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Discourse Particles in Sorani Kurdish

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Abstract

Discourse particles constitute an important part of spoken language; they have a wide range of pragmatic functions in interactional contexts. The object of the present paper is to introduce Kurdish discourse particles, clarify their functions in different discourse contexts, and briefly sketch some aspects of their grammatical properties. I will focus on Sorani Kurdish since this dialect has a rich inventory of discourse particles that have not so far been investigated. I will show that the majority of these particles convey multiple functions and display a great degree of free syntactic distribution, a noteworthy point. In addition to expounding upon their syntactic position, I will inquire into the types of sentences in which they can occur (declarative, interrogative, and imperative). Furthermore, I will argue that individual discourse particles can appear adjacent to each other to give rise to new combinations, and in some cases the order of the components participating in the combination can be reversed and still remain as acceptable forms. Finally, I will explore the interrogative contexts in which discourse particles can occur, and also distinguish between two types of particles that can affect the interrogative utterance in different ways.

Keywords: Sorani Kurdish, discourse particles, pragmatic function, interactional context, syntactic position, sentence type

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1. Introduction

Discourse particles (henceforth DPs) have been defined in the following ways:

- a. Discourse particles, in our terminology, are words that are uttered not because of their contribution to the propositional content, but because of some pragmatic function for the ongoing discourse (Stede and Schmitz, 2000).
- b. Discourse particles relate items of discourse to other items of discourse, i.e. they operate as indexical elements in those domains that are fundamental for spoken dialogic communication (Diewald, 2006).
- c. They (discourse particles) constitute a specific class of elements, which are similar to speaker-oriented adverbs, but compared to these they display a higher degree of grammaticalization and other peculiar characteristics clearly distinguishing them from this class of adverbs (Coniglio, 2009).
- d. Discourse particles in the narrow sense are used in order to organize the discourse by expressing the speaker's epistemic attitude towards the propositional content of an utterance, or to express a speaker's assumption about the epistemic states of his or her interlocuters concerning a particular proposition (Zimmerman, 2011).

Although there is much dispute among researchers regarding the different aspects of DPs such as their syntactic and morphological properties, a general consensus exists with respect to what kind of word class they constitute and a basic definition that could be attributed to these linguistic items. Following from the definitions provided above, DPs usually refer to lexical items which do not contribute to the propositional meaning of a sentence, but rather play an integral role in displaying the pragmatic effect of an utterance and showing the mental attitudes of the interlocuters. In this respect, it would be reasonable to posit that DPs are mainly utilized to imply the communicative intentions of the speakers and convey their attitudes in discourse contexts.

Extensive research has been carried out to account for the overall nature of DPs by shedding light on their special characteristics and the principal functions they bear in conversational contexts, all of which has led to an enrichment of our knowledge regarding the underlying linguistic behavior of this word class. Among other languages, German is notorious for its number of DPs and their widespread use in spoken language, an observation that has drawn the attention of many researchers to investigate DPs in this language and present

comprehensive analyses of their features (Diwald, 2006; Egg, 2012; Grosz, 2016; Döring and Repp, 2020; Siebold, 2021). As a starting point for the main topic of this paper and a more intuitive understanding of what is exactly meant by DPs, we are going to look at some examples of their uses in German and analyze the roles they play in different conversations. German DPs are words like *bloß*, *denn*, *doch*, *eigentlich*, *mal*, *ruhig*, *schon*, *vielleicht*, *ausgerechnet*, and *wohl*, just to give a few examples. These lexical items are frequently used in spoken German to show the mental states of the speakers and contribute to the pragmatic impact of the utterance. Look at the following examples, taken from Buscha and Szita (2011) (The translations have been added):

- (1) a. *Wann ist **denn** deine Prüfung?*
 when is **denn** your exam
 ‘When is your exam?’
- b. *Haben Sie **eigentlich** die neue Ausstellung gesehen?*
 have you **eigentlich** the new exhibition seen
 ‘Have you seen the new exhibition?’
- (2) a. *Können Sie mir **mal** das erklären?*
 can you to me **mal** this explain
 ‘Can you explain this to me?’
- b. *Können Sie mir **vielleicht** helfen?*
 can you to me **vielleicht** help
 ‘Can you help me?’
- (3) a. *Das ist **doch** ein fantastisches Ergebnis.*
 this is **doch** a fantastic result
 ‘This is a fantastic result.’
- b. *Das ist **ja** schrecklich. (This is awful.)*
 this is **ja** awful
 ‘This is awful.’

The use of *denn* and *eigentlich* in (1a-b) implies that the speaker is interested and eager to find out the answer to his question and shows his curiosity to know the response. *Mal* and *vielleicht* in the next examples are used to convey the sense of politeness and courtesy of the speaker while asking for a favor. Finally, *doch* and *ja* are meant to show feelings of surprise and astonishment.

To be more precise, in (3a) the speaker is astonished by being informed about the results of something because what he expected was strikingly different from what has come to pass. The same argument can be extended to (3b), in which the speaker is surprised and to some degree irritated by how awful something turned out to be, and takes account of the word *ja* to convey these feelings. These are just a few instances of the frequent uses of DPs in the course of German dialogues. What is the similarity between words such as *denn*, *eigentlich*, *mal*, *vielleicht*, *doch* and *ja* that distinguishes them from other word classes? This question is going to be addressed in more detail in the following section, but in general it would be reasonable to posit that this group of words (i) do not contribute to the propositional meaning of the sentence; therefore, they can often be eliminated without doing any damage to the grammaticality of the utterance (ii) do show the mental state of the speaker and convey pragmatic functions. Now that we have gained a general understanding of DPs based on the definitions provided at the beginning of the paper and the above examples, we can turn our attention to a brief overview of these particles in other languages.

Other languages have also been scrutinized, but much less significantly in comparison to German. Barnes (1995) and Bartkova, et al (2016) present analyses of some of the common DPs used in French conversations by taking account of their pragmatic functions and syntactic positions in utterance, as well as investigating their prosodic features. Coniglio (2009) provides a comprehensive inquiry of the status of DPs in Italian and draws analogies between Italian and German. Other languages which have been examined with regard to DPs include Niuean (Massam, et al., 2006), Hungarian (Gyuris, 2009), Cantonese (Wakefield and Lee, 2019), Korean (Kim, et al., 2020), Catalan (Trotzke and Mayal, 2021), and Indonesian (Karaj, 2021).

As far as Kurdish is concerned, no examination has been provided on the status of DPs in the Sorani dialect. To the best of my knowledge, two papers have been written about DPs in Ilami (Yeganeh and Gheitasi, 2014) and Kurmanjî (Çabuk, 2018), other Kurdish dialects. Sabir and Jawad (2019) investigate a number of adversative discourse markers in Sorani Kurdish by analyzing a novel written by a Kurdish author; however, the scope and content of their work is radically different from the main issue of this paper. This article focuses on a presentation of DPs in Sorani Kurdish, and in doing so the author will touch upon different aspects of this phenomenon. The main objective of this paper is to introduce the existing DPs in Sorani

Kurdish,² and to discuss their functions in conversational contexts, followed by an account of their diverse features.

Before entering the main discussion of this paper, it is important to make a terminological distinction between some relevant concepts. DPs are to be distinguished from discourse markers (henceforth DMs). According to Fraser (1990), “Discourse markers are expressions such as *now*, *well*, *so*, *however*, and *then*, which signal a sequential relationship between the current basic message and the previous discourse.” In contrast to DMs, DPs play a more important role in the discourse because they provide a great deal of information about the attitude of the speaker and how the utterance is to be interpreted by the listener; thus, their pragmatic impact is much broader. It is undeniable that DMs and DPs are similar in certain respects, such as the fact that neither of them contributes to the propositional content of the sentence; however, the underlying nature of these items differs. Fraser (1990; 1996) provides a comprehensive analysis of DMs in English and the functions they exhibit in conversational contexts. We will not go into any details regarding the difference between DMs and DPs, since this topic falls outside the scope of the present paper and does not serve any practical purposes for the main issue at hand. It is to be noted, however, that the items to be discussed in this paper are similar to the ones that exist in a language such as German; therefore, they are to be understood as DPs and not as DMs. Finally, another term which is closely related to the present discussion is modal particles, which can be interchangeably used with DPs, since they constitute the same word class and approximately represent the same concepts. For the sake of consistency, the term “discourse particle” will be used throughout this paper.

The structure of this paper is as follows: Section 2 is devoted to an investigation of Kurdish DPs. As a first step, I will briefly talk about the criteria that could be adopted to distinguish DPs from other word classes. Subsequently, I will introduce the common DPs that exist in the Kurdish language and inquire into an investigation of their main characteristics and explore their meanings. I will propose that Kurdish DPs be categorized based on their functions in the discourse, all of which will be put forward. Right after that, our attention will be turned to individual analysis of each of these linguistic items. This purpose will be achieved by providing conversations to clarify and illustrate their functions. The third section, whose overall focus is to

² The Kurdish variety under study is the Sorani dialect, but for the sake of brevity the term “Kurdish” will be used throughout this paper to refer to “Sorani Kurdish”.

explore some aspects of DPs, is divided into 3 subsections. In 3.1, we will take a closer look at the syntactic position of DPs and the sentence types in which they can occur. Section 3.2 is about particle combinations, the idea that two individual DPs can occur adjacent to each other to create a new DP. Section 3.3 elaborates on the type of interrogative contexts in which DPs can appear. Section 4 proffers the conclusion.

2. Discourse particles in Kurdish

The first and foremost challenge regarding the issue of DPs in linguistics is related to the grammatical criteria that could be adopted to distinguish them from other word classes. This issue has already received much attention in linguistic literature. The difficulty surrounding this phenomenon originates from the fact that a cross-linguistic survey is required to find out the fundamental characteristics of these lexical items. Since the linguistic research on this topic is confined to a limited number of languages, it would not be prudent to make a generalization regarding the status of DPs and apply the same criteria that might hold for a specific language to other languages. Therefore, we need to be extremely cautious when enumerating the characteristics of DPs.

The following table, gathered from Grosz (2016), Stede and Birte (2000), and Bayer and Obenauer (2011) presents some of the core grammatical properties of DPs and what distinguishes them from other word classes, particularly adverbs:

-
- a. DPs are not inflectable.
 - b. They usually have homonyms in other word classes.
 - c. As opposed to sentence adverbs they cannot be used on their own in response to a question.
 - d. They are generally more restricted in their syntactic distribution than adverbs.
 - e. They can be combined with other elements of the same type.
 - g. They are usually the result of grammaticalization.
 - f. They are modificational elements and can be deleted from the utterance.
 - g. They do not affect the truth conditions of the clause they occur in.
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Table 1. properties of DPs

Table (1) provides some of the general grammatical properties of DPs. Although the main purpose of this article is to focus on the pragmatic function of Kurdish DPs in interactional contexts, we will briefly look at their grammatical properties to realize to what degree they comply with the descriptions given in the above table.

On close inspection, one can easily observe the predominant role of DPs in Kurdish. It has a rich inventory of these items and in the majority of conversations they are widely used by native speakers to express their mental attitudes and a wide range of feelings; thus, they deserve critical attention. For that reason, this paper is devoted to exploration of Kurdish DPs, discussed and analyzed from different standpoints. However, before we launch into an inquiry of individual DPs in Kurdish, it would be appropriate to comment on the general functions they have in the discourse and in turn create a correlation between DPs and the functions that are going to be enumerated.

The following diagram presents a general overview of the functions of DPs in the Kurdish language:

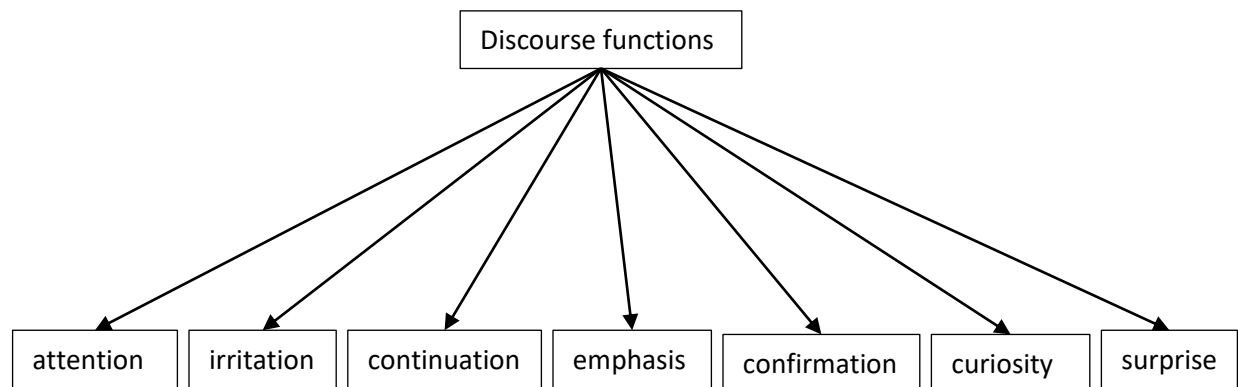


Figure 1. Taxonomy of discourse functions

The above diagram gives a clear illustration of the functions that Kurdish DPs fulfill in communicative settings. Based on this diagram, we realize that the pragmatic purposes of Kurdish DPs can be understood based on the seven functions proposed. At this juncture, we will introduce the main DPs in the Kurdish language, followed by the functions they carry out in the course of dialogues. Table (2) illustrates the list of DPs under investigation:

Particle	Function(s)
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<i>Are</i>	Attention, emphasis, irritation	Table 2. Kurdish DPs and Their Functions (s)³ Table (2)
<i>Jâ</i>	Continuation, emphasis, irritation	
<i>Hâ</i>	Emphasis, irritation	
<i>Bâsha</i>	Confirmation, irritation	
<i>Kuřa/kiche</i>	Irritation, emphasis	
<i>Da</i>	Irritation, emphasis	
<i>Har</i>	Irritation, emphasis	
<i>Awa</i>	Curiosity	
<i>Kho</i>	Emphasis	
<i>Âđi</i>	Irritation	
<i>Shâ</i>	Irritation	
<i>Akhar</i>	Irritation	
<i>Magam</i>	Confirmation, surprise	
<i>Adi</i>	Curiosity, confirmation	
<i>Day</i>	Curiosity, emphasis	
<i>Řâst</i>	Emphasis, surprise	

presents a list of some of the most important DPs used in everyday conversations by Kurdish native speakers. In the follow-up, I will go into details and explain the functions of each particle individually by giving appropriate examples. These examples will shed light on the multi-faceted functions of the DPs under consideration and the linguistic information that is encoded in these items. In each case, a short conversation will be presented to clarify and explicate the roles of DPs with respect to the above table.⁴

1. Are

a. used at the beginning of the sentence to introduce an utterance after a short pause and ask a question.

³ The phonological symbols employed throughout this paper to represent Kurdish sounds are taken from Thackston (2006). Refer to the beginning pages to find a correlation between Kurdish sounds and their English counterparts.

⁴ I originally wanted to explain the roles of the DPs under investigation using corpus-based data. However, after constantly searching on the internet, I could not find any corpus of daily conversations in relation to the Kurdish language. As a result, the conversations of this article are my personal observations about how Kurdish native speakers use these lexical items and I have tried to be as careful as possible in providing a comprehensive analysis of their functions.

Conversation 1

A: *Are, kanje bchîna sar shâkhî?*⁵

are when we go on mountain

‘When should we go climbing?’

B: *Sibayne dařoin.*

tomorrow we go

‘Tomorrow.’

In this short conversation, the first speaker makes use of the DP *are* to ask a specific question regarding something the interlocutors have been planning to do. He does so by uttering this particle at the beginning of his speech followed by a short pause, in the course of which he intends to get the attention of the second speaker. Based on this short conversation, it would be reasonable to claim that this DP is mostly used at the beginning of the sentence to attract the attention of another person and pose a question.

b. used at the beginning of the sentence to put emphasis on the question that is being asked and display the anger and irritation of the speaker.

Conversation 2

A: *Bochî Siâmak nahâta bo dâwate?*

why *Siâmak* didn’t come to the wedding

‘Why didn’t *Siâmak* come to the wedding?’

B: *Are chûzânim?*

are how should I know

‘How on earth am I supposed to know?’

This further use of *are* occurs when a person is tormented by being asked the same question over and over again, without knowing the answer. In this communicative setting, the first speaker has been asking the same question time and again, and the second speaker shows his exasperation by using *are* at the beginning of his utterance followed by *chûzanim*. The speaker could have easily refrained from using this word, but his application of this item puts emphasis on his lack of

⁵ It is to be noted that the English translations are rough paraphrases of the original sentences. For that reason, the reader should pay attention to the explanation to understand the main function of each DP.

knowledge regarding this matter and heightens the degree of his annoyance towards the first speaker. Conversation (2) can be rephrased in the following way:

Conversation 3

A: *Bochî Siâmak nahâta bo dâwate?*
 why *Siâmak* didn't come to the wedding
 'Why didn't *Siâmak* come to the wedding?'

B: *Chûzânim are?*
 how should I know *are*
 'How on earth am I supposed to know?'

As can be seen, the particle *are* can appear at the beginning and the end of an utterance without any change in meaning. In that respect, it displays a relative degree of freedom regarding its syntactic position.

2. *Jâ*

A. used at the beginning of the sentence to show continuity from the previous discourse.

Conversation 4

A: *Jâ, lagał kâkim lemân bûba shař.*
jâ with my brother got into fight
 'Well, I got into a fight with my brother.'

Like *are*, *jâ* can appear at the beginning of the sentence to draw the attention of the addressee and continue the discourse; however, a number of points need to be mentioned to make a distinction between these two DPs:

What follows *jâ* pertaining to this function is a declarative sentence and not an interrogative one. Secondly, from a contextual perspective, this DP is used at intervals by a speaker who narrates a story and with the help of this single word contributes to the flow of speech and continuation of the dialogue. In that sense, *jâ* is mostly used in narrative contexts and bears a function which is different from what we observed in the case of *are*.

B. used at the beginning or end of the sentence to put emphasis on an utterance and express the anger and irritation of the speaker.

Conversation 5

A: *Jâ zory le male.*

jâ much don't talk

'Shut the fuck up.'

B: *Joan qsân bka.*

beautiful speak

'Watch your mouth.'

In this scenario, the first speaker is annoyed by the loquacious behavior of the second speaker and as a strong reaction uses the word *jâ* at the beginning of his utterance to give a command and explicitly order him to end his talk. The communicative purpose of this DP in the present context is to simply strengthen the effect of the command and display the irritation of one of the interlocutors towards the other one. It can also occupy the final position in the sentence.

Conversation 6

A: *Zory le male jâ.*

much don't talk *jâ*

'Shut the fuck up.'

B: *Joan qsân bka.*

beautiful speak

'Watch your mouth.'

c. used at the beginning or end of the sentence to put emphasis on the question that is being asked and convey the irritation of the speaker.

Conversation 7

A: *Hemin aw ktebay khendotawa?*

Hemin this book has read

'Has *Hemin* read this book?'

B: **Jâ** *chûzânim?*

jâ how should I know

‘How on earth am I supposed to know?’

This function of the particle *jâ* is similar to *are*. In both cases, the DP appears at the beginning of the sentence to express the speaker’s irritation with regard to the question that has been asked, except for the difference that *are* exhibits a stronger pragmatic effect and reinforces the emphasis of the utterance to a greater degree. It can also appear at the end of the sentence without any change in meaning, as shown below.

Conversation 8

A: *Hemin aw ktebay khendotawa?*

Hemin this book has read

‘Has *Hemin* read this book?’

B: *chûzânim* **jâ?**

how should I know **jâ**

‘How on earth am I supposed to know?’

3. *Hâ*

a. used at the end of the sentence to put emphasis on the utterance and show the irritation of the speaker.

Conversation 9

A: *Zor qsân dakay hâ.*

much you speak **hâ**

‘You speak too much.’

B: *Pem khosha. Ba to řabtî ne.*

I like to you relation not

‘I like to. It is none of your business.’

A common point between this group of DPs (*are*, *jâ*, and *hâ*) is the fact that they are mostly used in communicative settings to express feelings of anger, irritation, and exasperation (Although

they can carry out other functions, as we have observed). Despite such similarities, there are subtle differences in terms of syntactic position and the sentence types in which they can occur. For instance, *jâ* exhibits a great degree of freedom regarding the positions it can occupy in the sentence. In addition, it can also appear in declarative, interrogative, and imperative sentence types. *Hâ*, another DP with more limited functions compared to the previous ones, is resorted to the final position of the sentence and can only appear in imperative sentences. It appears at the end of an utterance to emphasize the speaker's opinion regarding a certain matter. In conversation (9), once again the first speaker shows feelings of irritation due to the talkative behavior of speaker B. By using *hâ* in a declarative manner, he conveys two pragmatic functions; (i) he emphasizes the propositional content of this speech act (saying that speaker B is a very talkative person) (ii) he shows his personal irritation with respect to this type of behavior.

4. *Bâsha*

a. used at the end of the sentence to receive confirmation from the listener.

Conversation 10

A: *Sbayne wara mîwânî bâsha.*

tomorrow come party *bâsha*

'Come to the party tomorrow, ok.'

B: *Agar pem bikre dem.*

if I can I come

'I will if I can.'

Bâsha is another DP which is often used in interactional contexts to convey the attitude of the speaker and contribute to the pragmatic impact of the utterance. This particle often appears at the end of imperative sentences to receive confirmation from the listener, a point which is illustrated by Conversation (10). In this short dialogue, the first interlocuter gives a command and in doing so finishes his command with this DP. *Bâsha*, appearing at the end of the sentence, conveys the idea that speaker A expects a positive response from speaker B. In that sense, it bears a compelling force in the discourse and to some degree forces the second speaker to comply with the command and expects him to consider going to the party a responsibility.

b. used at the beginning of the sentence to ask a question in an angry way in order to express one's disapproval and annoyance regarding a certain matter.

Conversation 11

A: **Bâsha**, ato nâzânî aw kêra îstibâya?

Bâsha, you don't know this work is wrong

'Don't you know that this is wrong?'

B: *Bimbûra. Dupât nâbetawa.*

forgive me repeat it will not

'Forgive me. I will not happen again.'

Conversation (11) presents a scenario which makes clear the role of the DP under investigation. In this case, the first speaker is angry about something the second speaker has done and reprimands him by asking a question to seek an explanation regarding his action. The use of *bâsha* at the beginning of this question is a clear and reinforcing indication of the first speaker's irritation and disapproving stance with respect to a wrongdoing committed by speaker B. In this respect, *bâsha* intensifies the force and negativity of the question that is being posed.

5. Kuřa/ Kiche

a. used at the beginning or the end of the sentence to put emphasis on what is being said and sometimes show the irritation of the speaker.

Conversation 12

A: **Kuřa/Kiche** khot tûshî aw dardasaray maka.

kuřa/kiche yourself get into this trouble do not

'Don't get yourself into this trouble.'

B: *Ba qsat dakam.*

to you I listen

'I will not (I will follow your advice.)'

In conversation (12), the first speaker dissuades the second one from getting himself/herself into trouble. The DPs *kuřa/kiche* fulfill two important functions in this context, one of which is

related to the attitude of the speaker and the other one has to do with the core content of the utterance. Using *kuřa/kiche* at the beginning of the utterance demonstrates a certain degree of the speaker's irritation towards the second speaker and strongly warns him not to do something. The second function of these two DPs is tightly connected to the main content of the sentence. By uttering either of these words at the beginning of the sentence, the first speaker puts emphasis on his command and the DPs take scope over the entire proposition. There are cases, however, where the function of this DP is more limited in the scope it projects, as shown in the following example:

Conversation 13

A: *Jâponî sakhttra yâ âlmânî?*

Japanese is more difficult or German

'Which one is more difficult to learn, Japanese or German?'

B: *Kuřa/Kiche jâponî.*

kuřa/kiche Japanese

'Japanese.'

In this instance, the first speaker is curious about which of the two languages (Japanese or German) is more difficult. In response to his/her question, speaker B says that Japanese is more difficult than German. As DPs, *kuřa/kiche* simply underscore the propositional content of the statement and show the emphasis of the interlocuter's opinion. Unlike the previous case, they do not convey any sense of irritation or warning. The only difference between these two DPs is that *kuřa* is often used in cases when the addressee is male and *kiche* in contexts where the addressee is female. In conversation (13), the DPs *kuřa/kiche* can also appear at the end of the sentence, as shown below:

Conversation 14

A: *Jâponî sakhttra yâ âlmânî?*

Japanese is more difficult or German

'Which one is more difficult to learn, Japanese or German?'

B: *Jâponî kuřa/kiche.*

Japanese *kuřa/kiche*

‘Japanese.’

6. *Da*

a. used at the beginning of the sentence to put emphasis on the pragmatic effect of an utterance and show the irritation of the speaker.

Conversation 15

A: *Da tawâwî ka.*

da finish it

‘Put an end to it.’

B: *Bâsha.*

Ok.

‘Ok.’

In conversation (15), the first speaker is irritated by a discussion that has been presumably going on for quite some time without any agreement between the parties. To express his exasperation, speaker A forcefully orders the second speaker to stop talking and put an end to the discussion. In doing so, he applicates the word *da* at the beginning of his command to emphasize the effect of the utterance and show his irritation.

7. *Har*

a. used at the beginning or the middle of the sentence to show emphasis on what is being uttered and express the certainty of the speaker.

Conversation 16

A: *Zânyâr dazâne chon bâzî nasb kê?*

Zânyâr knows how game install

‘Does *Zânyâr* know how to install a game?’

B: *Har ley hâlî ne.*

har of it understand not

‘He does not know a single thing about it.’

In response to the question that has been asked, speaker B explicitly states that *Zânyâr* has no knowledge about installing video games. While expressing his opinion in this way, he uses *har* at the beginning of the utterance to add more weight and force to the utterance and express that he is certain and self-assured about his stance. Similar to the previous one with respect to its content, this DP bears a particular interactional function in cases where emphasis is involved. *Har* could also appear in imperative clauses, illustrated in the following example:

Conversation 17

A: **Har** bakheren.

har you welcome

‘Welcome.’

B: Zor *mamnûn*.

very much thank you

‘Thank you very much.’

Conversation (17) presents a simple context in which speaker A welcomes speaker B, in the course of which the word *har* intensifies the intimacy and friendliness between the interlocutors and displays the warm welcoming of the first speaker directed to the second one.

Conversation 18

A: *Ba khudây beâqlî*.

to god stupid you are

‘You really are stupid.’

B: *La to har âqiltrim*.

of you **har** smarter I am

‘No matter how stupid I am, I am not as stupid as you.’

Conversation (18) illustrates another emphatic function of this DP, accompanied by a sense of irritation. In this context, speaker A says that the second speaker is a stupid person, the reason for which is not of any consequence for the present discussion. As a reaction to this statement, speaker B responds that in the worst case he is not as stupid as the first interlocutor. He utilizes *har* to put emphasis on the propositional content of the sentence and explicitly demonstrate that

he is irritated by speaker A's previous comment. What is worthy of note here is that this DP can also occur in the middle of the sentence.

8. *Awa*

a. used at the beginning of the sentence to express the interest and curiosity of the speaker in receiving a response to his question.

Conversation 19

A: *Awa chi dakay?*

awa what are you doing

'What are you doing?'

B: *Aw charkhay châk dakamawa.*

this bicycle I repair

'I am repairing this bicycle.'

As a DP, *awa* mostly appears at the beginning of interrogative sentences to express the interest of the speaker in finding out about what someone else is doing and receiving an answer to his question. This can be observed from conversation (19). In the course of this dialogue, the first speaker intends to know what the second speaker is engaged with. To achieve this goal, he asks a simple question (*Chi dakay* meaning "What are you doing?") before which he utters the word *awa*, whose main function is to convey the further interest and curiosity of the speaker regarding the question that is being asked.

9. *Kho*

a. used at the beginning of the sentence to put emphasis on what is being said.

Conversation 20

A: *Kuray hahnâkay?*

heater you turn on

'Don't you want to turn the heater on?'

B: *Nawalâ. Kho sârd ne.*

no *kho* cold not

‘No. It is not cold anyway.’

In response to what has been asked, speaker B refuses the first speaker’s offer by using the particle *kho* at the beginning of his utterance. What follows this DP in conversation (20) bears semantic meaning by itself. What the second speaker hopes to achieve by using this DP is to put emphasis on his claim that the weather is not cold and there is no need for the heater to be turned on; thus, he reinforces his proposition.

b. used at the beginning, middle, or end of the sentence to receive confirmation from the listener.

Conversation 21

A: *Kuray halnâkay?*

heater you turn on

‘Don’t you want to turn the heater on?’

B: ***Kho** sârd ne?*

kho cold not

‘It is not cold, is it?’

A: *Nawalâ.*

no

‘No, it is not.’

The previous conversation has been repeated in this case to illustrate some important points about the core properties of the DP *kho*. In conversation (20), *kho* was used in the declarative mood to signal emphasis regarding a proposition; thus, affirming strongly that the room is not cold and therefore there is no need for the heater to be turned on. Conversation (21) presents the same conversation, with the important difference that *kho* appears in an interrogative sentence. In this example, the second speaker expects speaker A to confirm his proposition and respond that the room is not cold and the heater does not need to be turned on. The exact equivalent of this word in English would be question tag expressions, as has been translated in quotation marks. This observation is of central importance in our understanding of Kurdish DPs. We can come to the conclusion that in certain cases the functions of DPs can be determined based on the sentence types they appear in, be it declarative, interrogative, or imperative. In conversation (21), *kho* can also appear at the end of the sentence and convey the same communicative purpose. However, we

need to be more cautious when it comes to the position of this word in the middle of the sentence. It would be infelicitous to use *kho* in the middle of the sentence in conversation (21). In the following example, however, the use of *kho* in the medial position is syntactically well-formed and acceptable.

Conversation 22

A: Awsho **kho** nâchîna mâla pûrim?
 tonight **kho** don't we go house my aunt
 'We are not going my aunt's house tonight, are we?'

B: Nawalâ.

No
 'No, we are not.'

Conversation (22) presents a scenario in which *kho* has been used right after the temporal adverb, thus occurring in the medial position. One last point regarding this DP is worth mentioning. Declarative sentences in which *kho* appears can be both negative and positive in terms of their semantic value. However, in interrogative contexts this DP can only appear with a negative semantic value, meaning that the question tag has to be positive, as can be observed in conversations (21) and (22).

10. Âdî

a. used as a single word to express the irritation of the speaker in reaction to what has been said.

Conversation 23

A: Dabe lagal Hîwây âsht bewa.
 you should with Hîwâ make amends
 'You should make amends with Hîwâ.'

B: Âdî. Walâhî laway bawlâwa qat qatî qsa lagal nâkam.
 âdî I swear from now on never talk with him not
 'I swear I will never ever talk to him again.'

Among the DPs discussed so far, *âdî* displays a very special characteristic. Let us suppose that in conversation (23) speaker B has recently had a fight with another person named *Hîwâ*. As an

intermediary, speaker A advises him to patch things up with *Hîwâ* and make amends with him. In strong retaliation to this opinion, speaker B expresses his anger and irritation by using the word *âdî* at the beginning of his utterance, followed by another sentence to reinforce his reluctance regarding any kind of reconciliation with *Hîwâ*. As can be observed and generalized, this DP is fit as an adversative item for contexts in which an advice is given or a request is made, and in response the speaker is determined to do the exact opposite of what has been asked.

11. *Shâ*

a. used at the beginning of the sentence to show one's disapproval and irritation regarding a remark or utterance.

Conversation 24

A: *Sarakhoshî la Rizgârî kird?*

funeral of *Rizgâr* did

'Did you give your condolences to *Rizgâr*?'

B: *Nawalâ. Wakhtim nabû.*

No time I didn't have

'No, I didn't have the time.'

A: *Shâ aw qsayay.*

shâ this talk

Conversation (24) briefly elucidates the function of the DP under analysis. For the sake of the present discussion, we can suppose that speakers A and B have a very close friend called *Rizgâr*. *Rizgâr*'s mother has just passed away and the appropriate thing for the speakers to do would be to express their condolences. Speaker A has done so but speaker B has not. In conversation (24), the first speaker asks the second one regarding this issue and he answers that he has not yet expressed his condolences towards his close friend, simply because he didn't have enough time to do so. The excuse he is putting forward is not justifiable in the least and arouses the irritation and anger of the first speaker. As a result, the first speaker uses the particle *shâ* at the beginning of his utterance to implicate that the excuse provided by the second speaker (that he didn't have the time to express his condolences) is a most irrational and unjustifiable remark.

12. *Akhar*

a. used at the beginning or middle of the sentence to signal the irritation of the speaker and put emphasis on the question that is being asked.

Conversation 25

A: **Akhar** tukhdâ haqim nabû ley qals bim?

akhar to God right did not of him get angry

‘Didn’t I have the right to get angry with him?’

B: Barewalâ haqit bû.

yes right you had

‘You definitely had the right to do so.’

Conversation (25) provides an example which clarifies the role of *akhar*. Let us suppose that someone has done something wrong and speaker A is infuriated by it. As a result of his anger, he has criticized that person and told him off. In the current conversation, speaker A uses the DP *akhar* at the beginning of his utterance to convey one communicative function; i.e. irritation. By using this word he implicates that he is indignant about what has been done and expresses his exasperation in an emphatic manner. Building upon this observation, we can propose that *akhar* is used in interrogative contexts to show the irritation of the speaker. The use of *akhar* in the medial position also yields a grammatical sentence.

Conversation 26

A: Tukhdâ **akhar** haqim nabû ley qals bim?

to God **akhar** right did not of him get angry

‘Didn’t I have the right to get angry with him?’

B: Barewalâ haqit bû.

yes right you had

‘You definitely had the right to do so.’

13. *Adî*

a. used as single word in contexts when one of the speakers has misunderstood something and wants to find out the truth by utilizing this DP in an interrogative manner.

Conversation 27

A: *Doyne lagal Sîrwânî la resturane chitân khuârd?*
 yesterday with *Sîrwân* at the restaurant what did you eat
 ‘What did you eat with *Sîrwân* yesterday at the restaurant?’

B: *Nachûina resturane.*
 we didn’t go the restaurant
 ‘We didn’t go to the restaurant.’

a: *Adî?*
adî
 ‘What did you do then?’

This conversation can be analyzed by taking account of the concepts “presupposition” and “common ground”. Speaker A presupposes that speaker B and another person named *Sîrwân* went to the restaurant. In that respect, he considers this proposition to be part of the common ground or the mutual knowledge between the two interlocutors. What further arouses his curiosity is the food they ate in the restaurant. Speaker B’s response refutes the presupposition outright and states they did not go to the restaurant in the first place; therefore, the first speaker’s question is not pragmatically logical. As a result of his misunderstanding and lack of knowledge regarding this issue, the first speaker is tempted to know what the other participants had done if they didn’t go to the restaurant. In other words, he wants to rectify the miscommunication, a situation in which *adî* is frequently used as a DP to find out what the participants had done otherwise.

b. used at the end of interrogative sentences to receive confirmation from the listener.

Conversation 28

A: *Awřo deya mâla ma adî?*
 today you come house our *adî*
 ‘You are coming to our house today, aren’t you?’

B: *Hatman.*
 definitely
 ‘Definitely.’

Upon closer examination, one can observe that the function of this particle is analogous to *kho*, discussed previously. The crucial difference between these two, however, is that *kho* can appear in interrogative sentences in which the verb is negated, whereas *adî* is confined to interrogative contexts in which the verb is in the positive. One other difference is related to their syntactic position. While *kho* can appear at the beginning and end of interrogative sentences, the only grammatically acceptable position which *adî* can occupy with respect to this function is the final position.

14. *Magam*

a. used at the beginning or middle of the sentence to receive confirmation from the listener.

Conversation 29

A: *Khot sâz ka dachîna parke.*

yourself get ready we go park

‘Get yourself ready, we are going to the park.’

B: *Magam awsho mîwân nâyan?*

magam tonight guests don’t come

‘Are we not supposed to have guests tonight?’

A: *Nâzânim.*

I don’t know

‘I have no idea.’

In the given context, two propositions are at issue;

(i) going to the park

(ii) the coming of the guests

Speaker B is of the opinion that a number of guests are coming to their house and believes that the first speaker is aware of this fact; therefore, it is an uncontroversial common knowledge shared between the two interlocutors. However, it turns out that speaker A has no idea about the coming of guests and as a result suggests that he along with second speaker go to the park. In other words, he does not consider proposition (ii) to be part of the common ground. As a reaction to this offer and bearing in mind that they are soon to have guests, the second speaker utters the

DP *magam* at the beginning of his question to receive confirmation (that they are supposed to have guests) from the first speaker and get certain regarding this matter. This DP, just like the ones that have been discussed so far, can easily be removed without damaging the propositional content of the utterance. However, its utilization signals the idea that the speaker expects to receive a positive answer to his question. Conversation (29) can be rewritten in the following way, in which *magam* has appeared right after the first word of the sentence.

Conversation 30

A: *Khot sâz ka dachîna parke.*

yourself get ready we go park

‘Get yourself ready, we are going to the park.’

B: *Awsho magam mîwân nâyan?*

tonight *magam* guests don’t come

‘Are we not supposed to have guests tonight?’

A: *Nâzânim.*

I don’t know

‘I have no idea.’

b. used at the beginning of the sentence to show the surprise of the speaker regarding what has been said earlier by someone else.

Conversation 31

A: *Shatranjakay lagał khot bena bo parke.*

the chess with yourself bring to the park

‘Bring the chess with you to the park.’

B: *Magam dachîna parke?*

magam we go the park

‘Are we planning to go to the park?’

A: *Âdî.*

yes

‘Yes.’

Based on conversations (29) and (31), we can realize that there is a striking difference between the two functions associated with the DP *magam*. Once again, the different functions of this DP can be accounted for by looking at the linguistic concept of “negation”. At a closer scrutiny, we notice that in conversation (29) the verb appears in the negated form, entailing that *magam* should function as a DP to receive confirmation from the speaker. In contrast to this observation, conversation (31) presents an instance in which the verb has a positive value; therefore, its function is to express the surprise of the speaker because he has not been previously told that they are planning to go to the park and finds the proposition unexpected. Conversation (31) consists of two main propositions: (i) going to the park; (ii) taking the chess to the park.

Speaker A uses proposition (i) as a presupposition to put forward proposition (ii). However, it turns out that speaker B was not informed about going to the park beforehand; therefore, he questions the first proposition and shows surprise by uttering the particle *magam* at the beginning of his utterance. The use of *magam* in conversations (29) and (31) provides an insight into the semantics-pragmatics interface, because it leads us to the conclusion that the pragmatic function of a particle might be subject to the semantic value (negative or positive) of the sentence.

15. *Day*

a. used as single word to express the interest and curiosity of the speaker in wanting to listen to the rest of a story or discourse.

Conversation 32

A: Dwây qadarekî la fařânsay kâfîshâpekmân kirdawa.

After a while in France a coffee shop we opened

‘After staying for a while in France we opened up a coffee shop.’

B: Day?

To explain the function of this DP, it is important to understand the preceding discourse. Let us assume that speaker A is talking to an audience about his experience in France. He has been talking for ten minutes and at this point mentions an important part of his adventure; namely opening up a coffee shop with some other people. At this juncture, the second speaker (a member of the audience), absorbed by his story and interested in the rest of what is to follow, utters *day* in

an interrogative manner. Through the simple use of this word, he conveys to the speaker that he wants him to carry on with his story and tell the rest of it to the audience.

b. used at the beginning of some common expressions to show emphasis.

Conversation 33

A: *Dâmânnâwa safarekî oŕûpâya bkain.*

we are planning travel Europe do

‘We are planning to travel around Europe.’

B: *Day zor châka.*

day very well

‘Very well then.’

This function of *day* is limited to certain expressions. Basically, it is used in cases when a person confirms a course of action and by using this word adds more emphasis and weight to his statement.

16. *Ĥâst*

a. used before a specific word or expression to put emphasis on it and make it stand out in the sentence.

Conversation 34

A: *Law ĥamo nafaray Ĥâst amnî halbzhârd.*

of all people *Ĥâst* me chose

‘Of all those people, he chose me.’

B: *Chand badshânsî.*

how unfortunate you are

‘What bad luck you have.’

Let us suppose that speaker A is a student and belongs to a class with 40 members. One day, his teacher wanted to ask questions about what they had previously studied and he was chosen first among all those people. In conversation (34) the first speaker points to the fact that he was the only one chosen among a great number of people. In doing so, he uses the particle *Ĥâst* before the

object pronoun to put emphasis on it and make it stand out in the utterance, conveying the idea that it was strange and unexpected of him to be chosen among all those members. In that respect, the DP *řâst* puts emphasis on a single item, in this case the object of the sentence. This DP could also appear in interrogative contexts, as shown below.

Conversation 35

A: *Bo řâst atoy halbzhârd?*

why *řâst* you he chose

‘Why did he choose you?’

B: *Badshânsim boya.*

I am unfortunate that’s why

‘I guess I am just unfortunate.’

3. Aspects of Kurdish discourse particles

So far, we have enumerated some of the most important DPs in Kurdish, and in doing so tried to analyze them by explaining their functions in different conversational contexts. This section of the article is devoted to a general exploration of some relevant aspects of these particles, namely their syntactic positions, sentence types in which they occur in, particle combinations, and the types of interrogative contexts in which they appear.

3.1 Syntactic position and sentence type

Based on the conversations we have investigated so far I have drawn the following table to illustrate the syntactic positions DPs occupy and the sentence types in which they occur.

Table 3. grammatical properties of discourse particles

Particle	Function	Syntactic position	Sentence type
<i>Are</i>	Attention Irritation	Initial Final	Interrogative
<i>Jâ</i>	Continuation	Initial	Declarative

	Emphasis Irritation	Medial	Interrogative Imperative
<i>Hâ</i>	Emphasis Irritation	Final	Declarative
<i>Bâsha</i>	Confirmation Irritation	Initial Final	Interrogative Imperative
<i>Kuřa/kiche</i>	Irritation Emphasis	Initial Final	Declarative Imperative
<i>Da</i>	Irritation Emphasis	Initial	Imperative
<i>Har</i>	Irritation Emphasis	Initial Medial	Declarative Imperative
<i>Awa</i>	Curiosity	Initial	Interrogative
<i>Kho</i>	Emphasis confirmation	Initial Medial Final	Declarative Interrogative
<i>Âdî</i>	Irritation	Initial	Declarative
<i>Shâ</i>	Irritation	Initial	Declarative
<i>Akhar</i>	Irritation Emphasis	Initial Medial	Interrogative
<i>Magam</i>	Confirmation Surprise	Initial Medial	Interrogative
<i>Adî</i>	Curiosity Confirmation	Initial	Interrogative
<i>Day</i>	Curiosity Emphasis	Initial	Interrogative
<i>Řâst</i>	Emphasis Surprise	Initial Medial	Declarative Interrogative

hence; initial > medial > final

Bearing upon the information provided in table (3), some general points can be mentioned regarding the properties of Kurdish DPs. These observations are the following:

a. The number of DPs appearing in the initial, medial, and final positions are as follows:

initial: 15

medial: 6

final: 5

- b. The number of DPs appearing in declarative, interrogative, and imperative sentence types are as follows:

declarative: 8 interrogative: 10 imperative: 5
 hence; interrogative > declarative > imperative

- c. *Kho* is the only particle that can occupy all syntactic positions; initial, medial, and final.
 d. *Jâ* is the only DP that can appear in all three sentence types; indicative, interrogative, and imperative.

This was a general overview of the relative syntactic distribution of these particles and the sentence types in which they appear. Now, we are going to turn our attention to another aspect of the particles and their importance in the course of this paper.

3.2 Particle combinations

Bayer and Obenauer (2011) mention that German DPs can be stacked, meaning that they can appear adjacent to each other in fixed order. Based on their claim, up to three German DPs can occur next to each other in a sentence, as shown below (example taken from Bayer and Obenauer (2011)).

- (4) *Wo bist du denn nur / bloß den ganzen Tag gewesen?*
 where are you *denn nur / bloß* the whole day been
 ‘Where on earth have you been the entire day? (I am wondering)?’

The same phenomenon can be observed in Kurdish. In the following, you can observe a number of DPs that can appear adjacent to each other to give rise to new combinations.

- a. *Day + jâ: day jâ*
 b. *Jâ + bâsha: jâ bâsha*
 c. *Kuřa/kiche + jâ: kuřa/kiche jâ*
 d. *Kuřa/kiche + kho: kuřa/kiche kho*
 e. *Akhar + magam: akhar magam*

In the above examples, two different DPs have been combined in a linear way. At first glimpse, it becomes clear that the particle *jâ* is a productive element in these combinations. These particle combinations have been used in the following examples.

- (5) *Day jâ blam chî?*
day jâ I say what

‘What on earth am I supposed to say?’

(6) **Jâ bâsha**, *ato nâzânî aw kêra îshtibâya?*

jâ bâsha you don’t know this work mistake

‘Don’t you know that what you have done is wrong?’

(7) **Kuřa jâ**, *lagal kâkim leman bûba shař.*

kuřa jâ with my brother got into fight

‘Well, I got into a fight with my brother.’

(8) **Kuřa/kiche kho** *înglîsî nâzâne.*

kuřa/kiche kho English he does not know

‘He cannot speak English.’

(9) **Akhar magam** *awsho mîwân nâyan?*

akhar magam tonight guests don’t come

‘Are we not supposed to have guests tonight?’

The first observation to be made with regard to this set of DPs is that the second element in these combinations is crucial in conveying their communicative functions. In other words, the main functions associated to these items correspond closely to the second element that is used. To begin with the first example, the function of *day jâ* is the same as *jâ*, with a more heightened effect, conveying the idea that the speaker has got absolutely nothing to say regarding a certain issue. The same communicative purpose could have been achieved by merely utilizing *jâ* in the respective context, with the slight difference that *day jâ* bears more weight and emphasis compared to *jâ*. The same argument applies to other DP combinations, namely *jâ bâsha*, *kuřa/kiche jâ*, *kuřa/kiche kho*, and *akhar magam*. In each of these cases, the function of the particle combination closely matches the function of the second element.

Another point that is worth mentioning with respect to this issue is the order of the components that join together to make up these combinations. X and Y as individual DPs can combine with each other in two different ways to make up new forms. The following examples with the reverse order are acceptable forms. The only exceptions to this rule are *magam akhar* and *jâ day*, which do not exist.

- a. *Bâsha + jâ: bâsha jâ*
- b. *Jâ + kuřa/kiche: jâ kuřa/kiche*
- c. *Kho + kuřa/kiche: kho kuřa/kiche*

In each of the above examples except (a) and (e), the order of the DPs can be reversed. Some pertinent questions can come up in the discussion of particle combinations, such as the following:



1. *Is there a preference between the different forms of a particle combination? In other words, would it be reasonable to talk about canonical and noncanonical orders in this case?*
2. *Why can some DPs combine with each other while the others cannot?*
3. *Is there a difference in meaning between the two different forms of a particle combination?*

It would be very difficult to go into an investigation of these questions. It requires careful corpus-based study and meticulous investigation to form a well-founded argument in the case of this issue; therefore, I refrain from going into the detail of this matter. The last point I would like to mention in this section is the argument that some DP combinations can also appear dissociated from each other in the sentence. Look at the following examples:

(10) *Day blam chî jâ?*
day I say what *jâ*
 ‘What on earth am I supposed to say?’

(11) *Kuřa inglîsî nâzâne kho.*
kuřa English doesn’t know *kho*
 ‘He cannot speak English.’

On close inspection, we notice that in both examples one of the DPs occurs at the beginning and the other one at the end of the sentence. If we were to compare these instances with the DP combinations illustrated previously, we will realize that these two phenomena represent the same underlying structure in two different ways, as schematized below:

1. *Day blam chî jâ?* → *Day jâ blam chî?*

2. *Kuřa inglîsî nazane kho.* → *Kuřa kho inglîsî nâzâne.*


3.3 Discourse particles in interrogative contexts

Another aspect of Kurdish DPs that deserves attention is related to the interrogative contexts in which they occur. As illustrated and clarified previously, DPs can appear in interrogative sentences and occupy initial, medial, and final positions. A central question with regard to this observation is “In what kind of interrogative sentences do DPs occur?” Throughout this section, we are going to look more closely at DPs under discussion and elaborate on this question.

Before embarking upon a close examination of this topic, a word of caution is in order. The notion of discourse functions outlined at the beginning of this paper is different from what is going to be discussed in this section. Discourse functions refer to the specific functions a DP plays in conversational contexts, whereas the point of this section of the article is to expand upon the kinds of interrogative questions in which DPs occur, irrespective of their roles.

Generally speaking, DPs occur in four interrogative sentence types: seeking information, seeking explanation, rhetorical, and polar questions. The following diagram illustrates which DPs occur in which type of interrogative contexts.

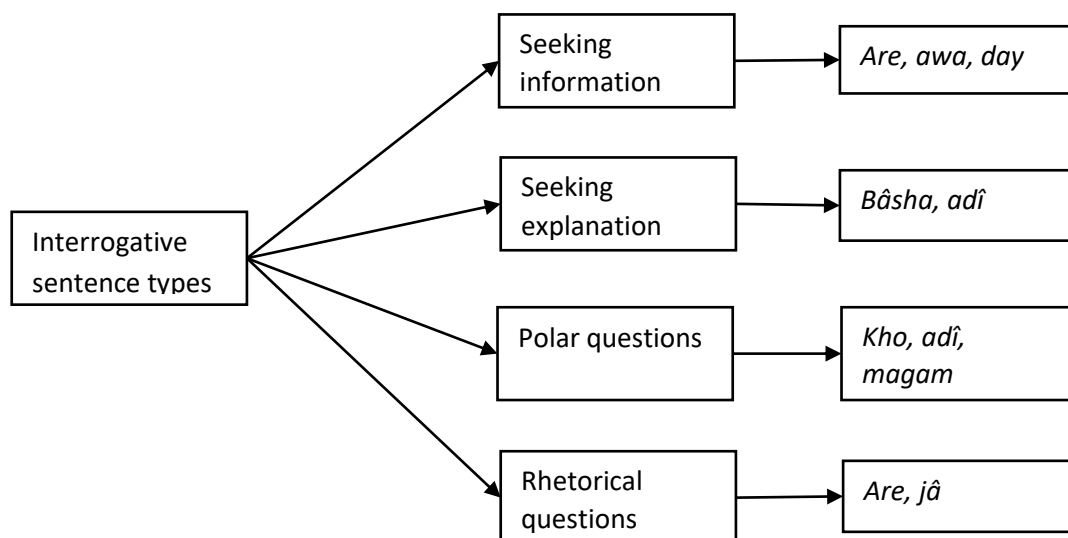


Figure 2. Kurdish DPs in interrogative sentence types

In order to clarify what is exactly meant by the above diagram, we can refer to the previous examples in which DPs were used. Conversation (1) has been repeated below.

- (12) A: *Are, kanje bchîna sar shâkhî?*
are when we go on mountain
 ‘When should we go climbing?’
 B: *Sibayne dařoin.*
 tomorrow we go
 ‘Tomorrow.’

Let us analyze this conversation by eliminating the particle *are*. Based on the translation that has been provided, the purpose of this question is to seek information about going climbing, which is why the DP *are* appearing in this sentence is said to occur in seeking-information question type. The presence of *are* at the beginning of the utterance implicates that the speaker wants to get the attention of the listener, a quality that can be attributed to its function in the discourse. In that respect, we can distinguish between the discourse function of this particle and the question type in which it occurs.

- (i) the role of *are* as a DP is to get the attention of the listener and ask a question
- (ii) the type of question that is being asked is to seek information regarding a certain issue

The same line of reasoning applies to other DPs. Look at the following examples:

- (13) A: *Bâsha, ato nâzânî aw kêra îshtibâya?*
bâsha, you don't know this work mistake
 ‘Don't you know that this is wrong?’

B: *Bimbûra. Dupât nâbetawa.*
 forgive me repeat it will not
 ‘I apologize. It will not happen again.’

- (14) A: *Bochî Siâmak nahâta bo dâwate?*
 Why *Siâmak* didn't come to the wedding
 ‘Why didn't *Siâmak* come to the wedding?’
 B: *Are chûzânim?*

are how should I know

‘How on earth am I supposed to know?’

To understand the type of interrogative sentences in which *bâsha* and *are* occur, we can simply eliminate them from the sentence, which would yield the following sentences.

1. *Ato nâzânî aw kêra îstibâya?*

you don't know this work mistake

‘Don't you know that this is wrong?’

2. *Chûzânim?*

how should I know

‘How should I know?’

In examples (1) and (2), the type of question that is being asked is the same as examples (13) and (14) and the only change that has occurred is that the particles *bâsha* and *are* have been eliminated from the sentence. Drawing from this observation, we can conclude that these two particles occur in interrogative contexts in which the purpose of the question is to seek explanation (in the case of *bâsha*) or ask something in a rhetorical manner (in the case of *are*). The presence of the DPs under discussion do not have any effect on the interrogative manner of the sentence. In short, the type of question that is being asked is impervious to the presence of the DPs. However, in certain interrogative contexts the presence or absence of DPs can make a remarkable difference in the way those questions are to be perceived by the listener. Consider the following examples:

(15) *A: Kuray halnâkay?*

heater you turn on

‘Don't you want to turn on the heater?’

B: Kho sârd ne?

kho cold not

‘It is not cold, is it?’

A: Nawalâ.

no

‘No, it isn't.’

(16) A: *Khot sâz ka dachîna parke.*

yourself get ready we go park

‘Get yourself ready, we are going to the park.’

B: *Magam awsho mîwân nâyan?*

magam tonight guests come

‘Are we not supposed to have guests tonight?’

A: *Nâzânim.*

I don’t know

‘I have no idea.’

Just like the previous cases, we can simply eliminate the DPs *kho* and *magam* and get the following sentences:

3. *Sârd ne?*

cold not

‘Is it not cold?’

4. *Awsho mîwân nâyan?*

tonight guests don’t come

‘Are we not having guests tonight?’

Comparing these two instances with and without the particles *kho* and *magam* can provide interesting insights into the underlying linguistic behavior of this group of DPs. Examples (3) and (4) represent polar question types, meaning that the questions can be answered with either “yes” or “no”. The important point to realize in this case is that the positive and negative answers to these two questions are equally possible. One could say either “yes” or “no”, each with 50 percent probability (if we were to examine these sentences out of the context). However, the insertion of *kho* and *magam* in these examples brings about an important change in the listener’s perception of these questions. By uttering these DPs, the speaker implicates that he wants his question to be answered in the positive way; thus, the equal distribution between “yes” and “no” as possible answers to the same questions changes radically. In examples (15) and (16), the speaker expects a positive answer from the listener and by using the particles *kho* and *magam* he explicitly conveys this expectation and compels the listener to answer the question in the positive

manner. For that reason, a significant change occurs in the interrogative mode of the sentence. While the purpose of (3) and (4) is to ask a yes-or-no question, the objective of (15) and (16) is to ask a seeking-confirmation question.

This hypothesis leads us to an interesting insight about the linguistic behavior of various Kurdish DPs. DPs that belong to seeking-information, seeking-explanation, and rhetorical questions only contribute to the attitudes of the speaker and do not exercise any influence on the propositional content of the question. As a result, their elimination has no impact on the interrogative mode of the sentence. In contrast to this observation, DPs that occur in polar questions have an important effect on how the propositional content is to be perceived. In that respect, their presence can make a major contribution to how the propositional content is to be understood by the listener and the interrogative mode of the sentence changes in a radical way.

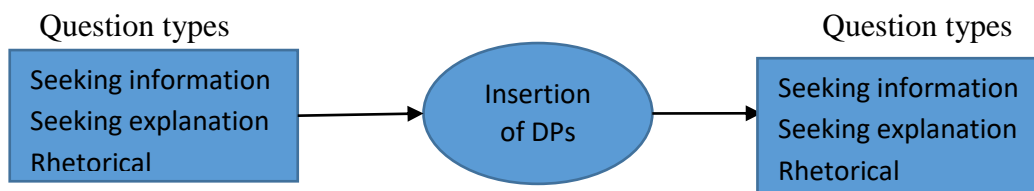


Figure 3

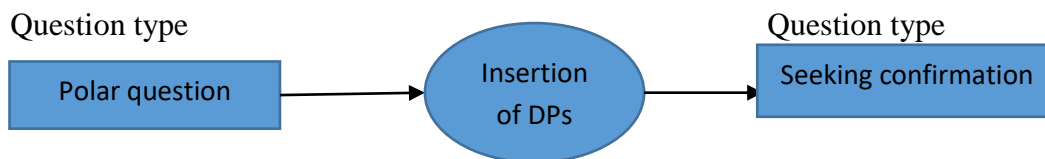


Figure 4

4. Conclusion

The purpose of this paper was to give a presentation of DPs in the Kurdish Sorani dialect. Throughout this article, we touched upon different aspects of these items and investigated their underlying behavior by elaborating on their pragmatic functions and grammatical properties. As a starting point, we provided some definitions of DPs, followed by a concise analysis of the role of these particles in German. Subsequently, the common grammatical properties of these items were

discussed and in doing so we enumerated some prevalent criteria that are adopted to distinguish this word class from other word classes. Later on, Kurdish DPs were introduced along with the functions they convey in discourse contexts. For each DP, an interactional conversation was put forward to clarify its role, syntactic position, and the type of sentence in which it occurs. Section 3 was devoted to a further analysis of these linguistic items by elaborating on a number of important aspects. 3.1 was an overview of the syntactic position and the sentence type of Kurdish DPs. In 3.2 we analyzed a phenomenon called “particle combinations”, according to which certain individual DPs can occur adjacent to each other in the sentence and give rise to new combinations. Finally, in 3.3 we made a thorough inquiry of the interrogative contexts in which DPs can occur. By way of concluding remarks, it would be appropriate to explain some characteristics of DPs in Kurdish, based on what has been discussed throughout this paper. A conspicuous property of these items is related to the relative degree of freedom they exhibit with regard to their syntactic distribution. As observed, in many cases Kurdish DPs can occupy different syntactic positions without any change in meaning. This characteristic accounts for a major difference between DPs in Kurdish and other languages, in which DPs are assumed to occupy fixed syntactic positions. Furthermore, the majority of Kurdish DPs are polyfunctional. They can contribute to the discourse by displaying a wide range of uses to show the mental attitude of the speaker and carry out various pragmatic functions. These functions include attention, irritation, continuation, emphasis, confirmation, curiosity, and surprise. In addition to their free syntactic distribution mentioned previously, they have the ability to occur in declarative, interrogative, and imperative sentence types. As we observed in 3.1, the majority of these particles occur in interrogative sentences, followed by declarative and imperative ones.

To sum up, this paper has been a first attempt to concentrate on an issue that has been neglected with regard to the Kurdish language. Despite the fact that DPs constitute a significant part of the spoken language, there has been almost no endeavor to account for the linguistic behavior of the Kurdish lexical items discussed. We observed that Kurdish has a rich inventory of DPs with a wide range of uses based on the contexts in which they can appear. In so doing, as far as possible we have fulfilled the objective of the current article, which was to delineate the functions of these items in communicative settings, account for their grammatical properties, and in turn present a general picture of their status in the Kurdish language.

Shortcomings

As mentioned at the beginning of this paper, I originally wanted to inquire into the topic of DPs by conducting a corpus-based study. Due to a number of reasons, I was not able to undertake this enterprise. A corpus-based study would have provided a much more comprehensive and overarching analysis of Kurdish DPs. It would have elaborated on these items based on real conversations and further discovered their pragmatic functions as well as grammatical properties. Therefore, further work should be done to provide a theoretical account of their syntax in Kurdish. Moreover, in so doing future researchers can work on the syntactic constraints that are involved in determining why DPs can occur in certain positions and why they cannot occupy other positions. Many other questions pertaining to the formal properties of DPs could be explicated and discussed in detail.

Despite its shortcomings, I hope this paper has achieved a worthy first step towards discussing an important issue in the Kurdish language, and thus opened a new line of research for any future work that might be carried out on this topic.

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