

## Verb Phrase Ellipsis in Icari Dargwa Complex Predicates<sup>1</sup>

Ivan Kalyakin, *Institute of Linguistics, RAS* (kalyakin.iv@gmail.com)

**Background.** Verb phrase ellipsis (VPE) is a process in which a verb phrase, usually identified as *vP*, goes missing under identity with the *vP* of an antecedent clause. An example of VPE in English is given in (1), where the constituent struck through is not pronounced.

- (1) *John brought a present to Mary, and Julian did [<sub>vP</sub> ~~brought a present to Mary~~] too.*

Although VPE has been long considered to exist only in English, recent research has shown that it exists in other languages, though in a slightly different form. Some languages with V-to-T movement (e.g., Hebrew, Irish or Russian) possess a variety of VPE usually labeled as VVPE (V-stranding VPE), see (Goldberg 2005) for an extensive survey of the phenomenon. In languages with V-stranding VPE only arguments that remain in the *vP* go missing, since the verb moves to a higher functional projection before deletion occurs.

**Puzzle.** Along with simplex verbs, Icari Dargwa (< Nakh-Daghestanian) employs a number of so-called complex predicates (CPr), which consist of a semantically bleached light verb (LV) and a non-verbal element (NV) that can be represented by a noun, adjective, adverb, numeral, and borrowed verb. In this talk, I examine an ellipsis construction attested in Icari Dargwa, in which only part of a CPr goes missing, and, following (Toosarvandani 2009), label it *vVPE* (*v*-stranding VPE). In the example of the construction in (2), not only the internal argument *χurejg* ‘food’ is deleted, but also the NV component *wa<sup>na</sup>* ‘warm’ of the CPr *wa<sup>na</sup>* AGR-*arq*’- ‘to warm up’. Since finite verbs in Dargwa languages are considered to not move out of the verbal domain, the exemplified pattern is quite unexpected.

- (2) *pat'ima-l χurejg wa<sup>na</sup> b-a<sup>arq</sup>'-b=ak:u, asijat-il*  
Patimat-ERG food.ABS warm N-make.PFV-AOR=NEG.COP Asiyat-ERG  
  
[~~χurejg~~ ~~wa<sup>na</sup>~~] *b-arq'-ib*  
food.ABS warm N-make.PFV-AOR  
‘Patimat didn’t warm up the food, but Asiyat did’.

It is also noteworthy that the NV element in such contexts need not obligatorily be null, cf. (3), where only the internal arguments are deleted.

- (3) *t:at:i-l durhu-li-j kiniga sawkat b-a<sup>arq</sup>'-ib,*  
father-ERG boy-OBL-DAT book.ABS present N-make.PFV-AOR  
  
*waba-l=ra [durhu-li-j kiniga] sawkat b-a<sup>arq</sup>'-ib*  
mother-ERG=ADD boy-OBL-DAT book.ABS present N-make.PFV-AOR  
‘The father gave his son a book, and so did the mother’.

**Data.** The fact that we indeed deal with *vVPE* can be demonstrated by employing a number of well-established diagnostics: the inability of elided material to be pragmatically controlled, i.e., to have a purely contextual antecedent (4), or the possibility to extract something from the ellipsis site (5).

- (4) [Observing teacher praising Musa after class]  
Me to Abdullah:  
a. *učitil-li s:a u gap w-a<sup>arq</sup>'-ib=di*  
teacher-ERG yesterday you.ABS praise M-make.PFV-AOR=PST

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- b. # *učitil-li* *s:a* [~~#~~ ~~*gap*~~] *w-aʕrq'-ib=di*  
 teacher-ERG yesterday you.ABS praise M-make.PFV-AOR=PST  
 (a=b) ‘(Don’t be jealous, Abdullah.) The teacher praised you yesterday’.
- (5) *učitil-li* *musa* *gap* *w-aʕrq'-b=ak:u,* [~~<ʔaʕbdulla>~~  
 teacher-ERG Musa.ABS praise M-make.PFV=NEG.COP Abdullah.ABS  
~~*gap*~~] *w-aʕrq'-ib* *ʔaʕbdulla*  
 praise M-make.PFV-AOR Abdullah.ABS  
 ‘The teacher didn’t praise Musa, but Abdullah he did’.

Moreover, as pointed by (Johnson 2001), the sentence contains ellipsis rather than phonologically null argument if a missing element allows for more than one reading. As shown in the example (6), the reflexive pronoun *cinna* allows for both strict and sloppy readings.

- (6) *asijat-il* *cin-na* *waba* *uxtan* *r-aʕrq'-ib,*  
 Asiyat-ERG self-GEN mother.ABS glad F-make.PFV-AOR  
*sabijat-il=ra* [~~*cin-na*~~ ~~*waba*~~ ~~*uxtan*~~] *r-aʕrq'-ib*  
 Sabiyat-ERG=ADD self-GEN mother.ABS glad F-make.PFV-AOR  
 ‘Asiyat made her mother happy, and so did Sabiyat’.  
 Strict identity: Sabiyat made Asiyat’s mother happy.  
 Sloppy identity: Sabiyat made her own mother happy.

**Analysis.** Following the analysis of Persian CPRs in (Megerdooian 2012), I adopt the structure of transitive CPRs exemplified in (8a), where XP is an NV element (V-to-*v* movement omitted). Ellipsis in Icari apparently targets a constituent smaller than *v*P, namely VP (8b).

- (8) a. [<sub>vP</sub> DP [<sub>vP</sub> *v* [<sub>VP</sub> DP [<sub>VP</sub> V XP]]]]  
 b. [<sub>vP</sub> DP [<sub>vP</sub> V+*v* [<sub>VP</sub> ~~DP~~ [<sub>VP</sub> ~~V~~ ~~XP~~]]]]

However, despite surface differences, Icari Dargwa *v*VPE licensing requirements are not significantly different from those in English, Irish or Russian. Following (Merchant 2001: 26), I propose that the main licensing requirement is a semantic antecedence condition (Merchant’s *e*-GIVENNESS). I will also try to show that, even though the light verb is never located inside the elided phrase, Goldberg’s Verbal Identity Requirement (Goldberg 2005: 187), which may be used as an additional licensing condition, is unnecessary, since the cases of argument structure alternations are correctly ruled out without postulating additional constraints.

- (9) Q: *u-l* *hin* *waʕna* *d-aʕrq'-ib=di?*  
 you-ERG water.ABS warm N.PL-make.PFV-AOR=2SG.PQ  
 ‘Have you heated the water?’
- A: *\*čul=el* *d-ih-ub*  
 self.ERG=EMPH N.PL-become.PFV-AOR  
 ‘The water warmed up on its own’.

Finally, those cases where the NV is pronounced are considered an instance of argument ellipsis, not *v*VPE. One piece of evidence comes from the interpretational possibilities of adjuncts. Adjuncts cannot go missing independently without arguments doing the same, and, consequently, may be deleted only due to VPE. In (10) the adverb *čak:wal* ‘carefully’ cannot be interpreted in the ellipsis site.

- (10) *rasul-li* *čak:wal* *uc:a* *ač* *b-aʕrq'-ib,*  
 Rasul.-ERG carefully door.ABS open N-make.PFV-AOR

$\text{ʔa}^{\text{ʕ}}\text{bdulla-l}$                        $a\check{c}$                        $b\text{-}a^{\text{ʕ}}\text{rq}'\text{-}b=\text{ak:u}$   
 Abdullah.-ERG                      open                      N-make.PFV-AOR=NEG.COP  
<sup>OK</sup> ‘Rasul carefully opened the door, and Abdullah didn’t open it’.  
 # ‘Rasul opened the door carefully, and Abdullah opened it carelessly’.

**Abbreviations:** 2 – second person; ABS – absolutive; ADD – additive particle; AOR – aorist; COP – copula; DAT – dative; ERG – ergative; EMPH – emphatic particle; F – feminine gender; GEN – genitive; M – masculine gender; N – neuter gender; NEG – negation; OBL – oblique; PFV – perfective; PL – plural; PQ – polar question; SG – singular

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