Two types of derived states in Bzhedug Adyghe

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Adyghe, morphologically ergative, highly polysynthetic Circassian (< Northwest Caucasian) language spoken in the South of Russia, possesses two constructions whose semantics crucially relies on the notion of derived (resultant or target, cf. [Parsons 1990; Kratzer 2000]) state. Both of them are peculiar in that the stative interpretation is induced by the presence of the Preterite suffix (-ʁe), which in its primary use denotes events. On the basis of our field data from the Bzhedug dialect, we discuss the semantics of the two constructions and argue that they involve two distinct kinds of derived states.

The first construction, the Resultative proper, is formally identical to the Preterite, save that in case of transitive verbs there is no Agent cross-reference prefix (1a-b). Morphosyntactically Resultatives behave as stative verbs. The Preterite suffix does not signal temporal reference, but acts as a stativizer in the sense of [Kratzer 2000]: Resultative denotes the resultant/target state of the base telic verb that is predicated of its Absolutive argument and holds at reference time. For explicit non-present tense reference, further temporal markers are attached to the right of the Preterite (2). The target state is fairly restricted semantically and Resultatives show some tendency towards lexicalization. In those cases when they combine with modifiers incompatible with underived statives (e.g. manner adverbs), these modifiers fall under the scope of the stativizer (3).

The second construction, the Continuative, is formed by means of the prefix *zere-*, which is historically a relativizer of manner ('the way X Vs'), and can both occur independently and form temporal converbs. The Continuative signals that the situation denoted by the predicate held at some point before the reference time and still holds at reference time, and thus it takes in its scope only homogeneous situation descriptions. Therefore it comes at no surprise that the Continuative freely combines with verbs denoting states and activities (4a), as well as derived Resultatives (4b), however, rather surprisingly, the regular Preterites of various verbs can also be embedded under the Continuative (4c). In the latter case the construction yields the meaning 'the state resulting from the event denoted by the base verb still holds at reference time'.

While the latter use of the Continuative refers to a derived state, like the Resultative, there is a significant difference in the semantics of the two constructions. The Resultative selects telic predicates, existentially binds higher components of their event structure and returns a semantically restricted state predicated of the Absolutive argument; the descriptive properties of the state denoted by the Resultative are fully determined by the base predicate. By contrast, the Continuative may combine with Preterites of both telic and atelic verbs, leaves the base event structure intact and returns an underspecified target state, the exact content of which is determined both by the lexical semantics of the base predicate and by the context, cf. [Nishiyama & König 2010]. The Resultative is thus an operation on event structure that creates a new lexical predicate with properties largely coinciding with those of underived statives. The "target state" use of the Preterite under the Continuative, however, is a post-lexical syntactic operation whose interpretation instantiates aspectual coercion [de Swart 1998] in the presence of a higher-level operator selecting for a homogeneous situation description.

The Bzhedug data strongly speaks in favor of distinguishing between types of states differing in how many of their descriptive properties are specified, as well as between stativizers operating at different levels of structure (lexical vs. syntactic). Somewhat paradoxically, the "higher" stativizer in Adyghe seems to always occur in the scope of a still higher semantic operator (in our case, the Continuative), while the "lower" stativizer (the Resultative) does not have such restrictions. The fact that it is the underspecified states derived by the Continuative that are obligatorily construed as reversible challenges not only the analysis in [Kratzer 2000]

under which target state reading arises from more complex structure (i.e. an extra composintionally accessible Neo-Davidsonian state argument), but also a more recent proposal by [Baglini 2013] that ties target state passives to VPs with lexicalized property scales.

Examples:

(1) a. *te pʰsənč̣'-ew l-er d-ʁe-ẑe-t*
we quick-ADV meat-ABS 1PL.ERG-CAUS-cook-FUT
'We will fry the meat quickly.'

b. *l-er ʁe-ẑa-ʁe*
meat-ABS CAUS-cook-PST
'The meat is fried.'

(2) *wə-qə-zə-k̇ʷe-ẑ'e pče-r ʔʷə-xə-ʁe-t*
2SG.ABS-DIR-REL.TEMP-go-INS door-ABS LOC-open-PST-FUT
'When you come, the door will be open.'

(3) *zeč̣'e gʷəš'ʰaʔe-xe-r saq-ew txə-ʁa-ʁe*
all word-PL-ABS attention-ADV write-PST-PST
'All the words were written carefully.'

(4) a. *weš'x qə-zer-je-š'x*
rain DIR-REL.MNR-rain
'It is still raining.'

b. *doske-m zere-tje-tx-a-ʁe-ze*
blackboard-OBL DIR-REL.MNR-LOC-write-LAT-PST-CNV

je-k̇ʷa-λe-r-jə je-ẑ'
DAT-go-DIR-CNV-ADD DAT-read(IMP)
'While it is still written on the blackboard, go and read.'

c. *doske-m qə-zere-tr-jə-tx-a-ʁe-ze*
blackboard-OBL DIR-REL.MNR-LOC-3SG.ERG-write-LAT-PST-CNV

je-k̇ʷa-λe-r-jə je-ẑ'
DAT-go-DIR-CNV-ADD DAT-read(IMP)
'While he has written it on the blackboard [= while it is still written on the blackboard as a result of his writing], go and read.'

Abbreviations:

ABS – absolutive; ADD – additive; ADV – adverbial; CAUS – causative; CNV – converb; DAT – dative; DIR – directive; ERG – ergative; FUT – future; IMP – imperative; INS – instrumental; LAT – lative; LOC – locative; MNR – manner; OBL – oblique case; PL – plural; PST – (perfective) past; REL – relativization; SG – singular; TEMP – temporal relation.

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