Participles and periphrasis in Avar

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Background: Approaches to periphrasis

- the selection – aka the 'conventional' – approach going back to Ross (1967)
  - auxiliaries are *bona fide* syntactic elements that can be merged, select and be selected
- the insertion approach (e.g. Cowper 2010, Bjorkman 2011 but actually going way further back)
  - auxiliaries are a last-resort repair strategy not present in the syntactic structure but inserted into an already built syntactic structure

Approaches to periphrasis: Status quo

Both approaches can handle English-type patterns known as additive:

(1)   He is/was/will be sing-ing.

Both approaches can handle the more intricate overflow pattern observed in Bantu, Arabic, and Latin

- Bjorkman 2011 for an insertion analysis
- Pietraszko 2020 for a selection analysis

This paper: Aims

- present an additive pattern from Avar
- show that it is problematic for the insertion approaches, broadly construed
- develop a selection-based analysis of the observed facts

This paper: Claims

- the Avar progressive instantiates an additive pattern distinct from English
- the morphology on the lexical verb is the morphology associated with the presence of high functional heads T and C in the absence of those heads
- a particular view of head-movement effects can help to capture the facts in a selection-based framework

The facts

The Avar progressive i

Avar (Northeast Caucasian, ca. 700,000 speakers) is a head-final morphologically ergative language with rich verbal morphology and a variety of periphrastic tenses.

(2) a. jasał   t'ex   c'al- ula
       girl.ERG(F) book.ABS(N) read-PRS

       'The girl reads a book.'

   b. jasał   t'ex   c'al- ul- e–   b b–ugo
       girl.ERG(F) book.ABS(N) read-PRS-PTCP–N N–AUX.PRS

       'The girl is reading a book.'

The Avar progressive ii

present participle of lexical verb + *be*

- the auxiliary can be both finite and non-finite, depending on the syntactic environment
- the entire progressive can, for instance, become a 'low' eventive nominalisation

the auxiliary behaves, for all intents and purposes, like a regular lexical verb

It's the additive pattern

- the auxiliary by itself is not responsible for the progressive interpretation
- nor is the participle by itself responsible for the progressive interpretation
- instead, the progressive interpretation arises from the cooccurrence of *be* with the present participle
    - like in English or Basque
- like the English *-ing* participle, the Avar participle can be used attributively
    - when it is, it is a full CP (Rudnev 2015)

The Avar participle

A-bar contexts i

Avar participles head relative clauses and matrix and embedded
interrogatives.

In these uses, participles inflect for tense and are not associated
with any particular aspectual interpretation:

(3) [jasał ___ c'al-ul-e–b / c'al-il-e–b /
  girl.ERG read-PRS-PTCP-N read-FUT-PTCP-N

   c'al-a-ra–b] t'ex
   read-PST-PTCP–N book

  'a/the book that the girl reads/will read/(has) read'

A-bar contexts ii

Progressive aspect is expressed periphrastically:

(4) [jasał __ c'al-ul-e−b   b−ug-e−b   / b−uk'-in-e−b
    girl.ERG read-PRS-PTCP-N N−AUX.PRS-PTCP−N N−AUX-FUT-PTCP−N

    / b−uk'-a-ra−b   ] t'ex
      N−AUX-PST-PTCP−N book

   'a/the book that the girl is/will be/was reading'

Avar participial relatives are CPs

- tense morphology expresses tense (absolute or relative)
  - reference time rather than event time is affected (Rudnev 2015: chap. 3)

A-bar contexts iii

Participles in A-bar contexts can express clausal negation:

(5)   jac-al-da   ła-la   [š:iw   w–ač'-ila-r-e–w   ]
     sister-OBL-LOC know-PRS   who.ABS M–arrive-FUT-NEG-PTCP–M

'Sister knows who will not arrive.'

No TP or CP inside periphrastic progressive

No clausal negation

(6) a. *jasał   t'ex   c'al-ula-r-e–b   b–ugo
       girl.ERG book.ABS read-PRS-NEG-PTCP–N   N–AUX.PRS

     ('The girl is not reading the book.')

   b. jasał   t'ex   c'al-ul-e–b   heč'o
      girl.ERG book.ABS read-PRS-PTCP–N   AUX:PRS:NEG

      'The girl is not reading the book.'

Problems for insertion approaches

Auxiliary insertion approaches like Cowper (2010), Bjorkman (2011) appeal to abstract formal features [INFL:_] on heads v, Asp, and T

- tense morphology is used to express something other than tense
- features of 'high' participles make no reference to progressive aspect
- features of 'low' participle make no reference to tense or clause type
- but the verbal form is morphologically identical

Avar participles: Summary

- 'high' (=CP) participles in A-bar contexts
    - tense and clause type but no aspect
- 'low' (=vP) participles in periphrastic progressive
    - aspect but no tense or clause type

Further facts we want to capture:

- value of tense feature on participle
- availability of independent temporal reference in 'high' participial clauses
- (in)compatibility with clausal negation

Analysis

Assumptions

- all complex expressions are created in the syntax
- syntactic heads carry selectional features, e.g. [Sel:V]
- heads can adjoin to heads
- heads can undergo displacement
- present-tense morphology is/can be default morphology arising in the absence of a valued tense feature
- complex head formation by adjunction can precede head movement

Complex heads and syntactic structure

- (external) head adjunction (Shimada 2007, Piggott & Travis 2013, 2017, Bruening 2019, Mitrović & Panagiotidis 2020, Mitrović 2020)

- head to phrase movement followed by projection (Epstein et al. 2016, Donati 2006, Gallego 2014, Mitrović & Panagiotidis 2020, Mitrović 2020)

Basic case: Simple finite clause i

Let us see how this system derives a simple transitive clause without periphrasis:

(7) jasał   t'ex   c'al- ula
     girl.ERG(F)   book.ABS(N)   read-PRS

     'The girl reads a book.'

I assume a minimal inventory of functional heads: v, T and C with selectional features v[Sel:V], T[Sel:v], C[Sel:T].

Step 1: Merge V (*c'al*) with internal argument.

Step 2: Create complex head v-T-C (∅-*ul-a*) by head adjunction.

Basic case: Simple finite clause ii

Step 3: Merge complex head v-T-C with VP as v: [[NP V] v-T-C].

Step 4: Merge external argument in Spec,vP.

Step 5: Copy T from complex head v-T-C and merge it with vP.

Step 6: Copy declarative C from complex head v-T-C and merge it with TP.

The selectional requirements of v[Sel:V], T[Sel:v], C[Sel:T] have now been satisfied.

(8) jasał   t'ex   c'al- ul- e–   b b–ugo
     girl.ᴇʀɢ(ꜰ) book.ᴀʙs(ɴ) read-ᴘʀs-ᴘᴛᴄᴘ–ɴ ɴ–ᴀᴜx.ᴘʀs

     'The girl is reading a book.'

Step 1: Merge V (*c'al*) with internal argument.

Step 2: Create complex head v-T-C (∅-*ul-a*) by head adjunction.

Step 3: Merge complex head v-T-C with VP as v: [[NP V] v-T-C].

Step 4: Merge external argument in Spec,vP.

Step 5: Merge auxiliary as v: [[[NP V] v-T-C] v]

→ the auxiliary now stops the T and C heads from being copied, and no TP or CP is projected

Deriving the facts

Values

- functional head T carries its feature values [PRS], [FUT] and [PST] from the get-go
- but those can only be spelled out as such once TP has been projected
- otherwise morphological defaults are inserted (Bjorkman 2011, Preminger 2014)
    - which in the temporal domain is present tense

Temporal reference

As is conventional, temporal reference is tied to the presence of TP;

- when there is no TP, no temporal reference is possible
  - as with, for instance, restructuring (Wurmbrand 2001)

Negation i

Recall that only 'high' participles are compatible with clausal negation, whereas 'low' participles are not:

(9) a. jasał ___ c'al-ula-r-e–b   t'ex
       girl.ERG read-PRS-NEG-PTCP–N book

   'a/the book that the girl does not read'

   b. *jasał t'ex   c'al-ula-r-e–b   b–ugo
       girl.ERG book.ABS read-PRS-NEG-PTCP–N n–AUX.PRS

Instead, negation must be carried by the highest verb:

Negation ii

(10) jasał   t'ex   c'al-ul-e–b   heč'o
girl.ERG book.ABS read-PRS-PTCP–N AUX:PRS:NEG

'The girl is not reading the book.'

I propose that this also happens because of intervention by auxiliary.

Neg is a functional head selecting a TP: Neg[Sel:T], and so must be copied into the clause to satisfy its selectional requirement.

Inside the complex verbal head, it is adjoined between T and C: v-T-Neg-C.

- if there is no auxiliary, then all heads, including Neg, can be copied into the clause and satisfy their selectional requirements;
- if there is an auxiliary, all of the heads, including Neg, are confined to vP
  - they should, then, receive default values, by hypothesis

But this is impossible for Neg, since Avar negation exhibits tense-conditioned allomorphy:

Negation iv

(11) a. murad   c'al- ula-(ro)   [non-past]
     Murad.ABS   read-PRS-(NEG)

     'Murad reads/does not read.'

   b. murad   c'al- ila- (ro)
     Murad.ABS   read-FUT-(NEG)

     'Murad will (not) read.'

Negation v

(12) a.   murad   c'al- ana   [past]
       Murad.ABS read-PST

       'Murad read/has read.'

   b.   *murad   c'al- ana-ro / c'al-ana-č'o
       Murad.ABS read-PST- NEG

   c.   murad c'al- i-   č'o
       Murad read-NMLZ-NEG

       'Murad did not read.'

To construct a grammatical negative verbal form, then, the tense value of the negated verb is crucial.

Otherwise, the grammatical system will be unable to choose between the two existing markers, *-ro* and *-č'o*.

Conclusions

- the additive pattern of verbal periphrasis in Avar presents a challenge for insertion approaches
- presence of tense-like morphology is only indicative of tense when a TP is projected
- complex head formation by adjunction can precede head movement
- reason to prefer selection approaches to insertion approaches

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