


## Conceptualization of the Verb “shekanen” (BREAK) in Kalhori Kurdish: A Cognitive Approach

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### Abstract

Among lexical relations, polysemy is of an important position in the semantic field because it provides the fertility of meaning and the expansion of concepts dramatically. The present study aims to represent the conceptualization of the verb /shekanen/ (break) in Kalhori Kurdish based on Evans and Green’s principled-polysemy approach (2006) in cognitive semantics. For this purpose, in this qualitative research, the data were collected from *Kurdish proverbs* (Jafarzadeh, 2006), interviews with Kalhori Kurdish speakers, and their routine dialogues; and then they were analyzed with the use of descriptive – analytic method. The results showed that the primary meaning of this verb was “break”, and it has thirty-six distinct meanings, such as “fragment”, “halve”, “burst”, “shrink”, “harm”, “pain” and the like in its semantic network. Then, these different meanings were also placed in seven distinct semantic clusters. Besides, these distinct meanings along with their seven semantic clusters were illustrated in a semantic network. The conceptual representation of verbs in the Kurdish language (Kalhori Kurdish) makes our knowledge about the verb more complete, and also helps the mobility of Kalhori Kurdish grammar.

**Keywords:** Cognitive Semantics, conceptualization, Principled-Polysemy Approach, Kalhori Kurdish.

### Extended Abstract

#### 1. Introduction

Among lexical relations, polysemy is of an important position in the semantic field because it provides the fertility of meaning and the expansion of concepts dramatically. The present study aims to represent the conceptualization of the

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verb /shekanen/ (break) in Kalhori Kurdish based on Evans and Green's principled-polysemy approach (2006) in cognitive semantics. The authors intend to use this approach to show what is the prototypical meaning of this verb in Kurdish, and based on this, to explain the peripheral meanings arising from it too. Finally, with the help of the semantic network, this study showed the relationship between the peripheral meanings together, and also the semantic relationship between the prototypical meaning and the peripheral meanings of this verb in Kalhori Kurdish.

## **2. Theoretical framework**

In cognitive linguistics, there are concepts and ideas that are constant in all the theories presented in it. These concepts and ideas are actually considered to be the basic principles of those theories. One of the concepts raised in cognitive linguistics is principled-polysemy approach proposed by Evans and Green (2006). In fact, it pursues two basic goals: one is that it defines and identifies the main concept among different concepts in the same class, and it makes a difference between the concepts and meanings stored in the mind and the concepts and meanings taken from the context. Second, the prototypical meaning is defined by a special radial category. Generally speaking, based on this approach, four basic criteria can be used to determine the prototypical meaning:

- a. The first determined meaning;
- b. Semantic superiority in the network;
- c. The semantic relationship of the prototypical meaning with peripheral meanings;
- d. Ease of prediction in the meaning extension.

## **3. Methodology**

Methodologically, this qualitative research is descriptive – analytic; its data were collected from *Kurdish proverbs* (Jafarzadeh, 2006), and interviews with Kalhori Kurdish speakers, as well as their routine dialogues. It is worth mentioning that the authors have also used their linguistic intuition for the authenticity of the data. The field of investigation is the study of the polysemy of the verb /ʃɛkanən/ (to break) in Kalhori Kurdish based on the approach of principled polysemy proposed by Evans and Green (2006). In order to analyze this verb in Kalhori Kurdish, which has different meanings in different contexts, we first represent its meanings and then draw its semantic network based on the Evans and Green's approach (2006). The verb /ʃɛkanən/ is one of the verbs that is widely used in Kalhori Kurdish and has several meanings.

## **4. Results and Discussion**

In this study, the authors tried to conceptualize the verb /ʃɛkanən/ (to break) in Kalhori Kurdish based on the principled-polysemy approach proposed by Evans and Green in 2006, and to specify its prototypical meaning as well as peripheral meanings. And accordingly, after studying and analyzing the collected data from

a cognitive perspective, they also drew its semantic network. It is worth noting that the analyses showed that this approach is effective for drawing the polysemy of this verb in the language variety of Kalhori Kurdish. The results showed that the prototypical meaning of this verb was “break”, and it has thirty-six distinct meanings, such as “fragment”, “halve”, “burst”, “shrink”, “harm”, “pain” and the like in its semantic network. Then, the finding showed that this verb is of seven distinct semantic clusters, such as “division cluster”, “split cluster”, “damage cluster”, “discontinuity cluster”, “measure cluster”, “revocation cluster”, “metaphor cluster”. Besides, these distinct meanings along with their seven semantic clusters were illustrated in a semantic network. Thus, it was clearly specified that the conceptual representation of verbs in the Kurdish language (Kalhori Kurdish) not only makes our knowledge about the verb more complete, but also helps the mobility of Kalhori Kurdish grammar.

### 5. Conclusions and Suggestions

Finally, the results showed that in creating the polysemy of this verb in this variety, the metaphorical cluster was of more frequency than the other clusters. In this verb from the Kalhari dialect, we witnessed its collocation with body-part words such as “heart”, “waist”, “hands” and “feet”, “head” and “neck”, makes this verb to have different meanings and concepts, and also the semantic effects of these body-part words in the conceptualization of the investigated verb were clearly identified. Also, as a suggestion, these studies showed that this approach is effective for drawing the polysemy of different parts of words in different languages. Thus, this research is also in line with the studies that have been done in respect with the different meanings of verbs and prepositions based on the cognitive approach, can identify and recognize the various meanings of the verb /ʃɛkanən/ in different contexts, that’s why it will be useful in teaching Kurdish language to language learners.

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