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Sprachtypologie und Universalienforschung

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STUF – Language Typology and Universals
Edition-in-chief: Prof. Dr. Thomas Stolz, Universität Bremen, Fachbereich 10, Postfach 300440, D-28334 Bremen, Phone: +49-421-2187565, Fax: +49-421-2184283, E-mail: img@uni-bremen.de.

Publisher: Akademie Verlag GmbH, Markgrafstr. 12-14, D-10969 Berlin, Phone: +49-30-42200640, Fax: +49-30-42200646, E-mail: akademie@akademie-verlag.de.
Managing director: Dr. Christine Auersteth.
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Advertising office: Christina Gericke, Akademie Verlag GmbH, Phone: +49-30-42200648, Fax: +49-30-42200647, E-mail: gericke@akademie-verlag.de.
Typesetting: WERSKATZ Schmidt & Schult GmbH, Ottenhainen.
Printed by: MB Medienhaus Berlin GmbH.

Subscription information: STUF is published as one volume of four issues per year. Subscription rates for Volume 63 (2010): Institutional (print and online) € 140.00 (postage extra). Single issues € 35.00 (postage extra). Private (print and online) € 77.00 (postage extra).

Subscription runs for further 12 months, if it is not cancelled at least 8 weeks before the end of the subscription period.

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When ‘towards’ means ‘away from’: the case of directional- ablative syncretism in the Ardeşen variety of Laz (South-Caucasian)

Abstract

This paper deals with morphosyntactic and semantic characteristics of the spatial case called motative in the Ardeşen variety of Laz. The motative can be used to mark the ground-nominal in ablative as well as in ablative spatial expressions, while the ground-nominal in static spatial expressions is unmarked for case. Hence, the motative case shows a conflation of the ablative with ablative spatial semantics, while at the same time excluding locative spatial meaning. Given that this kind of syncretism has been claimed to be non-existent, the findings for Ardeşen-Laz are of special relevance for the refinement of the typology on spatial case systems.

Keywords: South-Caucasian, space in language, spatial cases, source/goal asymmetry, case syncretism

1. Introduction

In the perception and description of spatial scenes, one entity, the figure (also called locatum or trajectory) is perceived as being in a spatial relation to another entity, the ground (also called relatum or landmark)\(^1\). The relation between figure and ground can be either dynamic or static, and spatial relations can in principle be divided up into three kinds of relations accordingly:

- static spatial scenes, i.e., configurations where a figure is located in relation to a ground (locative spatial scene),
- dynamic spatial scenes where the figure moves or is caused to move towards a ground (ablative spatial scenes),
- dynamic spatial relations where the figure moves or is caused to move away from a ground (ablative spatial scenes).

Cross-linguistically, we find diverse means of expressing the semantic role of the ground (i.e., place, goal or source) morpho-syntactically. The coding type, which is of relevance for this paper, is where special cases are used, i.e., spatial cases such as locative, allative, and ablative.\(^2\)

The linguistic expression and conceptualisation of spatial relations has been a widely discussed topic in linguistic research within the last twenty to thirty years. Considering that the biological basis of the cognitive apparatus is shared by all human beings, it is assumed that the perception of spatial scenes is based on the shared principles of signal processing and signal interpretation. With respect to linguistic expression of spatial scenes, however, cross-linguistic research on the semantics of spatial expressions has shown that the conceptualisation of space is not only dependent on biological, but also on linguistic and cultural factors (e.g., Bowden & Choi 2001, Levinson 2003, Levinson & Meira 2003; Levinson & Wilkins 2006, Brela 2007). Notwithstanding the diversity of the morphosyntax and semantics of spatial expressions, typological studies have made a case for some linguistic universals. One of these universals is the assumed non-existence of a linguistic category which can be used to mark both the destination and the source of a motion in space, and cannot be used to mark place, i.e. the ground in a static spatial scene (Andrews 1983, Iragami 1987, Stolz 1992, Cresswell 2006).

In this paper, we will discuss the morphosyntactic and semantic properties of the motative case in the Ardeşen-variety of Laz. The motative can be used to mark the ground-nominal in ablative as well as in ablative spatial expressions, whereas the ground-nominal in static spatial expressions is unmarked for case. I will argue that the existence of such a case makes it necessary to modify the typological assumptions about spatial case systems. Furthermore, I will also show that the motative case exhibits some asymmetries with respect to its use and semantics which are in accord with cognitive principles and cross-linguistic findings as discussed in the literature (e.g., Roberts 1996, 1997, Roberts & Zhong 2003, Lakoff & Lyons 2005, Wälchli & Zörns 2006, Nektina 2009).

2. Some basic facts on Ardeşen-Laz

As a sister language of Georgian, spoken on the south-eastern coast of the Black Sea, Laz is the only member of the South-Caucasian family which is spoken primarily outside of Georgia. The vast majority of its speakers live in Turkey and are bilingual in Laz and Turkish. Laz is a severely endangered language and it is used almost exclusively as a means of oral communication among family members. While most Laz older than forty are competent speakers of the language, an increasing number of young Laz are fluent only in Turkish, with a rapid decline of language competence with ethnic Laz younger than twenty (Kutscher 2000).

Laz as spoken in Turkey is divided into four dialectal variants (Harz, Ardeşen, Vitsesk, Hopa), all of equal sociolinguistic status, since a standard variety of Laz has not been established (cf. Kutscher 2001: chapter 1). The variety of Laz discussed here is the one spoken in the city of Ardeşen and the villages of the Ardeşen region. Although this dialect (Ardeşen-Laz) is more or less similar to the other dialects with respect to verb morphology, it differs considerably from other Laz varieties with respect to its case marking system and argument linking rules (cf. Kutscher 2001: chapter 5). While all

\(^1\) I would like to thank Delia Marić, Camilla Di Biase-Funtsch and three anonymous reviewers for inspiring comments on previous versions of this paper. I am also grateful to the patience and helpfulness of the Laz speakers in the region of Ardeşen and in Germany, who have supported my work for several years now.

other dialects of Laz have case marking relating to syntactic relations of core arguments (ergative, nominative, dative), Ardeşen-Laz does not mark core arguments for case (cf. 3 below).

Laz is an SOV language, exhibiting the categories of case and number in nominal expressions and a rich inventory of verbal categories with up to eight different morphological slots to be filled in the predicate, cf. (1).

(1) A B C D E F G H

N=object - preverb - 1/2-person - version vowel - root - caus - TAM=verb-number

(A or u) (voice, applicative) (non 3rd a)

An example of an inflected verb form is given in (2).

(2) var-ele-kek-eet
care-b-te-xex-i-t
A-B-C-D-E-G-H
N=beside-lx-xx-vil=pass.pfv=now=3rdx-xl

'We did not sit beside him/her.'

As (1) and (2) show, the information on person and number in Laz predicates is not marked by a single prefix but rather results from the interaction of prefixes and suffixes. These are portmanteau forms coding tense/aspect/mood as well as person (cf. MATTHESEN 1995). The person marking in the predicate is asymmetric. Only speech-act participants and 3rd person actors (in the sense of FOLEY & VAN VALIN 1984) are marked on the predicate. 3rd person undergoers (in the sense of FOLEY & VAN VALIN 1984) are unmarked or rather represented paradigmatically by absence of inflectional form (null-morpheme). Disregarding this asymmetry in the inflectional paradigm, predicates in Laz are head marking, with up to two arguments being represented in the verbal inflection, i.e. depending on the valence of the verb, verbal inflection is monov- or polyvalent. With polyvalent verbs the finite verb inflects for both actor and undergoer, cf. (3).

(3) ce-k-kere

pre-2u-beat-[3]=2s-govl=pv

'I will beat you!'

In contrast to its sister varieties, Ardeşen-Laz is an active language (KLENK 1974). i.e. monovalent verbs subdivide into two classes, depending on whether the verb takes a controlling or non-controlling single core argument (also called semantic alignment system, cf. DONOUSSIS & WIECHMANN 2008). Controlling single core arguments are marked as actor on the predicate, cf. the first person marker b- in (4a). Non-controlling single core arguments are marked as undergoer, cf. the first person marker m- in (4b). See also KITSCHER (2009: 119f) for further discussion.

(4a) bulut

1a-sing=5g

'I go.'

(4b) m-aginden

1u-snee=sing=5g

'I sneeze.'

While most Laz dialects have cases marking arguments (absolutive, ergative, dative) as well as adjuncts (cf. HOLLIDER 1991), in the dialect of Ardeşen-argument-NPs are always unmarked for case, cf. (5). This holds true for the actors of polyvalent predicates (5a, 5b), primary and secondary objects (in the sense of DiVER 1986), cf. (5b), and for the single core argument of monovalent active and inactive predicates (5c).

(5a) nana cay ilymi
mother tea plucked-[3]=2s-govl

'Mother plucks tea.'

(5b) oyremeni bere kiabi me-cay
teacher child book thither-give-[3]=2s-govl

'The teacher gives the book to the child.'

(5c) błę nie-traya-ndy / błę nie-agatan-ndy
boy sing-[3]=2s-govl boy be_valid=3s-govl

'The boy sings.' / 'The boy is five.'

The case system in Ardeşen-Laz is restricted to marking adjunct phrases, such as instrumentals (‘te vir’), cf. 6a), comitatives (‘ezi’sum’), benefactiveives (‘senni benn’, cf. 6b), goals and sources (‘qo vod’). See KITSCHER (2001: chapter 5) for a detailed discussion of the case system in Ardeşen-Laz.

(6a) qar-te go-csu
water-trin pre-cleans-[3]=2s-govl-pv

'He cleaned it with water.'

(6b) (ma) bere-senni kiabi me-m-c-4?
2sg 1sg child-ren book thither-1c-give-[2]=2s-govl-qv

'Did you give me the book for the child?'

As can be seen in (6b), the core arguments of the verb mezcu ‘give’ are unmarked for case, while the beneficiary of the giving event, the child, is marked by the benefactive case marker ‘enni’sen’.

In the same way, temporal and locative adjuncts are unmarked for case as well, cf. (7).

(7) livadi p-raysudem

garden 1a-sing=5g

'I sing in the garden.'

Hence, non-actor third person core arguments and temporal/locative adjuncts cannot be formally distinguished but can only be differentiated on semantic grounds.

Expressions of spatial relations frequently have a verbal predicate prefixed by a preverb with spatial semantics. In these cases, the ground-NP of the spatial expressions is unmarked for case in static and in allative spatial expressions, cf. section 3.3. Since a spatial preverb has a two-place argument structure relating to the figure and the ground of a spatial configuration (LIEHMANN 1983: 147f), we can conclude that ground-NPs unmarked for case are core arguments of the predicate. Since ground-NPs are most commonly non-speech-act participants and hence not overtly cross-referenced on the predicate in Laz, one cannot decide whether a ground-NP is a second or third argument in ditransitive constructions.
3. The basic characteristics of the motative

The term motative originates in a grammar of Laz by Rosen (1844) and captures the particular semantics of this case, which only encodes that the referent of a figure nominal has moved with respect to the motative-marked ground-nominal, but it is vague with respect to whether the figure is moving towards a goal, as in (8a), or it moves away from a source, as in (8b).

(8a) bere oxori-qa am-ulun
child house-mot into-go:3SG1PL.PRS
'The child goes into the house.'

(8b) bere oxori-qa gam-ulun
child house-mot out-go:3SG1PL.PRS
'The child goes out of the house.'

The direction of movement is usually specified by a spatial prefix of the predicate, e.g. amo- ‘into’ in (8a) or gamo- ‘out of’ in (8b) or by inference from information given in the verb root and following from the properties of the figure and ground referents.

Motative-marking is unrestricted with respect to the semantic characteristics of the ground-nominal it relates to. A motative-marked ground can refer to a location in the physical domain (cf. 8 above) or to an animate entity (9a). Ground-NPs can also be abstract, non-physical ideas such as muurebe war ‘war’ in (9b).

(9a) dokori-qa e-sonaten
doctor-mot 2SG-v-v-take:PL:PFV
'We will take you to the doctor.'

(9b) çöyi billumi enqe-pe muurebe-qa mend-axsee
village all man-PL war-mot thither-go:3PL:PFV
'All men in the village went to war.'

The motative is used not only to mark the destination of a motion or the origin from which a motion is initiated but also to mark ground-NPs which refer to a location about which a figure is moved or moves along, i.e. the motative can also have a (per)locative reading, cf. (10).

(10a) a-e ndya Ali mxzul-ul e-alarlu
one day Ali pear.tree-mot up-go:3SG1PL.PST.PPFV
'One day Ali climbed a pear-tree.'

(10b) sule-qa kojebu
bottom-mot down-vv-bang:3SG1PL.PST.PPFV
'It (the swarm) hung (onto the tree’s branch) to the ground.'

3.1. Morphology of the motative

The motative has three allomorphic variants depending on the part-of-speech of the semantic nucleus of the phrase. For personal pronouns the form is -de (11a), for locative adverbs the form is -le (11b), while in all other instances (nouns, demonstrative, interrogative pronouns etc.) the form of the motative is -qa (11c). Note that a third person is referred to by a demonstrative pronoun and not a personal pronoun, hence in dynamic spatial relations involving a third person the motative marker is -qa (11d).

(11a) skon-de mo-xsten
2SG-mot thither-go:3SMG:PFV
'S/He will come to you.'

(11b) hak-ile mo-xsten
here-mot thither-go:3SMG:PFV
'S/He will come here.'

(11c) oxori-qa mo-xsten
house-mot thither-go:3SMG:PFV
'S/He will come to the house.'

(11d) himu-qa mo-xsten
dem:3SMG-mot thither-go:3SMG:PFV
'S/He will come to him/her.'

If the personal pronoun is used attributively (i.e., as a possessive expression), the form of the motative is -qa. Hence, in complex phrases the choice of the allomorph is in accordance with the semantic nucleus of the phrase and not with the part-of-speech of the host of the case affix, as example (12) illustrates.

(12) nana skani-qa mo-xsten
mother 2SM-mother-mot thither-go:3SMG:PFV
'S/He will come to your mother.'

As opposed to the example given in (11a), the goal phrase in (12) is marked with the -qa allomorph since the semantic nucleus of the phrase is nana and the pronoun skani ‘son’ is used attributively. It is marked with the nominal form of the motative although the pronoun is the host of the case affix and according to the part-of-speech of the pronoun the case form expected to be applied would be -de.

3.2. Non-spatial functions of the motative case

Apart from marking the ground-NP in a spatial expression, the motative has expanded to cover four non-spatial functions. The fact that in typological perspective, some of the functions are related to the alliative case, while others are related to the ablative, supports the assumption that the motative case of Arzage-Laz is the result of a syncretism of the two spatial cases -de ‘ALL’ and -yem ‘ARE’, which are still present in other Laz dialects. In the following subsections each of the non-spatial functions of the motative will shortly be illustrated.

* Note that Laz has group inflection, i.e. case and number are only marked once per phrase. Case is marked on the last element of a phrase, while number is hosted by the semantic nucleus of the phrase, cf. Kutchers (2001: chapter 4).
3.2.1. Endpoints in time

The motative can be used in temporal expressions relating to a point in time at which a state-of-affairs is bound to end, cf. (13), a reading which relates to the ablative sense of the motative.

(13) ɣamani-ɣi ko-m-alanan lamuna-ɣi ko-dogotamam
morning-GEN mob-hither-go3SA.PRES evening-MOT mob-stay/MOT-3SA.PRES
'They (the soldiers) come in the morning and stay until evening.'
[KÜTSCHER & GENC 1998:153]

3.2.2. Comparison

Motative is used to mark the standard of comparison in comparative constructions (i.e. the source of the comparison), cf. (14). This extension of a spatial case to a non-spatial function is typologically frequently found with the ablative case marker (e.g. CHREESELS 2008).

(14) hamo axori himu axori-ɣa didi on
dem.prox house dem.dist house-MOT big be3SA-PRES
'This house is bigger than that house.'

3.2.3. Exclusion

Motative is also used to mark referents that are excluded from a group of referents, a sense which conceptually relates more to the ablative sense of the motative. An illustration of this extension of the motative case is given in (15) where the motative-marked expression refers to the only piece of land that is in the possession of the grandfather of the narrator, whereas every other field in the village belongs to other people.

(15) a Pifo-Avia-ɣa baka sot var- uyuru
one 'place-name'-MOT other somewhere neg bavc3SACGOSST.IPV
'He owned nothing apart from Pifo Avia.'
[KÜTSCHER & GENC 1998:72]

3.2.4. Adverbial clauses of time/condition

Motative can serve as a marker of a subordinate sentence in adverbial function. A somewhat peculiar property of Laz (all varieties, cf. HOLSKE 1991:409; cf. also HARRIS & CAMPELL 1995:145) is that case forms may be hosted by finite verb forms and express adverbial sentence meaning. In this kind of construction, the motative expresses an overlap in time between two events, i.e. an extension of time during which another event occurs (time adverbial of simultaneity), cf. (16). This is a function that relates neither to ablative nor ablative case, but is typologically rather related to locative cases.

(16) bere b-orli-ɣa dido yanni m-i-yur Ley
child 1A-DEPST.LPV-MOT many beehive 1U-YV-havc3EPAST.IPV
'When I was a child, we had many beehives.'

4. The use of the motative case in spatial expressions

4.1. Basic spatial constructions in Laz

Basic Spatial Constructions7 in Laz, i.e. expressions that are given as discourse-pragmatically unmarked answers to questions like “where is X?” in the case of static spatial scenes and “where to/from where is X moving/being moved?” in the case of dynamic spatial scenes, are constructed as containing three constituents: a NP referring to the entity being located (the figure), a NP referring to the place in which the figure is located or moved to or from (the ground) and a predicate. The predicate forms a part of a morphologically complex structure containing an inflected verb relating to the spatial orientation and shape characteristics of the figure (the spatial verb), together with a preverb giving spatial information about the configuration between figure and ground (the spatial relator). Ardeşen-Laz has 27 preverbs which cover both the spatial and the deictic domain. Most of the preverbs used in descriptions of spatial scenes are not restricted to either dynamic or static spatial relations, but are rather neutral in this respect, i.e. they can be used in both kinds of expressions (19a, 19b).

7 The term Basic Spatial Expression is based on the term Basic Locative Construction as used by LEVENSON (2003), LEVISON & WILKINS (2000).
The constructional properties of spatial expressions differ with respect to whether the spatial configurations the expressions refer to are static or dynamic. With static spatial expressions the ground-NP is unmarked for case, while in dynamic spatial expressions the ground may be marked with the motative case (details will be given in section 4.2). The following examples give the two constructional schemes together with some language examples.

### 4.1. Static spatial expressions

The construction scheme of a static spatial expression in Laz is given in (21).

(21) **Figure** Ground [Relator verbroot-inflection] Spatial Configuration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NP</th>
<th>NP</th>
<th>prv-</th>
<th>Manner-TAM-rv</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>gie</td>
<td>masa</td>
<td>gooo-degun</td>
<td>bottle table on standa3sg</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As is evident from example (21), the Laz variety under scrutiny in this paper clearly has no morphological marking of the ground-NP expressing the semantic role of place whatsoever. It is neither marked by case nor do we find adpositional marking in the phrase relating to the ground. This differs from other varieties of Laz, where the semantic role of place is marked with the dative case afer, cf. (22) (see also Holisky 1991:409).

(22) Witso-Arhati (Fondich)

- a mwa-fa bozo kojiroma ham aosiri-s
  - a pretty girl he sees this house-in
  - ‘He sees a pretty girl in that house.’ [Anderson 1963:113]
- a mwa aosiri a mwa bozo kojiroma aifis
  - he saw a girl near house aifis
  - ‘He saw a pretty girl in this house.’

Different positions of the figure are expressed by a set of verbs expressing spatial positions of figures with respect to specific properties of the figure referent (such as geometric properties, canonical vs. non-canonical orientation, individualized vs. mass-like, etc.), cf. Kutscher & Genč (2007). For instance, in (23), the positional verb prv-degun (which is used with non-mass like figures that have a canonical vertical orientation) is chosen by the speaker because the spatial configuration of the expression refers to a bottle in a vertical position. If the bottle had been located horizontally the speaker would have chosen prv-zun ‘it is lying’, a verb which is used with non-mass like figures which lack a canonical orientation (23).

(23) **gie** masa gooo-zun

| bottle table on liea3sg|p|p|

- ‘The bottle is (lying) on the table.’

### Table 1: System of preverbs in Ardeşen-Laz

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>spatial domain</th>
<th>deictic domain</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>non-projective</td>
<td>deictic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ama- ‘into’</td>
<td>me- ‘thither’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cc- ‘steep down, on(to), in(to)’</td>
<td>mao- ‘thither’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cele- ‘sideways down, on(to)’</td>
<td>deictic:spatial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cepka- ‘down into amidst’</td>
<td>mao- ‘across thither’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dolo- ‘on(to), down through, down along’</td>
<td>mao- ‘across thither, (towards) on top of another’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e- ‘steep up’</td>
<td>mola- ‘thither horizontally, in(to)’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>else- ‘sideways up, besides’</td>
<td>goola- ‘thither horizontally, on(to)’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cifea-‘up (through) amidst’</td>
<td>moko- ‘thither studder, thither “hook”’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gamma- ‘out of’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>goda- ‘out(to)’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gono- ‘in(to)’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>melea- ‘in, out of’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>megka- ‘in(to) (through) amidst’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mola- ‘in(to)’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cirram</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- go- ‘around’
- projective
- eka- ‘behind’
- else- ‘under’
- kolo- ‘on(to) front, aside, over’
- more than one entity as E or G
- cc- ‘on(to) another’
- kofka- ‘heap-wise, into one another, amidst’
- oko- ‘asunder, together’
- non-transparent
- eso- ‘accumulation’
4.1.2. Dynamic spatial expressions

The construction scheme of dynamic spatial expressions is given in (24).

(24) Figure Ground(Case) [Relator verbroot+inflection|spatialConfiguration]
    NP NP-[NP-mer] prw- Manner+TAM+\p
    gite masu goe- bam
    bottle table on la-pur[1\p]-3\gon

As the scheme and language example illustrate, in dynamic spatial expressions the ground-NP is not obligatorily marked with a case marker. The presence of the case marker is conditioned by the characteristics of the spatial relator, the verb stem and by discourse-pragmatics. If a dynamic spatial expression does only exhibit a simplex verb, i.e. a verb that does not have a preverb, then the use of the motative case is obligatory (cf. 25 below). With verbs of motion and caused motion that contain a preverb, the use of the motative exhibits further complexity and will be examined in more detail in section 4.2.

4.2. Use of the motative case in spatial expressions

The use of the motative is determined by the presence or absence of a spatial preverb. As already mentioned, with motion event predicates which do not contain a preverb, the ground-NP is obligatorily marked with the motative case, cf. (25).

(25a) nene-qa b-ular
doors mtor 1a-gon
'\i go to the door.'

(25b) *nene b-ular
doors
1a-gon

With verbs of motion and caused motion containing a preverb, the factors responsible for the use of the motative as a marker of the ground-NP are more complex; the expressions exhibit a clear asymmetry between the use of motative in allative vs ablative spatial relations. This will be discussed in the remainder of this section.

4.2.1. Allative spatial relations

In allative spatial expressions containing a preverb, the ground-NP is linguistically coded as a core argument, as (26) illustrates. In (26a) the ground-NP is unmarked for case and the addition of the motative case to the ground-NP renders the expression ungrammatical (26b), i.e. in allative spatial expressions containing a preverb the ground-NP cannot be marked with the oblique motative case.

(26a) tencere-\i dolo-b-o-bam
pot water into-1a-\VV-pour[1\p]-3\gon
'I pour water into the pot.'

(26b) *\i tencere-qa dolo-b-o-bam
water pot-mer into-1a-\VV-pour[1\p]-3\gon
4.2.3. Interrelation of spatial preverbs and case marking

In sum, we can state that spatial preverbs add a new semantic argument to the base verb, namely the ground of a spatial scene. Whether the ground is realized as a core argument, however, depends on at least one of three factors. The first factor is the semantics of the spatial construction: In ablative spatial constructions the ground is a core argument of the construction, in ablative spatial constructions as well as in deictic constructions and constructions with preverbless predicates, the ground NP is marked with the oblique case oblique. Hence, ablative spatial scenes are construed as highly transitive (in the sense of HOPPER & THOMPSON 1980), while ablative spatial scenes are not. This difference in behaviour has also been reported for other languages (IKEGAMI 1987, LESTRADE 2008) and may well be related to the difference in cognitive salience between goals and sources which will be discussed in section 5.

A second factor which determines the case marking of the ground-NP is a lexical one. While most spatial preverbs either take ground-NPs in motivative case (for ablative readings) or ground-NPs unmarked for case (for allocative readings), the preverb e-'up', epke-'up amidst' and epeke-'down amidst' obligatorily take ground-NPs marked with the motivative case in both the ablative and the ablative readings.

For the preverbs amo-'into' and gamo-'out of', a third factor seems to be of importance, namely discourse pragmatics. Both preverbs allow alternation between the more transitive construction with the ground-NP construed as a core argument and the less transitive construction with the ground-NP marked with the oblique case motivative. The details of this alternation have not been studied so far and need further investigation.

4.3. Allative and Ablative marking in other Laz varieties

In other Laz varieties, goal and source marking is distributed over two discrete cases. For ablative spatial configurations the ground is marked by the ablative case marker -qal-e (33a, 33b) whereas in ablative spatial configuration, the source-NP is marked by the ablative case marker -am-ra (33a, 33b), cf. also HOLSEY (1991), LACROIX (2009).

(33) Vise-Arhuvi (Fnektli)

33a Ali Vise-ge komalan
'Ali Vise-to comes' [ANDERSON 1963: 112]

(33b) Poli-len Turani
'Istanbul from Turan.' [ANDERSON 1963: 110]

33c oxori čikimle metxi var učumes homen
'He (Turhan) doesn't say, “Come to my house!” Immediately he (ABI) goes away from him.' [ANDERSON 1963: 117]
As has been shown in section 4.2, the variety of Ardeşen differs from all other dialects of Laz, since it does not differentiate between a goal and a source reading. The exceptional case of Ardeşen-Laz might be a result of a phonetically motivated syncretism of the two forms into one. But since there are no data available on the earlier stages of the language, this assumption can only be based on the phonological near-similarity and on the unusual semantics of the motivative case in combination with semantic asymmetries to be discussed in section 5 below and the non-spatial uses of the motivative, as have been illustrated in section 3 above.

5. Semantic asymmetry of the motivative in spatial expressions

The semantic conflation of source and goal readings has never been reported before for other languages (Andrews 1985, Igami 1987, Stolz 1992, Kreuzels 2006) and is sometimes even ruled out categorically as a cognitive possibility, considering the fact that motion towards a ground and motion away from a ground are spatial events which are in opposition to each other and exclude each other semantically. In the rest of this paper, we will deal with the semantics of this somewhat unusual case.

In simple terms, the meaning of the motivative case is vague with respect to expressing a motion towards a goal or away from a source, as was demonstrated in (3). Upon scrutiny, however, a clear semantic asymmetry can be found with respect to the interpretation of its meaning. In context-free elicited utterances, speakers have a strong preference to interpret motivative case as a marker for an ablative spatial relation. For instance, when presenting expressions such as the one given in (34), the intuition of the native speakers is to interpret the utterance as an expression for someone moving to the house and to negate the possibility of interpreting the utterance as expressing a movement away from the house.

(34) oxi:ti-ja ulan house-mot ge:lanqepes 'S/He goes to the house.'
    'S/He goes away from the house.'

The above-described preference for a directional reading of the motivative in context-free utterances is in accordance with findings in acquisition research and psychology. It can be explained by the asymmetry between the use of goal and source expressions which is based on a conceptual bias for goal paths. In several studies on the acquisition of English (Friesman et al. 1980, Landau & Zubowski 2003, Lakusta & Landau 2005), it has been shown that even in children's early speech there is an asymmetry of encoding goals and sources in path expressions: children regularly refer to the goal and the goal path expression in a directional motion event, but almost always omit the source and source path expression in a motion event that depicts motion away from a reference object. Likewise in psychological research it has been shown that perceivers of a spatial configuration focus their attention more on the endpoint than on the starting point of a motion event (Regier 1996, 1997, Regier & Zheng 2007). Based on several experiments with normally developing children and children suffering from Williams syndrome as well as English speaking adults, Lakusta & Landau (2005) argue that the bias towards the goal path in linguistic expression is caused by a conceptual goal-based perspective on events (which can be overriden on pragmatic grounds, i.e. by unusual, non-everday situations exhibiting extraordinary source paths). Furthermore, since the goal path bias is present even in pre-linguistic children, Lakusta & Landau (2005) argue that the goal path bias is indeed a conceptual bias and not a linguistic bias driven by frequency effects. The fact that frequency of goal expressions in many languages is generally much higher than source expressions could thus be accounted for as a epiphenomenon of a cognitively grounded goal path bias, a universal cognitive feature which might be due to properties of the attentional and memory systems of human brains (cf. Regier 1997, Lakusta & Landau 2005, Ilgara & Futsa 2000).

In Laz we find additional evidence that goals are of higher salience to the language user than sources when considering that the subpart of the preverb system containing expressions for goals is more elaborate than that for expressing source configurations.

Laz has a rather complex system of spatial relatives prefixed to the verb stem (spatial preverbs, cf. Kutscher 2003, 2007). However, in Laz we find a clear asymmetry in the structure of the preverb inventory: for stance and ablative motion, the system of preverbs is much bigger in size than for ablative motion. The number of preverbs for ablative relations is much smaller, with less fine-grained semantics and several ablative spatial concepts correlating with just one ablative spatial concept (cf. 35). Moreover, except from the preverb gama- 'out of' the preverbs used in ablative spatial expressions can also be used in descriptions of ablative spatial scenes, i.e. they are neutral with respect to referring to the starting or endpoint of a motion. The decisive factor for the choice of a preverb in ablative spatial expressions is the vertical axis of the motion, (cf. 35-38). In locative and ablative spatial expressions on the other hand, the vertical axis is only one of several parameters (for more details cf. Kutscher 2010).

gama- 'out of, away from (Ground is horizontal 35 or neutral 36)'

(35a) porqa dolabi mola-b-dum → dolabi-qa gama-b-i-yam
        dress wardrobe in-1a-pu:rs
        'I put the dress into the wardrobe.'
        wardrobe-mot out-1a-vv-tak:ee:rs
        'I take it out of the wardrobe.'

(35b) cari soba me:ka-b-dum → soba-qa gama-b-i-yam
        bread oven in-1a-pu:rs
        'I put the bread into the oven.'
        oven-mot out-1a-vv-tak:ee:rs
        'I take it out of the oven.'

(35c) ti:ni kapayi mo-b-dum → kapayi-qa gama-b-i-yam
        book slip case in-1a-pu:rs
        'I put the book into the slip case.'
        slip case out-1a-vv-tak:ee:rs
        'I take it out of the slip case.'

e- 'out of, away from (Ground is below)'

(36a) o:kari tasi ce-b-dum → tasi-qa e-ep:cop:am
        apple bowl down-1a-pu:rs
        'I put the apple into the bowl.'
        bowl-mot up-1a-tak:ee:rs
        'I take it out of the bowl.'

(36b) kazi bardayi dolo-b-dum → bardayi-qa e-ep:cop:am
        spoon glass in-1a-pu:rs
        'I put the spoon into the glass.'
        glass-mot up-1a-tak:ee:rs
        'I take it out of the glass.'

8 People suffering from Williams syndrome show normal speech abilities while having severe spatial impairments.
The case of directional-ablative syncretism

(37c) či’b Americans ti go-b-dum → ti qa e-b-gi-pum
book head on-1a-pu:pu:p+r
‘I put the book on the head.’

(38a) čanta dolabi go-b-dum → dolabi qa ee-b-i-yum
bag wardrobe on-1a-pu:pu:p+r wardrobe-mot down-1a-vv-take-r
‘I put the bag on the top of the wardrobe.’

(38b) čanta halili/masa go-b-dum → halili qa e-b-gi-pum
bag rug/table on-1a-pu:pu:p+r rug/table-mot up-1a-vv-take-r
‘I put the bag on the rug/table.’

This asymmetry in the inventory of spatial relators is also reported for other languages such as English, Dutch, Korean and Tzotzil Maya (cf. Bowkeran 1996, Bowkeran et al. 1995).

More evidence for an asymmetry between goal and source concepts is the difference in the distribution of the motative in Ardequ-Laz. As was discussed in section 2 and 4.4, ground-NPs in ablative spatial expressions are realised as core arguments of the spatial predicates, i.e. they are unmarked for case and may be represented by verbal inflection, while goal-NPs in ablative spatial expressions are obligatorily marked by the motative case (with the exception of predicates containing the preverb amo- ‘horizontally into’ or gamo- ‘horizontally out of’, cf. 29 and 30). Hence, with respect to markedness, the conceptually more unmarked category goal is expressed in the linguistically unmarked construction while the conceptually marked source is realised in a more marked manner with respect to its morphological form.

6. Conclusion

In sum, we find that Ardequ-Laz differs from the other varieties of Laz with respect to its case-system: Ardequ-Laz does not exhibit core cases and has a motative case which conflates the ablative with the ablative function while at the same time excluding locative spatial meaning. While this kind of conflation seems to be typologically exceptional and conceptually rather unmotivated, the semantics and use of the motative show some asymmetries which indicate that, upon scrutiny, the properties of the motative fit with the cognitive goal path bias which is claimed to be universal in humans by researchers on language acquisition and psychology. These asymmetries are i) a tendency to interpret motative-marked grounds as goals in expressions without preverbs, ii) a more fine-grained inventory of preverbs referring to ablative motion, and iii) a difference in markedness such that the cognitively more marked source expressions are also linguistically more marked, i.e. the fact that source expressions are marked obligatorily with motative, while goal-NPs are unmarked for case in expressions containing a preverb as a spatial relator.

References


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