

## Noun-verb complex predicates in Chechen

Zarina Molochieva (UC Berkeley & MPI EVA Leipzig)  
Alena Witzlack-Makarevich (University of Leipzig)

Complex predicates consisting of a nominal element and a light verb have enjoyed considerable attention in the investigations on Indo-Aryan (Mohanen 1994), Iranian (Goldberg 1996; Folli et al. 2003), Romance (Klingebiel 1989), and Germanic languages (Jackendoff 1974). Noun-verb complex predicates in these languages are of particular interest as they possess both lexical and phrasal properties. On the one hand, due to the lack of semantic compositionality, they are often regarded as building a single lexical unit. On the other hand, the single components of the complex predicates can remain transparent to certain rules of syntax. This violates the often assumed Lexical Integrity Principle, which predicts that syntax can neither manipulate nor have access to the internal structure of words (cf. Williams and di Sciullo 1987; Anderson 1992).

Though noun-verb complex predicates also exist in Nakh-Daghestanian languages, for instance, in Icarian Dargwa (Sumbatova and Matalov 2003) and Lezgian (Haspelmath 1993), there have not been any in-depth investigations of the phenomenon in these languages. The present talk attempts to fill this gap by providing a comprehensive account of noun-verb complex predicates in Chechen (Nakh, Nakh-Daghestanian; Russia).

The nominal elements of the complex predicates possess certain phrasal features and resemble direct objects. For instance, they occupy the absolutive argument slot and thus prevent any absolutive arguments from occurring with complex predicates, as in (1), they trigger agreement on the verbs, which possess an agreement slot, as in (2), finally, some complex predicates allow for its nominal element to occur non-adjacently, as in (3), and to be omitted under coreference, as in the same example.

- (1) *tilifon tuoxa* (telephone hit) 'phone'  
cuo            soega            tilifon            tyyxi-ra            siisara .  
3sERG        1sALL            phone            hit-WPST        yesterday.evening  
'She phoned me yesterday evening.'
- (2) *sa gatda* (soul make.tight) 'miss'  
naana-s            Muusa-na            sa            gat-d-o.  
mother-ERG        Musa-DAT            soul(D)        make.tight-D-PRS  
'The mother misses Musa.'
- (3) *ka tuoxa* (jaw hit) 'bite'  
cicig-as        ca-toex-na            cun-na        ka,        zhwala-s        toex-na        (cunna ka).  
cat-ERG        NEG-hit-PRF        3s-DAT        jaw        dog-ERG        hit-PRF        3sDAT jaw  
'It was not A CAT who bit him, it was A DOG.'

Noun-verb complex predicates in Chechen also have a number of features which make them resemble words: their meaning is mostly non-compositional; the nominal element cannot be questioned with a content question, as the pragmatic ill-formedness of (4), finally, some complex predicates require a fixed order of the two elements of complex predicates, as the ungrammaticality of (5) shows (compare to (3)):

- (4) *urs hwaqa* (knife rub) 'slaughter'  
hu            hweeqi-ra            Muusa-s        ystxa-na?  
what.NOM    rub-WPST            Musa-ERG        sheep-DAT  
Intended reading: 'With what did Musa slaughter the sheep?'
- #Urs hweeqi-ra.  
knife rub-WPST  
'With a knife.'

- (5) \**naanas-as*      *ca-gat-d-o-na*      *cun-na*      *sa*,  
 mother-ERG      NEG-make.tight-D-PRF      3s-DAT      soul
- jisha-s*      *gat-d-o*      (*cun-na*      *sa*).  
 sister-ERG      make.tight-D-PRS      3sDAT      soul
- Intended reading: 'It was not THE MOTHER who missed Musa most, but THE SISTER.'

After analyzing a range of Chechen complex predicates we come to the conclusion that they do not form a homogenous group. To capture this language-internal variation and assure comparability to complex predicates in other languages we discuss a range of typological variables building upon common tests applied to tell words and phrases apart.

## References

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