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*Title of paper:* Differential Agent Marking in Caucasian languages

## Differential Agent Marking in Caucasian languages

Differential Agent Marking (henceforth DAM) refers to as a situation in which the agent argument of a transitive construction is case-marked in different ways, depending on certain conditions. The following Lezgi example illustrates DAM, where the ergative case (which coincides with the oblique stem) is used in volitional/neutral agent constructions, whereas the adelative case is used in involuntary agent constructions:

- (1) a. *Zamira-di get'e xa-na*  
Z-OBL[ERG] pot break-AOR  
'Zamira broke the pot.'
- b. *Zamira-di-way get'e xa-na*  
Z.-OBL-ADEL pot break-AOR  
'Zamira broke the pot accidentally/involuntarily.' (Haspelmath 1993: 292)

Basically two different instances of DAM have to be distinguished:

- *Split Agent Marking*: In this situation, different marking applies to the agent in different lexico-grammatical environments (see e.g. Silverstein 1976, Dixon 1994). The splits are usually conditioned by the lexical class of the verb, by semantic properties of the NP, TAM, or the type of the clause (e.g. main vs. subordinate clause).
- *DAM in a narrower sense*: In this situation, the agent can be marked differently in the same lexico-grammatical environment. DAM in this sense can depend on semantic (see ex. (1), where volitionality is the relevant factor) or discourse-pragmatic factors (e.g. information structure, expectedness, definiteness; see e.g. McGregor 2010).

DAM is widespread among the languages of the Caucasus; it occurs in all three indigenous Caucasian language families.

The present paper aims at providing a typological overview of DAM in Caucasian languages and seeks to focus on the following questions:

- What are the relevant domains triggering DAM in Caucasian languages?
- What types of DAM occur in particular languages?
- What case markers are involved?
- What genealogical and geographical patterns can be detected?

The language data for this paper cover all Caucasian (low-level) genera.

### **Abbreviations**

ADEL=adeltive; AOR=aorist; ERG=ergative; OBL=oblique

### **References**

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