

## How to do restructuring in an Ergative language

**Philip Shushurin, Institute of Linguistic Studies, Moscow, Russia/Ben Gurion University of the Negev, Beer Sheva, Israel**

**Intro.** It has been observed that the embedded verb in certain polypredicative constructions can demonstrate a degraded, or impoverished status, as compared to the higher one, both in terms of morphology and syntax. For instance, the phenomenon of long distance passivization (or – long object movement, LOM) may involve an embedded verb not specified for active/passive voice. An influential tradition of research (Wurmbrand 2016, Wurmbrand&Shimamura 2017) has analyzed such constructions as involving a syntactically deficient embedded *v* (Voice head) which stands in a syntactic relation with a Voice head in the matrix clause. Most of the work on restructuring has discussed languages with Accusative and Austronesian alignment, and relatively little research has been on Ergative languages. The question of whether Ergative languages may involve restructuring by voice incorporation is relevant and important given that Ergative languages generally lack passivization, and the data from Ergative languages may clarify whether restructuring is only possible in the contexts of long distance passivization. I will show, based on the evidence from Chechen, that Ergative languages may have restructuring constructions. Unlike Accusative languages, Ergative languages involve a dependency between the lower *v* head – the head responsible for the Agreement with the internal argument.

**Data.** In Chechen, there are two pairs of aspectual verbs (*begin* and *finish*) which only differ in their argument taking potential (1-2). To that effect, the verb *d'a-d-olo* is strictly transitive, while the verb *d-oladol* is (mostly) intransitive. However, the transitive aspectual verbs may only take verbal phrases which contain DP arguments (3-4). In contrast, such rule doesn't hold for intransitive counterparts of such verbs (5) – they allow intransitive embedded structures. (Examples with *begin*, same holds for *finish*)

(1) Asa urok d'a-j-oli-ra

I.erg lesson prf-f-begin-rpst

'I began the lesson.'

(2) \*Urok d'a-j-oli-ra

lesson prf-f-begin-rpst

int. 'The lesson began.'

(3) Asa kniga j-eša d'a-j-oli-ra

I.erg book f-read prf-f-begin-rpst

'I began reading a book.'

(4) \*So/\*Asa ida d'a-d-oli-ra

I.nom/I.erg run prf-n-begin-rpst

'I began running.'

(5) So ida v-olaveli-ra

I.nom run m-begin-rpst

'I began running.'

I suggest that the ban on DP-less constructions is due to the fact that the embedded Absolutive object is in fact in Agreement relation with the matrix, rather than the embedded, verb and is needed to satisfy this verb's Probe. One piece of evidence to this effect comes from the fact that constructions like (7) are ungrammatical even with those verbs which lack an internal Absolutive argument but bear lexically determined agreement marker (feminine *j-* with *read*). There is

further evidence for the impoverished status of the embedded verb. To that effect, the embedded verb is incompatible with both negative and causative markers. In contrast, such constraints are not observed with the corresponding non-transitive matrix verb *d-oladol*.

(6) Asa j-eša-r j-u

I.erg f-read-irr f-aux

'I will read.'

(7) \*Asa j-eša d'a-j-oli-ra

I.erg f-read prf-f-begin-rpst

int. 'I began reading.'

**Analysis.** I will adopt three assumptions concerning Chechen syntax. First, I assume that the Absolutive argument in the embedded clause is able to raise to the periphery of the embedded clause (SpecAspP) where it can agree with the matrix verb. Second, I assume that *v* and Voice are featurally indistinguishable. More specifically, I suggest that in transitive constructions, the *v* head, which agrees with the Absolutive, obligatorily passes its features to the next verbal head (Voice). That brings the consequence that any instance of valuation of the features on one head values the features on the other head as well. Third, I suggest that any *v* head may come impoverished and lack a Probe. Such probe is unable to agree with the DP directly; such head may only acquire its features via agreeing with another verbal head. The Absolutive DP is assumed to raise to the edge of the embedded clause. The lower head is deficient and lacks a Probe. However, it possesses an unvalued  $\phi$  features which get valued in a two-step fashion: first, the higher head agrees with the DP (the semantic argument of the embedded verb); second, the higher verb agrees with the lower verb, valuing its features. The derivation is largely analogous to the mechanism proposed by Wurmbrand (2016) for voice restructuring, modulo the two following details. First, the agreement relation holds between *v* rather than Voice heads. Given the featural indistinctness of *v* and Voice the same featural dependency holds between Voice heads as well. Second, the described process proceeds in the absence of Passive formation. However, the suggested movement of the Absolutive argument allows the matrix verb to agree with the embedded object. The observed properties follow straightforwardly. The absence of the embedded Absolutive bleeds restructuring since the matrix verb is unable to get its Probe valued. The absence of functional material on the embedded verb follows from the deficiency of the embedded verb.

**Conclusion.** The proposed analysis provides evidence that restructuring is possible in Ergative languages and the Long Object Movement is not a prerequisite for it. It may also shed light on the nature of so called Long Distance Agreement (e.g. Haspelmath 1999).

## Bibliography

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