instance, be?am in 8 introduces a positive
213 statement 'the region is now trouble free' which dismisses a negative statement put forward in S1 'catastrophic
214 events happened'.

215 Those events were catastrophic, but now our region enjoys tranquility.

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

219 **12 VI.**

220 **13 Conclusions**

221 The claims about the 'ambiguity' of the English connective but is not entirely true ??Anscombe and Ducrot, 1977:
222 26). Depending on the relevance-theoretic approach and according to the different translation options, this paper
223 concludes that but is a polysemous connective and that it has four distinct, yet interrelated, procedural meanings.
224 These meanings shall not cause any ambiguity in translating into Kurdish, because each meaning fits into a specific
225 interpretation of the general procedure. However, having no detailed research about Kurdish connectives would
226 pose a challenge to translators, as they need to be aware of the textual functions of each connective and the
227 contexts in which they are used in order to have a flawless final product in their translation. Based on the RT's
228 procedural account, there are four distinct interpretations of the general procedure associated with but, namely;
229 denial, contrast, correction and cancellation, which are translated into that events very unpleasant were-they,
230 but now situation-of region-the-our very quiet-is-it.

Kurdish as ke?i, be pe?ewanewe, be ?kú and be?am respectively as shown in Figure 2.



Figure 1:

231

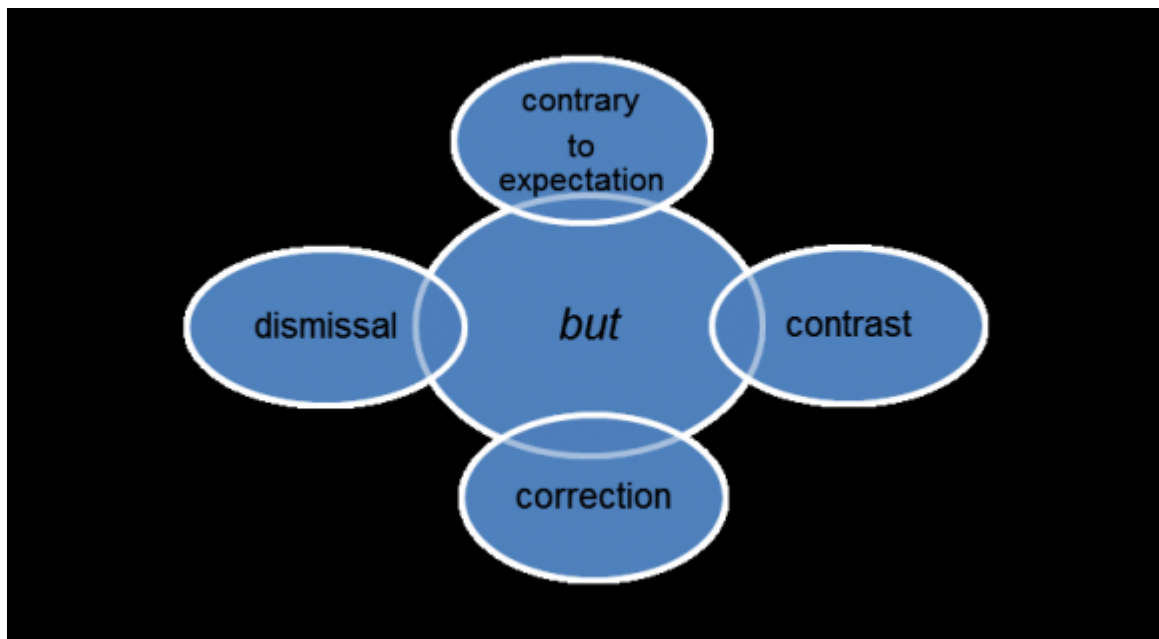


Figure 2:



Figure 3:

adversative relation. Bach (1999) claims that the different interpretations of but have proven but to be ambiguous. However, these different readings of but should not be considered as ambiguous, because each interpretation can be attributed to different procedures.

7. a) Our troops will be stuck in the front line of a strategy that has an end date but has no clear end game. (Online 7)

7. b)

d) 'Dismissal' but

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

[Note: Consider but in the procedure implemented in 7a, in which S2 cancels or dismisses the importance of the topic forwarded in S1. The proposition expressed by S1 in 7a and indirectly contradicted and dismissed by S2, and]

Figure 4:

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