

# STRUCTURAL ASSYMETRIES IN KURDISH VS ENGLISH

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# Introduction



## Linguistic Background to the languages

### English -

- Belonging to the Indo-European language family
- 360-400 million native speakers , about 700-800 million L2 speakers, 600-700 million foreign language speakers
- Latin Alphabet

### Kurdish-

- Belong to Iranian language family
- Spoken by Kurds in the Kurdistan region
- 20-30 million speakers
- Uses a combination of the Latin, Perso-Arabic and Cylliric Alphabet

# Aim of the Paper

- Declare structural differences between English and Kurdish languages through Morphological and Syntactic Typology
- To help 2LL comprehend the Kurdish language much easier based on the syntactic rules
- Identify problems in learning Kurdish
- Suggest fundamental methods and principles to help acquire the language faster and in an easier manner



# General Overview



# Morphological and Syntactic Typology

## Morphological Typology

The parameters that are generally mentioned are Affixation, Number of Morpheme per words, Degree of Fusion, Polysynthetic, and Morpho-syntactic Contexts

## Syntactic Typology

Classification of languages done majorly on the basis of Nominal Subject [S], Verb [V] and Nominal Object [O]

# Morphological Typology

Isolating Languages: "every word consists of only one morpheme" have no specific rule of morphology. Such languages are a one-to-one correspondence between words and morphemes. However, Whaley (2008) rejected the idea and said that there is no such thing as a complete isolating language in the world. See the below example

Wǒ zài mǎi shū le. (Mandarin Chinese)

I DUR buy book CRS

"I am buying a book." (Li and Thompson, 1981:21)

Kate hatma mali bradarakam dastmankrda xwendn.

(Kurdish)

When come (I) house (his) friend (me) begin (we) (to) study.

When I came to my friend's house, we began to study.

The words in the above examples are invariable, and there is no morphological variation for. In the case of the Kurdish tense, both (come and begin) is used instead of (came and began); similarly, the Chinese case in (buying). On the other hand, the time adverbial of the sentence is the same as the English one. Another case, the Kurdish language does not use prepositions so frequently, since changing the phonological structure of the sound will change the meaning of the same proposition; as an example:

La mal (falling intonation) ----- in-house.

La mal (rising intonation) ----- to the house.

# Morphological Typology

Agglutinating Languages: having longer word pattern, are consisted of one morpheme; but the word boundaries are always definite (Comrie, 2009). Furthermore, the morpheme has its shape, so it is much easier to identify it. Consider the example given below:

	English		Kurdish	
	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
Nominative	A man	Men	Pyaw-aka	Pyaw-akan
Accusative	A man	Men	Pyaw-ek	Pyaw-akan
Genitive	Man`s of a	Men`s of a	Pyaw-eki	Pyw-akan
Dative	To a man	To Men	Bo pyaw-aka, bo pyaw-ek	Bo Pyaw-akan
Vocative	O` man	O` men	Pyaw-	Pyaw-akan
Ablative	With, from, by a man	With, from, by a men	La pyaw-akawa	La Pyaw-akan

In the contrary, in polysynthetic languages, English is more productive than Kurdish; since the English language combine different lexical morphemes together to formulate one; (swim) and (suit) = (swimsuit), as each word of (swim, suit, and swimsuit) gives a different meaning and has an individual stakeholder. But this case is absent in Kurdish as the different lexical morphemes cannot bind together unless you put a boundary morpheme between them (jl) (mala) = (Jl-i-mala).

La mal (falling intonation) ----- in-house.

La mal (rising intonation) ----- to the house.



# Morphological Typology

Free and Bound Morphemes: In English, the articles (a, an and the) are free morphemes but they are bound in Kurdish, as is illustrated by the below examples:

a. Danish: Dag (day).... Dagen (the day), Park (park).... Parken (the park), or Vise (song).... Visen (the song). (Whaley, 2008)

b. Kurdish, Definite article: Rozh (day).... Rozhaka (the day), Park (park).... Parkaka (the park), or Gorani (song).... Goraniyaka (the song).

Indefinite article: Rozh (day).... Rozhek (a day), Park (park).... Parkek (a park), or Gorani (song).... Goraniyak (a song).

Inflectional and Derivational Morphemes: These in English will not change the internal word structure and spell; whilst, in Kurdish, the word passes from one phase to another. For example (Establishments: establish + ment + s) and (Damazrawakan: Damazrandn + Ø + akan) (the word type will change from {damazrandn} as [Verb] to {damazrawa} as [Noun] without any affixes, but only through an internal change of word type).

# Syntactic Typology

Free and Bound Morphemes: In an extensive sample consisting of 1228 languages; the result showed the enormous range of languages for each word order formation, such as:

S & O & V: 497 languages  
S & V & O: 435 languages  
V & S & O: 85 languages  
V & O & S: 26 languages  
O & V & S: 9 languages  
O & S & V: 4 languages  
Lacking a dominant order: 172 languages

Table 2. English vs. Kurdish sentence structuring.

	SVO	SOV	VSO	OVS	VOS	OSV
English	He ate the meal	X	X	X	X	X
Kurdish	Kuraka xwardi nanaka	Kuraka nanakai xward	Xwardi kuraka nanaka	Nanakai xward kuraka	Xwardi nanaka, Kuraka	X
	He ate the meal	He the meal ate	Ate he the meal	The meal ate he	Ate the meal he	



# Grammatical Features

*Table 4. Grammatical features.*

	English	Kurdish
Marking Type	Dependent	Dependent
Nominal Case Inflections	-	+
Grammatical morphology	Prefix, Suffix, Infix	Prefix and Suffix
Word-Order Variability	None	Very High
Pro-Drop	-	+
Top-/Subject- Prominent	Subject Prominent	Subject, Object, and Verb Prominent
Classifiers	-	-
Motion Lexicalization	Satellite-framed	Verb-Framed
Grammaticized tense	+	+
Grammaticized Aspect	+	-

# Formal and Semantic Features

- a. The beautiful girl ..... Kcha jwanaka (girl – the – beautiful – the)
- b. The lazy student ..... Xwendkara tamalaka (student – the – lazy – the)
- c. A handsome teacher ..... Mamostayaki qoz (Teacher – a – handsome – a)

In the above examples, they will clarify that the articles in Kurdish cannot stand alone and they bind themselves to both adjective and noun. Moreover, in the English language only the noun can be definite or indefinite; in contrast, in Kurdish, both the adjective and the noun can be definite and indefinite through boundary morphemes.

# Language Universality (Uniqueness)

According to Greenberg, the idea of language's universality is "tacitly implicational" and it is inferred by the "definitional characteristics of language"

Rutherford (1984: 138) talked about SLA (Second Language Acquisition) and FLA (Foreign Language Acquisition) explanatory framework "though less often actually utilized" and he emphasized on the universality of each language that is spoken by human being even if it is a low rated (rare) spoken one (for example Chamicuro, Dumi, Ongoto, Liki, Tanimba, etc.)

Some noteworthy features which are unique to Kurdi are:

- No specific characteristics
- No standard language that foreign acquirers can rely on
- Two varieties Kurmanji (popular in Turkey, Iran and Syria) and Sorani (Spoken in Kurdistan) are both equally popular
- Kurdish does not have a standard way of writing; uses both Arabic and Latin alphabet.
- No language learning centres for foreigners available anywhere in the world.

Due to the absence of learning centres, the language has frozen and fossilized, and you can see no development in the language anymore.



# Conclusion

So, all in all, we derive a few conclusions from the paper:

1. English is a dynamic language, unlike Kurdish, which is a closure language
2. The reviews given in the paper are in fact non-exhaustive and the relation between language universals and FLA/SLA was clearly explained
3. The paper answered several research questions, as the different parameters of both English and Kurdish were shown and sufficient examples were also provided
4. Both Languages word orders were explained sufficiently
5. Finally the uniqueness of the Kurdish language was clarified.

*Thank  
you!*