

## **Distinctiveness of Juncture in English and Central Kurdish**

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### **Abstract**

The present study attempts to find out the distinctiveness of juncture (pauses within words, phrases and sentences) in English and central Kurdish. Juncture is the relationship between one sound and the sounds that immediately precede and follow it. It is a morphophonemic phenomenon with double signification, a suprasegmental phoneme which changes the meaning and is important for phonological descriptions of languages. The aim of this study is to see how juncture affects the meaning of words, phrases and sentences. Slow or rapid speech can also determine the use of juncture which marks the break between sounds and the phonological boundary of words, phrases or sentences. However, the ambiguity of meaning resulting from the placement of juncture can be solved by context. Stress placement on certain words also affects the use of juncture and leads to a change in meaning. In this study, English and Central Kurdish junctures were identified within words, phrases and sentences. Based on the data collected and presented, it was found out that juncture in English is distinctive at all levels, namely, simple words, phrases and sentences. In Central Kurdish, however, juncture is distinctive in compound words and sentences. As for the sentence level, because Kurdish is an agglutinative language, there are cases where the pause or juncture is closely related to the morphological structure of the words and the personal clitics and prefixes added to the end. As for the implications of the results in the field of practice, teachers must take these into consideration while teaching stress, intonation and other aspects of connected speech.

**Keywords: Distinctiveness, Juncture in English, Juncture in Kurdish**

### **1. Introduction**

Juncture as a concept has gained renewed interest cross-linguistically in the last few decades. There are several works conducted to uncover the nature and the status of juncture in different languages and at different levels of language. The distinctiveness of this concept in Kurdish language, however, still remains untackled by scholars.

Junctures allow listeners/speakers of a given language to hear and produce differences between words and phrases. In English, there are a number of differences in the way words are pronounced in isolation and in the stream of speech in connected discourse.

**Juncture:** is a pause of slightly delay in a continuous flow of speech

**Pauses:** are intervals of silence between or with in words, phrases and sentences.

## 2. Definition

As for the definition of juncture , there are some different views. Juncture, to Roach (1991:p.129) is "the relationship between one sound and the sounds that immediately precede and follow it".

Juncture, in linguistics, is the manner of moving (transition) between two successive syllables in speech. An important type of juncture is the suprasegmental phonemic cue by means of which a listener can distinguish between two otherwise identical sequences of sounds that have different meanings.

On the other hand . Juncture is seen as a para-phonotactic unit with a delimitative function. It refers to the boundaries between phonetic or phonological entities such as phonemes , syllables , morphemes , words , intermediate prosodic phrases, and intonational phrases ( Mannell ,2000 : p.3 ).This turns to be the main reason that we have different types of juncture as it will be explained below.

Juncture refers to 'any phonetic feature whose presence signals the existence of a grammatical boundary'(Trask 1996:p.189).Here, the concept of boundary refers to the boundary between syllables.

Juncture is, generally, viewed as a type of supra-segmental area which has most to do with segmental phonemes ( Gramley and Patzold, 1992:p.109) . This term is used in phonology to refer to the phonetic boundary features that may demarcate grammatical units such as morpheme, word, or clause ( Crystal, 2003:p.248) . In other words, it is a phonologically manifested boundary between linguistic units( Lehiste, 1964: p.172). The most obvious realization of a junctural feature is pause or silence( West, 1975:p.104; Al-Hamash, 1979:p.124; Crystal, 2003:p.248); which is, though, functional ( Bičan, 2006:p.2) . However, for some linguists " it is primarily a lengthening of a sound after which it , i.e. a boundary, occurs "( Hill, 1955: p.534). In short , juncture refers to the pause that marks the boundary between two adjacent syllables or words that cause difference in meaning.

## 3. Types

Concerning types of juncture, there are several classifications proposed in the literature. The most convenient distinction is one made between three types: close juncture, internal open juncture, and external open juncture (Ukashah, 2005: p.53 and Roach, 2000: p.144).

For further explanation of the type, in the phrase ' my train', the relationship that holds between /m / and /ai / in 'my', /t / and / r /, /r / and /ei /, and finally /ei/ and /n / in 'train' is described as a close juncture. The relationship that holds between /ai / of 'my' and / t / of 'train' is described as internal open juncture, whereas the relationship between / m / of 'my' and / n / of 'train' is described as external open juncture.

Close juncture refers to the normal transition between sounds within a word (Crystal, 2003: p.249, and Ukashah, 2005:p.53). The internal open juncture (or the plus juncture / + / as frequently termed in the literature) is treated as a "special kind of break between phonemes, thus it breaks up the phonemic flow and makes words" (Roberts, 1956:p.231). This term is used to refer to the phonetic features that differentiate dozens of minimal pairs" which contain the same sequence of phonemes but differ in their prosody, meaning and orthography" (Karn and Yeni-Komshian, 2005:p.1). To consider the previously given example in the light of this account of internal open juncture, we gather the minimal pair 'my train' /maɪ + treɪn /and ' might rain' / maɪt + reɪn /. This notation suggests that in the first example the plus juncture falls between /ai / and / t /, whereas in 'might rain' it falls between /t / and / r /.

Another classification of types of juncture is based on whether they occur within one multi-syllabic word , or two words forming a compound or components of a phrase or words in a sentence.

#### **4.Methodology and Research Design**

##### **4.1 Objectives:**

The paper aims at:

- 1-Identifying the distinctiveness of juncture in English and Kurdish
- 2-Showing the phonetic, phonological and morphophonemic factors that remove juncture ambiguity
- 3-Identifying similarities and differences in the distinctiveness of juncture in English and Kurdish

##### **4.2Research Questions:**

The paper attempts to answer the following questions:

- 1)Is Juncture distinctive in English and Central Kurdish?.
- 2)What are the similar aspects of juncture between English and Central Kurdish?
- 3)What are the different aspects of juncture between English and Central Kurdish?

##### **4.3Data and Scope of the study**

The data of this study is from English and Central Kurdish junctures which were mainly collected from newspapers , books and everyday talk. Possible junctures were also tried by going through the Kurdish–Kurdish Dictionary of Kurdistan (2021) and Kurdish-English Dictionary Sharazoor(2000).

#### **5.Previous studies**

The concept of juncture has received renewed interest cross-linguistically in the last six decades. A considerable work has been done to investigate the nature and the status of juncture, sometimes with remarkable debates though.

Demirezan ,M.(2019) conducted a study entitled ' The phonological structures of open and close junctures in utterances for English Teachers'. The aim of the present work is to discuss the concept of juncture phonemes in relation to open and close internal juncture phonemes in English The main findings of this study was that at the word and phrase level, open and close junctures come to the stage to give hard times to the non-native speakers in perception of speech and production of speech. By nature, sounds signal pauses, segmentation, and which the listeners need them to perceive the spoken utterances. Close junctures take place in compound words while the open or plus junctures are situated in or among the phrases. They both change the meanings of utterances; therefore, they are accepted as phonemes in English.

Setter et al. (2014) conducted a study entitled ' Word juncture characteristics in world Englishes'. This study looks at the perception of word juncture characteristics in three varieties of English (British, Hong Kong and Singapore) among British, Hong Kong and Singaporean listeners in order to widen our understanding of English juncture characteristics in general. We find that, even though reaction time data indicates that listeners perform quickest in the variety they are most familiar with, not only are juncture differences in British English difficult for Hong Kong and Singaporean listeners to perceive, they are also the most difficult for British listeners. Juncture characteristics in Hong Kong English are the easiest to distinguish among the three varieties.

Saeed & Ahmed(2011) studies juncture in their work entitled 'The Perception of Word Juncture in English and Arabic'.In this study the perception of word juncture in English and Arabic is investigated. Word juncture is taken as the allophonic, or phonetic, variation at word boundary that is contrastive Corporuses of English and Arabic minimal pairs of juncture phrases were collected and native speakers of English and Arabic were asked to pronounce these phrases in isolation and then to use them in sentences. Three groups of subjects (a group of 13 Undergraduate students of English, a group of 11 MA students of English and a group of 9 Lecturers, all being native speakers of Arabic) were chosen to carry out the experimental part of the study. Four perception tests were carried out: two on English and two on Arabic. These tests were designated to examine the subjects' precision in the identification of the juncture phrases when used in isolation and in sentences. The subjects' reliance on the phonetic cues to identify the juncture phrases when used in isolation was low and rather fluctuant between the groups and the two languages. The sentential context, on the other hand, has shown a significant influence on the identification responses of the subjects in the three groups and in both English and Arabic.

The current study differs from the previous ones in dealing with data from Central Kurdish which has not been investigated in this respect. The data and the analysis of the Kurdish part are all original as there are no previous studies, to the best of researcher's knowledge, in this respect.

## **6.Juncture in English**

Based on the literature , juncture in English has been tackled in several areas. Here are

some examples of open and close syllabic junctures in English:

<b>Open juncture</b>	<b>Close juncture</b>
a nice house	an ice-house
a nation	an Asian
Joy sleeps	Joyce leaps
I scream!	Ice cream
I saw her race	I saw her ace
that stuff	that's tough
the waiter cut it	the way to cut it
pets enter	Pets centre
stopped aching	Stop taking

Phonetically, the nature of open juncture is complicated because it involves changes in length, pitch, aspiration and in other features of sounds, e.g.: in the pair of words *ni/trate* – *night-/rate* the distinction in juncture lies in: 1) the greater degree of aspiration of /t/ in the first word; 2) allophonic difference of /r/ – in the first member of the opposition it is slightly devoiced under the influence of the initial /t/; 3) the diphthong /αI/ is shorter in the second word because the syllable is closed by a voiceless /t/. But, this lies outside the scope of this paper, therefore it will not be focused on here.

Juncture is distinctive at all levels, namely word level, phrase level and sentence level in English. But, it is only observed in spoken language and is not reflected in writing.

### 6.1 Word level

For word level juncture in English. It is worthy to note that multi-syllabic words are meant here as they allow for more breakups. Consider the following examples:

*-triangle = try +angle*

As an example of juncture within one word, consider 'triangle' which has a special meaning 'a geometrical shape' but when a juncture is inserted or a pause is made /traɪ/, /ɒŋl/ will be created which have two distinct meanings.

### 6.2 Phrase level:

As for juncture between two components of a phrase, English is rich due to the phonotactic rules, in other words the consonant clusters observed in English, Consider these examples

In the phrases '**keep sticking**' the boundary is clearly seen in writing but when during speaking the pause changes and attaches the initial /s/ of the second word to the end of the word we get '**keeps ticking**' which has a totally different meaning.

Another example for phrase level is '**why choose**' which has a clear meaning but when a juncture or pause is added then we might get '**white shoes**' which is quite different. Stagaberg (1971:p.69)

### 6.3 Sentence level :

At the sentence level, juncture and pauses are also observed in English and they are distinctive. Consider the following examples:

In '**its praise**' the boundary is clear and the meaning is obvious but when the juncture is shifted or the pause is delayed we get '**it sprays**' which has a quite different meaning.

In the sentence '**I saw her race**' we have clear word boundaries with a specific meaning , but with one pause insertion or delay between '**her race**' it could sound '**her ace**' which gives a different meaning.

### 7. Juncture in Kurdish:

As for juncture in Kurdish, the examples are somewhat limited due to the fact that Kurdish is an orthographic language.

In Kurdish , juncture is closely related to stress as it can be observed at word and sentence level.

#### 7.1 Word Level

For distinctiveness of juncture at word level , consider the following examples below:

Harme / herme/ means ... but if we move the place stress to the second syllable or add a juncture or pauses after the first syllable / her/ + / me/ the meaning changes into a sentence 'do not run'.

Similarly , in /demar/ which means 'nerve' when it is said with stress on the first syllable , the meaning is totally changed when we add a juncture or a pause between the first and the second syllable and become /de/ + /mar/ which means 'ten snakes'.

Other cases in Kurdish are observed to confirm the distinctiveness of juncture and pauses within words or phrases. Consider the following instances:

When /yekser/ is connected as one word with no pause it means 'immediately' , but when you say or write them as two separate words , in other words you add juncture or pause and space between them /yek/ +/ser/ the meaning changes into 'one head'.

Similarly , when /zordar/ is said or written as one word with no juncture ,it means 'oppressor' but when a pause or juncture is inserted within the word / zor/ + /dar/ the meaning becomes 'many trees'.

In /dupshk/ which means 'scorpion' when said or written as one connected word with no interval , whereas the same string of letters said or written with a pause or juncture within the word /du/ + /pshk/ the meaning changes into 'two shares'.

In /bezar/ which means 'bored' when it comes as one connected word , the meaning changes when you insert a pause or space within the word and make it /be/ + /zar/

which means ' someone who has no ability to talk'.

One unique example in Kurdish is the word /berdash/ which means 'grinding machine' when it is said or written as one word , but when a pause is inserted it has two other options /ber/ + /dash/ which means ' a prior pawn' or /berd/ + /ash/ which is polysemous , it could mean ' stone for making food' or 'stone mill'

In this sample /koandam/ which means 'system' when is it written and said all as one word , but when it is written or said as two separate words /ko/ and /andam/ each one has a different meaning , 'plus' and ' organ or member' . respectively.

In this sample /serdar/ which means 'chief or a personal name' when is it written and said all as one word , but when it is written or said as two separate words /ser/ and /dar/ each one has a different meaning , 'on/above" and ' tree' . respectively.

In this sample /cebecekrdn/ which means 'implementing' when is it written and said all as one word , but when it is written or said as three separate words /ce/ , /ba/ and /ce/ each one has a different meaning , 'place','by' and ' ce' . respectively.

In this sample /bezar/ which means 'bored' when is it written and said all as one word , but when it is written or said as two separate words /be/ and /zar/ each one has a different meaning , without and ' tongue/dialect' . respectively.

Another example in Kurdish is /razyana/ which means 'fennel plant' when it is written or said as one word with no juncture or pause, but when it is written or said with an interval between them it becomes /raz/ which means ' secret' and /yana/ which means ' club'. This shows how distinctive juncture is in central Kurdish.

In /rahenan/ which means ' training' when it is written and said as one word, it becomes two different meanings when written as two separate words just by adding juncture or pause /ra/ which means ' opinion' and /henan/ means 'bringing'.

On the other hand , in a word like /ballkesh/ which means ' prevalent' when it is one word with no juncture or pause, but it has two totally different meanings when a juncture or pause it added /ball/ means ' wing' and /kesh/ which means ' weight'.

In short , it is observed that juncture and pauses are distinctive at the word level in Central Kurdish ,both ins writing and speaking.

## 7.2 Sentential Juncture:

As for the samples at sentential level, there are some very interesting ones in central Kurdish. Consider the following:

1.a که بابم بوو ، کهبابم بوو .

1.b که بابم نهما ، کهبابم نهما .

/ke babm bu, kebabm bu/ which mean 'when I had father , I had Kebabs'

/ke babm nema, kebabm nema/ means 'when I lost my father , there were no more Kebabs'.So, when the /ke/ is separated from /babm/ it means ' when' and 'bab' means ' father' , but when the juncture is removed it becomes /kebab/ which means 'Kebabs'.

2.a. زۆربلنی هاتم.

2.b. زۆر بلنی هاتم.

In this sentence , when /zorblle/ is written and uttered as one junk with no juncture or pause ,it means 'talkative' , the whole sentence means ' you talkative , I am coming for you'. When /zor/'many times' and /blle/'say' are separated with a pause in the same sentence , the meaning will be totally changed into ' Say I am coming many times'.

3.a. ئەوه بابەتیکى لاپه لا بوو .

3.b. پێم گوتى ئەو چەكە لاپه لا .

In the sentence 3.a , the word /labala/ when it is written and said as one single word , it means in 'an off the record' , the whole sentence gives this meaning 'This was an off the record topic'.In the sentence (3.b)/laba/ and /la/ when separated , the meaning is changed into ' emphatic of move away'

4. هەرچەندە كە 'رووتام' ، مایلی 'پرووتم'.

In this sentence /her chanda ke **rutm** , mayli **rutm**/ , the first /rutm/ when pronounced together as one word it means 'I am naked' , while the second one means ' I long to your face'.Here , the role of stress is observed in identifying the intended meaning of the speaker.This is related to the morphological structure of the word and the personal suffix and clitic added to the end of the word.In the first /rutm/, /rut/ is the base which means /naked/ and /m/ is the first person clitic. In the second /rutm/ , /ru/ is the base which means 'face' , /t/ is the second person clitic and /m/ is the first person clitic.

In short, juncture and pauses are distinctive at the word , especially compound word level , and sentence level in central kurdish.

## 8. Discussion:

Based on the data collected and presented, Juncture in English is distinctive at all levels , namely , words, phrases and sentences. As it can be observed from the English examples, pauses within single multi-syllabic words and compound words lead to changes in meaning while they are uttered by speakers as a casual speed. Though native speakers intuitively recognize the word boundaries and construct the meaning based on the context, yet this sometimes leads to misinterpretation and miscommunication.

As for the samples at phrase level, it is quite clear that pauses and juncture, in other words annexing a sound with the preceding or following word leads to an overall meaning change, hence it is distinctive. This is primarily due to the nature and structure of the phonotactic rules in English which allows for consonants clusters are the beginning and end of words. English syllable structure, potential clusters are CCCVCCCC. So, the possibility of consonants following each other with no vowel interval paves the way for possibility of initial and final consonants to be move from one position, final to initial position, when two such words are uttered successively.



Concerning sentence level sample, though the context solves this problem of misinterpretation especially in writing due to punctuation marks and spelling conventions, yet sometimes hesitation in talking , other external factors and/or deliberate pauses ,as for language games or tongue twisters, might lead to misinterpretation and miscommunication. Therefore, pauses and juncture is distinctive in English at the sentence level as well.

In Central Kurdish, However, juncture is distinctive in compound words and sentences. As we have observed in the sections above , there are several samples for the distinctiveness at word level but due to the restrictions on the consonant clusters in Central Kurdish which allows only two initially and finally in words with conditions on the second sound of the cluster, all the examples are compound words. No sample was found in Kurdish that contains distinctive pauses or juncture within one word. This is one of the differences found between English and Kurdish.

The compound word level samples are also of various types. Some of them are based on the stress shift from one syllable into another, whereas others are based on whole syllable annexation to one another. Another important point of difference is related to the fact that there is no Kurdish word that starts with a vowel sound , instead they are preceded by an glottal stop /hamza/ which is not phonemic. This glottal stop is found in some varieties of English as a substitute of /t/ but it lies outside the scope of this study.

Concerning the distinctiveness of juncture and pause within a sentence in Central Kurdish , there are several examples as stated above. In some sentences , the importance of pause and juncture is closely related to the morphological structure of the word , the clitics and personal suffixes. This is due to the fact that Kurdish is agglutinative language.

## **9. Conclusions**

It is concluded that juncture(pauses) are distinctive at word, phrase and sentence level in English and Central Kurdish. As Kurdish is an orthographic language , the distinctiveness is observed in speaking and writing ,whereas in English it is found only in spoken language.

Due to the difference in the phonotactic rules in English and Central Kurdish , there are differences in the potential distinctives of pauses and junctures.

At word level ,the distinctiveness cases are observed in multi-syllabic words and/or compound words in both English and Central Kurdish. At the phrase level , the data shows all types of phrases are liable for this phenomenon. As for the sentence level , because Kurdish is agglutinative language , there are cases where the pause and juncture is closely related to the morphological structure of words and the personal clitics and prefixes added to the base.

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