TEXT DISCOURSE FEATURES IN SOUTHERN ZAZAKI (CERMİK/SİVEREK DIALECT) – A Glance at some Folktales – Eberhard Werner (SIL International)

Abstract or Introduction

Zazaki, as a North-Western Iranian language, reveals textual discourse features some of which are unique, others follow in line with related Iranian languages. This text focuses on the textual discourse features of folktales. They offer both anthropologic and cognitive-linguistic insights. Following the principle of linguistic relativity (a weak version of Sapir-Whorf hypothesis) both provide fuller clarity on the worldview of this people group. The investigation of these discourse features follows the pragmatic model of Dooley and Levinson (2000). In order to understand the role of discourse theory approach in textual discourse is used.

Objectives

Zazaki is split in three main dialects:

- **Northern Zazaki**: Ovacık, Tunceli, Varto, Elazığ, Pulumurıye, Erzincan and Artvin. Follow Alevism.
- **Eastern Zazaki**: Bingöl (Çeviş, Cabaçeraz), Palu (Palo), Hani (Hem), Lice, and Ergani. Smaller Zaza (exclaves in Muş and Ulûk) follow the Hanafi-Sufi Shadî cult (Islamic school) and small groups of Alevism follows.
- **Southern Zazaki**: Çınkır, Cerrik, Silerek (Sörewag area). Follow the Islamic school of the Hanafi rite.

In Zazaki part of a “Caspian Sea language belt”? Some evidence is related to the inner-cultural mutual knowledge. By the use of discoursive tools in SZ: emphasis by word order, word class usage and speech articulation.

Methods

A lingualistic comparative study on text discourse by structural similarities of Zazaki narratives and folktales with Gilaki dialect (of Rash.)

The used Text Discourse Analysis is following Dooley/Levinson 2000; Lambrecht 1998; Givon 1990. Following discoursive Text Discourse Analysis is following Dooley/Levinsohn 2000; Lambrecht 1998; Givon 1990. Following discoursive

Narrative Structure

Disruptions of main event line leads to the hearer’s/reader’s attention. The unmarked sentence constituent order is a starting point. Marked order the text discourse feature. The narrative consists of inter- and intertextual cohesion.

Starting point: Unmarked sentence constituent order

- S-O-V (transitive); S-V (intransitive); S-O-V-Goal or S-IO-V

Information structure asks about information which is added to the given one. In discourse analysis the pragmatic structure of where information is added and how it relates to what is already there. The flow of information is interrupted. Sentence Articulation:

- Topic-Comment (Theme Rhetme division) pattern follows: the topical-comment structure focuses on the fact that the comment is the result (argument focus), and thematic (sentence focus).

In Zazaki topic always precedes the comment.

- A comment can be background information (also Gilaki). Identification of information articulation answers one concept, rest of information is presupposed: herunda xodi bıyık … and suddenly his corpse become stiff.

- Thetic comment (also Gilaki) in folktales starting formules: Cakê bemo caka iban; new mîdek bomo, "Somehered there is a certain man, "

Point of departure: preposed adverbal elements, anchor info new established information. In SZ: temporal, referential, echo and spatial PoDs (also in Gilaki and Farsi). word new c do or new c dowr el vert et ‘in former times’ (temporal PoD); wing / majea / u di ‘there; suddenly’ is (a) spatial and b) a temporal PoD; E.g. Wexdê veri et, dowr el vert et ‘it was awal ibiyik. ‘In former times, long ago there was an aga’, ‘at one day’ (temporal PoD); a wus ‘thus’ (=temporal PoD); ya ‘hey’ (referential PoD).

Tail-Head Linkage: repetition of the last verb or noun. Naîq et cermé bernemé bernemé... ‘They slaughter the calf for them!’ also ymou ymou ‘we go.’

Foreground information and backgrounding: ‘de-automized’ unusual linguistic form (alliteration, onomatopoeia, puns, anasonance, wordplays).

Foreground information moves; introduces it as a story (foreground line), background information is non-event supportive material, which does not itself narrate the main events. SZ folktales are told in the imperfective aspect ("historical present") e.g. o ymou el he ‘he goes home’. Instead, imperfective progressive is used in oral conversation of daily affairs, e.g. o ymo ymo ‘he is going home’.

Flashback: dislocated constituent (extra-positioning; topicalization; foreground information and backgrounding).

Relevance Theory: At information structure level the audience is addressed first by the topic, which is then commented. Implicit information can be concluded by the use of discoursive tools and the inter-cultural mutual knowledge.

References


Selkan, Zülfü 1998. Turkish Grammar. Text discourse helps to understand indigenous genre, linguistic styles and features of orality that need to be addressed and covered in literature.

References

- Northern and Southern Zazaki are closely related in using the same text discourse features, the Eastern dialect needs more research.
- Southern Zazaki, Gilaki and Farsi have a lot of text discourse features in common, at the same time there are distinctions too. Relative clause structure is more complex in Gilaki and Farsi.
- Folktales in SZ demonstrate high influence by orality, due to lack of literacy. Zazaki is in the very beginning to develop genre, linguistic styles and become literate. On the level of narrative structure pre- and post-posting, dislocations to the left and right, as well as restrictive relative clauses are used to disrupt the main event line to attract the hearer’s/reader’s attention. On the level of information structure background insertion, the use of PoD’s as attention getters (temporal, spatial, referential and echo), tail-head linkage, foreground information and backgrounding “de-automize” the progress on the story line. This is done to add new, to emphasize given or to correct still available information.

- Recently, written material is highly influenced by Western, Turkish or Kirmanlij literature. Due to translation, folktales, poems, poetry and narratives reveal influence by Latin or Turkish Grammar. Text discourse helps to understand indigenous genre, linguistic styles and features of orality that need to be addressed and covered in literature.

- Relevance Theory and functional translation theory reveal the communicative processes of genre stimulation, of the transformation of speech acts into written variety and the erection of attention in the cognitive perception of narrative information.