

# The Tanti Dargwa category of contrast

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1. As is known at least since early 1980s, many Daghestanian languages possess a morphological category contrasting an individual to other individuals within a pragmatically established set (see Зализняк & Туровский 1984; Богуславская 1989; Boguslavskaja 1995). In the languages discussed in the literature, the category of contrast (labeled ‘restrictivity’) is usually expressed on attributes (primarily, on adjectives and participles but sometimes also on adnominal possessors); cf. (1):

- (1) Chirag Dargwa (Boguslavskaja 1995: 237)

bat’ar-ze q’ale ‘fine house’	bat’ar-kan q’ale	‘FINE house’
fine-ATR house		fine-CONTR house

Despite the fact that the category of contrast in Daghestanian languages was recognized long ago, to the best of my knowledge, no detailed description of it has been published. In what follows, I provide a preliminary description of the category in Tanti Dargwa (the Dargwa branch of the Northeast Caucasian family).

2. **Form.** In Tanti Dargwa, there are two dedicated suffixes used for the expression of contrast, namely *-il* (singular) and *-te* (plural). These suffixes appear on various kinds of attributes, including participles, adjectives and genitive and locative forms of nominals:

- (2) q:uka-te rurs-be

beautiful-CONTR:PL girl-PL  
‘beautiful girls (in contrast to ugly ones)’

- (3) če-uk-un-il murgul us:-iž kajs:-un

PREV-[M]eat.PF-PRET-CONTR:SG man sleep-INF lie.PF-PRET  
‘That man that had eaten (in contrast to the hungry one) went to sleep.’

- (4) dali ma<sup>h</sup>ha<sup>h</sup>čqala-b-il qali b-ic:-ib-da

I:ERG Makhachkala-N(ESS)-CONTR:SG house N-sell.PF-PRET-1  
‘I sold that house of mine which was in Makhachkala (in contrast to other houses of mine).’

Interestingly, these suffixes can also appear on “adverbial forms” which do not function as attributes. In this case, we still observe the contrast of individuals and not, for example, the contrast between different kinds of manner etc.:

- (5) niš:i-š:u dawlače-b-le-te ča-r-b-uq-un

we-APUD rich-HPL-ADV-CONTR:PL PREV-EL-HPL-go.PF-PRET  
‘They came to us being rich (in contrast to now, when they are not rich)’

Finally, some speakers marginally allow the appearance of the markers of contrast on head nouns of phrases describing the relevant individual:

- (6) murgul-il us:-iž kajs:-un

man-CONTR:SG sleep-INF lie.PF-PRET

‘The husband (and not the wife) went to sleep.’

It is worth noting that the combinations of some adjectives with the suffixes *-il* and *-te* have been lexicalized; cf. *kuq:-il* ‘left’. Moreover, these suffixes derive the quantifiers *imc’a-te* ‘most, majority’ (lit. ‘those that are many’) and *kam-te* ‘minority’ (lit. ‘those that are few’).

3. **Semantics and functioning.** Prototypically the category expresses the contrast between similar individuals. The nominal describing the contrasted individual may have specific reference (as in multiple examples above) or generic reference:

- (7) dam b-ič:aq-i-d b-erκ-ub-il dig  
I:DAT N-like.IPF-TH-1 N-dry.PF-PRET-CONTR:SG meat  
‘I like the DRIED meat.’

If the category of contrast operates with established sets, it could be expected that its markers would not appear in non-specific nominals. Curiously, however, this expectation is not borne out. Thus, *-il* and *-te* are also found on predicate nominals in declaratives (8) and exclamatives (9), and in existential and possessive clauses, where the subject noun phrase apparently should be non-specific (10):

- (8) hiž muq’ara c’ub-il sa-b  
this lamb white-CONTR:SG COP-N  
‘This lamb is white (not of the other colour).’
- (9) ah, ʔa<sup>ʕ</sup>bra q:uκa-jil rursi  
INTRJ INTRJ beautiful-CONTR:SG girl  
‘Ah, what a beautiful girl!’
- (10) š:i-li-c:ie-d urcul-la-te qurle le-d  
village-OBL-IN-NPL wood-GEN-CONTR:PL house:PL be-NPL  
‘There are wooden houses in the village (apart from stone house).’

I consider these uses to be secondary and to result from pragmaticization of the category which is typical for grammaticalizing processes.

4. **Conclusion.** The Tanti Dargwa category of contrast seemingly differs from similar categories described by Boguslavskaja in two respects. First, the markers of contrast appear not only on attributes. Second, the use of these markers does not imply specificity. These peculiarities of the category of contrast in Tanti Dargwa may be due to its high degree of grammaticalization.

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### Abbreviations

ADV – adverbial; APUD – localization ‘at’; ATR – attributive marker; CONTR – contrast; COP – copula; DAT – dative; EL – elative; ERG – ergative; ESS – essive; GEN – genitive; HPL – human

plural; IN – localization ‘in’; INF – infinitive; INTRJ – interjection; IPF – imperfective; M – masculine; N – neuter; OBL – oblique stem; PF – perfective; PL – plural; PRET – preterite; PREV – preverb; SG – singular; TH – thematic element.

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