Event Schemas and Thematic Roles in Ilami Dialect of Kurdish

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Abstract

Speakers use schemas to organize their knowledge of the world. Without these mental structures, communication would be too difficult, if not impossible. Schemas are of different kinds and event schemas are considered as one of the most important categories of schema. In this paper, we aim to study different kinds of event schemas like, "being schema", "doing schema", "moving schema", etc. in Ilami Kurdish. Our analysis is mainly based on the Dirven & Verspoor classification. In order to analyze these components, we will cite Kurdish examples, and then we try to analyze these instances by determining main thematic roles of each category. We will also discuss how these roles are affected by or affect something, in an event schema. Results show that Ilami more or less uses the categories previously studied in English.

Keywords: Cognitive linguistics, Schema, Event schema, Kurdish

1. Introduction

Cognitive Linguistics (CL) is an approach to the study of language informed by both linguistics and psychology. It describes how language interfaces with cognition, and how it adapts in the course of language usage, phylogenetically in language evolution, ontogenetically in language acquisition, and moment-to-moment in situated, on-line language processing and performance. (Robinson & Eliss, 2008:2)

Over the past 25 years, Cognitive Linguistics has matured into one of the most prominent alternatives to the linguistics paradigm of Chomskyan generative grammar. Cognitive linguistics as such is no single theory but is probably best seen as a family of approaches which share several theoretical and methodological assumptions. (Robinson & Eliss, 2008:408)

A semantic theory, part of cognitive grammar, identifies meaning with conceptualization-the structures and processes which are part of mental experience. A central notion is how a conceptual content is *construed*: the construal of a lexical item depends on several factors, including the *cognitive domains* in which it appears (e.g. space, time, color) and variations in perspective and salience. (Crystal, 2003: 80)

Schemata, as an important topic in cognitive linguistics, are said to be *higher-level complex (and even conventional or habitual) knowledge structures* (van Dijk, 1981: 141), which function as *ideational scaffolding* (Anderson, 1977) in the organization and interpretation of experience. In the strong view, schemata are considered to be deterministic, to predispose the experiencer to interpret his experience in a fixed way. We can think of racial prejudice, for example, as the manifestation of some fixed way of thinking about newly encountered individuals who are assigned undesirable attributes and motives on the basis of an existing schema for members of the race. (Brown, 1989: 247)

For some obvious differences, we can readily modify the details of a cultural schema. For many other subtle differences, however, we often do not recognize that there may be a misinterpretation based on different schemata. In one reported example, an Australian factory supervisor clearly assumed that other factory workers would know that Easter was close and hence they would all have a holiday. He asked another worker, originally from Vietnam, about her plans; the Vietnamese worker immediately interpreted the utterance in terms of being laid off (rather than having a holiday). Something good in person's schema can sound like something bad in another's. (Yule, 1947:87)

Schema is an important topic discussed and studied by many scholars. Gibbs & Colston (1995) discuss some of the empirical evidence from psycholinguistics, cognitive psychology, and developmental psychology that is consistent with the idea that image schemas and their transformations play important roles in human cognition. Their review suggests possible ways of integrating this research with the findings on linguistic structure and meaning in cognitive semantics. Clausner & Croft (1997) examine a fifth theoretical construct, that of "image schemas" (recurring basic conceptual structures), and argue that image schemas are a subtype of domain. They argue that it is concepts in domains that are locational or

configurational, not the domains themselves. They finally analyze image schemas and show how they function like domains, in which are found both locational and configurational concepts. Corbett and Hmieleski (2007) examine the interplay and divergence between the role schema of individuals in corporations and the event schemas necessary to launch a new venture. Then they show how the corporate context can create tension between corporate entrepreneurs' role schemas and the event schemas necessary for entrepreneurship. Ferreti et al (2001) use an integrative account of the processing of words, thematic roles and schema, and then they conclude that this type of detailed world knowledge is tied tightly to on-line thematic roles assignment. Tseng (2007) studies image schemas by drawing on insights not only from cognitive linguistics but also from critical linguistics; he pays special attention to image-schematic pattern in two Chinese Zen poems.

In this article we aim to study different components of event schema in Ilami and specify Theta roles according to a pattern, previously discussed by Dirven and Verspoor (2004). In order to achieve this goal, we will present sufficient examples for different event schemas including *being schema, happening schema*, *doing schema*, *experiencing schema, having schema, moving and transferring schema*. These terms will be briefly defined below:

1.1 The Being Schema

The main function of the *being schema* is to relate a characteristic or any other conceptual category to a given entity which does not really play a dominant role in the relationship.

1.2 The Happening Schema

The *happening schema* emphasizes a process that is taking place and the participating entity involved in it. However, the participating entity itself need not really be actively involved in the process and is therefore also a patient.

1.3 The Doing Schema

In a *doing schema* one entity is seen as the source of the energy that is developed, and consequently as instigating the action. It should be noted that doing schema is almost exclusively linked to human agents.

1.4 The Experiencing Schema

By *experiencing schema* we mean the mental processing of the contact with the world. This is expressed by mental verbs such as to see, to feel, to know, to think, to want etc. the entity involved in an "experiencing" schema is neither passive like a patient nor active like an agent. This role is called the Experiencer, the role of the entity that has a mental experience.

1.5 The Having Schema

In most prototypical case, the *having schema* relates a human possessor to the object possessed, but it may also relate an affected entity to its cause of affection, a whole to its parts, or one family member to another. (Dirven & Verspoor, 2004)

1.6 The Moving Schema

In addition to the patient, the *moving schema* has three other roles that specify the movement. When something moves, it has a place where the movement begins, the source; a place where the movement ends, the goal; and a way of getting from the one to the other, the path.

1.7 The Transferring Schema

Another common schema combines moving and doing schemas, but in this case there is a second animate participant, the recipient, which functions as the goal for the patient. The source is also animate. This is called the *transferring schema*.

1.8 An Introduction to Kurdish

Kurdish has many dialects, and Ilami dialect is one of these varieties. Britannica describes Kurdish so:

> Kurdish is a new western Iranian language spoken in Kurdistan; it ranks as the third largest Iranian language group, after Persian and Pashto, and has numerous dialects. There are two main dialect groups. The northern group-spoken from Mosul, Iraq, into the Caucasus—is called Kurmānji; in Turkey, Hawar (Turkized Latin) characters are used in the written form. It is spoken within a broad region that stretches roughly from Orūmīyeh, Iran, to the lower reaches of traditional Kurdistan in Iraq. In Iraq, Kurdī is the official form of Kurdish. Subdialects of Kurdish include Kermanshahī, Lekī, Guranī, and Zaza. (Britannica)

As noted, Ilami (sometimes called Feyli) is another variety under the Kurdish umbrella. This dialect is widely spoken in Ilam, a small mountainous city located at the west of Iran. Ilami shares some similarities with Kermanshahi and Kalhori. While most of Kurdish varieties have ergative system, Ilami does not have such a system. (Kalbassi, 2010).

2. Data Analysis

In this section, Kurdish examples will be given and each instance will be analyzed. For more convenience, English literal and exact translations for each instance are given.

Table 1. The being schema

Kurdish examples	English translation
mærizəm sick am	I am sick. (attribution)
kɑwʃelæ fəræ ræin bin shoes the very beautiful were	The shoes were very beautiful. (Attribution)
kətɑwæ hɑ bɑnə məzæ book the is on the table	The book is on the table. (Location)
kɔræ ɑbi dæ wæræ bəraʟzamæ boy the blue wearing cousin my is	The boy with the blue shirt is my cousin.(membership and Identifier)
qeʟɑqeran köjə mærufegæ hɑ dæ ilɑm Qelaqeran mountain a famous is (which) is in Ilam	Qela-qeran is a well-known mountain in Ilam. (location)
bɑxelə xuwe hɑ erɑn Orchars good are (in) Iran	There are fruitful orchards in Iran. (existential)

As we can see, there are several kinds of "being-schema" in Kurdish. It can be deduced that all the examples above share a common feature which is "*being*". mærizəm is a sentence containing an attributive adjective and a form of **be**:

a)   mæriz+**əm**

The next example has another form of verb **be** as well:

b) kɔræ **ɑbi   dæ   wær+æ**   bəraʟzam+ æ

It is clear that the relative clause (ɑbi   dæ   wær+æ) acts as an identifier, while kɔræ bəraʟzam+ æ can show a membership (of a family for instance). In other words, a relative clause is embedded into the main sentence to identify the "patient" more clearly.

As we will see, **qeʟɑqeran** and **kətɑwæ** in the following examples are semantically patients and their locations can be inferred from the whole sentences (i.e.in Ilam and on the table).

a) **qeʟɑqeran** köjə mærufegæ hɑ dæ ilɑm

b) **kətɑwæ** hɑ bɑnə məzæ

Table 2. The happening schema

Kurdish examples	English translation
ɑwæ dere rəʃe **water the is dripping**	The water is dripping.
qəsæ hæ dæ wirəmɑw t͡ʃu **words always from memory go**	I always forget what i have said.
dænə bərend͡ʒæ t͡ʃəg **time the rice went**	The rice is dough-baked.
dæ gærmi ɑgər dæm t͡ʃəg **from heat fire from me went**	It is too hot.
ʒɑn pærijæ nɑmə særəm **pain jumped into my head**	I have a headache.
bimæ gəl **became rolling**	I fell down.

Patients in all the examples mentioned above undergo a process passively.

a) **xɑgelæ** derən kɔ ɭən

eggs the are   boiling

b) dæ gærmi ɑgər dæ**m**   t͡ʃəg

from heat fire   from me   went

"xɑgelæ" and **"m"** are patients passively involved in some processes. In other words, **"xɑgelæ"** (eggs) are involved in the process of boiling and **"m"** (me) in the process of perspiration.

Table 3. The doing schema

Kurdish examples	English translation
dɑɭəgəm qæzɑj tɑmdɑre dərəs kərd mother my food tasty made	My mother cooked a delicious meal.
t͡ʃæn sɑæt rə kərdim severl hours walked we	We walked for hours.
mɑʃinæ dərəs kərdəm car the made I	I repaired the car.
əj hɑd͡ʒætelæ ʃurt she dishes the washed	She washed the dishes.

Unlike the examples mentioned so far, in a doing schema an agent is always present. If we look at these examples, we can see that agents usually do an action:

a) fəræ dærs   xwænəs**əm**

a lot   lesson studied i

b) **əj** hadʒætelæ   ʃurt

she   dishes   the washed

əm and **əj** in (**a**) and (**b**) are considered as agents (referring to I and he/she) who do two different actions and are the source of energy (studying hard and washing the dishes).

Table 4. The experiencing schema

Kurdish examples	English translation
xwæm ʃənæwəsəmæ myself have heard I	I have heard the news .
ʃɑnsi jækə dæ ræfiqeləm dim by chance one of friends my saw I	I saw one of my friends accidently.
bəragæm fəræ xwæʃe dæ ʃənɑ dijɑj brother my very like from swim come	My brother likes swimming a lot.
iʃəm dæ særʒæn hemæ særəm duwæ dɔ kwətɑw say I from headache now head my become two halves	My head aches.
wətəm hɑde bətijæni kɑrə æram bəkej said I perhaps could you something for me do	I thought that you may help me.

Experiencing schemas differ from doing schemas (in that agents always do an action in a doing schema), because in experiencing schemas, as its name indicates, agents always undergo an experience. Let us analyze some of the examples above to illustrate the fact:

a) ʃɑnsi jækə dæ ræfiqeləm   **dim**

by chance one of friends my   saw i

b) æli xwe **dəzanəs** ærɑ məqæsəræ

ali himself **knew** why blameworthy is he

In (a) and (b), "dijən" (to see) and "zanəsən" (to know) are two experiences. "I" and "Ali" experience two situations without doing actions. It might be worth noting that in Ilami dialect sometimes "wətən" (saying) is used with the meaning of "thinking" or "feeling" as well:

c) **wətəm** hɑde bətijæni kɑrə æram bəkej

said   **I** perhaps could you something for me do

Table 5. The having schema

Kurdish examples	English translation
ɑdætelə gæne dere habits bad has he	He has some bad habits. (mental possession)
dogəlæ bæʧæ dere two children has she	She has two children. (material possession)
fəkrelə xuwe derəm thoughts good have i	I have good plans in mind. (mental possession)
dusə dɑʟəge dere love mother her has she	She loves her mother. (mental possession)

In the having schemas mentioned thus far, agents possess a property or specific feature(s). As it was seen this possession can be either physical or mental.

Although "dogəlæ bæʧæ" (two children) is a material possession, "ɑdætelə gæn"(bad habits) can be considered as a mental possession.

Table 6. The moving schema

Kurdish examples	English translation
ej hæ dæ mɑʟ tɑ mædræsæ wæ pɑ ʧu she from house to school by foot	She walks from the house to the school
dæ særʒɑn tɑ ʃuwæki næxæftəmæ from headache till morning have not slept I	I had a headache; I could not sleep until morning

This kind of schema is always involved by a movement. The following example represents the agent **[ej]** moving from one place to another. The source, from which the movement starts, is **[mɑʟ]** (house) and the goal is **[mædræsæ]** (school). It should be noted that this moving schema can take place in the form of time too:

a) dæ sær ɑn **tɑ   uwæki** næxæftəmæ

from headache till morning have not slept I

tɑ   uwæki: End

In the example above a starting point is not mentioned, but it can be mentioned and the sentence is still acceptable:

b) dæ sær   ɑn **da dijashaw tɑ ʃuwæki** næxæftəmæ

from headache from night till morning have not slept I

dæ dijæʃɑw: Start

tɑ ʃuwæki: End

Table 7. The transferring schema

Kurdish examples	English translation
bɑnkæ pʊ læ degæmɑn bank the money give us	The bank will give us the money.
hæqə dæsə xejɑtæ dɑm fee his tailor the paid i	I paid the tailor's fee.
kətɑwæ dæ kətɑwxɑnæ qært kərdəgæ book the from library the borrowed he	He borrowed the book from the library.

In this type of schema, a person always receives something as a receiver. As it can be seen, [**xejɑt**] is the receiver of the fee and [**mə**] is the agent (a person who paid the fee).

a) hæqə dæsə xejɑtæ dɑm

fee his tailor the paid i

3. Conclusion

In this article we tried to analyze different event schemas in Ilami Kurdish. We saw that the same categorization suggested by Dirven and Verspoor can be justifiable in Kurdish too. In other words, we can find many instances for each category (like being, happening schemas, etc.). It should be noted that small differences are still observable. For example it is not common for a "pain" to jump into "head" or "stomach" in English, but it is widely used in Kurdish. So "pain" can be considered as an agent/doer that does an action and affects someone (patient), except that it is not a human being. It can be said that some of the Kurdish examples are an amalgam of different event schemas and should not be classified in one category exclusively. For example "ej hæ dæ mɑlˌ tɑ mædræsæ wæ pɑ ʧʼu" can be considered as moving and doing schemas. We should not forget that often the meaning of the verbs is no longer understood literally as we saw in some of the happening schemas. "dænə bərenʤæ ʧʼəg" has a form of "going" and when it is translated literally, someone may think of it as a doing schema for instance. But it is metaphorically used to refer to a change in shape and taste. In this article some aspects of event schemas were studied and scrutinized. A study of other Kurdish schemas can be of a high value and can be done for the next research.

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