Decomposing Ossetian Complex Predicates: Act Naturally

Intro. Iranian Complex Predicates provide unique data for theories of verb (phrase) decomposition (Baker 1997; Wunderlich 1997; Rappaport Hovav&Levin 1998; Travis 2000 a.o.) Two general trends in this domain can be roughly referred to as 'lexicon-based' and 'syntactic', having (Hale&Keyser 1993) as typical for the first, and (Ramchand 2008) as a representative for the second approach.

Under Ramchand's approach, vPs consist of three levels: init, proc and res, External (causer) and Internal (theme) Arguments being Specs in them. Composition of vP subparts gives rise to all situations described by natural language. Ramchand's system relies on the logical event typology which should be realized in a language, see (Pantcheva 2008) on implementation of this system for Persian. H&K's system is based on lexical class distinction and, consequently, on natural language (object vs event) ontology, see (Folli, Heidi, Karimi 2005; Megerdoomian 2008; Farudi&Toosarvandani 2008) for Iranian. Thus, according to H&K, vP decomposition should be more language-specific, whereas Ramchand's approach supposes that init, proc and res components equally participate in vP derivation.

Properties of Ossetian CmPs. Nominal Elements in CmPs are either stative or dynamic. Statives underlie unaccusative CmPs and adnominal attributes, (1). Dynamic roots are of three major types: bivalent, monovalent and onomatopoetic. CmPs with dynamic roots are transitive, (2.a), or unergative, a great part of which are onomatopoetic words, (3-4.a). Dynamic nominal roots head process or result DPs, (2-4.b). Light Verbs in CmP are 'do' (causative) and 'be' (inchoative).

Proposal. I propose the following structure for Ossetian CmP: **(i)** LVs introduce vP, supplied (or not) with the external argument in case of 'do' ('be'); **(ii)** the lexical √P dominated by vP lacks categorial specification; **(iii)** NE is in the √-head position; **(iv)** lexical heads introduce IAs that surface dependent on the dominating functional head; **(v)** statives denote result states and take a theme argument in the Spec of √P, (5.a); **(vi)** bivalent dynamics introduce events and take themes as complements, (5.b); **(vii)** monovalent/onomatopoetic dynamics correspond to events without IAs, (5.c); **(viii)** in DPs EA is merged as a possessor (see Radford 2000), IA as Specs of √P, (5.d).

The following facts support the proposal. **(1)** Being used as a √-head, NE resists any modification, (6.a), and cannot be separated from LV, (6.b). **(2)** Unaccusative can, whereas transitive/unergatives can not be used with 'be' LV, (7). This is due to the fact that arguments of dynamic heads (EA) should be introduced by 'do' whereas arguments of statives (IA) are merged inside √P. This fact contradicts Ramchand's system, where theme argument in Spec, procP makes contributions both to unergative and unaccusative clauses. **(3)** Transitive clauses are easily derived from any unaccusative by means of LV 'do', (8). The IA is located in √P, hence no problems for the EA to be merged by dominating causative v ('do'). On the contrary, monovalent and onomatopoetic dynamics cannot be transitivised by adding causer, (9-10). This is because their arguments are already merged in Spec, vP (v='do'). **(4)** It is possible in imperfective predication to use 'do' LV intransitively, (11). I propose that what we are faced with here is the unaccusative/passive use of 'do'. Such option is valid for IAs of statives, and excluded for IAs of bivalent dynamics, (12). This is because IA of statives are specifiers but IA of bivalent dynamics are complements and the former can, whereas the latter can not raise to subject position. This again disfavors Ramchand's approach, under which both IAs would be in Spec positions. **(5)** Unaccusative and transitive CmPs can't be coordinated having the same subject, (13). The reason is that there are two different LVs here: the transitive 'do' with and the unaccusative 'do' without EA.

The most serious problem posed by Ossetian for Ramchand's theory is that there seems to be no evidence for procP and (a)telic processes may be traced to composition of different LVs and √Ps.

Sum. CmPs composed of NE and 'be' or transitive/unaccusative 'do'. Note, that causative (transitive) / inchoative (unaccusative) alternation regularly attested with other Ossetian verbs. A choice of a LV depends on whether NE has its own Spec, complement and/or should be supplied with the external argument. NE are bare roots, whose distribution determined by their semantics in line with H&K's approach. When put under appropriate LV, √Ps create verb phrases that function much like simple vPs do. The rest of the paper examines other CmP aspects (aktionsart, third argument, ambient predicates).

1.a æž ynk'ard kænyn
I sad do
I feel myself sad.

1.b [DP ynk'ard adæjmag]
sad man
a sad man

2.a wyj bæx-y wæj kodta
he horse-Acc sale did
He sold the horse.

2.b [DP bæx-y wæj]
horse-Gen sale
sale of a horse

3.a læppu lenk kæny
boy swimming does
A boy swims.

3.b [DP læppu-jy lenk]
boy-Gen swimming
swimming of a boy

4.a k'aliu k'ær-k'ær kodta
branch crack-crack did
A branch cracked.
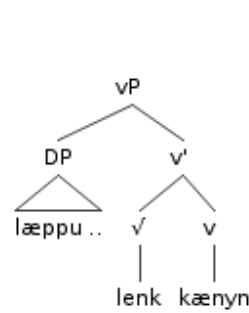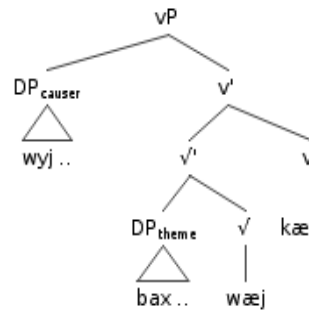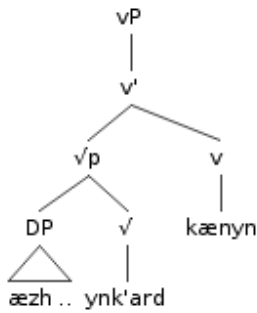
4.b [DP k'aliu-jy k'ær-k'ær]
branch-Gen cracking
cracking of a branch

5.a 5.b 5.c 5.d
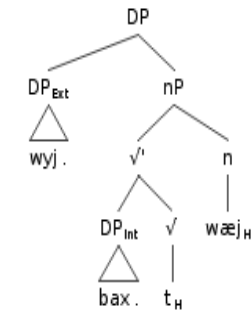
6.a *šau byrc kænyn
black pepper do
to pepper with black pepper

6.b *læppulenk žnon kodta
boy swimming yesterday did
The boy swam yesterday.

7.a ziza yvžær iš
meat bad became
The meat spoiled.

7.b *bæx gæpp iš
horse jump became
(int.) The horse jumped.

8.a læppu fynæj iš
boy dreaming become
The boy fall asleep.

8.b æž læppu-jy fynæj kodton
I boy-Acc dreaming did
I made the boy fall asleep.

9.a læppu lenk kodta
boy swimming did
The boy swam.

9.b *æž læppu-jy lenk kodton
I boy-Acc swimming did
(int.) I made the boy swam.

10.a k'aliu k'ær-k'ær kodta
branch crack-crack did
A branch cracked.

10.b *æž k'aliu k'ær-k'ær kodton
I branch crack-crack did
(int.) I cracked a branch.

11.a æž zyk' štyr kodton
I hole large did
I deepened the hole.

11.b zyk' štyr kodta
hole large did
The hole deepened.

12.a læppu bæx nyv kodta
boy horse image did
The boy drew a horse.

12.b *bæx nyv kodta
horse image did
(int.) The horse was getting drawn.

13 *æž šmæšty æmæ me fyd-y šmæšty kodton
I angry and my father-Acc angry did
I got angry and made angry my father.