

Split intransitivity in literary Tabassaran

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In Tabassaran, all 3rd person nominals show ergative alignment as regards both case marking (A is marked with Ergative case, S=P with Absolutive) and indexation on the verb (which shows identical gender and number agreement with both S and P, while A is not indexed on the verb).

However, interlocutive pronouns (those referring to the speaker and/or hearer in the speech act) have a single case form marking S, A and P, i.e. they show neutral alignment (Table 1), while they display gender and number marking identical to that seen for nouns.

Table 1

	1sg.	2sg.	1pl. (exclusive)	1pl. (inclusive)	2pl.
Abs	<i>uzu</i>	<i>uvu</i>	<i>uçu</i>	<i>uxhu</i>	<i>uçvu</i>
Erg	<i>uzu</i>	<i>uvu</i>	<i>uçu</i>	<i>uxhu</i>	<i>uçvu</i>
Gen	<i>yiz</i>	<i>yav</i>	<i>iç</i>	<i>ixh</i>	<i>içv</i>
Dat	<i>uzuz</i>	<i>uvuz</i>	<i>uçuz</i>	<i>uxhuz</i>	<i>uçvuz</i>

Moreover, Tabassaran seems to have developed person agreement, a phenomenon unknown in related languages. The agreement markers are interlocutive pronouns which have come to be attached to the verb. 3rd person is not marked. The verb may agree with one or several of its arguments. This agreement seems to be obligatory with the Subject¹ and optional with other arguments.

Intransitive verbs display an actancy split with regard to person agreement. In my presentation, I will first of all give a brief illustration of agreement behaviour in transitive constructions. It will be seen that the pronominal elements indexing the agent and the patient have distinct forms (Table 2), unlike the corresponding free personal pronouns (Table 1):

Table 2

	1sg.	2sg.	1pl.	2pl.
Agent	<i>-za</i>	<i>-va</i>	<i>-ça</i> (<i>-xha</i>)	<i>-çva</i>
Patient	<i>-zu</i>	<i>-vu</i>	<i>-çu</i> (<i>-xhu</i>)	<i>-çvu</i>

In (a) I will present the category of consistently "patientive" intransitive verbs (e.g. *yik'ub* 'die', *alaqhub* 'meet'), whose single actant is indexed as a patient. In (b) "agentive" intransitive verbs will be discussed (e.g. *ğüb* 'come', *älqhüb* 'laugh'), for which S is indexed as A. And in (c) I will analyse a group of verbs which can mark their S either as A (ex. 1) or as P (ex. 2) depending on the voluntary or involuntary character of the action referred to. The examples cited will be drawn from published texts and my own fieldwork, carried out in summer 2009.

¹ The notion of 'subject' here encompasses the functions of agent, single actant and experiencer.

- a) dustağ.di- alaqh-ur-
 ʔ çvu
 prison-IN meet-FUT-
 2PL

You will meet in prison.

- b) uvu haz älqh-üra-va
 ? ?
 2SG why laugh-PRS-
 2SG

Why are you laughing?

- c) 1) časovoyir.i- ängel ğa-xh-niy-ça
 qhdi
 sentry.PL- tardy Px-be-
 POSTCOM AORPST-
 1PL

We loitered with some sentries.

- 2) doklad hāzur ap'-uri ängel ğa-xh-un-
 zu
 report ready make- tardy Px-be-
 CVPRS AOR-1SG

I was delayed by a report I was preparing.

I will conclude by showing that such actancy splits involving person agreement do not behave identically in the different varieties of Tabassaran.