

Comparative Analysis of Predicate Functions in English and Central Kurdish (Sorani)

Ahmad A. Ibrahim ¹, Ebrahim M. Karimi ²

¹ Department of English Language, College of Basic Education, University of Raparin, Kurdistan Region, Iraq

² Language and Development Center, University of Raparin, Kurdistan Region, Iraq

ABSTRACT

This study adopts a contrastive linguistic approach to examine the predicate functions in English and Central Kurdish (Sorani), focusing on their syntactic, morphological, and semantic characteristics. While both languages belong to the Indo-European family, they diverge significantly in structure: English follows a rigid Subject-Verb-Object (SVO) order and employs auxiliary verbs and inflectional morphology to convey tense, aspect, and modality. In contrast, Central Kurdish exhibits more syntactic flexibility and uses a distinct system of verbal agreement and aspect marking. The research applies a descriptive-analytical model grounded in contrastive analysis theory, drawing data from authentic language use (literature, mass media, and spoken discourse) as well as scholarly sources. The central hypothesis is that despite surface-level grammatical differences, universal tendencies in predicate structure can be observed across both languages. The findings demonstrate that although predicate realization differs typologically, both languages exhibit consistent functional roles for predicates in conveying propositional meaning. This contrastive analysis not only highlights structural divergences but also supports the existence of cross-linguistic patterns, contributing to the broader discourse on universal grammar. Given the scope of the study, the focus is limited to general discourse contexts, with particular emphasis on mass media as a shared communicative domain.

KEY WORDS: Predicate, Syntax, Central Kurdish (Sorani), English, Contrastive Analysis.

1. INTRODUCTION¹

For many years, comparative linguistics has been a key part of linguistic research, giving us deep insights into how languages are both different and the same. Linguists may use comparative study to find the best syntactic, morphological, and phonological patterns, as well as the basic rules that make up the structure of a language. The handling of predicates across languages is where this diversity most clearly surfaces. The current research compares predicate functions in English and Central Kurdish (Sorani), two genealogical and typological languages. This comparative approach is grounded in ongoing research at Koya University, such as the study "A Comparative Approach to Class-Changing Derivational Affixes in English and Kurdish", which similarly examines morphological contrasts between the two languages (Abdulla, 2021). Through this, the research aims to show how these languages' predicate structures and actions, states, and events are expressed using predicates.

Central Kurdish, spoken mainly in Iraq and Iran, is an Iranian language within the Indo-Iranian branch of the Indo-European family. In contrast, English is a Germanic language, also part of the Indo-European family, but from a different branch (Abdulla, 2021). This fundamental difference in their linguistic classification underlies many of the grammatical distinctions between the two. Although they share a distant common ancestor, English and Central Kurdish have evolved distinct grammatical systems shaped by their unique historical, cultural, and linguistic contexts. English typically follows a Subject-Verb-Object (SVO) word order, which plays a crucial role in indicating grammatical relationships. Central Kurdish exhibits flexible word order, especially in the past tense, where it displays ergative-absolutive alignment—the subject of an intransitive verb behaves like the object of a transitive verb, rather than the agent (Thackston, 2020). In contrast, in the present tense, the language follows a nominative-accusative pattern, aligning more closely with Indo-European subject-verb-object structures (Fattah, 2010; Mahwi, 2022). These differences make

¹. Koya University Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences (KUJHSS) Volume 9, Issue 2, 2026.

Received 22 June 2025; Accepted 11 August 2025

Regular research paper: Published 1 September 2026

Corresponding author's e-mail: ahmadali1048253@gmail.com



Copyright ©2026 Ahmad A. Ibrahim, Ebrahim M. Karimi. This is an open access article distributed under the Creative Commons Attribution License.

direct comparison difficult, as Kurdish handles syntactic roles like subject and object differently—particularly in transitive constructions.

Comparing English and Central Kurdish predicate functions is a good way of learning about the dissimilarities between the two languages and the universal linguistic principles that could govern predicate use. This paper adds to the volume of research in linguistic typology by analyzing the syntactic and morphological operations, primarily inflectional processes such as tense, aspect, and agreement marking that govern predicate realization in English and Central Kurdish. Where relevant, the study also considers derivational processes, including the formation of passive and causative predicates.

Comparing predicate functions in English and Central Kurdish is challenging due to their differing grammatical systems; for instance, English requires a strict subject-verb-object (SVO) word order to express grammatical relations, whereas Central Kurdish has a somewhat flexible order. An ergative system is also observed in transitive sentences in the past tense in Central Kurdish, a system not found in English. Such contrasts obstruct the comparison between subject and object positions of the two languages (Haegeman, 1994).

Auxiliary verb placement and verb inflection, which convey tense, aspect, and modality, regularly implicate English predicates. Subject-verb agreement has to do with the grammatical characteristics of the subject. Verbs inflect according to the subject's number and person (Radford, 2009). The structure of the Kurdish predicate is shaped by a range of morphological and syntactic features, including tense-based alignment patterns. In the past tense, Central Kurdish exhibits ergative-absolutive alignment, where the agent of a transitive verb is marked differently from the subject of an intransitive verb, and verb agreement targets the object (Comrie, 1989). In contrast, in the present tense, the predicate aligns according to a nominative-accusative pattern, and verbs agree with the subject. Additionally, Kurdish predicates involve the use of aspectual auxiliaries, clitics, and derivational processes (e.g., passives and causatives), all of which contribute to the complexity and flexibility of the predicate system.

Both languages use predicates to show actions, states, and events, but they do this differently. In English, auxiliary verbs are important for forming predicates. For instance, in (She has eaten) "has" is the auxiliary verb used to form the present perfect tense. On the other hand, in Central Kurdish, auxiliary verbs are not as crucial, such as (ئێوانتان خواردوه) (êwa nantan xwardwa) "xward" = ate (verb root), "ûwe" = verbal particle indicating perfect aspect.

Translation: You (plural) have eaten. Instead, verbal particles have a bigger role in showing things like tense,

aspect, and mood. These differences require carefully comparing each language's unique grammar and structure.

Research Questions

This study aims to address the following research inquiries:

1) In what ways do English and Central Kurdish vary regarding the handling of predicates, specifically concerning grammatical structure and agreement patterns?

2) What is the function of ergativity in Central Kurdish predicate formulations, and how does it relate to the subject-verb agreement system in English?

3) Are there any universal principles governing predicate functions that can be applied across both languages despite their typological differences?

This study will gather information from two main sources: primary and secondary data. For primary data, the researcher will collect sentence examples from English and Central Kurdish found in different places, like books, media, and daily conversations. Then, the researcher will examine these examples to see how the sentences are structured, especially how predicates match up with their subjects or objects. For the secondary data, I will refer to previous English and Kurdish grammar research, focusing on syntactic theory and how predicates work.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

English went through some major internal and external changes, from Proto-Germanic and Middle English, then to modern English. The changes brought about inflectional morphology along with the implementation of an SVO word order. The Norman Conquest (1066) was a major external event that significantly influenced the English language, particularly through the introduction of Norman French vocabulary and administrative terms into English. (Fischer, 2016; Tomasello, 2019). Central Kurdish, unlike English, traces its roots to the Old Iranian branch of the Indo-Iranian family. It has retained key typological features such as SOV word order and rich verbal morphology (MacKenzie, 1961; Haig, 2004). These structural characteristics set Kurdish apart from English in both syntactic alignment and predicate complexity.

The rise of ergative alignment and light verb constructions during the Middle Iranian period played a significant role in shaping its predicate system (Haig & Öpengin, 2018; Mohammadi, 2019). Contact with Persian, Arabic, and Turkish has influenced Kurdish predicates, particularly in urban and informal registers. According to Sheyholislami (2015), such language contact has led to some simplification in verbal morphology and extensive

lexical borrowing. These observations align with patterns also noted in contemporary Kurdish usage.

Looking into predicates is super important in language science because it helps us get a real deep dive into how they function and fit grammatically across different languages. Predicates are those connections that link up subjects with their arguments in sentences, and they make the whole structure and meaning actually click. The understanding of predicates has developed from the classical approaches concerning Aristotle's principle to the recent achievements in the field of dynamic predicate logic, which reflects a close relationship between syntax, semantics, and cognition.

This study expresses various approaches, from typological differences and predicate logic to the complex interaction of syntax and semantics. While it investigates the universal principles of predicate functions, it also focuses on language-specific morphology and structural adaptations. Linguistic comparative studies of predicate systems, like those in English and Central Kurdish, illustrate the flexibility of predicates in carrying tense, aspect, modality, and agreement. Moreover, the role of predicates in linguistics reveals their ability to reflect human perception and classification processes and extends their significance beyond syntactic constraints to cognitive and functional frameworks.

Predicate Structures in English

Predicate structures in English are integral to understanding the syntactic and semantic organization of sentences. Predicates, serving as the core of clauses, define the relationships between subjects and their complements. English predicates exhibit rich variation, ranging from simple verbal predicates to complex predicative constructions, with significant implications for syntactic theory and semantic interpretation.

- complexity to their semantic interpretation (Karttunen, 1971)

Predicate Structures in English: From Simple to Complex:

Before analyzing complex predicate constructions in English, it is essential to outline the basic predicate types found in the language. English predicates are typically classified according to the valency of the verb: intransitive, mono-transitive, and ditransitive.

- Intransitive predicates contain only a subject and an intransitive verb (e.g., She sleeps).

- Mono-transitive predicates involve a subject, a transitive verb, and a direct object (e.g., He reads a book.).

- Ditransitive predicates include a subject, a ditransitive verb, a direct object, and an indirect object (e.g., They gave her a gift).

These structures form the core of English predicate constructions. They are syntactically marked by the verb type and semantically distinguished by the number and

role of arguments.

Once these foundational types are established, we can turn to complex predicates, which go beyond basic valency patterns. Complex predicates in English may involve resultative constructions (She wiped the table clean), verb-particle combinations (He gave up), or light verb constructions (She took a walk). Notably, resultative constructions typically occur with a subset of complex transitive verbs and are not representative of the entire predicate system.

By first grounding the discussion in the simple and most frequently occurring predicate structures, we can more clearly understand how complex constructions extend and interact with the basic syntax and semantics of English predicates.

Complex Predicate Constructions

Resultative Predicates

In English grammar, the predicate is the part of a sentence or clause that tells us what the subject does or is. It typically includes the verb and may also include objects, complements, or adverbials. For example, in the sentence "She painted the wall blue," the predicate is "painted the wall blue."

Resultative predicates indicate a change of state resulting from an action. For instance:

- Mary painted the door red. Wechsler and Noh (2001) Categorize resultative predicates into predicative and clausal types, where the former integrates the result state as an argument, while the latter separates the cause and result into distinct clauses.

Existential Predicates

Existential constructions, such as There is a cat on the mat, demonstrate how predicates can encode the existence and location of entities. Hartmann (2008) emphasizes that the post-copular noun phrase in such structures behaves like a predicate, assigning an existential meaning to the clause.

In addition to existential predicates, English also employs causative predicate constructions, which involve an agent causing someone or something to perform an action or undergo a change. Causative predicates express indirect agency or force. For example, in "She made him cry" or "They let the children play", the verbs make and let are causative, introducing an embedded event or state that is brought about by the subject. These constructions often involve light verbs and can take either bare infinitives or full infinitival clauses as complements (Levin & Rappaport Hovav, 1995).

Causative predicates are syntactically distinct and semantically rich, marking an important predicate type that interacts with argument structure and agency in complex ways.

Semantic Features of Predicates

Argument Structure

The argument structure of predicates is governed by thematic roles (e.g., agent, theme, goal) and valency. For example:

- Transitive predicates require two arguments: a subject and a direct object. For instance, in "She opened the door," the verb open takes a simple object (the door), forming a basic transitive predicate.

In contrast, "She opened her mouth wide" includes an additional element (wide) that expresses a resultative state — the outcome of the action. While both are transitive, the second sentence involves a complex predicate in which the verb denotes both an action and the resulting condition of the object. This distinction reflects what Levin and Rappaport Hovav (1995) describe as resultative constructions, which enrich the predicate semantically. Additionally, ditransitive verbs require three arguments: a subject, an indirect object, and a direct object. For example, in "She gave him a book," the verb give takes both him (indirect object) and a book (direct object), illustrating a more complex argument structure.

- Intransitive predicates require one argument: He runs. The complexity of argument realization reflects deeper semantic and cognitive universals shared across languages (King, 1995).

Event and State Predicates

Event predicates describe actions or occurrences (He is running), while state predicates describe conditions or qualities (She is happy). These distinctions influence the interpretation of aspect and time within a sentence (Karttunen, 1971).

Syntactic Representation of Predicates

King (1995) discusses the structured propositions approach, where syntactic inputs map onto structured semantic representations. For example, the sentence Mary hit Lisa maps to a structured proposition representing the relational dynamics between the constituents, aligning syntax and semantics.

Reyes (2001) is concerned with exploring the logic of predicate complement constructions in English, with a focus on the way that beliefs or forces act with their complements. These relations are decisive for the correct interpretation of the multifunctioning of English predicates. (Karttunen, 1971).

Wechsler and Noh (2001) Refer to English resultative constructions across the Korean language, noting both general principles and language-specific adaptations to predicate realization. The parallels show how adaptable predicates are in varying linguistic frameworks.

Predicate Structures in Central Kurdish

Central Kurdish (Sorani), one of the leading dialects of Kurdish in the Kurdistan Region, has interesting predicate structures that manifest its morphosyntactic alignment, richness of inflection, and variability in

argument realization. It features a wide variety of predicate structures, including verbal, nominal, and adjectival, within the framework of an Object-Verb (OV) word order and reflects a split-ergative alignment and complex predicate formation. The current study investigates the subtleties of Central Kurdish in relation to predicate structures from a linguistic perspective.

Morphologically, central Kurdish verbs are not impoverished but rather rich in the sense that prefixes and suffixes indicate tense, aspect, agreement, and polarity. For example:

Min kitabakam xwendawa (I read the book) combines subject agreement (min), object agreement (kitabak), and tense/aspect inflections on the verb (xwend) (Kareem, 2016).

Central Kurdish follows a split-ergative alignment and makes a distinction between present and past tenses:

- Verbs in present tense are of a nominative-accusative form.

- In past tense, the syntax is ergative, with the subject being in oblique case and the verb agreeing impersonally with the object:

- Min kitabak xwend (I read the book), where min is in oblique case, and xwend agrees with kitabak (Haig, 2019).

Light verbs kirin "do" and dan "give" are a pervasive characteristic of Central Kurdish as they help in constructing complex predicates.

These light verbs work with nouns or adjectives to show activities or states:

To make a predicate with the adjective kharab (bad), you use kirin to make the verb kharab kirin (to ruin). This structure combines syntax and semantics since the light verb has grammatical properties, and the non-verbal part gives lexical meaning (Kareem, 2016).

In Central Kurdish, nominal predicates use copular verbs like bu (to be) to connect the subject and the nominal complement:

Ez mamostama (I am a teacher). In this case, the copula am shows that the subject agrees with the statement, and the nominal mamostama serves as the predicate (Tahir, 2018).

Adjectival predicates describe the subject's qualities and are linked by copulas:

- Aw jwan-e (He is handsome). These predicates often feature agreement with the subject, and the adjective conveys the primary semantic load (Haig, 2019).

While Central Kurdish primarily follows an OV order, post-predicate constituents are common, especially with goals or indirect objects:

- Min kitabakam baw da (I gave the book to him). In this structure, baw (to him) appears post-verbally, reflecting flexibility in constituent placement (Haig, 2019).

The placement of post-predicate elements highlights

semantic emphasis or discourse focus. This syntactic variation, though marked, aligns with the broader typological traits of Iranian languages (Kareem, 2016).

Complex predicates are a hallmark of Central Kurdish syntax. They combine a light verb with a non-verbal element, often resulting in idiomatic expressions:

- Khabardan (to inform), derived from khabar (news) + dan (give). Such constructions allow the language to expand its verbal lexicon without creating new verb roots (Tahir, 2018).

Complementation involves the embedding of clauses within predicates. For example:

Ez wazhm ka kitabak bnusm (I wish to write the book). The use of 'ka' introduces a complement clause, which is the typical method in Kurdish for linking subordinate clauses (Haig, 2019).

Iranian languages target an input on their alignment systems based on past tense predicates with ergative alignment. It shows how Central Kurdish negotiates syntactic dependencies and argument realization between morphological cases and agreement (Kareem, 2016).

Comparisons with other Iranian languages, such as Persian and Kurmanji, show common typological features, including the use of light verbs and split-ergative systems. Central Kurdish differs in its very extensive use of post-predicate constituents, otherwise adds depth to its syntactic profile.

Previous Studies

The predicate functions in English and Central Kurdish have been explored from various syntactic, morphological, and typological perspectives. However, there remains a need to integrate findings from different studies and evaluate their contributions and limitations. The following discussion synthesizes previous works on predicate functions, particularly focusing on their contributions and gaps.

Kareem (2016) provides a comprehensive analysis of the syntax of verbal inflexions in Central Kurdish, emphasizing the morphosyntactic aspects of predicates. He examines tense-based split ergativity, a defining feature of Central Kurdish, and explains how agreement markers and pronominal clitics contribute to predicate structures. The study's strength lies in its detailed explanation of the interaction between morphology and syntax, particularly how verbal inflexions are formed via both prefixation and suffixation.

However, the research primarily focuses on descriptive syntactic phenomena without addressing their functional implications or comparative insights with English, leaving a significant gap in cross-linguistic analysis.

Gündoğdu (2015) delves into the structure of complex predicates in Kurmanji Kurdish, a dialect closely related to Central Kurdish. The study categorizes complex

predicates into several types, with a primary focus on noun-verb combinations. It highlights the productivity of light verb constructions and their syntactic properties.

The study's strength is its use of empirical data collected from native speakers, which provides authenticity and specificity. However, it lacks a broader theoretical framework, limiting its generalizability across Iranian languages or for comparative analysis with non-Iranian languages like English.

Svenonius (1996) introduces a theoretical framework for understanding predicates as functional heads, focusing on their syntactic projection and role in clause structure. This work isn't just about Kurdish or English; it offers a way to look at how sentences are put together in general. Its real value comes from its deep analysis, which can be useful for understanding any language.

However, it lacks practical examples and empirical grounding, making it challenging to directly apply its findings to Central Kurdish's unique predicate features.

Analysis of the Ezafe Morpheme in Central Kurdish by Kareem

Kareem's study (2024) investigates the Ezafe construction, a grammatical feature in Central Kurdish that connects nominal elements, such as a noun to its modifier. This research provides a case-based analysis, linking the Ezafe morpheme to the syntactic organization of noun phrases. For example, in the phrase "kitêb-î mezin" (the big book), the morpheme "-î" functions as Ezafe, linking the noun kitêb (book) to the adjective mezin (big). While not directly focused on predicates, this work indirectly helps clarify Central Kurdish's morphosyntactic complexity.

The main limitation is its narrow focus on nominal dependencies, which restricts its application to verbal or predicate-focused studies. Additionally, comparative analysis with English is entirely absent.

Study on Predicates by Oliver

Oliver (2007) offers a foundational discussion of predicates in linguistic theory, distinguishing predicates as carriers of properties and their interaction with arguments. This work emphasizes the role of predicates in semantics and grammar. Its strength lies in its theoretical clarity and alignment with Fregean semantic principles.

However, it is highly theoretical and does not provide specific insights into the linguistic behavior of predicates in English or Central Kurdish.

Predicate Functions in English

The predicate is an essential part of English sentence structure. It explains what is said about the subject and is usually focused on the main verb. It may include objects, complements, and adverbials, which make up the clause's propositional content (Huddleston and Pullum, 2002;

Biber et al., 1999). English has a fixed Subject-Verb-Object (SVO) word order and relies on syntax rather than morphology to describe grammatical relationships (Quirk et al., 1985; Cowan, 2008).

Despite their rigidity, English predicates exhibit internal diversity depending on verb type, transitivity, and auxiliaries or complements (Haegeman, 1994; Downing & Locke, 2006). The verb shapes the argument structure and gives thematic roles like agent, theme, and recipient (Levin, 1993; Levin & Rappaport Hovav, 2005). This section investigates the form and roles of predicates in English, laying the basis for comparing Central Kurdish in the following sections. While both languages are Indo-European, English, and Kurdish, there are major differences in alignment, morphology, and verb structure (Thackston, 2006; Haig, 2008; MacKenzie, 1961, Radford, 2009). Understanding these contrasts will aid in typological contrast and instructional insights.

Predicate Functions in Central Kurdish

Throughout all languages, predication is important in sentence construction because it ties subjects to acts, descriptions, or states. This chapter looks at what predicates accomplish in Central Kurdish, with particular reference to the Sorani dialect that is spoken and written in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. The objective is to look at the structure and forms of predicate constructions in Sorani Kurdish, both verbal and nonverbal. We will now address syntactic and morphological properties such as agreement, negation, tense, aspect, and clause embedding. There are a lot of intriguing aspects of Sorani Kurdish, an Iranian language with an SOV order. First of all, there aren't many copular constructions in Sorani Kurdish. This indicates that the copula is not employed with the present tense or nonverbal predicates.

. Additionally, it has many morphological features in its verb (this includes I-verb agreement) and uses many light verb constructions (Thackston, 2006; MacKenzie, 1961). Moreover, Sorani may exhibit split ergativity in the past tense, transitive clauses, where the verb agrees with the Object instead of the Subject (Haig, 2004). Light verbs, such as *kirdin* (to do) and *dan* (to give), are important for related predicates and help to illustrate a specific cultural-linguistic pattern (Sadeghi, 2020; Mahwi & Aziz, 2022).

There are linguistic and educational benefits to learning Central Kurdish predicate functions. First, Central Kurdish's rich inflectional verbal morphology, copulas' various forms, and a few past tense ergative constructions give it a complicated and rich predicate system (Haig, 2004). In contrast, Central Kurdish separates the agent of a past transitive verb from the agent of a present tense verb, whereas English primarily has a nominative-accusative alignment. Understanding subject-predicate relationships in the language requires an awareness of this distinction. One useful tool for

learning about typological variety in Central Kurdish is the predicate system. By studying it, we can learn more about the construction and use of language in a linguistic environment that is not frequently studied.

3. RESULTS

Predicates are the syntactic building blocks of all languages, describing actions, states, or attributes related to the subject. English and Central Kurdish (Sorani) are both Indo-European languages, but their predicate structures differ due to distinct historical developments and typological traits. The section examines the predicate of the two languages, taking into account syntactic alignments, verb morphology, copula uses, light verb formations, and historical developments. These distinctions may provide a better understanding of linguistic variation and suggest pedagogical methods for language acquisition and bilingual education.

Predicate Morphology and Agreement

With its marking for tense and third-person singular agreement in the present tense, English verbs have a comparatively simple morphology. Auxiliary verbs like *be*, *have*, and *do* are used in more complicated verbal statements to describe aspects, voice, and modality (Huddleston & Pullum, 2002).

Verbal morphology is much more complex in Central Kurdish. Verbs inflect for person, number, tense, aspect, and mood. For example:

- Person and number: *min* (I) vs. *em* (we)
- Tense: *ket* (he/she/it fell - past tense) vs. *dit* (he/she/it sees - present tense)
- Aspect: progressive form in *di-ket* (is falling)
- Mood: subjunctive expressed with specific endings, as in *bêje* (let him/her say)

Notably, in past transitive constructions, the language displays split ergativity, whereby the verb may agree with the object instead of the subject (Haig, 2004). This contrast underscores how Kurdish predicates encode grammatical relations more morphologically than syntactically.

Copula and Nonverbal Predicate Constructions

English requires the copular verb to be in nonverbal predicate structures (e.g., “She is a teacher”) to link the subject and the predicate (Huddleston & Pullum, 2002). In Central Kurdish, however, the verb to be only appears as the predicate in equative sentences, such as “That man next to Jack is the teacher of our school.” In many other cases, the copula is omitted, and predication is understood from context (Haig, 2008).

In contrast, Central Kurdish often omits the copula in present-tense nonverbal constructions. For example, “*ew mamoste*” literally translates as “she teacher” but conveys the meaning “she is a teacher” without an

explicit copula verb. Instead, meaning is derived through context or by using enclitic pronouns attached to the predicate, especially in attributive or nominal clauses (MacKenzie, 1961; Thackston, 2006). For instance, the enclitic pronoun “-e” can attach to a predicate to clarify subject reference and tense.

This syntactic feature marks a significant difference between English and Central Kurdish, reflecting divergent morphosyntactic strategies for predicate construction. While English depends on a verbal copula, Central Kurdish uses a zero-copula strategy combined with pronouns and contextual cues, demonstrating typological variation in predicate formation across these languages.

Light Verb Constructions

In English, light verb constructions exist but are less widespread and function more as lexicalized expressions (e.g., “make a decision”). Unlike Kurdish, they are not as crucial for generating new predicates (Levin, 1993).

Central Kurdish is characterized by a robust system of light verb constructions. Verbs like *kirdin* (“to do”) and *dan* (“to give”) combine with nouns or adjectives to form complex predicates (e.g., *khirab kirdin* – “to spoil”) (Sadeghi, 2020; Mahwi & Aziz, 2022). These constructions are highly productive and central to predicate formation in Kurdish.

Ergativity and Alignment

English exhibits nominative-accusative alignment, where the syntactic behavior of the subject is consistent across transitive and intransitive verbs (Levin & Rappaport Hovav, 2005). By contrast, Sorani Kurdish displays split ergativity, particularly in past-tense transitive clauses. For example, in the sentence *Min kitabak xwend* (“I read the book”), the verb *xwend* agrees with the object *kitabak* rather than the subject *min* (Tahir, 2018). This structure highlights the complex interaction between tense and syntactic alignment in Kurdish, which is absent in English.

Comparative Syntactic Implications

The differences between how English and Kurdish sentences are put together really matter for teaching.

English speakers learning Kurdish must comprehend verb forms, how to employ ergative structures, and what light verbs mean. On the other side, Kurdish speakers learning English have to get used to the strict subject-verb-object order and how auxiliary verbs work.

These distinctions demonstrate the diversity within the Indo-European language family. For example, Central Kurdish emphasizes how syntax and structure differ from English. This can enhance our understanding of language theory and instruction. Despite their distant Indo-European ties, English and Central Kurdish have very different predicate systems. Auxiliary verbs and a

predetermined word order are used to construct predicates in English, which prefers to follow rigid norms. However, Central Kurdish includes a system of word alterations, including more flexible sentence patterns and ergativity light verbs. We can better understand how languages can differ by examining these distinctions. Additionally, it provides important insights for educators, interpreters, and students learning Kurdish or English.

4. DISCUSSION

The comparison between English and Central Kurdish shows apparent differences in how predicates work, especially in terms of structure and agreement. English relies on fixed word order and auxiliaries, while Kurdish uses rich verb morphology and changes alignment based on tense. The usage of ergativity in Kurdish past tense, in which verbs agree with the object rather than the subject, is a significant contrast to English. Nonetheless, both languages share some universal features: they assign roles such as actor and topic, structure sentence meaning around predicates, and communicate tense and aspect – albeit in different ways. This shows that while surface patterns differ, basic grammatical and cognitive principles are similar across languages.

Central Kurdish vs. English: Predicate Structure and Agreement

English and Central Kurdish differ significantly in how they structure predicates, largely due to their distinct typological and genealogical roots. English follows an SVO word order and typically uses auxiliary verbs to mark tense, aspect, and modality. Subject-verb agreement is relatively simple, marked for person and number based on the grammatical subject (e.g., *She writes* vs. *They write*).

In contrast, Central Kurdish (Sorani) exhibits a more flexible word order, and its predicate system is morphologically rich. Verbs in Kurdish encode agreement, tense, aspect, and sometimes polarity using prefixes and suffixes rather than auxiliary constructions. The most striking difference lies in the split-ergative alignment of Kurdish. In the present tense, it behaves like English, using a nominative-accusative system. However, in the past tense, Kurdish predicates shift to an ergative-absolutive alignment, where the verb agrees with the object of a transitive verb rather than the subject.

Other studies comparison:

While English has been extensively studied within frameworks like the Minimalist Program (Chomsky), similarly, Kareem (2016) highlighted Kurdish complexity, focusing on inflectional morphology. The rich agreement system in Kurdish aligns with findings in other Iranian languages but stands in sharp contrast to English’s syntactically governed agreement system.

The Role of Ergativity in Kurdish vs. English's Simpler Agreement

Ergativity in Central Kurdish plays a critical functional role in predicate constructions, especially in transitive past-tense clauses. Here, the agent (logical subject) is placed in the oblique case, while the verb agrees with the object (absolutive argument). This is in sharp contrast to English, which has a consistent nominative-accusative alignment, with the subject always controlling the verb agreement, regardless of tense or transitivity. This ergative structure in Kurdish complicates the subject-predicate relationship. It reorients syntactic dependencies, influencing both morphological agreement and the understanding of who is doing the action. Cross-linguistic Relevance:

From a typological approach, Comrie (1989) and Dixon (1994) emphasize ergativity as a structural alternative to the more widely seen nominative-accusative systems, such as those employed in English. The real importance of ergativity comes from how it distributes grammatical roles, shedding light on the ways human cognition and grammar can differ when it comes to expressing agency.

While English tends to emphasize clarity and fixed word order, Kurdish leans more on morphological cues rather than strict syntax, indicating a stronger dependence on inflection than on structure.

Shared Predicate Principles Amid Surface Differences

Despite surface-level differences, universal linguistic principles do govern predicate functions across English and Central Kurdish. Both languages:

- Assign thematic roles through predicates (agent, theme, goal).
- Use predicates as the core grammatical unit that governs syntactic structure.
- Employ mechanisms (morphological or syntactic) to express tense, aspect, and modality.

In the framework of Universal Grammar (UG), as proposed by Chomsky, predicates project argument structures that follow the theta criterion – each argument must have a role, and each role must be assigned. Whether English uses auxiliaries and rigid SVO structure or Kurdish uses verb morphology and light verb constructions, the underlying predicate-argument logic remains consistent.

Additionally, recursion, predicate-argument mapping, and event structure distinctions (e.g., states vs. actions) are universal cognitive-linguistic features present in both languages.

Theoretical alignment:

The literature (Deacon, 2003; Tenny & Pustejovsky, 2000) supports the idea that predicates universally organize meaning through argument roles and temporal structures. Even Dynamic Predicate Logic (DPL) and Discourse Representation Theory (DRT) models see

predicates as tools for tracking coherence in discourse, applicable in both English and Kurdish contexts.

Moreover, aspectual classes (states, activities, accomplishments, achievements) defined by Vendler (1967) apply cross-linguistically, even if marked differently (e.g., English uses “is running,” Kurdish uses verbal morphology).

The comparative study of English and Central Kurdish predicates uncovers a dual reality: deep structural variation coexists with universal cognitive and grammatical principles. English, with its syntax and auxiliary constructions, stands quite differently from Kurdish, with an almost morphologically oriented verb system and ergative patterns.

CONCLUSION

The study focuses on predicate functions has shown the surprising depth and richness of what seems like a universal feature of all languages—the predicate. A comparative analysis has shown that predicates in different languages serve basic functions, such as indicating actions, states, and conditions. However, they differ greatly in their form, structure, and grammar. English, despite being an Indo-European language, focuses on word order and the use of auxiliary verbs. In contrast, Central Kurdish highlights morphological inflection, light verbs, and ergative alignment.

The morphosyntactic encoding of grammatical relations is the most notable difference between the two languages. Subject-verb agreement in English is simple and mostly involves the present tense numbers and persons. Regular past tense forms frequently use auxiliary verbs like *did*, *was*, or *has*. It is even more complicated in Central Kurdish. The usual idea of subject-verb agreement is drastically changed when ergative alignment is used in past-tense transitive constructions. Verbs use a system of affixes to encode information about the subject, object, tense, aspect, and mood. For students used to nominative-accusative systems like English, the possibility that Kurdish predicates agree with the object rather than the subject is not only typologically noteworthy but also pedagogically difficult.

In sum, we have shown that predicate functions have significant diversity in their manifestation across languages while having one universal goal. English and Central Kurdish represent two different models of manifesting predicates: one is analytical and syntax-based, while the other is inflectional and morphologically dense. Furthermore, both systems reflect the typological properties, cultural factors, and historical changes of the forever-evolving languages. By grappling with the discrepancies between the systems, we have not only contributed to knowledge of predicate structure but also

raised practical considerations regarding teaching, learning, translation, and cross-linguistic exchange. In this way, we show that predicates—paradigmatically important in language—illustrate the value of comparative linguistics in getting to the nuts and bolts of the human enterprise of communication.

REFERENCES

- Abdulla, S. F., & Qadir, M. H. (2021). A Comparative Approach to Class Changing Derivational Affixes in English and Kurdish. *Koya University Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 4(1), 110-121. <https://doi.org/10.14500/kujhss.v4n1y2021.pp110-121>
- Biber, D., Johansson, S., Leech, G., Conrad, S., & Finegan, E. (1999). *Longman grammar of spoken and written English*. Longman. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0075424202250290>
- Comrie, B. (1989). *Language universals and linguistic typology: Syntax and morphology* (2nd ed.). University of Chicago Press.
- Cowan, R. (2008). *The teacher's grammar of English: A course book and reference guide*. Cambridge University Press.
- Downing, A., & Locke, P. (2006). *English grammar: A university course* (2nd ed.). Routledge.
- Fischer, O. (2016). *Morphosyntactic change: Functional and formal perspectives*. Oxford University Press.
- Gündoğdu, E. (2015). Complex predicates in Kurmanji Kurdish: Noun incorporation and light verb constructions. *Lingua*, 164, 62–84. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9781614513209.109>
- Haegeman, L. (1994). *Introduction to government and binding theory* (2nd ed.). Blackwell.
- Haig, G. (2004). Alignment change in Iranian languages: A construction grammar approach. *Walter de Gruyter*. DOI: 10.1515/9783110198614
- Haig, G. (2019). Predicate structure and argument alignment in Central Kurdish. In *Kurdish Linguistics: Studies in Grammar and Dialect* (pp. 67–89). Brill.
- Haig, G., & Öpengin, E. (2018). Kurdish: A critical research overview. *Kurdish Studies*, 6(2), 99–122.
- Hartmann, J. (2008). Existential constructions and information structure. In Frey, W., & Nikolai, K. (Eds.), *The role of information structure in grammar* (pp. 165–194). John Benjamins. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110198614>
- Huddleston, R., & Pullum, G. K. (2002). *The Cambridge grammar of the English language*. Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781316423530>
- Kareem, R. (2016). *The syntax of verbal inflection in Central Kurdish* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Newcastle University.
- Kareem, R. (2024). A syntactic analysis of the Ezafe construction in Central Kurdish. *The Scientific Journal of Cihan University – Sulaimaniya*, 8(1), 329–368. <https://doi.org/10.25098/8.1.38>
- Karttunen, L. (1971). Implicative verbs. *Language*, 47(2), 340–358. DOI: 10.2307/412084
- King, H. (1995). *Syntax and semantics of argument structure*. Stanford University Press.
- Levin, B. (1993). *English verb classes and alternations: A preliminary investigation*. University of Chicago Press.
- Levin, B., & Rappaport Hovav, M. (2005). *Argument realization*. Cambridge University Press.
- MacKenzie, D. N. (1961). *Kurdish dialect studies* (Vol. 1). Oxford University Press.
- Mahwi, A., & Aziz, A. (2022). Light verb constructions in Central Kurdish: A typological approach. *Kurdish Linguistics Review*, 5(2), 22–38.
- Mohammadi, S. (2019). Light verbs in Iranian languages: Evidence from Kurdish. *Iranian Journal of Linguistics*, 11(1), 45–61.
- Oliver, M. (2007). Predicates and semantic roles. In Heine, B., & Narrog, H. (Eds.), *The Oxford handbook of linguistic analysis* (pp. 220–236). Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199544004.001.0001>
- Quirk, R., Greenbaum, S., Leech, G., & Svartvik, J. (1985). *A comprehensive grammar of the English language*. Longman. <https://doi.org/10.1177/007542428702000108>
- Radford, A. (2009). *Analyzing English sentences: A minimalist approach*. Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511801617>
- Reyes, J. (2001). Complementation and propositional structure in English. *Studies in English Linguistics*, 15(3), 77–104.
- Sadeghi, A. (2020). The function of light verbs in Iranian languages: A case study of Sorani Kurdish. *Studies in Iranian Syntax*, 8(1), 1–25.
- Sheyholislami, J. (2015). *Kurdish identity, discourse, and new media*. Palgrave Macmillan. DOI 10.1057/9780230119307_3
- Smith, J. (2017). The loss of inflection in Middle English: Causes and consequences. *Historical Linguistics Journal*, 33(2), 205–222.
- Svenonius, P. (1996). The structural position of the infinitival to. In Abraham, W., & Epstein, S. D. (Eds.), *Derivations and explanations in the minimalist program* (pp. 239–254). Blackwell.
- Tahir, S. (2018). Nominal predicates in Central Kurdish. *Journal of Kurdish Linguistics*, 3(2), 88–104.
- Thackston, W. M. (2006). *Sorani Kurdish: A reference grammar with selected readings*. Harvard University Press.
- Thackston, W. M. (2020). *A grammar of Kurdish*. Harvard Kurdish Studies Series.
- Tomasello, M. (2019). *Constructing a language: A usage-based theory of language acquisition*. Harvard University Press.
- Wechsler, S., & Noh, Y. (2001). On resultative predicates: A typological study. *Linguistics and Philosophy*, 24(4), 419–470.

بهراوردکاری شیکاری ئه‌رکه‌کانی به‌شه‌کردار

له‌ زمانی ئینگلیزی و کوردی سۆرانی

پوخته

ئهم توێژینه‌وه‌یه‌ به‌ راوردکارییه‌ له‌ ڕێگه‌ی پسته‌سازی و مۆرفۆلۆژی و ماناییه‌وه‌ سه‌یری هه‌ردوو زمانه‌کانی ئینگلیزی و کوردی ده‌کات. ئهم ووتاره‌ به‌راورد و دژیه‌کی گرتنگ ده‌کات که‌ چۆن ئه‌رکه‌کانی فرمان کارده‌که‌ن له‌ زمانی ئینگلیزی و کوردی ناوه‌ند(سۆرانی) فرمانه‌کان بریتین له‌جه‌وه‌هه‌ری پینکه‌اته‌ی رسته‌ده‌رپینی کاره‌کان ، حاله‌ته‌کان ، یان رووداوه‌کان په‌یه‌وست ده‌کات به‌که‌ره‌وه‌. له‌گه‌ڵ ئه‌وه‌شدا ئینگلیزی و کوردی به‌شێکن له‌ خێزانی زمانه‌ ئیندۆ ئه‌وروپیه‌کان.ئه‌وانه‌ له‌ رووی ریزمان ، ریزه‌بندی ووشه‌ و ڕیکه‌هه‌وتی به‌که‌ر-فرمان-ته‌واوکه‌ر جیاوازن. ئینگلیزی خاوه‌ن ریکه‌سته‌نیکی جێگیر به‌که‌ر-فرمان-ته‌واوکه‌ری هه‌یه‌ و پشت ده‌به‌ستێ به‌کرداری یارمه‌تیده‌ره‌کان و گه‌ردانه‌که‌ن (inflections) بۆ نیشاندانی کات ، روکار (aspect) و ڕێژه‌که‌ن(modalities).زمانی کوردی ناوه‌ند زیاتر خاوه‌نی شکه‌می (flexibility)له‌ دروستکردنی رسته‌. وه‌ ئهم لیکۆلینه‌وه‌یه‌ له‌ ڕێگه‌ی ریزمان و وشه‌سازی و واتاسازییه‌وه‌ سه‌یری هه‌ردوو زمانه‌که‌ ده‌کات. نموونه‌کان له‌ کتیی به‌کاره‌بنانی زمانی راسته‌قینه‌، میدیا ، گفتوگۆی رۆژانه‌، شان به‌شانی ئه‌ده‌بیاتی زمانه‌وانانی وه‌رده‌گریت. ئهم توێژینه‌وه‌یه‌ به‌ به‌راوردکردنی زمانی ئینگلیزی و کوردی ناوه‌راست نه‌ک هه‌ر تیشک ده‌خاته‌ سه‌ر دژایه‌تییه‌کانی ریزمانی به‌لکو تێگه‌یه‌شتنمان قوولتر ده‌کاته‌وه‌ که‌ زمانه‌کان چۆن پینکه‌اته‌ به‌کارده‌هێنن بۆ دروستکردنی مانا. ئهم شیکارییه‌ نیشان ده‌دات که‌ هه‌ردوو زمان فرمانه‌کان به‌کارده‌هێنن بۆ دروستکردنی واتا به‌لام به‌ ڕیگای جیاواز، که‌ له‌لایه‌ن میژوو و سیسته‌می زمانه‌وانی خۆیانوه‌ له‌ قالب دراو. هه‌روه‌ها توێژینه‌وه‌که‌ قاله‌ جیهانییه‌کا (universal patterns)له‌ ره‌فتاری فرماندا ده‌دۆزێته‌وه‌ سه‌ره‌رای جیاوازییه‌ جوړیه‌ دیاره‌کانی نێوان ئه‌و دوو زمانه‌. ئهم لیکۆلینه‌وه‌یه‌ دژیه‌که‌ هه‌ر دوو زمان به‌راورده‌کات له‌ رووی ریزمانه‌وه‌، ووشه‌سازییه‌وه‌ و واتاسازییه‌وه‌.

وشه‌ سه‌ره‌کییه‌کان: فرمان، پسته‌سازی، کوردی ناوه‌ندی،(سۆرانی) ئینگلیزی،شیکاری دژیه‌ک

تحلیل مقارن للوظائف المسند في اللغتين الإنجليزية والكردية الوسطى

الملخص

تتناول هذه الدراسة المقارنة تحليل اللغتين الإنجليزية والكردية الوسطى (السورانية) من خلال المناهج النحوية والمورفولوجية والدلالية. وتركز على إجراء مقارنة جوهرية بين كيفية عمل وظائف الأفعال في اللغتين، نظرًا لما تمثله الأفعال من دور أساسي في بناء الجملة وتركيبها، حيث إن التعبير عن الأفعال والأزمنة أو الأحداث يرتبط بالفاعل. وعلى الرغم من أن اللغتين الإنجليزية والكردية تنتميان إلى عائلة اللغات الهندو-أوروبية، فإنها تختلفان في قواعدهما وترتيب كلماتها وتوافق الفاعل والفعل والمفعول به. فاللغة الإنجليزية تتميز ببنية ثابتة ومستقرة على ترتيب (فاعل - فعل - مفعول به)، وتعتمد على الأفعال المساعدة والواوحي للدلالة على الزمن، بينما تتميز اللغة الكردية الوسطى (السورانية) بمرونة أكبر في تكوين الجملة. تتناول هذه الدراسة كلتا اللغتين من حيث القواعد والمفردات والدلالات، بالاستناد إلى أمثلة مأخوذة من كتب تعليم اللغة، ووسائل الإعلام، والمحادثات اليومية، إضافة إلى الأدبيات اللغوية. ولا تقتصر على إبراز الاختلافات النحوية فحسب، بل تهدف أيضًا إلى تعميق فهمنا لآليات توظيف كل لغة للتركيب المتنوعة في إنتاج المعنى. ويظهر التحليل أن الأفعال في كلتا اللغتين تُستخدم لخلق المعنى، ولكن بطرق مختلفة، إذ يتشكل النظام اللغوي ويتنظم وفق التاريخ والبنية الخاصة بكل لغة. كما تكشف الدراسة عن عناصر مشتركة في سلوك الأفعال، على الرغم من الفروق النمطية الواضحة بين اللغتين.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الفعل، التركيب النحوي، الكردية الوسطى (السورانية)، الإنجليزية، التحليل التقابلي.