

Nanomorphosyntax of the Iberian-Caucasian Languages and Its Leading Elements in Diachrony

Ts. R. Baramidze

Iv. Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University, Tbilisi, Georgia

Keywords: Nanomorphosyntax, Iberian-Caucasian Languages, Lability, Grammatical Class, Ergativity, Recipient.

Abstract: The article deals with the relationship between the main categories of nanomorphosyntax of the Iberian-Caucasian languages (lability, grammatical class, ergativity). The relationship of these categories should be studied as elements of nanosyntax. The formation of a complex syntactic system of the Iberian-Caucasian languages is associated with the specifics of the verb of these languages. Verbal categories are included in the syntactic constructions of the Iberian-Caucasian languages; therefore, the syntax of these languages should be considered as morphosyntax. The signifier of an ergative construction in a verb is the recipient marker (R). The recipient marker (R) is a small element, an "atom" of the nanomorphosyntax of the Iberian-Caucasian languages, which preserves the ancient conjugation model. From a nanosyntactic point of view, I consider the recipient - R (direct object) to be the key and leading actant, as well as the smallest element of this actant - a marker of the ergative construction in the Iberian-Caucasian languages. I note that the recipient valence, its form-content originality forms a set of distinctive features of the Iberian-Caucasian languages from other language families, including those languages that have ergative and ergative constructions, but do not have a grammatical class, lability and, most importantly, priority of recipient marker valency (R) in a transitive verb.

1 INTRODUCTION

In the article the relationship between the main categories of nanomorphosyntax of the Iberian-Caucasian languages (lability, grammatical class, ergativity) is considered. The interrelationship of these categories should be studied as elements of nanosyntax. I want to discuss the solution of a wide range of issues, from large problems, such as modularity of language, to small details, such as the functioning of allomorphy (facultative and positional) in Iberian-Caucasian languages and its interaction with syntactic structures. Synchronous and diachronic analysis of the empirical material of the Iberian-Caucasian languages, as well as the use of the method of internal reconstruction of subsystems between language groups show that the main morphosyntactic categories are interrelated. This relationship may reflect the smallest element of the nanomorphosyntax of the Iberian-Caucasian languages - the recipient marker (R).

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

The atoms of language are smaller than we thought (Starke, 2009). The problem of differentiation of research fields of formal and functional language: "Formal research assumes immanent qualities of language form, study of causal connection between formal elements... Accordingly, functional research assumes language functions, discussion of structure (values), their mutual relations... A separate problem is the correlation of form and function. In this case, I discuss the formal-functional relation in the nanosyntax of the Iberian-Caucasian languages.

Nanosyntactic structures are much larger than we thought and, conversely, their elements become much smaller. It turns out that this contradicts a fundamental tenet of the field: the deeply rooted assumption that the "ingredients" of syntactic structure are lexical units, "words" or "morphemes". The contradiction stems from the fact that traditionally one views syntax as a way of organizing lexical units. But as syntactic structures "grew," not only their "terminals" became "much smaller," they became submorphemic - smaller than individual morphemes.

I consider the recipient – R (direct object) as the key and leading actant and the smallest element of this actant - marker of the ergative construction in Iberian-Caucasian languages from the nanosyntactic point of view. I will note that the recipient valency, its form-containing singularity forms a set of distinguishing features of Iberian-Caucasian languages from other language families, including those languages which have ergative and ergative constructions but have no grammatical class, labiality and, most importantly, the priority of the recipient marker valency (R) in the transitive verb.

3 RESEARCH RESULTS

In the Iberian-Caucasian languages three types of conjugation are attested: class, class-personal and personal. We should separately distinguish cases when a verb does not change either in person or in grammatical classes (Lezgi language). If the language does not distinguish between grammatical classes, then the language cannot have class or class-personal conjugation, but personal conjugation (or non-differentiation of persons and classes). There is class conjugation in Chechen, Ingush, Avar and Andi and Dido languages (Chikobava, 1979).

Class conjugation can be of two kinds: class-subject and class-object. In a non-transitive verb, only the class and number of the subject (class-subject conjugation), and in a transitive verb, only the class and number of the object (class-object conjugation) can be designated: in class conjugation, the subject is not reflected in the transitive verb - the verb does not designate either class or number of the subject. Class-subject conjugation of a non-transitive verb.

For example, Avar language: w-ugo wats "there is a brother" - noun (subject) of grammatical class I ("man"); j-igo jats "there is a sister" - noun (subject) of grammatical class II ("woman"); b-ugo ču "there is a horse" - noun (subject) of grammatical class III; r-ugo watsal, jatsal, čujal "there are brothers, sisters, horses" - nouns (subjects) of the plural I, II and III grammatical classes; w-ach'ana wats "came brother" - noun (subject) of I grammatical class ("man"); j-ach'ana jats "sister came" - noun of II grammatical class ("woman"); b-ach'ana ču "horse came" - noun (subject) of III grammatical class; r-ach'ana watsal, jatsal, čujal "brothers, sisters, horses came" - nouns (subject) of I, II and III grammatical classes in plural.

The class-object conjugation of the transitive verb: w-etsula wats "praises brother" is the noun (subject) of grammatical class I ("man"); j-etsula jats "praises sister" is the noun of grammatical class II

("female gender"); b-etsula ču "praises horse" is the noun (subject) of grammatical class III whom; r-etsula watsal, jatsal, čujal "praises brothers, sisters, horses" are nouns (objects) of grammatical classes I, II and III in the plural. In the plural, the grammatical classes are not distinguished, so the nouns of all three classes have the same form. In a transitive verb, all four forms indicate the class of the object: "who is praised?", "what is praised?" The verbs w-etsula, j-etsula, b-etsula indicate that the nouns belong to grammatical classes I, II and III (Chikobava, 1979).

In general, the transitive verb semantics implies an active subject and therefore the designation of the subject is more important here than in a non-transitive verb, but this logical assumption is not justified: a verb with active semantics indicates the name to which the action is directed and the actor (subject) is not reflected in the verb conjugation - active action without an actor (without subject) - such is the transitive verb in the Ibero-Caucasian grammar class conjugations.

In the class conjugation, the subject (with a non-transitive verb) and the nearest object (with a transitive verb) are denoted by the same formants: w-ach'ana 'come' points to the subject of Grammatical Class I and w-etsula 'praise someone' points to the object of Grammatical Class I, in both cases the noun being in the Nominative case. The subject and object are distinguished by personal conjugations (Georgian: v-aqe 'I praised him', m-ako 'he praised me'; v - S1, m - O1). However, the same subject and object person form can be denoted by the same formant (e.g. in Adygean, Ubykh and Abkhazian). The indistinguishability of subject and object formants is an ancient phenomenon, and the distinction is new.

In Old Georgian, the plural of subject and object could be denoted in the verb by the same suffix - en: igini (S) ts'er-en "write"; igini (O) čven davts'er-en-it "we wrote them"; both subject and object are in the nominative case here (Chikobava, 1979).

4 DISCUSSION

As it is well known, the grammatical class category, which is the basic morphological category in the Nakh languages and most Dagestani languages, is alien to the Kartvelian languages; it is differentiated in both Abkhazian and Abaza, but does not occur in other languages of the same group: Adyghe languages and Ubykh. The conjugation systems of the Adyghe, Ubykh and Kartvelian languages are personal, the verb changes either according to the subject or to the

subject and the object. In most Nakh and Dagestani languages, the verb is alien to the person category; the verb changes according to classes: a non-transitive verb changes according to the subject class, a transitive verb changes only according to the object class; in the transitive verb conjugation the subject is never specified. In some languages of the Daghestan group, in addition to the category of class, the verb has the category of person... In one language (Udi) the conjugation system is personal, and in two closely related Udi languages (Lezgi and Agul) the verb changes neither in class nor in person (Chikobava, 1979).

Originally in morphology the grammatical class category – persons (who?) and things (what?) – represented the basic, universal morphological category; grammatical class indexes were used in nouns, adjectives, numerals, pronouns, verbs, participles, masdars, adverbs of place. In Kartvelian languages we can observe the presence of fossilized class-markers (fused with bases) in nouns, verbs; as well as in participles and masdars, although their function has already changed; the morphological relation between the categories of person (who?) and thing (what?) is mostly complete, sometimes incomplete.

The main marker of the class category in the Nakh and Dagestani languages *d-* is also found in the Kartvelian languages, namely in verbs (fused together with bases). Grammatical classes were also indicated in the declension of nouns. The original conjugation system was class conjugation, the next step in the development of the conjugation system was the period of the class-personal conjugation, which was replaced by the personal conjugation as a result of dying away the class category. In Old Georgian personal conjugation the leading role of the object (in comparison with the subject) was still felt, which was essential for class conjugation.

The leading role of the object in transitive verb conjugation, which is the initial position typical for the history of verbal conjugation in the Iberian-Caucasian languages, explains the amplification on the object; this feature was characteristic of the transitive verb, the verb of the ergative construction. The ergative construction was formed simultaneously in the Iberian-Caucasian languages during the period of class conjugation, when verb stems differed only minimally from nominal stems. Transitive verbs in the ergative construction could not distinguish a voice; the stem of a transitive verb could be neither passive nor active (transitivity was initially "labile" in nature).

Lability in the Kartvelian languages has now disappeared. Lability is a leading phenomenon in the

morphosyntactic structures pattern of the Iberian-Caucasian languages. Lability is present wherever if there is a grammatical class and, consequently, an ergative. Diachronic analysis of the lability of the Kartvelian languages empirical material and the synchronic aspects of the languages allow the reconstruction of the category of lability as a key morphosyntactic phenomenon of the Iberian-Caucasian languages along with grammatical class and ergative through internal reconstruction of subsystems among the Iberian-Caucasian language groups. The verb-predicate of a labile construction creates the possibility of varying transitivity-intransitivity:

Georgian: აყ იკ`ვანა მან იგი – "he took him" (Active) – აყ იკ`ვანა იგი = აყ კ`ვანილ იკნა "was taken" (passive);

Georgian: მოიკ ლა მან იგი "killed himself" (Active) - მოიკ ლა იგი "was killed" (Passive).

Active and passive semantics participate in lability before the formation of a voice; lability expresses both active and passive nature without a voice. The precedence of labile constructions lies in the designation of the recipient (direct object) in the verb instead of the subject and even of the ergative construction in languages which have no ergative case, since the case has not been developed (e.g., in Abkhazian). Ergativity and lability are intertwined with the most ancient morphosyntactic phenomenon – the grammatical class. In languages in which the grammatical class is well preserved and the conjugation has the character of class conjugation, the category of lability-stability fully functions, contains the semantics of transitivity-intransitivity and formally expresses precisely both active and passive nature.

The expression of active voice is directly related to the marking of the grammatical class of the recipient in the verb. Object-class conjugation is the initial morphosyntactic structure model of ergative-constructed languages with morphosemantic ability to express lability and transitivity. The voice in these languages (Abkhaz-Adyg, Nakh, Daghestan) is not developed because it is not necessary - the category of lability includes active and passive, both semantically and formally, as a possibility of active and passive voice subsequently.

In languages in which the class has disintegrated, the category of labiality is gradually reduced, and then semantics creates a voice category along with the category of transitivity-non-transitivity to express the grammatical opposition of active and passive character from the depths of labiality, but the active

voice is a syntactic unit (defined by construction), the passive developed later (for example, in Georgian).

What is the set of basic categories of morphosyntactic system structure of Paleo-Caucasian< Iberian-Caucasian languages and what are the main categories representing their morphosyntactic constructions in entwinement? The study of empirical material of Iberian-Caucasian languages proves that lability is the leading phenomenon in the morphosyntactic frame model of these languages – in diachronic analysis of empirical material and synchronic aspects of these languages and the use of internal reconstruction of subsystems among language groups. Grammatical class and ergativity are also key morphosyntactic phenomena of the Iberian-Caucasian languages. The verb-predicate with labile construction creates the possibility of variation of actants and transitivity-non-transitivity. Active and passive semantics participates in lability before voice formation and expresses both active and passive without voice.

Avar: *šiša b-eq'ana* "The bottle was broken" (S Nom.),

vats-a šiša b-eq'ana "the brother broke the bottle" (S Erg. O Nom.) (Chikobava, 1962).

The form *b-eq'ana* is ambivalent; the verbal form is unchanged, the construction varies, and hence there is possibility of expressing active and passive. The bivalent form is transitive and expresses an active action, and the univalent form is non-transitive and expresses a passive action. The agent S in the monovalent form (*šiša b-eq'ana* "The bottle broke") corresponds to the recipient in the bivalent form (*vats-as šiša b-eq'ana* "The brother broke the bottle").

There are stable and labile verbs in Adygean. Some simple verb stems may be either transitive or non-transitive; these are stable verbs; transitive verbs have historically been labile - the same verb with a simple stem could form an ergative construction in one context (i.e. could have a recipient) and a nominative construction in another (could have no recipient). The Adyghe language has preserved labile verbs. For example, the verb *q'ute* "to break" may be both non-transitive (*dzhegual'er meq'ute* "The toy is broken") and transitive (*ki elets'ek'um dzhegual'er eqs'ute* "The child breaks the toy"). The author points out that transitivity-non-transitivity of verbs with labile construction change as a result of the alternation of the vowel stem: *ma-de* "smb. sews" (in general) is non-transitive, *e-dy* "smb. sews (something)" is transitive (Ujuhu, 2012).

The formation of the complex syntactic system of the Iberian-Caucasian languages is related to the specificity of the verb of these languages. Verbal

categories are included in the syntactic constructions of Iberian-Caucasian languages; therefore, the syntax of these languages should be regarded as morphosyntax. The morphosyntactic cornerstone of Iberian-Caucasian (Paleo-Caucasian) languages is the category of grammatical class, the classification of beings, things, events of the universe not only as reasonable and unreasonable classes, but also as a linguistic worldview. Even an imperfect study of the various Iberian-Caucasian language families shows that the labile phenomenon is characteristic only of those languages which have a grammatical class and, therefore, a priority of the recipient marking – i.e. objective marking in the transitive verb-noun, and in such a construction the Subject is in the Ergative, i.e. has an Ergative construction despite the time of action expressed by the verb (tab.: *izu b-is-nu-za ža* "I caught the bird" A - Erg. R - Nom.).

It is essential for labile constructions to have a recipient (direct object) in the verb instead of the subject, and to have an ergative construction even in languages that do not have an ergative as a case, since the declension has not developed (e.g., in Abkhazian). Why is declension not developed in Abkhazian? Abkhazian transitive verb contains markers of recipient and agent; recipient comes first, indicating that the verb is transitive and has an ergative construction, i.e. the subject of this verb contains an ergative... The non-alternative marking of the recipient priority in a language is an ancient phenomenon in the Iberian-Caucasian language.

The objective conjugation in Georgian (*gaqeb me šen ...* "I praise you...") can only be explained by the fact that the morphosyntactic constructions of Kartvelian conjugation were formed as one of the diasystems of the morphosyntactic frame model - system of Iberian-Caucasian languages - a historical departure from the basic system and reinterpretation of the system expressing the change of actants valence (class - class-person - person), lability was destroyed along with grammatical class and as a "compensation" the voice evolved. As a result of the divergence of the original morphosyntactic system of the Iberian-Caucasian languages, the nanomorphosyntactic diasystems were formed, which subsequently formed the morphosyntactic properties of the related branches of the Iberian-Caucasian languages.

Ergativity and transitivity, as well as the priority of recipient marking simultaneously exist in the morphosyntactic basis of the Iberian-Caucasian languages. Today Adygean languages have no grammatical class, but this does not mean that the

features of this category are excluded and no longer exist. The grammatical class has not disappeared without a trace. The voice category in these languages has not been formed seeing that, in spite of the fact that the grammatical class has disappeared as a full-fledged morphological phenomenon, the labiality remains and, therefore, the ability to distinguish between active and passive character exists. On the one hand, there are languages with personal conjugation (Adygean, Udi...) in which the class conjugation has been destroyed, but the labiality is preserved and the category of the voice has not been formed. On the other hand, there is a model of personal conjugation in which the labiality has been partly or largely obscured together with the class conjugation, the model of object conjugation has collapsed, but the object conjugation has still survived (gaqeb me šen "I praise you"...). In order to compensate for the lost class and labiality, in contrast to the North Caucasian languages, voice grades, rounds and series were formed.

Thus:

1. The morphosyntactic basic system of the Iberian-Caucasian languages included the following categories: grammatical class, ergative-nominative, labile-stable, dynamic-static, semantic distinction of active-passive nature.
2. Stage 2 preserves all the above categories, but the grammatical class expression weakens and the process of collapse of this category in the so-called peripheral languages begins, but the process of collapse at this stage is not yet complete. Along with the collapse of the class the opposition labile-stability weakens, but in all Iberian-Caucasian languages the direct object-marking priority of the verb is preserved. Consequently, at this stage the formation of the declension system, the case-marking begins. At the 1st stage no cases are marked, but there are constructions: nominative, ergative, reflected in the verb (cf. Abkhazian). Abkhazian remained in Stage 1 for the formation of cases, and in Stage 3 for the formation of conjugation.
3. At the 3rd stage the functioning morphosyntactic phenomenon - grammatical class is no longer marked, has completely disintegrated as a functioning morphological category, but has not disappeared without a trace (participles, word-formation, substances...). Labiality-stability is lost, but the "trace" remains; ergativity-transitivity becomes more evident, leading to the final formation of

the system of declension. At this stage the category of voice can be distinguished.

Thus, Stage 1 is well preserved in the North Caucasian languages (except Adygean and some Lezgi languages...). Stage 2 is a transitional stage, and Stage 3 is represented in the Kartvelian languages. The grammatical class contains notions of labiality and ergativity, including the ability to meaningfully and formally distinguish between active and passive. Class conjugation, as the initial conjugation for Iberian-Caucasian languages, is built precisely on labiality-ergativity, where the priority in expressing the active character belongs to the recipient, unlike in Indo-European, Turkish and other languages.

In non-Iberian-Caucasian languages, the active and passive actants are always in the nominative case. Here there is only a nominative construction. Hence, there is no class, no labiality and ergativity, no pronounced transitivity-non-transitivity distinction as in the Iberian-Caucasian languages.

The objective conjugation in Georgian (gaqeb me šen ... "I praise you...") can only be explained by the fact that morphosyntactic conjugation constructions of the Kartvelian languages were formed as one of the diasystems of the morphosyntactic frame model - system of Iberian-Caucasian languages - a historical departure from the core system and reinterpretation of the system expressing the change of actants valence (class - class-person - person), labiality being lost with the grammatical class and as a "compensation" the voice developed.

There are three different approaches to understanding the category of voice in linguistic Kartvelology: 1. A. Shanidze: There are three types of voice: active, passive, and middle (Kipshidze, 1994) 2. Arn. Chikobava: A verb can show active and passive voice (Chikobava, 1979). 3. B. Jorbenadze: Middle is one of the components of the voice, but at the same time it is static. Active and passive voice forms are opposed to the verb of the middle voice, static to dynamic (Jorbenadze, 1975).

The Zanskij (Mingrelo-Lazian) material supports the viewpoint of Arn. Chikobava. There are only two voices in Zanski: active and passive. As for the so-called middle voice, T. Uturgaidze's point of view seems acceptable: verbs (qris "blows", ts'uxs "worries", duys "boils", dgas "stands", ts'evs "lies"...) became medium after the category of voice (Uturgaidze, 2002). D. Melikishvili's point of view is also noteworthy: the agent of these verbs is the same subject (ts'uxs is - tvitonve mts'uxarea - "He is sad - himself is sad"). The subject of these verbs is self-acting, its action is reciprocal (Melikishvili, 2001). Obviously, it is necessary to distinguish the verbs of

the so-called middle voice, as they form a group of verbs which have no concept of voice, these are verbs without voice and this is partly determined by their semantics and largely by the fact that they are static verbs (Kyria, 2015).

The verbs of the so-called Middle Voice are singled out (A. Shanidze), because they form a group of verbs without a voice meaning, these are verbs without a voice and this is partly determined by their semantics and to a large extent by their static nature. These verbs have not developed the voice and are therefore singled out into separate groups. In the Middle and Active Voices, it is evident that the direct object is lost everywhere, and at the expense of it, the action transferred from the subject to the object becomes a self-acting subject, and it gives the impression that we are dealing with another type of verb, while the loss of one of the objects has meaning. In Mingrelo-Lazian it is impossible to observe this, but in Old Georgian it is obvious:

Old Georgian. h-mepob-s - h-mepa,

New Georgian. mepob-s "reigns" imepa "reigned".

The recipient is lost in the verb because of the semantics of the verb, otherwise the presence of a personal marker indicates that h-mepa means "reigned / was king. That is why bivalent markers are given in the verb. I. Kipshidze did not single out the conjugation of verbs of the so-called middle voice, as the scientist believed that medioactives in the Mingrelian language are conjugated similarly to verbs of the active voice (Kipshidze, 1994).

Labiality is an ancient category in the Ibero-Caucasian languages. The ergative construction in the Ibero-Caucasian languages is neutral from this point of view. The great structural difference between the modern Ibero-Caucasian languages gives us an excellent opportunity to trace in diachronicity the history of the overall structure of these languages through the internal reconstruction of the subsystems.

5 CONCLUSIONS

The history laid out hereby reveals the general phenomena underlying the modern differences: the structural differences between the Ibero-Caucasian languages are secondary, the general features are old. The original residence of the Ibero-Caucasian peoples is a natural prerequisite for the problem of historical and genetic kinship of the Ibero-Caucasian languages with the non-Indo-European and non-Semitic languages of the same region: the Hattian, Urartian,

Hurrian, Proto-Caucasian languages (the mentioned problem has a long history).

The above conjugation types must belong to different periods of time: they reflect different stages in the evolution of the conjugation system. This is evidenced by the results of studying their relations by the method of internal reconstruction: class-personal conjugation - class conjugation, complicated by personal indicators. This is most evident in those languages in which the grammatical class indicator is a prefix and the person indicator is a suffix (Lak, Dargin and Batsbi), and the person indicators may or may not be attached to the verb, and the class markers are not obligatory. Since the historical connections of class and class-personal conjugation have already been identified, we can establish the history of the formation of personal conjugation: personal conjugation can be seen as the result of simplification of class-personal conjugation. After the disappearance of the category of grammatical classes, the verb ceased to change by grammatical classes. The destruction of the grammatical class category in the language must have entailed the loss of class conjugation: the class indicator left without function, according to the general rules, must have either been lost, merged with the base, or acquired a new function (reinterpretation).

Despite such significant changes, the morphosyntactic models historically developed by primordial categories preserve the priority of the recipient (R) even in languages where the grammatical class (Georgian, Adygean) has disappeared or class-personal conjugation is represented, but there is no nominative, ergative, dative system. The signifier of the ergative construction in a verb is the marker-recipient (R) (Abkhazian). The marker-recipient (R) is a small element, an "atom" of the nanomorphosyntax of the Iberian-Caucasian languages, preserving the ancient model of conjugation.

REFERENCES

- Starke, M., 2009. *Nanosyntax: A short primer to a new approach to language*. 36. 1. pp. 1-6. <http://www.ub.uit.no/baser/nordlyd/>.
- Jorbenadze, B., 1975. *Formal and functional analysis of the Georgian verb*. pp. 177.
- Melikishvili, D., 2001. *On the principle of grouping conjugated forms of Georgian verbs into rows and series*.
- Uturgaidze, T., 2002. *On the direction and outcome of morphological processes*. II.

- Kyria, C., Ezugbaya, L., Memishishi, O., Chukhua, M., 2015. *Comparative grammar of the Laz and Mingrelian languages*. I.
Kipshidze, I., 1994. *Works*.
Shanidze, A., 1953. *Fundamentals of morphology*.
Chikobava, A., 1979. *Introduction to Iberian-Caucasian linguistics*.
Chikobava, A., Tsertsvadze, I., 1962. *Avar language*.
Ujuhu, T., 2012. *Textbook on Adygei (Circassian) Language*.

APENDIX

Abbreviations:

Avar. - Avar

Georgian. - Georgian

Old Georgian. - Old Georgian

New Georgian. - New Georgian

noun

tab. - Tabasaran

c. - page

R - recipient

S - subject

O - object

