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Conceptualizing the Preposition /ʕalaa/ in the Taizzi Dialect: a Cognitive Semantic Approach^(*)

Dr. Turki Mahyoub Qaid Mohammed

Assistant Professor - Department of English

Center for Languages and Translation

Taiz University, Yemen

turki_mhd1@yahoo.com

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تصور حرف الجر "على" في اللهجة التعزية: مقاربة دلالية معرفية

د/ تركي مهيب قائد محمد

أستاذ اللغويات المساعد في قسم اللغة الإنجليزية
مركز اللغات والترجمة – جامعة تعز – اليمن

الملخص

يتناول هذا البحث دلالات حرف الجر "على" اعتماداً على إطار التحو العرفي (CG) الذي طوره لانجاكر (1987)، من أجل الحصول على تحليل دلالي معرفي لحرف الجر هذا بناءً على استخدامه في اللهجة التعزية. عادة ما يستخدم حرف الجر "على" للدلالة على الوضع الرأسي. أي أنه يستخدم لوصف العلاقة المكانية بين كيانين ماديين يكون أحدهما مستعلياً/مدعوماً بكيان مادي آخر. إن ما يميز حرف الجر "على" عن بقية حروف الجر ملائمة للاستخدام بالمعنى المكاني الذي يقع فيه كيان مادي على كيان مادي آخر. ومع ذلك، فإن تحليل استخدام حرف الجر "على" قدم تفسيرات لأسباب استخدامه في العديد من الحالات المختلفة حيث تم استخدامه مثلاً للدلالة على علاقات مكانية غير مرتبطة بالإسناد العمودي. أظهرت الأمثلة المقدمة في هذا البحث أن المتحدثين باللهجة التعزية يوسعون استخدام حرف الجر "على" لتصوير علاقات مكانية تختلف عن تلك التي يقع فيها المبتذل (TR) فعلياً على المعلم (LM)، كالعلاقات المكانية التي يكون فيها الـ TR مرتبطاً بالـ LM أفقياً أو رأسياً. من الناحية التعليمية، يُعدّ تطوير الوعي الدلالي لاستخدام حروف الجر أمراً بالغ الأهمية لأغراض التدريس، وهذا البحث يسهم في تعزيز الوعي بمجموعة من المفاهيم مثل تعدد المعاني، والاصطلاحات، والتنوع الثقافي، والعالمية، وخصوصية اللغة ... إلخ. علاوة على ذلك، يدعم هذا البحث ما توصل إليه بحثان سابقان لـ تركي محمد (2012) و تركي محمد وآخرون (2012) من أن استخدام حروف الجر من قبل المتحدثين باللهجة التعزية لترميز العلاقات المكانية أو الزمانية يعتمد على كيفية توصيفهم المعرفي للعلاقة بين الـ TRs و الـ LMs.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الإدراك والتصور؛ العمودية؛ دلالات حروف الجر؛ حروف الجر العربية؛ اللهجة التعزية.



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Abstract

Adopting the framework of Cognitive Grammar (CG), developed by Langacker (1987), this paper investigated the semantics of the preposition /ʕalaa/ in order to obtain a cognitive semantic analysis of this preposition as it is used in the Taizzi dialect, (TD from now onwards). Typically, /ʕalaa/ is used to encode verticality. That is, it is used to describe a spatial relation between two physical entities where one physical entity is *located on/supported by* another one. The crucial conundrum of /ʕalaa/ is that it is very appealing to be used in the locative sense in which one physical entity is LOCATED ON another one. However, the analysis of /ʕalaa/ provided justifications of its use in many instances of the TD where this preposition was seemingly exploited to encode non-support-related spatial relations. The data presented in this paper showed that speakers of the TD extend the use of /ʕalaa/ to depict spatial relations other than the ones where the Trajector (TR) is actually *located on* the Landmark (LM), and spatial relations in which the TR and the LM are horizontally or vertically related to each other. Pedagogically speaking, developing semantic awareness of the use of prepositions is crucial for teaching purposes. This study helps students and learners of a language to reinforce their awareness of concepts like polysemy, idiomaticity, cultural diversity, universality, and language specificity...etc. Furthermore, this study supports Mohammed, Turki (2012) and Mohammed, Turki et al (2012) proposal that the use of prepositions by speakers of the TD to encode spatial or temporal relations depends on how they cognitively characterize the relation between the TRs and the LMs.

Keywords: conceptualization; verticality; prepositional semantics; Arabic prepositions; Taizzi dialect.

Introduction:

It is a fact that users of languages, or language variants, are incorporated in space. This brings to light the inevitable use of prepositions that are frequently used to encode the spatial relations they are surrounded by. Since prepositions describe a relationship between different entities, it becomes a significant task to know how to use them and how to decide professionally which preposition is to be exploited rather than the other ones. Moreover, Carlson (2000) maintains that to be able to describe where objects are located using simple locative terms is considered a basic skill for any speaker of a language. This wide use of prepositions is no doubt one of the reasons why prepositions should be closely examined.

The significance of prepositions results from the fact that speakers of any language/dialect need to lexicalize spatial relations in everyday life. The truth remains that it is commonly through prepositions these spatial scenes are depicted. Besides, languages vary in the ways they encode spatial relations depending on the details of the relation itself, whether temporal or spatial. This paper aims at identifying a set of related senses of the polysemous preposition /*ʕalaa*/ as displayed in the TD. Some of which are not found in other varieties of Arabic or even Standard Arabic itself. As a polysemous preposition /*ʕalaa*/ can signify a variety of peculiar senses that are associated with the TD like the temporal domain, the domain of accompaniment, the domain of horizontal axis, the domain of measure and percentage, the domain of manner of action, the domain of activity and involvement, the domain of force and power, and the domain of dependence. Interestingly, some of these senses are not associated with the use of /*ʕalaa*/ in Standard Arabic or other Arabic dialects.

The quandary with /*ʕalaa*/ lies in being very appealing to be used in the locative sense where one physical entity serves as a support of another physical entity especially when they stand in vertical positions. Other obscurity with /*ʕalaa*/ as used in the TD is that it is used in the temporal domain. This however is not common in Standard Arabic.

In relation to the category of prepositions, it is a fact that it constitutes a form of speech in almost every language or even a dialect, spoken or written except for few languages like Korean that 'has no such words at all', (Lindstromberg 2010). In contrast, a language like Arabic has at least

seventeen prepositions (Al-Afghaani 1971), constitute a crucial category of the language. The significance of prepositions results from the fact that it is mostly through prepositions the spatial scenes are depicted and the fact that different languages vary in the ways they utilize prepositions to encode spatial relations. Fuse (2006) maintains that ‘Languages contrast in the various ways they lexicalize spatial relations depending on the details of the relation (e.g., degree of fit, the shape or orientation of the objects, the frame(s) of reference commonly used in the language; i.e., absolute, deictic, intrinsic), and the grammatical forms of the spatial terms themselves (e.g., prepositions, verbs)’. Moreover, prepositions cover a wide range of relations where they can profile different kinds of relations, “simplex or complex”, (Langacker 2008). This makes prepositions outstandingly different from other linguistic categories that can profile either simple or complex relations.

It is to be noted that, some linguists considered prepositions as being meaningless words, (Tesnière 1953). In addition, some Arab grammarians judged prepositions to be less important than other parts of speech in Arabic language; nouns and verbs. However, prepositions play a very significant role in depicting a wide range of relations, and describing a wide set of metaphors and abstract expressions that can be subject to linguistic analysis, (Fuse 2006).

Literature overview:

Many books examined and analyzed the prepositions of Arabic language. Yet, in most cases, they examined prepositions as a grammatical class. They examined the category of prepositions as a whole rather than exploring individual prepositions. Besides, most of these works focused on the grammatical function of prepositions that Arabic prepositions assign to their arguments - the genitive case. Preposition, in Arabic grammar, is termed as particle of attraction and it causes the following noun or adverb in genitive case, (Wright, 2011). Detailed studies that examine the semantics of one preposition in particular, or attempt to subject it to a thorough and comprehensive cognitive analysis, rather than examining it from a grammatical point of view are uncommon, (Mohammed, Turki. et al 2012)

Semantically speaking, traditional books on Arabic language, e.g., Al-Afghaani (1971), Al-Muzani (1983), and others, viewed prepositions of



Arabic language as less important than other grammatical classes, namely, nouns and verbs. Thus, there are two types of sentences in Standard Arabic: Nominal sentences (starting with a noun), and Verbal sentences (starting with a verb). In grammar of Arabic language, lexical items were broadly divided into three main classes: nouns, verbs and particles. Expressing a relation between two arguments x and y , prepositions were thought of as being less significant than the other two classes due to the fact that the focus was more on their grammatical function, (Mohammed, Turki. et al. 2012).

Other studies looked at the common mistakes in the use of preposition of Arabic language and shed light on grammatical and ungrammatical interchangeable substitution of Arabic prepositions in some contexts. In line with the views of old Arab grammarians, Ammār, M. (1998), for instance, focuses on the use of the Arabic preposition. All instances explained and elaborated upon in this work were selected from the Holy Quraan, and Standard Arabic.

Sardaraz and Ali (2017) have demonstrated with large linguistic data from the Quran that conceptual metaphors have extensively been used in the Quran to generate the use of preposition *fī* with abstract concepts and emotional states. The conceptual metaphor approach, they argue, can give a new impetus to the study of Arabic prepositions in the Quran to harness the full semantic complexity of the spatial prepositions.

Similarly, Sardaraz, Khan, et al (2019) have examine the use of the preposition /*min*/ in the Holy Quraan. They point out that the data examined showed the idiosyncratic behavior of preposition, attaining different semantic arguments in different linguistic contexts, which strengthen the argument that language use cannot be abridged to static mapping in the human conceptual system.

More specifically, some studies dealt with the use of prepositions in a particular surat in the Holy Quraan. For instance, Al-Refaai, M. (2015) discusses the semantics of Arabic prepositions in Surat Al-Baqarah as exhibits in three English translations. Selecting twenty ayaat from Surat Al-Baqarah whose preposition problems and failures seem to pose a problem, their study attempts to examine and analyze the meanings of the prepositions within the ayaat to identify which translation is more accurate and useful to the readers.



Other works examined Arabic prepositions from a comparative perspective. Darraaj (1991) compares the prepositions of Arabic with the prepositions of Hebrew and Syriac languages. Najjar (1986) studies the meanings of Arabic prepositions in their linguistic use in MSA based on the description of prepositions in the books of old Arab grammarians. She conducted, as well, a comparative study between the use of prepositions in Arabic, Hebrew, and other Semitic languages, (Darraaj 1991).

Similar to ad-positions, postpositions and other spatial relaters, prepositions are cross-linguistically one of the most challenging categories. Prepositions are challenging for learners of any second language, Arabic and English are no exception. Potential problems for any learner are compounded by the manner in which prepositions may be presented in grammar books, where their various meaning extensions are frequently portrayed as arbitrary, leaving learners with few options other than to memorize prepositions “narrow context by narrow context” (Lindstromberg, 2010).

Other studies spotlight the difficulties that learners of English as a second language face with prepositions of English. Nacey and Graedler (2015), for instance, examine preposition use in oral language produced by advanced Norwegian learners of English. They investigate the frequency of inappropriate preposition use and the possible extent to which L1 transfer may play a role in production, and eventually the results about spoken preposition use were contrasted with results from a corresponding investigation into preposition use in a written learner corpus.

Similarly, Aajami, R. (2019) attempts analyzing the polysemy of the English preposition *in* from the cognitive linguistic (CL) point of view using Evans' and Tyler's approach (2003). She pointed out that it was the perplexity faced by Iraqi second language learners (L2) due to the multi-usages of this preposition that motivated her to conduct her study.

It is only recently, linguists have started to focus on the importance of the dialects of Arabic language and started to subject them to linguistic analysis. Nevertheless, in most of these studies, the topic of prepositions has been briefly explained if not totally neglected. For instance, Mohammed, Turki et al. (2012).

- have examined the use of a particular preposition in the TD adopting the Cognitive Grammar approach.



Theoretical Framework:

This study adopted the framework of (CG) which proved to be an effective means used to examine prepositions in many languages or language variants. Being no exception, this framework proved to be an effective means to study and scrutinize one of the frequently used prepositions in the TD. Language is a ‘product’ of people’s experience of the outside world. Language is ‘the product of our interaction with world around us’. Speakers’ understanding of the world that they interact with is one way or the other represented in their everyday language, Heine (1997).

Speakers of any language would need to make some mental effort to come to a decision as what preposition to exploit in order to make appropriate utterances. They would employ their understanding of the world they live in to make the correct choice. Consequently, “the possibility of using various prepositions to depict one spatial relation comes as a result of the different mental images that the speakers have of how to situate these entities around them”, (Mohammed, Turki, 2012, p. 66).

In this study, notions of CG like trajector, landmark, image schema, cognitive domains, and others were adopted. The author considered vivid instances of /ʕalaa/ as used by speakers of the TD. These notions helped the author present the use of the preposition /ʕalaa/ in the horizontal and vertical axes. Moreover, they enhanced the explanation of the use of the preposition /ʕalaa/ in various domains, and the description of how speakers of the TD exploit /ʕalaa/ to encode various horizontal and vertical spatial relations, and how different conceptualizations are involved. Though /ʕalaa/ belongs to the semantic field of ‘support’, the instance examined below proved that the use of this preposition could cover a wide range of temporal and spatial relations which together form a coherent semantic network where the concept of Support is the underlying image schema.

Method:

The data presented in this study comprise a collection of instances that have been taken from everyday speech registers of the speakers of the TD. The data analysis gets through two steps, first, the instances were examined from a cognitive perspective, second, the authors presented illustrative figures to visually depict the instances and make it more explicit for the reader to



figure out the instances and the relations under discussion. The clarifying figures made it possible for the readers to comprehend the seemingly support-irrelevant instances.

It is worth noting that the TD is mostly spoken rather than written variant of Yemeni Arabic. Different from Standard Arabic that is used by the educated people for different formal registers, the TD is mostly used in informal registers. Yet, the TD can be used as a written form in personal letters among friends, and in mobile messages and in social media. It becomes clear that the TD is employed in the everyday life of the people of Taiz, and that the speakers of the TD switch to Standard Arabic only when the necessity calls for that. As for running their daily affairs, the speakers of TD will only employ their own dialect, namely, the TD, (Mohammed, Turki 2012).

To ensure the triangulation of sources of data, data collection was performed in different conversational situations. Mostly, the data was collected by taking notes. Whenever needed, specialists in Arabic language were consulted in order to confirm data taken from the native speakers, ensure the validity of the data, and collect new instances. Special attention was given to instances in which the preposition /*ʕalaa*/ was markedly utilized.

Data analysis and discussion:

The conceptual base of /*ʕalaa*/

/*ʕalaa*/ describes a spatial relation that involves two partakers; the Trajector (TR) being a physical entity that receives the support of another physical entity that is conceived as a supporter of the TR, the Landmark (LM). Consequently, this necessitates actual contact between the TR and the LM.

At the very basic level, the spatial relation of SUPPORT requires two entities. Here, the first entity in this spatial relation (TR) is thought of as a three dimensional movable physical entity. The second entity in this spatial relation (LM) is thought of as a three dimensional physical entity that functions as a supporter of the burden, (TR). In this relation, one of the LM's crucial properties is that it is physically qualified to serve as a supporter. That is, it should have an exterior that could hold the TR.

The spatial relation of support can be characterized in terms of other sub-components. At the basic level, the spatial relation of support differs from other spatial relations, containment for example. The support spatial relation

is thought of in association with vertical axes. That is, the two participants in the support relation are thought of in terms of which one is above/below the other one.

In terms of force dynamics, the support relation can be thought of as a result of an external force that moves the TR and situates it on the top/surface of the LM. Consequently, the TR's path is characterized as getting away from the source of this external force and moves towards the LM. Figure 1 below presents the conceptual base of the preposition /*ʕalaa*/.

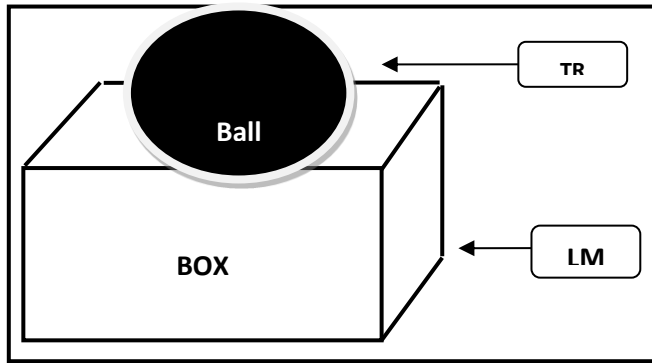


FIGURE 1. 'The conceptual base of /*ʕalaa*/. The ball on the box'

Conceptualizing the relation of SUPPORT mentally triggers two participants. The first serves as a burden and the second serves as a supporter of this burden. These two participants build up the semantic structure of the relation of SUPPORT. However, such a spatial relation may involve other elements. These elements are described as subcomponents that help in fully conceptualizing this relation.

If a speaker of the TD chooses to use the preposition /*ʕalaa*/ rather than other prepositions of Arabic, it is because he/she characterizes the TR as a burden being supported by the LM. Saying that "الكرة على الصندوق" /*alkurah ʕalaa aS-Sunduq*/ meaning 'the ball is on the box' characterizes a mental image where the TR is stably maintained by the LM. That is to say, the LM is conceived as a sustaining exterior. The idea of support is highly stressed in such instances.

/ʕalaa/ – Different prepositions, identical relations

At this stage and before demonstrating the different domains in which the preposition /*ʕalaa*/ is used it would be appealing to further clarify the idea of employing different prepositions to say the same thing. It frequently occurs that speakers of two different languages or even two dialects of the same



language employ different prepositions to encode the same temporal/spatial relation based on how they construe it. This also occurs when one tries to translate an utterance from one language to another. Different prepositions to be used though the meanings of the utterances they express are more or less the same. Consider the following instances taken from two different varieties of Yemeni Arabic:

1- إيش في قلبك؟

(Mohammed, T. 2012)

eeš *fii* qalbak

what *in* heart (your)

What is *in* your heart?

2- ويش على قلبك؟

weš *ʕalaa* galbuk

what *on* heart (your)

What is *in* your heart?

The two instances above clearly show the fact that speakers of two languages or even two different dialects of the same language might choose diverse prepositions to encode spatial relations in line with the way they mentally conceptualize it. It is a truism that speakers of different languages and different dialects carve out the semantic space of prepositions differently. Fuse (2006: 26) states that ‘regardless of the various ways languages may carve up the world we still do not know how to tell clearly when and to what extent language influences our earliest thought’.

This can be further clarified with two instances from two different varieties of Arabic language.

3- بشي تؤمرني

(TD) (Mohammed, T. 2012)

tuʔmurnii bšii

Order you me with a thing

Is there anything I should do for you?

4- تامرني على شيء

(Kuwaiti Arabic)

taamirnii ʕalaa šii

Order you me on a thing

Is there anything I should do for you?

Instances (3) and (4) re-emphasize the fact that the difference of the ways speakers of these dialects choose to communicate with each other in encoding the same spatial relation is because of the variant ways they cognitively characterize this relation. Whereas speakers of the TD focus more on the thing they are going to do for their addresses, speakers of the Kuwaiti Arabic do mentally focus more on the implication of the word /*taamirni*/, meaning 'order'. As the reader knows, 'orders' are usually given by someone who is supposed to be in a higher rank than the one he/she orders. Given that, the spatial particle /ʕalaa/ meaning *on* is used to highlight this idea of hierarchy. The position of the order giver is supposed to be higher compared to the position of the 'ordered' person. The mental image speakers of Kuwaiti Arabic have for the relation between the two participants motivates the use of the spatial particle /ʕalaa/ rather than other ones.

In the same vein, speakers of different languages cognitively perceive relations in the real world differently. Consequently, they choose to lexicalize 'the same' spatial relation variously. A good example, which can be presented here to reinforce this argument, is when two speakers of Arabic and English choose to exploit variant relational particles to lexicalize the same relation. When speakers of Arabic would prefer to choose the preposition /ʕalaa/ meaning '*on*', speakers of English would prefer to choose the preposition '*in*' to lexicalize this relation. Here, choosing different prepositions is due to the fact that they differ in how they conceptually characterize the relation concerned. Consider the instance below:

5- عليه ديون كثيرة

ʕaleehi duyuunun katheerah
on him debts many
He is so *in* debt.

In the instance above the concept of verticality plays a significant role in understanding why speakers of different languages would exploit two different prepositions to depict the relation above. Speakers of Arabic conceptualize and characterize *debts* as a burden that is located *on* the debtor. Thus, the sense of support is strongly implied, the use of the preposition /ʕalaa/ meaning seems to be a competitive candidate to encode this relation. The relation between the TR 'debts' and the LM 'him' is mentally perceived



as such ‘him’ is a supporter of the “debts” that are located *on* ‘him’. That is why they choose the preposition /ʕalaa/ to lexicalize this relation. On the other hand, speakers of English conceptualize this relation differently and consequently choose another preposition to lexicalize it.

/ʕalaa/ – Temporal domain

Markedly, the preposition /ʕalaa/ is used to encode a temporal relation in the TD. This makes it different from Standard Arabic where /ʕalaa/ is not frequently exploited to encode temporal relations. This can be also true about other varieties of Arabic language. In most cases, it is the preposition /fii/, rather than other prepositions, which is frequently employed in temporal domains in Standard Arabic. This can be attributed to the fact that to speakers of Standard Arabic, or even some varieties of Arabic language, /fii/ is more conceptualized as to encode temporal or spatial relations where a physical entity is contained by another physical entity. Some might argue that ‘time’ is not a physical entity. That is a valid argument. However, ‘time’ is conceptualized as a container, and that is why the preposition /fii/ is more frequently nominated to encode this containment relation. Speakers of the TD, choose other ways to encode such relations. One of these ways is using the preposition /ʕalaa/.

Speakers of the TD are aware of the fact that in some occasions ‘time’ of the event is thought of to be *not* long enough to enclose the event. This makes them nominate another preposition to encode the temporal relation. Thus, the preposition /ʕalaa/ is used with LMs that denote time points that do not seem to be liable to contain the events. Accordingly, the preposition /ʕalaa/ is preferred to be exploited to encode temporal relations with LMs that denote longer periods around a specific point of time. The mental conceptualization of time here can be described as such time is cognitively perceived as a span of time rather than a point of time on the time line. Consider the following instance:

6- نلتقي على الساعة عشرة

niltaqii ʕalaa as-saaʕah ʕašrah
meet (we) on the hour ten
Let us meet at ten o’clock.



One of the uses of the reposition /*ʕalaa*/ in the TD is its use in the temporal domain. In the TD, the preposition /*ʕalaa*/ can be used with complements that denote time expressions. Such utilization of the preposition /*ʕalaa*/ in encoding these temporal relations heavily depends on how speakers mentally characterize these periods of time. In his book *From Space to Time: Temporal Adverbials in the World's Languages*, Haspelmath (1997) maintains that the use of various prepositions in expressions that denote time depends on the speakers' conceptualization of these periods of time. This explains why speakers of the TD use different prepositions to encode different temporal relations. The speakers of the TD conceptualize periods of time either as points of time or time extents.

This is not peculiar to speakers of the TD. Haspelmath (1997) refers to the fact that whereas 'the morning' and 'the evening' has a kind of semantically parallel function, 'the night' has 'a very different function' for people. That justifies, according to him, the use of the preposition *at* with word like 'dawn', 'dusk' and 'noon' and the use of the preposition *in* with morning and evening. 'Morning' and 'evening' are thought of as time spans that can serve as containers of events and the preposition *in* is utilized to convey the idea of containing relation.

In the same vein, Lindstromberg (2010) maintains that English speakers are likely to use the preposition *in* when the GR (LM) denotes a period or a span of time that can serve as a container of the events. English speakers tend to use the preposition *in* when the TRs are thought of as being 'long enough' to enclose events; examples are 'morning, afternoon and evening'. Other English prepositions as *at* can be used in expressions where the LMs seem not to be long enough to enclose the events. In such cases, the LMs denote a point of time rather than a span of time.

Consider the following instance:

7- We first met in London at midnight on Friday in 2010.

In (7) three relational particles, namely; *at*, *on* and *in*, are exploited to encode three temporal relations. The use of different relational particles in this instance can be due to the speaker's understanding of the notion of containment. The year '2010' is conceived as a long span of time that has the function of enclosing the event 'met' and the preposition *in* is exploited to



convey this sense more precisely. The prepositional phrase ‘in 2010’ identifies the temporal location of the event ‘met’ on the time line as much as the preposition *in* specifies the location of the event being ‘in London’. Dirven and Radden (2007) describe this kind of temporal specification as location time. They state that ‘we will describe specifications that locate a situation at a point of time or in a period as **location time**’. (2007: 318)

/ʕalaa/ – The domain of accompaniment

In the following instances, the preposition /ʕalaa/ reveals another domain where it can be used, the domain of accompaniment. Conceptually, speakers of the TD characterize the LM as accompanying the TR and somehow surrounding it. A distinction has to be made here between the sense of accompaniment expressed by /ʕalaa/ and the sense of accompaniment expressed by /maʕa/ meaning ‘with’. The researcher argues that the sense of accompaniment expressed by /ʕalaa/ has a sub sense of reliance and dependence. Thus, /ʕalaa/ competitively arises to encode the relations in the following instances:

8- على بركة الله

ʕalaa barakati illah
on blessing Allah
With the blessing of Allah

In instance (8), the abstract concept (بركة الله) / meaning ‘blessing of Allah’ serves as the LM that supports the TR, the action to be commenced. The sense that is cognitively prevailing in the sentence above is the sense of accompaniment. However, the use of the preposition /ʕalaa/ in this sentence entails that the sense of support is present, as well. Interestingly, the reader can simply notice that the TR is not mentioned in the sentence above and the thought is utterly expressed with the use of the preposition /ʕalaa/ and the LM.

In the same vein, in instance (9) below the LM is conceptualized as accompanying the TR and thus the word /maʕa/ meaning ‘with’ is deployed by the speakers of the TD to encode such a relation. Since the sense of accompaniment is prevailing here the speakers of the TD the preposition /ʕalaa/ is not used. Look at instance (9):

9- مع السلامة

maʕa as-salaamh
with safty
May you have a safe move!

The instances (8) and (9) above do have the same structure. Both instances begin with /ʕalaa/ and /maʕaa/ and they are directly followed by the LMs. Furthermore, in the both instances above the LMs are all abstract entities where no actual accompaniment takes place. One more observation is that the instances above are uttered in the same occasion where the speaker makes their good wishes for the listener. This makes the use of the preposition /ʕalaa/ different from the use of other prepositions /fii/, for example, which is used by the speakers of the TD to makes their wishes, no difference good or bad their wishes are, Mohammed, Turki et al (2012).

/ʕalaa/ - TR and LM facing one another

In other situations, the preposition /ʕalaa/ is used to encode a spatial relation that holds between a TR that is located in front of a LM. Here, the TR is neither factually located on / supported by the LM, nor in actual contact with it.

Nevertheless, using the preposition /ʕalaa/ in such cases implies that the speaker one way or the other conceptualizes the TR as being located on and supported by the LM though there is no actual contact between the two physical entities, the TR and the LM. Consider the following instance:

10- الرِّجَالُ لَهُ سَاعَةٌ عَلَى الْبَابِ

ar-raggaal loh saaʕah ʕalaa albaab

The man has he one hour on the door

The man has been waiting for an hour next to the door.

In the instance above, the use of the preposition /ʕalaa/ is ascribed to the fact that the speaker conceptualizes the spatial relation that holds between the TR and the LM as a relation of support. It is obvious, however, that the TR and the LM are located in front of one another where no physical entity is located on / supported by the other. The reader can imagine a scene with a man standing at the door of a house waiting for some response from the people inside. It is acceptable that the speaker might not need to use the preposition /ʕalaa/ to encode this spatial relation and could use any other spatial particle that describes this seemingly support relation holding between the TR and the LM. Consider figure 2 that depicts the spatial relation where speakers of the TD use the preposition /ʕalaa/ rather than any other spatial particle that is equivalent to the English 'in front of' or 'behind' to encode this most-probably-considered a support spatial relation.

The instance above is another good example that clearly shows that how speakers of the TD will choose to code a spatial relation linguistically depends on how they mentally characterize it. Choosing ‘in front of’ and ‘behind’ depends on the vantage point a speaker assumes, (Langacker 2008).

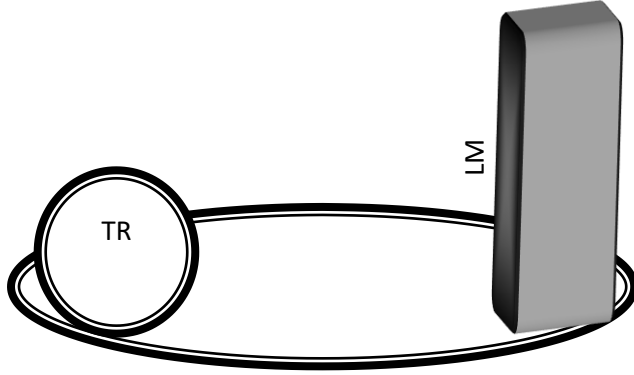


FIGURE 2. “TR and LM facing one another”

ṣalaa/ - the horizontal axis

Though the sense of support suggests that the TR stands in vertical relation where it is a burden on the LM and this presumes the fact that horizontality does not seem to play a lucid role in better understanding the sense of support. The use of the preposition /*ṣalaa*/ in the TD proves things differently, however.

The use of the preposition /*ṣalaa*/ in the instances below implies that the TR is supported by the LM, albeit the LM is situated horizontally at the beginning, end, or even next to the LM. In other cases, the TR can even be situated opposite to the LM. Consider the following instances:

11- شتلاقي البيت على يمينك

iṢtilaaqi al-beet ṣalaa yameenak
will find (you) the house on right (yours)
You will find the house at your right.

In instance (11), the LM is technically situated horizontally at the right of the TR. The reader can imagine a situation that someone is asking about a house he/she is not able to find. The response he/she gets is that “the house is at your right”. The use of the preposition /*ṣalaa*/ in the instance above suggests that the sense of support is strongly implied. The speakers of the TD

use of the preposition /ʕalaa/ meaning ‘on’ as the best competitive candidate to encode this relation and this explicates how speakers of the TD understand this spatial relation. The spatial relation in the instance above is mentally perceived as such the location of the house is supported by horizontal direction ‘right’ and thus prevents search “on” any other direction but right. It is as if the search would not be rewarding unless it relies ‘on’ the direction ‘right’. The sense of support in this instance is more dominant than any other sense and that justifies the use of the preposition /ʕalaa/.

12- الدكان على الواجهة

Ad-dukaan ʕalaa alwagihah

The shop on the front

The shop is on the front

In (12) ‘front’ is perceived as a direction whose extensions can support the TR. If one stands facing the front, then they have to be exposed to one direction ‘front’. The sense of support is regarded as the focal relation between the TR and the LM and that justifies the use of the preposition /ʕalaa/. What reinforces this argument here is that speakers of the TD would not choose any other preposition or particle to encode this spatial relation.

The domain of measure and percentage

The preposition /ʕalaa/ can be used in the domain of percentage. Here the use of /ʕalaa/ helps the reader understand the relation as such one number profiles the TR and the other profiles the LM and the TR is supported by the LM. What is to be noted here is that in this relation the TR represent a proportion of the LM. That is to say, the TR signifies a proportion in relation to a whole; the whole here is represented by the LM.

In the instances below, (13) and (14), the TR is mentally conceived as supported by a LM that denotes the perfect or the ideal measures. The relation between the TR and the LM in these instances is perceived as the LM supports the TR. Here, the LM is profiled as the highest figure. Once the TR matches the LM then this perceived as the perfect or the ideal point. The preposition /ʕalaa/ when used in this domain can be preceded by figures less than or equal to the LM but not higher than it. The logic behind using the preposition /ʕalaa/ to encode such a relation is that the LM is conceived as the highest figure that can support all the numbers that can be less or equal but never more. The LM

here serves as the highest limit by which the LM is supported. Consider the sentences below:

13- نظرك ستة على ستة

naDarak sittah ʕalaa sittah
sight (your) six on six
You have 6/6 vision.

14- عشرة على عشرة

ʕaŠarah ʕalaa ʕaŠarah
ten on ten
Ten out of ten. (Perfect)

Going through the instances (13) and (14) above, one will indisputably notice that the figure that precedes the preposition /*ʕalaa*/ matches the figure that follows it. Here, the speakers of the TD are very much aware of the sense of perfection that is profoundly presented in the match between the two figures preceding and following the preposition /*ʕalaa*/. If in any case the speakers of the TD tend to portray the idea of imperfection then they would choose a figure that is smaller than “six” and “ten” in (12) and (13) respectively.

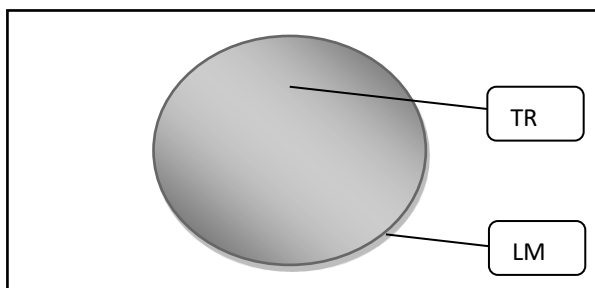


FIGURE 3 The TR and the LM having the same ratio

/*ʕalaa*/ - The domain of manner of action

In this domain the English preposition *in* is used with LMs that describe the manner of an action or denote the setting of a situation. Different from English where the preposition *in* is used to cover this domain, speakers of the TD would use the preposition /*ʕalaa*/. In the English expression ‘*he shouted in anger*’ the preposition *in* relates to a manner of doing something: the TR, ‘he’,



is a person who did an action in a particular manner, *angrily*. The meaning of the notion ‘manner’ and how the preposition /ʕalaa/ is employed in this abstract domain can be explained in the following instances:

15- على مهلك

ʕalaa mahlak
on ease (your)
At your ease.

16- على راحتك

ʕalaa raaHatak
on comfort (yours)
At your convenience.

17- على أحر من الجمر

ʕalaa ʔaHarr min al-gamr
on hotter than coals
On pins and needles.

As the reader can notice the preposition /ʕalaa/ is used with LMs that give information about the manner in which the action was performed. The LMs ‘ease, convenience, hotter than coals, and air, are abstract concepts that clarify the manner in which the actions are performed. Further, the use of the preposition /ʕalaa/ suggests that the idea of support is clearly present in all these instances. The actions performed in (15) through (17) are cognitively conceptualized to be supported by particular manners.

In the instances above, the use of the spatial preposition /ʕalaa/ is a consequence of a spatial conceptualization. The speakers of the TD mentally connect their understanding of the sense of support in the real world to the exploitation of the preposition /ʕalaa/ in a non spatio-physical relation. This involves meaningful consequences for the TR and the LM, such as the LM constrains the environment in which the action is experienced.

/ʕalaa/ - The domain of activity and involvement

One of the domains that the preposition /ʕalaa/ can cover is the domain of activity and involvement. The exploitation of the preposition /ʕalaa/ in this domain further emphasizes the point that experiential correlation can justify the ubiquitous association of this preposition with a set of cognitive semantic domains.



This kind of association is further represented when the preposition /ʕalaa/ is employed in the domain of activity. Obviously, speakers of the TD perceive a correlation between a person (TR) and a particular activity (LM) that supports the TR as a SUPPORT relation between the person and the activity he/she is involved in. Consider the following instance:

18- كنت على الفيس

kent ʕalaa al-feis
was (I) on the face
I was on Facebook.

19- أنا مشغول على اللاب توب الان

?anaa mašGuul ʕalaa al-laabtob al-?aan
I busy on the laptop now
I am busy on the laptop right now.

In (18) and (19) the activities ‘on Face book’ and ‘on the laptop’ are thought of by speakers of the TD as LMs that serve as a supporter of the TRs involved. The instances present analogous cases where the preposition /ʕalaa/ designates a spatial relation in which the TR is metaphorically supported by the activity itself rather than any other physical entity.

One can imagine a situation where one is involved in the activity of browsing Face book where he/she is mentally and physically is thought of to be a burden on the LM, Face book. If he/ she is to get involved in other activity then they have to be displaced and get located on a new activity, LM. In (19) the case is more elicited. The reader can imagine a situation where someone is working on his/her laptop and it is his/her hands that are located on the laptop or a part of it. Consequently, he/she is not capable of getting involved in any other activity unless he/she is located somewhere else away from the ‘laptop’. That is, using the preposition /ʕalaa/ to express the idea of being ‘on Face book’ or ‘on the laptop’ does imply that speakers of the TD characterize such relations as support relation where the prepositions /ʕalaa/ can be exploited as in this new-fangled domain that can be correlated with the semantics of the preposition /ʕalaa/.

/ʕalaa/ - The domain of force and power

One of the distinctive domains in which the preposition /ʕalaa/ is exploited by the speakers of the TD is the domain of force and power. Highly considering the fact that the preposition /ʕalaa/ mainly represents a spatial relation in which one physical entity is located on another physical entity, the

speakers of the TD interestingly exploit the preposition /*ʕalaa*/ to encode the idea of force and power. The speakers of the TD are very much aware of the fact that the more powerful person normally holds a higher position and they conceptualize it as a force that is located on a exterior that holds this burden.

20- وعلى عينك

wu ʕalaa ʕainak
and on eye (your)
Against your will.

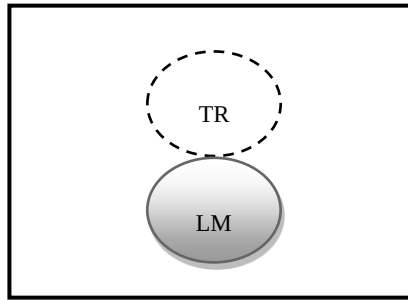


FIGURE 4. Against your will

The expression in (20) is uttered when speakers of the TD would like to communicate the idea of making someone do or accept something even though they do not want to. In terms of force dynamics, the support relation can be thought of as a result of an external force that moves from the TR and is situated on the exterior of the LM. Consequently, the path of the power of the TR is characterized as repositioned and located on the LM. Here, an abstract part of the TR, 'power', is metaphorically located on a part of the LM, 'eye'. Consider the figure below:

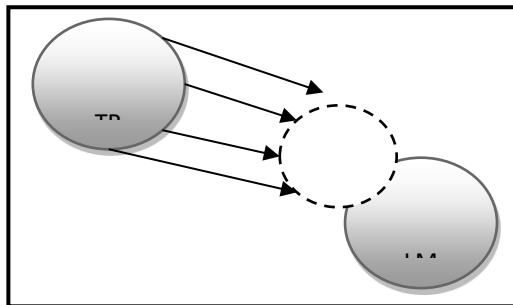


FIGURE 5. Power located on a part of the LM

In the instance above, the speaker of the TD conceptualize the relation that holds between the TR and the LM as such the TR, or part of it, is situated on the LM. This conceptualization is reinforced by the use of the preposition /ʕalaa/ rather than any preposition. Interestingly, changing the preposition /ʕalaa/ with another spatial particle will change the meaning entirely. Consider the instances below:

21- في عينك خليها

xalliihaa fii ʕainak

keep her (you) in eye (your)

Take care of her.

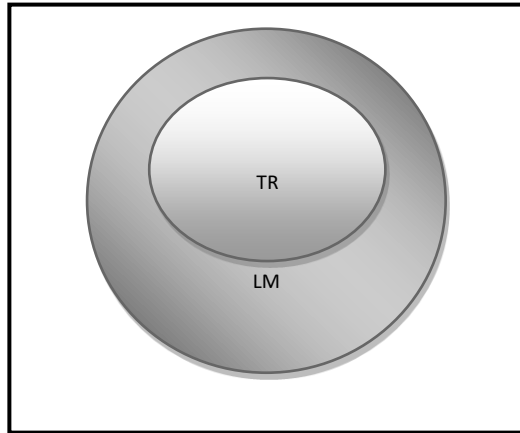


FIGURE 6 Keep her in your eye

In (21), the TR 'عينك' / 'your eye' is perceived as a LM that contains the TR 'هي' / 'her' and protects it. The TR here is perceived as an object that is in a situation where it is involved within the interior of the LM and is simultaneously guarded by it. The LM in this instance plays the role of a container of the TR and provides a source of safety, as well. On the other hand, the use of the word 'eye' as the LM evokes the sense protection and security. Now consider the following instance:

22- عينك تحت خليها

xalliihaa tHat ʕaynak

put her (you) under eyes (your)

Keep an eye on her.

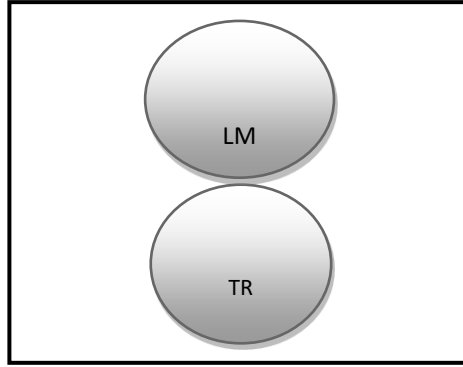


FIGURE 7. Keep an eye on her

As the reader can simply notice, there is no difference between (21) and (22) except for the substituting preposition /*fii*/ with the locative adverbial /*taHt*/ meaning ‘under’. The LMs and the rest of the sentences remain the same. The change of the preposition totally changes the meaning, however. It is not only change of location that is attained, but also a change of the implication of the sentence.

Interestingly, repeating the word "عين" meaning “eye” and dropping any preposition between them will result in an expression that is, semantically speaking, entirely different. The expression "عيني عينك" or "عينك عينك" is said to someone who does not show respect to who is in front of them and speak whatever they want or do undesirable actions in front of the eyes of others with all boldness.

The domain of dependence

The use of the preposition /*ʕalaa*/ in the instances below demonstrates how speakers of the TD use it to cover the domain of dependence or reliance. This implies that speakers of the TD, one way or the other, conceptualize the relation as a support relation and thus nominate the preposition /*ʕalaa*/ to encode this relation. The following instances support this argument:

23- راكن عليك

raaken ʕaleek
depend (I) on you
I depend on you.

24- على الله

ʕalaa Allah
on Allah
Leave it to Allah!



In (23) and (24), the speakers of the TD conceptualize the relation as a support relation and thus nominate the preposition /*ʕalaa*/ to encode this relation. Here, the conceptualizer construes the situation as if the TR fully depends on the LM and they exploit the preposition /*ʕalaa*/ that calls to mind the sense of support.

In (23) and (24), the sense of support is strongly implied and The LMs are conceived as supporters to the TRs. It should be emphasized that in both instances the speaker does not only convey the semantic message of physical reliance. The message of spiritual reliance is implied, as well.

Conclusion:

There is no doubt that though they are small words, prepositions play a vital role in our everyday life and they constitute an important part of any language or a dialect. Using the wrong preposition can entirely change the context of a sentence, or an utterance, and cause miscommunication. Though they are limited in number, they are important because they act as vital markers to define the spatial/temporal relations between the different entities in a sentence. Using prepositions properly is one of the problems that face speakers / learners of a language. Proper handling of a preposition is not an easy task since they have a polysemous nature and they can be used in various cognitive domains that may overlap with one another. Speakers of different languages may use various prepositions to depict the same relation based on how they characterize this relation and on how they understand the semantics of each preposition.

Attempting to unfold some unsolved issues concerning the use of prepositions /*ʕalaa*/ in the TD, this study contributes to the semantics of prepositions in general and to the use of the Arabic prepositions in the TD in particular. It allows the readers to examine some of the special uses of the preposition /*ʕalaa*/ in the TD, and demonstrates how TD speakers cognitively understand temporal and spatial relations and consequently choose a particular preposition to encode these relations. Besides, examining vivid and contextualized instances that speakers of the TD use in their everyday life, the paper presents a more valid sort of investigation.

The utilization of the preposition /*ʕalaa*/ in various domains gives emphasis to the fact that experiential correlation can justify the ubiquitous



association of this preposition with a set of cognitive semantic domains. The analysis presented in this paper proves that the choice of which preposition is to be used to encode a relation, whether temporal or spatial, depends on conceptualization. It shows how speakers of the same language, though varied dialects, use different prepositions to encode the same relation according to how they cognitively perceive this relation. The instances presented have obviously shown that there are peculiar ways in which speakers of the TD choose to express themselves, and depict temporal and spatial relations based on their cognitive perception.

It remains a fact that what proves to be true about the use of the preposition /ʕalaa/ in the TD is inevitably true about the use of other preposition in the TD or even the use of the preposition /ʕalaa/ in other dialects of Arabic language. Based on this truth, the analysis presented in this paper can be repeated on the use of other prepositions of the TD or the use of the preposition /ʕalaa/ in other dialects of Arabic language. Unquestionably, such investigation expansion will be an addition to the pool of knowledge of cognitive semantics, and to the literature of Arabic prepositions, dialectal studies, and cultural diversity.

Based on the results of this study, future research may attempt analyzing other Arabic prepositions adopting the CG framework. Future research could support the proposal that speakers of a particular Arabic dialect have developed the semantics of other prepositions other than /ʕalaa/ in such a way that they utilize it to cover a wider range of cognitive domains than found in the MSA.

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