

Keeping up with the Joneses

Agreement marking and case stacking in Classical Armenian

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Outline

Brief background

Case mismatches in Armenian relative clauses

- Standard forms

- Case-matching violations

Suffixaufnahme or case stacking

- General points

- Quasi-Suffixaufnahme* in Classical Armenian

- Corpus study

- Origin

Brief background

- ▶ Classical Armenian is an Indo-European language on its own branch.
- ▶ first attested in the 5th century CE
- ▶ spoken mainly in the Armenian Highlands (South Caucasus, eastern Turkey)
- ▶ heavily influenced by Iranian languages, esp. Parthian, on all levels: phonology, lexis, derivational morphology, syntax
(BOLOGNESI 1960; HÜBSCHMANN 1875; MEILLET 1911–1912; MEYER 2023*b*; SCHMITT 1983))
- ▶ extensive secondary influence (in certain genres) from Greek as well
(MEYER 2018; MURADYAN 2012)
- ▶ other contact languages (with more arguable influence): Old Georgian, Urartian

Grammatical categories

- ▶ CASE: NOM, ACC, GEN, DAT, ABL, LOC, INS
- ▶ widespread isomorphism, esp. between NOM and ACC, GEN and DAT
- ▶ NUMBER: SG, PL
- ▶ equally applies to the verbal system
- ▶ no GENDER

- ▶ TENSE: PRS, PST (imperfective); AOR (perfective); PF, PLPF (stative-resultative)
- ▶ there is no separate FUT tense
- ▶ MOOD: IND, SBJV, IMV
- ▶ SBJV expresses future reference, potentiality, etc.
- ▶ VOICE: ACT, MP

Agreement

- ▶ verbal agreement is with the (grammatical) subject
- ▶ exception: transitive perfects (∅-agreement of the copula, fossilised 3SG form)
- ▶ nominal agreement (e.g. ADJ + N) is very limited – we'll come back to that later

Case mismatches in Armenian relative clauses

The relative pronoun

- ▶ Likely owing to word-final apocope in its prehistory, Armenian does not have a GENDER category.
- ▶ Nouns, pronouns and adjectives inflect for NUMBER and CASE only.
- ▶ In the SG, there is no morphological distinction between NOM and ACC.
- ▶ Definite/specific direct objects may be marked with the proclitic *z=*.
- ▶ Especially in the NOM.PL, corresponding forms of the interrogative pronoun *ov* are occasionally found.

CASE	SG	PL
NOM	<i>or</i>	<i>ork'</i>
ACC	<i>or</i>	<i>ors</i>
GEN	<i>oroy</i>	<i>oroc'</i>
DAT	<i>orum</i>	<i>oroc'</i>
LOC	<i>orum</i>	<i>ors</i>
ABL	<i>-ormē</i>	<i>-oroc</i>
INS	<i>orov</i>	<i>orovk'</i>

Typical headed relative clause

- ▶ The typical headed relative clause in Armenian construes
 - ▶ with a relative pronoun in NUMBER agreement with its pivot,
 - ▶ and in a CASE determined by relative clause syntax.

(1) *yaynžam gay Yisus and nosa i get mi orum*
then go.3SG.PRS Jesus with DEM.ACC.PL into village.ACC.SG INDF.ACC.SG **REL.DAT.SG**
anown ēr get'samani
name be.3SG.PST Gethsemane

“Then Jesus went with them to a village whose (lit. ‘to which’) name was Gethsemane”
(Mt. 26:36)

Potential for confusion

- ▶ Most Armenian relative clauses behave like their Indo-European counterparts.
- ▶ There is (essentially) no case attraction or *attractio inversa*.
- ▶ Potential confusion may arise only when the verb in the relative clause is in the periphrastic perfect: relative pronouns in GEN may denote the subject of the relative clause (cf. MEYER 2023b).

(2) *Matuc'eal ew oroy z=erkus k'ahk'ars=n a'real ēr,*
approach.PTCP and REL.GEN.SG_A OBJ=two_O talent.ACC.PL=DET receive.PTCP be.3SG.PST
ew asē.
and say.3SG.PRS

“The one who had received the two talents approached and said.” (Mt. 25:24)

Reflections of Greek relative attraction

- ▶ Armenian translations of Greek tend to be very close to the original (in one way or another).
- ▶ Yet, relative attraction proper is never employed in headed relative clauses (*pace* JENSEN 1959:210).

(3) *ew darjan hoviwk' =n p'arawor arnēin ew ōrhnein*
 and return.3PL.AOR shepherd.NOM.PL=DET glorious make.3PL.PST and praise.3PL.PST
καὶ ἐπέστρεψαν οἱ ποιμένες δοξάζοντες καὶ αἰνοῦντες
z=Astuac, vasn amenayn z=or luan ew
 OBJ=God.ACC.SG because everything.GEN.SG **OBJ=REL.ACC.SG** hear.3PL.AOR and
τὸν θεὸν ἐπὶ πᾶσι οἷς ἤκουσαν καὶ
tesin, orpēs patmec'aw noc'a.
 see.3PL.AOR as tell.3SG.AOR.PASS DEM.DAT.PL
εἶδον καθὼς ἐλαλήθη πρὸς αὐτοῦ

“And the shepherds returned, glorified and praised God because of everything that they had heard and seen, as it was told to them.” (Lk. 2:20)

A curious exception

- ▶ One passage presents a relative pronoun in an unexpected case.
- ▶ It cannot be attributed to attraction.
- ▶ It must be based on an erroneous reading:
 - ▶ The translator likely mistook Gk. ὧν ‘being’ (PRS.PTCP.NOM.SG) for the pronominal form ὧν ‘whose’ (REL.GEN.PL).
 - ▶ No other constituent can account for this form, nor do variant readings offer any help (MEYER 2023c).

(4) *ew ink‘n Yisus ēr amac‘ ibrew eresic‘ skseal oroc‘*
 and INT Jesus be.3SG.PST year.GEN.PL like 30.GEN.PL begin.PTCP **REL.GEN.PL**
 Καὶ αὐτὸς ἦν ὁ Ἰησοῦς ὡσεὶ ἐτῶν τριάκοντα ἀρχόμενος ὧν
orpēs karcēr ordi Yovsep‘ay ...
 as think.3SG.PST son Joseph.GEN.SG
 ὡς ἐνομιζέτο υἱὸς Ἰωσήφ ...

“And Jesus himself had begun to be c. 30 years of age (of which?), as it was reckoned, [he] the son of Joseph ...” (Lk. 3:23)

Free relative clauses

- ▶ Free relative clauses are subject to case-matching constraints.
- ▶ They are restricted to situations in which the case of REL as determined by relative clause syntax is identical to that of its logical pivot in the matrix clause.

- (5) *ew ork'* *keran=n* *∅ ēin* *ark'* *ibrew hing hazar.*
and **REL.NOM.PL**_i eat.3.PL.AOR=DET e_i be.3.PL.PST man.NOM.PL like 5 thousand
οἱ δὲ ἐσθίουντες ἦσαν ἄνδρες ὡσεὶ πεντακίχλιοι
“And [those] who ate were about five thousand men.” (Mt. 14:21)

Semi-free relative clauses

- ▶ Free relative clauses are frequent in both the New Testament translation and autochthonous literature.
- ▶ Semi-free relative clauses (= with a cataphoric pivot in the matrix clause), are almost absent from the New Testament, but common elsewhere.
- ▶ They are usually employed where case-matching constraints prevent free relative clauses.

(6) *nok'a* *z=merks* *zgec'uc'anen, ew* *z=aynosik,* *ork'*
DEM.NOM.PL OBJ=naked.ACC.PL dress.3PL.PRS and OBJ=DEM.ACC.PL **REL.NOM.PL**
melōk'=n *en* *merkac'eal* *əst nmanut'ean=n* *Adamay,* ...
sin.INS.PL=DET be.3PL.PRS undress.PTCP in likeness.LOC.SG=DET Adam.GEN.SG

“They dress the naked, and those who through sins have become naked in the likeness of Adam, ...” (Agat'angelos, *Patmowt'iwn Hayoc'* 9,13)

Case-matching violations I

- ▶ Hellenising (= translated) Armenian does not always follow case-matching constraints.
- ▶ REL may take the case required by matrix clause syntax.
- ▶ Such patterns occur in both Greek and Armenian (ex. 7), but also independently just in Armenian (ex. 8).
- ▶ In ex. 7, GEN is dependent on *aržani* / ἄξια.
- ▶ The relative clause verb requires ACC, which is not realised in either sentence.

(7) *ew mek' y=iravi, zi aržani oroc' gorcec'ak'=n*
 and 1.NOM.PL in=justice.LOC.SG because worthy **REL.GEN.PL** do.1PL.AOR=DET
 καὶ ἡμεῖς μὲν δικαίως ἄξια γὰρ ὧν ἐπράξαμεν
ařnumk' z=hatuc'umn
 take.1PL.PRS OBJ=compensation.ACC.SG
 ἀπολαμβάνομεν

“And we justly take compensation worthy of what we have done.” (Lk. 23:41)

Case-matching violations III

- ▶ Most common as translations of Greek articular phrases (e.g. with PTCP or ADV).
- ▶ Here, the Armenian REL renders the Greek DET.

but optional: in the second relative clause below, REL exhibits the case expected by the relative clause; the matrix clause would call for ABL.

- (9) *orum* *xndrē* *i* *kēn,* *tur,* *ew or* *kami*
REL.DAT.SG ask.3SG.PRS from 2.ABL.SG give.2SG.AOR.IPV and REL.NOM.SG want.3SG.PRS
Թ՞ **ափտօ՞նտի** **սե** **ծօ՛ւ** **կա՛յ տօ՛ն** **թե՛լօնտա**
p'ox arnul i kēn, *mi darjuc'aner* *z=eres=s.*
loan take.PRS.INF from 2.ABL.SG NEG turn.2SG.PRS.IPV OBJ=face.ACC.SG=DET
ἀπὸ σοῦ δανείασθαι *μὴ ἀποστραφῆς*

“Give to him who asks you, and don’t turn your face from him who wants to take a loan from you.” (Mt. 5:42)

Case-matching violations in semi-free relative clauses

- (10) *amenec'un oroc' ēk' i Hrov̄m sireleac' a(stuco)y, koč'ec'eloc'*
all.DAT.PL **REL.DAT.PL** be.2PL.PRS in Rome beloved.GEN.PL God.GEN.SG call.PTCP.DAT.PL
πᾶσιν **τοῖς** οὓσιν ἐν Ῥώμῃ ἀγαπητοῖς θεοῦ, κλητοῖς
srhoc' ...
holy.GEN.PL
ἀγίοις

“To you all who are in Rome, beloved by God, called [to be] Saints...” (Rom. 1:7)

Violations in autochthonous texts I

- ▶ In autochthonous texts, case-matching constraints are standardly observed or bypassed (e.g. with pronominal pivots = semi-free relative clauses).
- ▶ A handful of violation occur in one author.
- ▶ Here, the preposition *yandiman* should govern GEN, but REL remains in NOM as required by the relative clause.

(11) *Ew yandiman xōsēr t'agawor=n, ork' ēin i tan=n*
and in-front-of say.3.SG.PST king=DET **REL.NOM.PL** be.3.PL.PST in house.LOC.SG=DET
ark'owni, et'ē ...
royal COMP

“And before [those] who were at the royal court, the kind said that ...” (Elišē, *Vardan...* 131)

Violations in autochthonous texts II

- ▶ In three near-identical instances in the same author, ‘attraction’ of REL does occur – but only after a preposition.
- ▶ The scope of this phenomenon is clearly limited: Eznik, one of the translators of the New Testament.

(12) *Na ew z=mardoy yirawi, asemk’, krel patuhas and*
also concerning=man.ABL.SG justly say.1PL.PRS endure.PRS.INF punishment.ACC.SG for
oroc’ gorcic’e.

REL.GEN.PL work.3SG.PRS.SBJV

“We also say about man that he rightly endures the punishment for what he has done.”
(Eznik, *Elc Alandoc’* 49 (cp. also 44, 51))

Hierarchies

- ▶ Non-case matching relative clauses in the New Testament are a minority pattern.
- ▶ *c.* 3% of all relative clauses studied (27 instances out of 947).
- ▶ ‘Attraction’ routes are limited: NOM ⇒ ACC, DAT, GEN; ACC ⇒ GEN.
- ▶ These routes correspond neatly to the attraction hierarchy postulated by GROSU (1994:108):
NOM ⇒ ACC ⇒ DAT ⇒ GEN ⇒ ... ⇒ PRONOMINAL
- ▶ reminiscent of the Noun Phrase Accessibility Hierarchy (KEENAN AND COMRIE 1977:66, adapted below), according to which a language’s ability to relativise on a syntactic role in the hierarchy entails that all roles higher in the hierarchy can be relativised as well:
Subject ⇒ Direct Object ⇒ Indirect Object ⇒ Oblique ⇒ Genitive ⇒ Object of Comparison
- ▶ ‘Attraction’ thus occurs from the more accessible (in Armenian: structural) case into the less accessible case / role.
- ▶ A plausible reason for this pattern: more accessible cases / roles are more readily understood by implication / context (cp. PROBERT 2015:196–7 on Greek).

Conclusions

- ▶ Relative attraction proper, i.e. in headed relative clauses, does not occur.
- ▶ Armenian (basically) only knows non-case matching phenomena in (semi-)free relative clauses.
- ▶ Unlikely to be internally motivated since
 - ▶ they (almost) never occur in non-translated texts;
 - ▶ they are linked to relative clauses or articular phrases in Greek;
 - ▶ they closely imitate Greek case usage and word order.
- ▶ (Semi-)free relative clauses therefore serve as a valuable diagnostic tool, determining that
 - ▶ the New Testament translation has developed a (grecising) grammar partially different from that of autochthonous texts;
 - ▶ New Testament Armenian is not suitable as a linguistic representative of Classical Armenian as a whole;
 - ▶ the hierarchies of GROSU (1994) and KEENAN AND COMRIE (1977) still hold even in translation.



Suffixaufnahme or case stacking

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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

(13) NP_1 -suffix_X NP_2 -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
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- ▶ often limited to certain combinations with particular cases, most frequently with the genitive (and other expressions of possession)
- ▶ 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

- (14) *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)
- (15) *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)
- (16) *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

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

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“on top of the hill” (Alawa; PLANK 1995:43)
- (19) *mangulmili-ma* *bilö-va* *biε-nägi-ma*
canoe-IV man-I I-3SG.POSS-IV
“the man’s canoe” (Lardil; PLANK 1995:49)

Question

Is there a phenomenon *like Suffixaufnahme* in Classical Armenian?

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YES

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YES-ish

Agreement in Classical Armenian

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

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

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

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

(KÖLLIGAN AND KIM fthc.)

Präfixaufnahme

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

- (23) *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**

How many occurrences do we find (= is this 'just' a stylistic device) and what is their configuration?

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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

(24) NP₁-suffix_X NP₂-suffix_Y-suffix_X

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(25) prefix_X-NP₁-suffix_X [...] prefix_X-NP₂-suffix_Y

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(25) prefix_X-NP₁-suffix_X [...] prefix_X-NP₂-suffix_Y

(26) *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)

(27) *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*, *ənd*, *əst*, *z=*, *i/y=* et *c'='.*

Exclusions

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- ▶ One might, therefore, assume that other prepositions could behave similarly as regards repetition.
- ▶ There are five others: *ar*, *ənd*, *əst*, *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.

(28) *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 (MEYER 2023a).
- ▶ 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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