

լաքուածները ողջ բազմութիւնը, երանութեան ձայն արձակելով, նրա ստացուածքին միանգամայն արժանի արքայական պատիւ պարգեւեց նրան: Իսկ խորամանկ գիշերասեր թռչունը, որ մօտ էր գտնուում փառաբանողին, քննախոյզ խոհեմութեամբ ճանաչեց իր սեփական գոյնը: Իսկոյն բռնեց դուրս քաշեց իր վրայ եղածներին նման փետուրները եւ, բացայայտելով իր տոհմակցի սովորութիւնը, մերկացրեց զարդարուածի սնապարծ ամբարտաւանութիւնը: Նրան հետեւելով՝ միւսներն էլ, մօտիկից զննելով ու ճանաչելով սեփական գունաւորումը, իւրաքանչիւրը հանեց իր փետուրները: Հնչեց արտաքին զարդարանքից զրկուածին այսպանող ու ծաղրող մի երգ, եւ իր պաճուճանքից մերկացած, նա բազմաթիւ թռչունների ծաղրի առարկայ դարձաւ»:

## DIALECTSYNTAX— ON THE IMPORTANCE OF SYNTACTIC CRITERIA IN MULTI-FEATURE CLASSIFICATION OF ARMENIAN DIALECTS

Jasmine Dum-Tragut

Languages differ from each other in respect to certain linguistic features, and likewise dialects. These distinguishing, contrastive features comprise the phonological and lexical inventory of a natural language as well as the structural, i.e. the morphological and syntactic characteristics. In modern linguistics, the structural features of languages have been stressed in comparative studies, and modern typology and language universal research are mainly based on such features. Typology as practiced since the early 90s investigates differences and hence also similarities between languages. In modern areal linguistics these typological features have been used to classify languages according to their structural attributes and to define linguistic areas. Shared so-called grammatical features are often an evidence for close language contact, interferences and parallel linguistics developments.

In the history of linguistic typology two methodological issues were to be addressed, the basis of the cross-linguistic comparison and the language sample. One of the first steps was the so-called morphological typology (Schleicher), which used the morphological structure of words as basis for a classification. But since languages generally do NOT belong to a single holistic structural type, but rather to a type that consists of various structural parameters, they may contain features representing two or more types. Beginning with the implicational universals of Greenberg in the 60s the attention of typology has turned to selected syntactic features, especially regarding word-order and agreement patterns. Even

in typology, until the 60s the syntax of natural languages has been a relatively neglected area of study. The main problem was simply not the same knowledge and the same data were available about syntax and sounds. It was easier to study sounds than syntax.

Languages differ in certain syntactic features, and likewise dialects.

In dialectology, however, syntax is represented only by way of exception. Dialectology was primarily influenced and determined by the methods of historical linguistics in the 19th and early 20th centuries: the analysis of linguistic data (in dialectology of course, speech utterances) regarding their phonetic, morphological and lexical features (RUOFF 1982, 239). Theoretical demands for the inclusion of syntactic features which have been formulated by early dialectologists have often not been considered either in practical diatopic or syntopic studies: "It is at least desirable to include syntax, suprasegmental and stylistic phenomena into dialectological studies" (WEGENER 1879).

It is phonetics which was regarded as the basis of dialectology, and it is still the main criteria for the classification of dialects.

Generally, in the early stages of historical linguistics, in dialectology and in typology only those features were vastly defined and described which were apparent to linguists. In dialectology, the most apparent features were those which are on the surface of the dialect, the phonetic inventory, the phonetic realization of lexemes in comparison with the standardized and written language and the specific lexicon. Morphological features were often

restricted to apparent "deviations" from the standard language, such as "deviating" verbal, nominal or pronominal forms.

But what about syntax?

Why have syntactic features often been neglected in dialectology and have not yet been taken for granted to be part of a complete structural description and classification of a dialect?

A language and consequently a dialect is defined as a variable system consisting of various levels (phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics) which are characterized by their own specific inventory (phonemes, morphemes, rules, lexicon). The specific structure of a particular language and consequently of a particular dialect can be defined as the entirety of the relations of these elements. Why have syntactic rules and features not been considered to be an essential part of linguistic and dialectological description and classification?

There may be several reasons for that:

the transparency of syntactic features and rules

the stability of syntactic features and rules

the reach of syntactic features and rules

the sample

Syntactic rules, especially word order rules, functional principles or pragmatic marking, are in most cases no surface phenomena, i.e. syntactic rules are often the least apparent linguistic rules to observers. Specific phonetic realizations or specific lexemes are much easier to record than specific syntactic rules. This is also due to the fact that in general a phonetic and lexical inventory can also be directly compared either to other dialects or to the written and spoken standardized language. Dialectologists are generally used to comparing directly the "apparent" substance of different varieties.

Syntactic phenomena, however, are said

to be less comparable to other dialects and to standardized language. The syntactic differences between dialect and standardized language are supposed to be identical to the ones between spoken and written language (LÖFFLER 1982,450). Spoken syntax was considered to be a deviating system from written syntax in the first studies of the 1960s, but was later on defined as an independent linguistic, though "deficient", system. Spoken syntax uses other structural methods and elements than the written one. Characteristic traits are e.g. incomplete sentences (ellipsis), dislocation, topicalization, dominance of parataxis, word order variations in general, special agreement patterns etc. This implies that the syntax of any spoken variety is different from its written form. For that reason a direct comparison of really standardized and not deviating (i.e. written) syntactic system with a deficient (i.e. any spoken) syntactic system is not necessarily a conclusive comparison.

But still, the spoken syntax of a standardized language may differ from a spoken dialectal syntax, if not regarding sentence complexity or length or pragmatic highlighting but other structural characteristics like word order variations, agreement or cliticization, just to name some. These features are apparent only, if they deviate extremely from the rules of the "written" language.

According to my intuition especially such features shall be considered in dialectal classification.

Syntactic rules and features are usually not very stable in spoken language. This is partly due to pragmatics: in spoken language, suprasegmental features are very important for language production and perception. They mark not only emphasized elements and simple word and syntactic boundaries, but are also used instead of word order rules. Other

elements helping the speaker/hearer to produce/understand utterances are non-verbal ones. Syntactic rules can be easily changed and even omitted in spontaneous speech by means of suprasegmental and non-verbal elements.

Syntactic rules shall be regarded as linguistic characteristics of dialectal groups: the syntactic features usually do not differ too much in smaller dialectal zones, but usually more or even almost obviously in the classification of bigger dialect groups. Linguistic features other than syntactic ones are more likely between a small subgroup of dialects or between the "subdialects" of two neighbouring villages. This implies that the reach of specific syntactic features is quite low and shall only be considered in the fundamental classification diversification of dialects into certain main groups but not into smaller subgroups. This is an opinion I would like to argue about.

Traditional dialectal classification may lack syntactic features since it is rather difficult to measure syntactic variations from samples. Descriptions of syntactic rules of a language in general requires other linguistic methods and other kinds of samples apart from comprehensive samples. In contrast to morphology, semantics and partly phonetics, syntax cannot be investigated by means of direct interviews or questionnaires. Much large-scale methods are required such as corpus work, detailed transcriptions and statistics. This great deal of investigation is mostly out of all proportion to the amount of suitable syntactic material found.

Despite the fact that many syntopic descriptions are rather "complete grammars" of a specific dialect of a single village/town or smaller dialectal region, these "grammars" do often not contain a description of syntactic features.

Most of such "local grammars" deal only with the common phonological and lexical descriptions, and touch upon syntactic rules only if they deviate from the "norm".

The other method of dialectology, the diatopic or regional description shows only dialectal-geographical features of certain regions. Most of these regional descriptions are based on phonetics and lexicon, and are orientated by isoglosses. It is still not common with dialect geography to use "isosyntaxes" (HUBER 1909, 100).

Syntax is not an integral part of dialectological descriptions in most dialectologies of particular languages, and the first systematic steps to take syntactic rules into consideration were undertaken by a scientific group, the Tübingen work group on "Language in Southwest Germany" in the late 60s, working on syntactic features of German. Though some other syntactic studies followed, e.g. in Romance languages by BENINCA, this field is still neglected.

One of these earliest studies of dialectal syntax of the Tübingen work group represents one of the rather seldom dialect maps with isosyntaxes. The isosyntax here was a certain clause in Standard German "*wie wir gestern abend heimgekommen sind*" ("when we arrived yesterday evening"), the order of the auxiliary and the parts of the compound verb was in the centre of the scientists' interest.

Syntactic features are not commonly used as characteristics in dialectology but may be of importance to stress the dialectal boundaries between dialectal groups and to find out new differences between dialects in the subdialectal level.

It seems crucial to give some clues to possible syntactic features in dialectology for arguing the demand for the inclusion of syntactic features and rules into modern dialectal classifications.

Recalling the fact that the history of dialectology shows some parallels to linguistic typology and diachronic linguistics, one could conclude that, in general, the same features could be used in dialectology as in word-order-, relational and functional typology. Especially the features of word-order morphosyntactic agreement, focusing and topicalization patterns shall be investigated more closely. One of the main fighters for dialect syntax, Abraham, has given a kind of systematic list of possible features (ABRAHAM 1993,7):

word order phenomena in general  
agreement  
case syncretism  
structural and case-subject  
zero subject  
infinitive constructions  
clitization  
general syntactic typological features.  
Others have added  
negation  
extraposition of negative particles  
syncretism of dative and accusative  
animacy etc.

#### Syntactic features in Armenian dialectology

Armenian dialectology is historically based on morphological criteria as given by Ačaryan in 1911. In this pioneering work he classified Armenian dialects into three major groups by means of the morphological feature of the present tense formation. Within these three major groups he distinguished the dialects by means of phonetic, lexical and other morphological features. Ačaryan's notion "morphological features" comprised the number of cases, the comparison of adjectives (but primarily the morpholexical formation of the degrees than the order of adjective

and standard), the verbal forms (with the indication of the order of verb and auxiliary, respectively verb and verbal particle as well as the negative paradigm), the animacy criterion respectively the use of accusative versus dative for direct objects.

It is rather amazing that early Armenian dialectology has based its classification on morphosyntactic features at the time when in Europe dialectal classification was only concentrating on phonetic features. Only later, starting with Ğaribyan (1941) the Armenian phonetic system was moved to the centre of dialectologists' interest.

It was only in the 70s when Jahukyan adopted a multi-feature classification with 100 features, combining 50 phonetic and 50 so-called grammatical features for an optimized classification of Armenian dialects.

Let us have a closer look at these "grammatical features".

Strictly speaking, the majority of the features are morphological ones. Only the following features can apparently be grouped to syntactic (typological) features:

feature 70: the definiteness of the possessor phrase, such as

*աշխարհի-ն տեղ* versus *աշխարհի տեղ*

*հացի կտոր-ը* versus *հացի-ն կտոր-ը* or

feature 71: the order of the indefinite article, such as

(3) *մի մարդ* versus *մարդ մը* or

(4) *մի աշխարհ* versus *աշխարհ մը*

feature 72: the use of the prefix *q-* with direct object (72a) only with personal pronouns

(5) *տեսնել աշխարհ* versus *տեսնել զաշխարհ*

(6) *սիրելի ինձ* versus *սիրելի զիս*

feature 73: the use of postposition of written language as preposition

(7) *իմն հետ* versus *հետ իմն*

feature 74: the difference between dative and accusative for marking direct objects (animacy criterion)

feature 75a) the additional use of preposition with locative meaning

(8) *երթալ գիւղ* versus *երթալ ի գիւղ*

(9) *նստել տաւր* versus *նստել ի տաւ*

feature 97: the postposed order of the negative particle *մի* and *նչ*

(10) *մի գրիր* versus *գրիլ մի*

(11) *չգրես* versus *գրես չ*

The repetition of auxiliary in negative compound tenses

(12) *չեմ գրել* versus *չեմ գրեր եմ*  
Armenian dialectology has obviously considered some syntactic features in syntopic descriptions and as important criteria for dialect classification, though - as usual in a wide range of dialect grammars, only those syntactic features of a certain dialect have been described which obviously differ much from the written language. This method can be found crosslinguistically in all earlier local grammars. Some syntactic elements, however, have not been considered yet.

If trying to find syntactic-typological features of interest for Armenian dialects, one should try to find those syntactic features of Modern Armenian literary variants, which contribute also to a differentiation between Standard Eastern and Western Armenian. I will certainly not be concerned with a precise explanation and representation of the syntactic differences of Standard Eastern and Western Armenian in this paper, but would like to name some of the most apparent distinctive features: Some of these differences can be expected also in dialectal subgroups.

a) word-order

In Modern Armenian literary variants the order of the noun-phrase constituents is grammaticalized to a preposed unmarked order (attribute + N). Because of this grammatical-

ization no "deviations" can be expected in neutral utterances.

The only difference in the placing of adnominal attributes is represented by the order of the indefinite article, preposed in Eastern Armenian and postposed in Western Armenian.

Adposition is also with overwhelming frequency postposed, the frequency may however differ in Western Armenian because of the lack of an own locative-morpheme and consequently by the paraphrastic locative expression by means of postpositions.

The order of adjectives and standard of subject in comparison is also more or less the same in both variants, Standard + Marker + Adjective.

The order of negative particle and finite verb is also parallel in both Modern Armenian literary variants (neg + V) as the order of subordinate relative clauses (N + REL), and in most cases the order of auxiliary and verb as V + AUX and the one of verb particle and verb (part + V).

Basic word order, however, is difficult to state, it can however be regarded as principally S-O-V in both variants. The basic word order apparently differs in both standard variants by the functional perspective, the focus principle in Eastern Armenian. Also of interest is the use of double negation in Eastern Armenian by contrast to Western Armenian.

b) relational typology

In relational typology, both variants are generally nominative, i.e. the structural subject appears in zero-marked nominative case. Deviations from this rule may occur with participial and infinitive constructions. Especially the (logical) subject of such constructions can be of interest.

Regarding the direct object, the literary variants are said to be different. When Eastern Armenian has an animacy distinction,

Western Armenian will not have one. Thus, in Eastern Armenian animate objects are always in dative, inanimate ones in the zero-marked nominative. In Western Armenian, nominal objects are always in zero-marked nominative, pronominal ones in accusative.

c) other syntactic differences

Other syntactic differences might occur in morphosyntactic features, like definiteness. It is well-known that Eastern and Western Armenian differ also in definiteness marking: while Eastern Armenian seems to have clear rules for the use of the definite article, in Western Armenian these rules do not appear that consistent. Definiteness seems also to have an effect on word order mainly in Eastern Armenian.

Agreement is only used with subject and finite verb or auxiliary, and is also regularly used in dialectal variants of Modern Armenian. Concord between adnominal attributes and nouns on the other hand cannot be expected in dialects, since it absolutely lacks in standardized variants and because of grammaticalized syntactic position of these attributes preceding the noun.

Another syntactic feature is negation. Especially literary Eastern Armenian uses double negation.

In a catalogue of multi-feature classification of Armenian dialects, the following syntactic characteristics may serve as features:

basic word order in neutral sentences (VO : SO)

order of indefinite article (N + INDEF : INDEF + N)

order of verb and auxiliary in compound verbal forms (V + AUX : AUX + V)

order of verb and verbal particle in compound verbal forms (part + V : V + part)

negation of verbs (neg(-)AUX V : neg(-)

V AUX : V (neg-)AUX etc. neg(-)Vfinite, Vfinite neg.

negation in general : double negation?

comparison of adjectives : standard-

marker-adjective : adjective-marker-standard

case syncretism in general : locative?

animacy distinction with direct objects:

±animate noun

treatment of direct objects, nominative :

accusative : dative; nouns and pronouns

cliticization

topicalization: what is topicalized?

infinitive and participle constructions :

case marking of subject and direct object .

definiteness marking : article with GEN,

with DEM etc.

focus principle

Some of these features, especially the most obvious ones, have already been included into Ačaryan's morphological features, and later into Jahukyan's "grammatical" features, such as order of indefinite article, the animacy-distinction or the negation of verbal forms. The feature of comparison of adjectives has been treated as purely morphological one, regarding only the difference between analytic and synthetic formations. The inversion of adpositions, the use of the prefixed *z-* as accusative marker and some paraphrases for locative meaning have also been included, apparently thanks to rather detailed local grammars.

Let me give an example of some syntactic features which have usually been considered in local grammars, but which are not explicitly formulated as distinctive features in word-order in Armenian dialectology: the order of auxiliary and verb in general, the order of verbal particle and verb, the order of the negative auxiliary and the negation of verbs.

| Dialect     | AUX+V         | particle+verb | negation, AUX+V       | negation finite verb   | prohibitive               |
|-------------|---------------|---------------|-----------------------|--|---------------------------|
| Ararat      | V+AUX (AUX+V) | part+V        | neg-AUX+V (V+neg-AUX) | neg-finite V finite V + * <i>vōč<sup>c</sup></i>                       | <i>mi+V</i> V+ <i>mi</i>  |
| Bayazet     | AUX+V+AUX     | part+V        | neg-AUX+V+AUX         | neg-finite V   | <i>mi+V</i>               |
| Tiflis      | V+AUX         | part+V        | neg-AUX+V             | neg-finite V <i>vuc<sup>c</sup></i> + finite V                         | <i>mi+V</i>               |
| Ardvin      | V+AUX         | part+V        | neg-AUX+V             | neg-finite V   | <i>mi+V</i>               |
| Loŕi        | V+AUX         | V+part        | V+neg-AUX             | finite V + <i>voč<sup>c</sup></i>                                      | V+ <i>voč<sup>c</sup></i> |
| Ľarabal     | V+AUX         | part+V        | V+neg-AUX             | neg-finite V finite V + <i>hiwč<sup>c</sup></i>                        | V+ <i>mi</i>              |
| Šamaxi      | V+AUX         | part+V        | neg-AUX+V             | neg-finite V   | <i>mi+V</i>               |
| Agulis      | V+AUX         | part+V        | V+neg-AUX             | neg-finite V finite V + <i>unc<sup>c</sup></i>                         | V+ <i>mja</i>             |
| Melri       | V+AUX         | part+V        | V + neg-AUX           | finite V + <i>uc<sup>c</sup></i> , <i>vuc<sup>c</sup></i> neg-finite V | V+ <i>mē</i>              |
| Polis       | V+AUX         | part+V V+part | neg-AUX+V neg-V+AUX   | neg-finite V   | <i>m(i)+V</i>             |
| Karin       | V+AUX         | V+part        | neg-AUX+V             | neg-finite V   | <i>mi+V</i>               |
| Svedia      | V+AUX         | part+V        | neg-AUX+V             | neg-finite V   | <i>mi+V</i>               |
| Van         | V+AUX         | part+V        | neg-AUX+V             | neg-finite V   | <i>mi+V</i>               |
| Sasun       | V+AUX         | part+V        | neg-AUX+V             | neg-finite V   | <i>mə+V</i>               |
| Muš         | V+AUX         | part+V        | neg-AUX+V (+AUX)      | neg-finite V   | <i>mə+V</i>               |
| Tigranakert | V+AUX         | part+V        | neg-AUX+V             | neg-finite V   | <i>mi+V</i>               |

table 1, Example for syntactic criteria or isosyntaxes in some Armenian dialects

This small table can only offer a small impression of "isosyntaxes" in Armenian dialectology.

As can be seen, dialects may also differ in the way how they usually order verb and auxiliary, verbal particles and verbs, even more by the way how they order negative particles, auxiliary and verb. Of course, such order parameters are also of interest for typological findings: if the negative particle is used with overwhelming frequency in preverbal focus, it will usually occur there (neg-finite verb † neg-AUX+V, *mi* + V). The same is true for predominant postverbal focus (finite verb + neg † V + neg-AUX or V + AUX + neg, V + *mi*). The position of the negative particles in relation to verbs may also give some clues for other negative constructions in Armenian variants.

The comparison of order variants in one dialectal group, subgroup or intergroup may

also help to draw dialectal boundaries more exactly and to stress the relations between "border-dialects" or so-called interdialects: the mutual interference is reflected in syntactic features of which one part is considered as prototypical for Eastern Armenian and the remaining part as prototypical for Western Armenian dialects. It is also obvious from the small table that by means of a single order variation more dialects may be individuated.

It is advisable however, to proceed not only from syntactic differences between written Eastern and Western Armenian, but also from all kinds of syntactic features that may occur in dialects. The more distinctive features are used and known, the more distinct dialects can be individuated. Just an example: in Northern Italy only by studying the syntax of subject clitics, dialectologists could find 25 distinct dialects (RENZI/VANELLI 1983). By adding other features at least 100 syntactical-

ly distinct dialects can be listed in Northern Italy!

It is also a task for syntopic dialectologists to provide new local grammars. These grammars shall be grammars *in sensu stricto*, i.e. descriptions of all features of a language, i.e. a real grammar of a particular "language" and not orientated by the normative grammar of the written language. In German and also Romance dialectology, for example, there exist several complete local grammars but also specific local syntaxes which describe only the syntax of a certain dialect.

It goes without saying that the classification of dialects will become more complicated, when more features are considered.

Also in diatopic dialectology the geographic diffusion of differing syntactic forms may be of interest for the production of new dialect maps. As mentioned above, the idea of using isosyntaxes is not that absurd. The primary question is raised by the need to select adequate syntactic features for such a geographic presentation. Not all syntactic features are suitable to be used as markers for a particular dialectal area.

The dialectal syntaxes are also of importance for further synchronic and diachronic studies in Armenian variants. Dialects use to reflect foreign influences, loans or are-alinguistic developments more intensely than standardized written language can ever do. This is true for the phonetic inventory, morphology and the lexicon, but also for syntax. The syntax of Armenian dialects may also contribute to understand phenomena of standardized language, such as word order and focus phenomena:

And finally: outstanding problems in the syntax of Modern Armenian, both Eastern and Western, may find a solution only based on evidence from certain dialects (ZWART 1993, 246).

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