

Quasi-Suffixaufnahme in Classical Armenian

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Outline

Suffixaufnahme or case stacking

Quasi-Suffixaufnahme in Classical Armenian

Corpus study

Origin

Suffixaufnahme or case stacking

The presence in a single word of what are seen as two inflections for case.

*A noun may be marked e.g. as adnominal; thus **Bill's** in **Bill's wife**. Call it 'genitive': **Bill-GEN wife**. In many languages, e.g. in Australia, an adnominal noun will also agree with the case of a noun on which it depends: e.g., if the word for 'wife' is dative, **Bill-GEN-DAT wife-DAT**. But 'genitive' is itself traditionally a case. Therefore, to the amazement of linguists who first came across such languages, they have nouns inflected for 'case' twice and not once.*

(MATTHEWS 2014)

General Points

(1) NP₁-suffix_X NP₂-suffix_Y-suffix_X

- ▶ an agreement phenomenon largely associated with agglutinative languages
- ▶ geographically not very widespread, largely restricted to the Caucasus, Middle East and Australia
- ▶ often limited to certain combinations with particular cases, most frequently with the genitive (and other expressions of possession)

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- ▶ a selection of languages:
 - ▶ Old Georgian (BOEDER 1995)
 - ▶ Hurrian (WEGNER 2007:69–75)
 - ▶ Urartian (SALVINI AND WEGNER 2014:29–31)
 - ▶ Sumerian (PLANK 1995:40–1)
 - ▶ Elamite (PLANK 1995:42)
 - ▶ Kayardild (ROUND 2012:76–7, 189–99)
 - ▶ Lardil (RICHARDS 2013)
 - ▶ Alawa (PLANK 1995:43)
 - ▶ Laragia (PLANK 1995:49)

Classic Examples

- (2) *ščeṽn-ita čmid-isa sameb-isa-jta*
 help-**INS** holy-GEN trinity-GEN-INS
 “with the help of the Holy Trinity” (Old Georgian; Sos 1980 no. 2)
- (3) *sen(a)=iffu=ue=ne=z* *asti=i=z*
 brother-1SG.POSS-GEN-CON-**ERG** wife-3SG.POSS-**ERG**
 “the wife of my brother” (Hurrian; Mil. III 7)
- (4) *Ngada latha karnjin-i marun-ngan-ku maarn-ku*
 1SG pierce wallaby-ACC son-GEN-INS spear-**INS**
 “I’ve speared the wallaby with my son’s spear.” (Lardil; RICHARDS 2013:43)

Less typical examples

- (5) *pahi-r* *sunki-p-r(i)*
protector-**3SG.ANIM** king-3PL-**3SG.ANIM**
“protector of kings” (Elamite; PLANK 1995:42)

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- (7) *mangulmili-ma bilö-va biε-nägi-ma*
 canoe-IV man-I I-3SG.POSS-IV
 “the man’s canoe” (Lardil; PLANK 1995:49)

Question

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YES-ish

Armenian: a summary in four bullet points

- ▶ an Indo-European language spoken (then and now) in the Caucasus
- ▶ strongly influenced by a number of other languages over the course of time (Urartian, Iranian languages, Turkish, Russian, etc.)
- ▶ a case system resembling that of Proto-Indo-European (8 cases), but with a higher degree of isomorphism
- ▶ morphosyntactic agreement in NPs is less developed than in other Indo-European languages (possibly owing to word-final apocope in Proto-Armenian, affecting case marking)

Agreement in Classical Armenian

(8) *p'arawk' mecawk'*
 glory.INS.PL great.INS.PL
 “with great glory”

(9) *mec c'asambk'*
 great rage.INS.PL
 “with great rage”

(10) *mecaw palatanawk'*
 great.INS supplication.INS.PL
 “with great supplications”

(KÖLLIGAN AND KIM fthc.)

Given this limited degree of basic morphosyntactic agreement in NPs, one would not necessarily expect other mechanisms ...

Präfixaufnahme

... but there is at least one (non-obligatory) agreement pattern in Classical Armenian which resembles *Suffixaufnahme* as outlined above.

- (11) *covac'uc'anēr z=vardapetut'ean=n z=xorut'iwn*
 dive.3SG.PST **OBJ**=teaching.GEN.SG=DET **OBJ**=depth.ACC.SG
 “he dove into the depth of the teachings” (Koriwn (I) XVII.21)

The proclitic *z=* in Classical Armenian marks a definite / specified direct object and frequently co-occurs with the enclitic determinatives *=n, =d* or *=s* (MEILLET 1913:79–80; MINASSIAN 1996:217; SCALA 2011).

Approach

How can we establish that this pattern behaves like *Suffixaufnahme* in other languages?

► **corpus study**

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Do other, similar repetitions occur in Classical Armenian which might suggest that Armenian just ‘likes to repeat itself’?

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Do other, similar repetitions occur in Classical Armenian which might suggest that Armenian just ‘likes to repeat itself’?

▶ **origin**

What is the historical origin of this pattern? Can it be explained on the basis of Armenian-internal developments / structures alone or do we need to consider language contact?

Findings in the corpus

(12) NP₁-suffix_X NP₂-suffix_Y-suffix_X

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(14) *xoselov* *z=noc'anē* *z=amenayn č'arut'iwn*
 tell.INF.INS PREP/**OBJ**=3PL.ABL **OBJ**=all malice.ACC.SG
 “by relating all their malice” (Elišē III.234)

(15) *varesc'ē* *z=tiezerakan* *išxanut'iwn=d* *z=or* *awandeał ē*
 use.3SG.AOR.SBJV **OBJ**=universal power.ACC.SG=DET **OBJ**=REL.NOM.SG give.PTCP be.3SG
dma *y=Astu(a)coy*
 3SG.DAT from=god.ABL.SG
 “he will use his universal power, which was given to him by God” (Elišē II.130)

Corpus and tendencies

An initial corpus study:

- ▶ Koriwn, early 5th century (6'300 words)
- ▶ Elišē, early 6th century (40'800 words)

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	Koriwn	Elišē
$z=X \ z=Y$	23	61
$z=X \ A \ z=Y$	15	43
$z=X \ A \ B \ z=Y$	4	14
Total	42	118

All repetitions

	Koriwn	Elišē
$z=X \ z=Y$	13	9
$z=X \ A \ z=Y$	8	11
$z=X \ A \ B \ z=Y$	4	6
Total	25	26

Only repetitions where one NP is non-ACC

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Observations:

- ▶ relatively speaking, Korwin repeats the marker $z=$ more frequently than Elišē
- ▶ repetitions with one NP in non-ACC are more frequent in Koriwn
- ▶ there seems to be a correlation between distance of NPs (where one NP is non-ACC) and the occurrence of $z=$

Exclusions

- ▶ Originally, the *nota accusativi* *z=* was a preposition.
- ▶ One might, therefore, assume that other prepositions could behave similarly as regards repetition.
- ▶ There are five others: *ar*, *and*, *ast*, *z=*, *i/y=* et *c'='.*

Exclusions

- ▶ Originally, the *nota accusativi* *z=* was a preposition.
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- ▶ There are five others: *ar*, *and*, *ast*, *z=*, *i/y=* et *c' =*.
- ▶ The corpus study shows that only *one* other preposition is *sometimes* repeated: *i/y=* (7 occurrences in the corpus).
- ▶ These repetitions do not occur with one NP in a case other than the expected.
- ▶ It therefore seems improbable that the repetition of prepositions should be the origin of *Präfixaufnahme* in Armenian.

- (16) *i nerk's matuc'eal i srahs=n ark'uni*
PREP under advance.PTCP PREP chamber.ACC.PL=DET royal
“... he advanced into the royal chambers ...” (Elišē VII.257)

Origin?



- ▶ Work in progress
- ▶ It is possible that Urartian influence might play a role (cf. suggestions concerning Urartian–Armenian syntactical interference in YAKUBOVICH 2010), but it is not clear how this should have come to pass.
- ▶ Given the prevalence of this phenomenon in the region, it cannot be excluded *a priori* that we might be dealing with a sort of areal phenomenon.

Summary

- ▶ *Suffixaufnahme* (case stacking), a morphosyntactic agreement pattern, is not widespread but well attested in the historical Caucasus and the Middle East.
- ▶ A very similar phenomenon also occurs in Classical Armenian, even if its manifestation is unlike the classic examples in relying on prefixes rather than suffixes.
- ▶ The origin of this agreement pattern is unclear, but an internal explanation seems unlikely on the whole.
- ▶ At the same time, it is not clear which contact language or other language of the region might have been the model for this particular pattern.
- ▶ Much work remains to be done: bigger corpus, closer investigation of neighbouring languages, etc.

Thank you for your attention!

Շատ շնորհակալություն ձեր ուշադրության համար!

Questions / remarks / observations?

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