HIERARCHICAL ALIGNMENT IN KARTVELIAN: THE PROBLEM OF DITRANSITIVES

Kartvelian languages are not the first place one looks for hierarchical alignment, but in fact one subtype of ditransitive construction manifests hierarchical alignment in a number of Kartvelian languages: the so-called person-function constraint in Georgian, Megrelian and Svan. In this talk, I will argue that these constructions illustrate the basic independence of alignment types between transitive and ditransitive constructions, while posing problems for theories that seek to reduce person-function phenomena to either thematic role or to surface constituency and facts of case.

The basic facts are as in (1) (see also Harris 1981). Although ditransitives and transitives share the same complicated system of morphological blocking well known for Georgian, they differ in that ditransitives betray an interesting gap in the syntactic distribution of features and grammatical functions not seen in transitives: first and second persons may be associated with recipients of ditransitives and the themes of monotransitives, they may not be associated with themes of ditransitives. However, Georgian has two ways to circumvent this problem. As in (2), one can convert the illicit first or second person pronoun into a third person possessive phrase headed by *tavi* 'head, self' (AKA 'tavization'); or one can exceptionally agree with the secondary object instead of the primary object. Because this is the only context in which verbs ever agree with secondary objects, we can say that Georgian in fact has ditransitive hierarchical alignment without also having monotransitive hierarchical alignment. This much would be interesting in itself, but the same facts hold in other Kartvelian languages ((3) and (4)).

Various proposals have been made in various frameworks to explain the distribution of features into arguments. Perhaps most famous among these are structuralist arguments that localize the problem in the system of case-assignment, as with Bonet (1991). Evidence that this cannot be so is that Georgian famously splits case assignment across different tense-aspect series and, in this context, completely disregards whatever case is being assigned, as you can see in (5). Interestingly, this is even true for the 'demoted' argument in the inverse construction in (5c) which is formally not marked by a grammatical case at all, but by a postpositional phrase headed by =*tvis* 'for'. On the other hand, certain data bring into question Haspelmath (2004)'s semantically based analysis involving thematic roles: neither nominalizations (6) nor derived causatives behave as he predicts. I will argue this is because the constraint is defined on a level of grammatical functions not isomorphic to either case/constituent structures or thematic roles.

(1)   3 OBJ; 1 or 2 OBJ2
   a.   *vano-m   (šen)   še-a-dar-a   givi-s
        Vano-NARR   2Sg   PVB-PRV-compare-AOR3SG   Givi-DAT
        'Vano compared you to Givi'
   b.   *vano-m   (me)   še-a-dar-a   givi-s
        Vano-NARR   1Sg   PVB-PRV-compare-AOR3SG   Givi-DAT
        'Vano compared me to Givi'
(2) a. TAVIZATION:
        1 or 2 OBJ (AGR); 3 [< 1 or 2] OBJ2
        Vano-m   še-a-dar-a   Anzor-s *šen-i*   *tav-i*   / (*šen)
        VANO-Narr PVB-PRV-send-AOR3SG Anzor-DAT   2SgPOSS-NOM head-NOM   2SG
        'Vano compared you to Anzor'
  b. SECOND-OBJECT AGREEMENT: 3 OBJ; 1 or 2 OBJ2 (AGR)
        vano-m   še-g-a-dar-a   Anzor-s šen
        Vano-NARR PVB-2-PRV-compare-AOR3SG   Anzor-DAT   2SG
        'Vano compared you to Anzor ' (Harris 1981: 48)

(3)   **MEGRELIAN**
    a. **Present** [SUBJ~NOM~ + AGR ~ OBJ~DAT~ ~ OBJ2]
      *Vano   Anzor-s   a-dar-en-s   ma
      Vano.NOM   Anzor-DAT   PRV-compare-TH-3SG   1SG
      'Vano is comparing me to Anzor'
    b. **Present** [SUBJ~NOM~ + AGR ~ OBJ~DAT~ ~ OBJ2 + **AGR**]
      Vano   Anzor-s **m**-a-dar-en-s   ma
      Vano.NOM   Anzor-DAT   1SG-PRV-compare-TH-3SG 1SG
      'Vano is comparing me to Anzor.'

(4)   **SVAN**
    a. **Present screeve** [Subj~nom~ + Agr ~ Obj~dat~ + Agr ~ Obj2]
      *Vano   Anzor-s x-a-mjōn-e   mi.
      Vano.NOM   Anzor-DAT   3-PRV-compare-3 1SG
      'Vano is comparing me to Anzor.'
    b. **Present screeve** [Subj~nom~ + Agr ~ Obj~dat~ ~ Obj2 + Agr]
      Vano Anzor-s m-a-mjōn-e   mi.
      Vano.NOM   Anzor-DAT   1SG-PRV-compare-3   1SG
      'Vano is comparing me to Anzor'

(5)   Georgian tense/aspect-splits ignoring case and constituency in PFC contexts
    a. Present series [**NOM**~AG~ ~ **DAT**~REC~ ~ **DAT**~TH~]
      *Ivane   Mariam-s   šen   a-dzl-ev-s
      John.NOM   Mary-DAT   2SG   PRV-give.PRES-TH-3SG
      'John is giving you to Mary.'
    b. Aorist series [**NARR**~AG~ ~ **DAT**~REC~ ~ **NOM**~TH~]
      *Ivane-m   Mariam-s   šen   mi-s-c-a
      John-NARR   Mary-DAT   2SG   PVB-3-give.AOR-AOR3SG
      'John gave you to Mary.'
    c. Perfect series [**DAT**~AG~ ~ -**TVIS**~REC~ ~ **NOM**~TH~]
      *Ivane-s   Mariam-isa=tvis šen   mi-u-c-i-a
      John-DAT   Mary-GEN=for   2SG   PVB-PRV-give.PERF-PERF-3SG
      'John has apparently given you to Mary.'

(6)   Nominalizations do not abide by the constraint (Bonet 1991)
    a. **2 REC; 3 TH**
      mis-i   ča-bar-eb-a   šen=tvis
      3POSS-NOM   PVB-render-TH-MAS.NOM   2SG=for
      'turning him over to you' (lit. 'his rendering to you')
    b. **3 REC; 2 TH**
      šen-i   ča-bar-eb-a   mis=tvis
      2SgPoss-NOM PVB-render-TH-MAS.NOM   3Sg.GEN=for
      'turning you over to him' (lit. 'your rendering to him')

(7)   Derived causative ditransitive verb 'make teach' behaving exactly like nonderived verbs (see (5))
    a. *Zurab-i   da-a-sc'avl-in-eb-s   Mariam-s   me
      Zurab-NOM PVB-PRV-teach-CAUS-TH-3SG   Mary-DAT   1SG
      'Zurab is making Mary teach me'
    b. *Zurab-ma   da-a-sc'avl-in-a   Mariam-s   me
      Zurab-NARR PVB-PRV-teach-CAUS-AOR3SG   Mary-DAT   1SG
      'Zurab made Mary teach me'
    c. *Zurab-s   da-u-sc'avl-in-eb-i-a   Mariam-isa=tvis   me
      Zurab-DAT PVB-PRV-teach-CAUS-TH-PF-3SG Mary-GEN=for   1SG
      'Zurab has apparently made Mary teach me'

Works Cited
Bonet, Eulalia. 1991. Morphology after syntax: pronominal clitics in Romance. PhD dissertation, MIT. /// **Harris**, Alice. 1981. Georgian Syntax: a study in grammatical function changing. CUP: Cambridge. /// **Haspelmath**, Martin. 2004. 'Explaining the Ditransitive Person-Role Constraint: A usage-based approach.' Constructions online: http://www.constructions-online.de/articles/35/ ///