Definiteness, Specificity and DP Shells in Central Kurdish

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From NP to DP: Some theoretical background

• Early stages of Generative Grammar:
  • A noun phrase is the projection of the head noun, whereas other accompanying elements such as articles, determiners and adjectives are modifying elements (see Jackendoff 1977).

Abney’s (1987) DP Hypothesis:
  • A noun phrase is headed by a functional category realized by a determiner (D) with NP as its complement.

Functional heads following DP Hypothesis:
  • Any lexical or inflectional category which has a grammatical function and provides semantic content is the head of a maximal projection (Chomsky 1995).
The Noun Phrase in CK

Functional elements to express (in)definiteness in Central Kurdish (CK, henceforth).

(1) esp-eke
    horse-DEF ‘the horse’

(2) esp-e zil-eke
    horse-IZ big-DEF ‘the big horse’

(3) esp-êk
    horse-INDEF ‘a horse’

(4) esp-êk-i zil
    horse-INDEF-IZ big ‘a big horse’

• –êke in Hawrami is regarded as head of DP (Holmberg and Odden 2004, 2008).

• The D category in CK is associated only with (in)definiteness features.
Definiteness and the status of the morpheme -e

- Demonstratives are accompanied by the clitic –e attaching to the noun or to the end of postnominal modifier(s).

(5) em pyaw-e (6) ew pyaw-e pir-e
this man-DEF ‘this man’ that man-IZ old-DEF ‘that old man’

Previous assumptions about -e

- -e is part of the prenominal demonstrative article (Fattah 1997: 181 and Öpengin 2013: 107)

My assumption

- –e is a marker of definiteness and the prenominal part marks the deictic feature.
Evidence that \(-e\) is a definite marker:

- In a narrative, a noun can carry the inflection \(-e\)

(7) žin-êk ra-y de-kird berew ême legel du
    woman-INDEF way-3SG PROG-make.PST towards us with two
    mindal-eke-i, žin-e hawar-i de-kird bo yarmeti
    child-DEF-3SG woman-DEF shout-3SG PROG-make.PST for help

    ‘A woman was running towards us with her two kids; the woman was calling for help.’

- \textit{kam} ‘which’ and \textit{ĉi} ‘what’

  The interrogative quantifier \textit{which} marks definiteness, while \textit{what} indicates indefiniteness (Pesetsky 1987, 2000; Gebhardt 2009).

(8) kam sêw-e?
    which apple-DEF ‘which apple?’

(9) ĉi sêw-êk?
    what apple-INDEF ‘what apple?’
• The quantifier *her* ‘any/each’

• The quantifier *each* encodes definiteness or specificity, while *any* expresses indefiniteness (Beghelli and Stowell 1997; Giannakidou 1998, 1999, 2004; Vendler 1962: 157-159).

(9) ba her kes-e sèw-èk ber-èt.
    let each person-DEF apple-INDEF take.subju-3SG
‘Let each person (of them) take an apple.’

(10) her kes-èk hat bo ère yarmeti bi-de
    any person-INDEF come.PST to here help IMP-give.1SG
‘Help any anybody who comes here.’
• The demonstratives can occur without –e, where the relevant nominal construction is devoid of any sense of definiteness.

(11) swalker-eke deger-êt le em maɭ(*-e) bo ew maɭ(*-e).
    beggar-DEF roam.PRS-3SG from this house(*DEF) to that house(*DEF)
    ‘The beggar goes from one house to another.’

• Vocative constructions are standardly considered definite (Lyons 1999: 152).

(12) daik-e
    mother-V(DEF)
    ‘you, mummy’

(13) kurd-in-e
    kurd-PL-V(DEF)
    ‘you, Kurds’
Cross-linguistic evidence of definite markers accompanying demonstratives is found in several languages including Romanian, Macedonian, Hungarian, Bulgarian, Indonesian, Irish, Spanish and Greek.

(14) toj covek-ot Macedonian
    this man-the
    ‘this man’ Giusti (1992: 7)

(15) tazi kniga-ta colloquial Bulgarian
    this book-the
    ‘this book’ Franks (2001: 19)

(16) aftos o andras Greek
    this the man
    ‘this man’ Panagiotidis (2000: 718)

Thus, apart from the indefinite marker -êk, CK has two markers of definiteness: –eke and –e.
• Question: Are the (in)definite markers all realized by the same D category?

• Answer: Given the surface order inside the DP, the answer is negative.

\begin{align*}
(17) & \quad \text{esp-ekte-an} & (18) & \quad \text{esp-e zil-ekte-an} \\
& \quad \text{horse-DEF-PL} & & \quad \text{horse-IZ big-DEF-PL} \\
& \quad \text{‘the horses’} & & \quad \text{‘the big horses’} \\
(19) & \quad \text{ew esp-an-e} & (20) & \quad \text{ew esp-e zil-an-e} \\
& \quad \text{that horse-PL-DEF} & & \quad \text{that esp-IZ big-PL-DEF} \\
& \quad \text{‘those horses’} & & \quad \text{‘those big horses’}
\end{align*}

• Number projects a phrase (see Ritter 1991, 1992, 1995)

• –an is the Num head of a functional projection (NumP).

• The two definite markers appear in different positions: –ekte precedes –an, whereas –e follows it.

• If DP is realized by discourse-related functional elements, CK should have two DP layers with NumP intermediate between them.
• Theoretical background and assumptions

• A non-lexicalist approach:
  • Nouns enter the derivation from the lexicon as bare stems. If a noun appears with inflectional elements, it must have received these inflections in the derivation (Baker 1988; Cinque 1999; Julien 2002, Marantz 1997).

• The LCA (Kayne 1994)
  • Phrases with head-final order are derived by movement of the complement to a position asymmetrically c-commanding the head.
  • Since the noun sêw ‘apple’ in (17) appears before the functional inflections, it must be in a derived position.
Based on Chomsky’s (1995) minimalist derivational theory, the structure for the noun phrases in (21) and (22) are as represented in (23) and (24), respectively.

(21)  sêw-ek-an
      apple-DEF-PL
      ‘the apples’

(22)  ew  sêw-an-e
      that  apple-PL-DEF
      ‘those apples’

- The noun phrase in (21) projects a DP contained by the projection of Number (23), that in (22) projects a DP which contains NumP (24).
• **Position of demonstratives:**

Demonstratives merge somewhere lower than definite article (Biberauer *et al.* 2014; Roberts 2011; Guardiano 2010).

• **Motivation for NP movement:**

• If movement is always triggered by some feature (Chomsky 2000, 2001, 2008), D and Num should carry an EPP feature.

• Purely syntactic features that trigger movement are widely supported in recent literature (Biberauer *et al.* 2014; Pesetsky and Torrego 2001; Roberts and Roussou 2003).

• **Linearization movement**

• Drawing on the LCA, Biberauer *et al.* (2014) argue that the head of a head-final construction bears a movement triggering feature moving the sister of the head to the specifier of that head.
Questions about two D categories:

• Why two DPs?

• Does the difference in the structure indicate a difference between the feature make-up of the two D categories?

• Could one D position encode some feature not shared by the other D?

• Where is –êk realized?
• **The two D positions:**

• **Definiteness:** the grammaticalization of specificity and uniqueness (Enç 1991; Lyons 1999).

• **Uniqueness:** the referent is familiar to the speaker and the hearer (Anderssen 2007: 255).

• **Specificity:** the referent familiar to the speaker, but not (necessarily) to the hearer (Anderssen 2007: 255).

• **My proposal**
  • The lower D position realized by –eke is the locus of definiteness proper entailing both specificity and uniqueness.
  • The higher D spelled out by –e encodes the single feature of specificity subsumed under definiteness.
• In possessive constructions -eke denotes definiteness, while –e encodes specificity.

(25) kur-eke-m naw-i Azad-e.
boy-DEF-1SG name-3SG Azad-AUX.PRS
‘My son’s name is Azad.’

(26) ew kur-e-m naw-i Azad-e
that boy-DEF-1SG name-3SG Azad-AUX.PRS
‘That son of mine’s name is Azad.’

• The DP kur-eke-m ‘my son’ in (25), is both unique and specific.

• However, ew kur-e-m ‘that son of mine’ in (26) is specific but not unique.
• **Further evidence that –e marks specificity in CK**

• In morphology, too, -e indicates specificity.

(27) wiłax-i berz
animal-IZ tall
‘tall animals’

(28) wiłax-e berz-e
animal-IZ tall-DEF
‘horse or mule, literally, the tall animal’

• *wiłax-i berz* ‘tall animals’ in (27) is generic.

• *wiłax-e berz-e* ‘literally, the tall animal’ denotes a horse or a mule.

• **More examples:**

(29) sed sed-e
hundred hundred-SPEC
‘hundred’ ‘century’

(30) dwan dwan-e
two two-SPEC
‘two’ ‘twin’

(31) bin dest-e
under hand-SPEC
‘coin flipping, game’

(32) du kilk-e
two tail-SPEC
‘earwig, an insect with two tails’
• Cross-linguistic evidence.

• Articles which mark specificity not definiteness are rather widespread (Lyons 1999: 59).

• lá in Brazilian Portuguese is a functional category marking specificity (Pereira 2010).

(33) *essa mulher* lá
    this woman the ‘this woman’

• Mavea, a language spoken in Vanuatu uses distinct articles to mark definiteness and specificity Guérin (2007)

• Rijkhoff’s (2002) survey of 85 languages:

-Definite articles co-occurring with demonstratives in languages like Abkhaz and Hungarian are not associated with definiteness, but with specificity.
Position of –êk:

• –êk is a marker of indefiniteness, not just a diachronic remnant of the numeral êk ‘one’ as claimed by Lyons (1995: 95).

• -êk can co-occur with plural marking (34). The definite marker -e has the same morpheme order as -êk with respect to the plural marker (35), which is different from that of –eke (36).

(34) kes-an-êk
  person-PL-INDEF ‘(some) people’

(35) ew kes-an-e
  that person-PL-DEF ‘those people’

(36) kes-eke-an
  person-DEF-PL ‘the people’

• Given its distribution, -êk merges with NumP similarly to the definite marker –e.
(37) Shows the structure for (34), compared to the general proposed structure for the CK DP (38)

• **Semantic evidence:** –êk encodes specificity only, similarly to –e.

(39) kur-êk-m naw-i Azad-e.
    boy-INDEF-1SG name-3SG Azad-AUX.PRS
    ‘A son of mine’s name is Azad.’

(40) ew kur-e-m naw-i Azad-e
    that boy-DEF-1SG name-3SG Azad-AUX.PRS
    ‘That son of mine’s name is Azad.’

• Both DPs in (39, 40) are interpreted as specific but not unique.
References


• Marantz, A. 2001. ‘Words’. Paper Presented at the *20th West Coast Conference on Formal Linguistics*, University of Southern California. 23-25

Thank you for your attention!

Any questions?