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Rules and Exceptions: The Junggrammatiker and Verner's Law

[abstract to be supplied]

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Modern Standard Arabic: In search of irregularity

Modern Standard Arabic is a language noted for its regularity. Is it, therefore, a suitable candidate for examination using Beedham's Method of Lexical Exceptions (Beedham 2005)?

The majority of Arabic verbs are derived from triliteral (triconsonantal) roots which are slotted into a small, finite number of patterns forming the basis of the lexical system. However, a brief survey of Arabic grammar books (e.g. Holes 1995, Badawi et al. 2004, Wright 1967) reveals that there is a diversity of opinions on how the morphology of these verbal patterns relates to the semantic and syntactic properties of the resulting verbs.

In search of a suitable set of exceptions on which to attempt to apply the method, the following questions will be addressed:

i. Is the Arabic verb really this regular?
ii. Is the distribution of verb forms in the lexicon random?
iii. To what extent are the syntactic and semantic properties of verbs predictable from their morphology?

In answering these questions, reference will be made to an exhaustive dictionary survey which has been undertaken (using Wehr 1994) of Arabic verbal forms and their patterns of co-occurrence, including statistical evidence, and some preliminary findings which have influenced the choice of material for further research. There will also be brief discussion of some of the limitations of the Method of Lexical Exceptions suggested by these findings.

Selected Bibliography
Verb-Noun constructions (VN) contain a generic Verb (V) and a specific Noun (N) which is either 1) lexicalised as part of a Complex Predicator: as in faire faillite, make haste, 2) a modifier of the Complement: faire le plein de carburant, make a fool of oneself, 3) a Complement in a Complex Predicate: faire du travail / travailler, to make a suggestion / to suggest. In all of these cases, the N specifies the semantic Range of the Process expressed in the Predicate as a whole (Halliday 1985). I argue here that Process Range is the only distinguishing feature of VN constructions. It is therefore not necessary to postulate ‘Support Verbs’, ‘Light Verbs’, ‘Stretched Verbs’ or other intermediate lexical categories that have been suggested in recent syntactic theory. Furthermore, I argue here that there is no difference in principle between ‘free’ VN collocations on the one hand and ‘fixed’ VN collocations on the other. All VN co-occurrences are constructions from the point of view of the ‘lexicogrammar’, and any complex sign can be promoted to the discourse level of ‘idiom’.

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The Non-Suffixal Derivation of Intensive Forms in Turkish

The structure of word-forms in Turkish does not seem to be a complicated problem, with Turkish being an agglutinative language: suffixes (as known, there are only suffixes in Turkish) are joined to stems or the word bases in a sufficiently clear manner. However, in the same language intensive forms of adjectives, adverbs and nouns may be created by means of partial reduplication – morphemes like prefixes are used. This is the only regular use of ‘interfixes’ in Turkish – I propose calling the items in question ‘interfix’ – they bind part of root with root.

More than 150 units in Turkish intensify by doubling the title syllable and adding or replacing its final consonant with -p-, -s-, -m-, -r-, -pA-, -ril-, -rma-, -pis-, -ram-, -re-, -se-, -ş-, -t-, (the last 9 of these affixes are discussed first).
High productivity of this kind of word-formation is illustrated by the following: both simple and derivative units are reduplicated; alongside with native Turkic words Arabic or Persian loanwords are partially doubled, as well as new borrowings: direkt (<Fr. directe) ‘direct’, di-m-direkt ‘straight’.

The growing dynamics of this word composition is confirmed in language contact too: in the Ingilo dialect of Georgian (which is widespread in Azerbaijan) some intensive forms are produced according to the Azerbaijani model using Georgian adjectives: çitel ‘red’, çi-m-çitel ‘absolutely red’; cariel ‘empty’ ca-m-cariel ‘quite empty’ etc.

The reduplicated syllable (i.e. the first) is accented, while Turkic words as a rule have an accent on the last syllable.

This small fragment of Turkish grammar seems to be very important for the specifications of the main properties of Turkic languages, because two typological characteristics of native lexical items – only suffixation and accent on the last syllable – are changed.

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One Type of Compound Word (“tskheniparia” ‘horse-thief’) as Compressed Sentence in Georgian

In contemporary Georgian there are compounds of the type noun + verbal stem + ia (suffix). Specialists interpret these forms in the following ways: (1) the second component, i.e. the verbal stem, semantically approximates to the active participle; (2) the second component is represented by the imperative; (3) the direct object is expressed by noun and the second component is a participle which is based on the aorist and has lost its prefix; (4) it consists of the participle with a direct object and an infinitive with the suffix -a; (5) the verbal components of these forms are based on the stems of infinitives – they express the “possession” of the action denoted by the infinitives; (6) they function as participles, confirmed by the existence of the parallel forms as well, although these forms differ in stylistic nuances. The forms with -ia express state and denote some property as a result of subsequent reinterpretation. The case of the nominal components of these compounds is also differently interpreted – nominative, genitive, and adverbial cases are often mentioned thereupon, although the genitive is considered more acceptable.

In our opinion these forms are extended morphosyntaxemes, which seem to be equivalent to compressed sentences. Actually it is the model of the simple non-expanded sentences in which the agent is expressed by the suffix -ia (in the finite forms of the verbs in the Kartvelian languages the agent of the 3rd person is denoted by a suffix) and the whole compound represents an agent. Predicate is related to the verbal constituent, which is manifested by the verbal root without any affixes and the direct object is expressed by the noun. As for the case of the object, generally it is genitive, implying that it agrees with the infinitive. The dative is obligatory when the names with losable vocal ending do not lose their final vocal (dropping of the dative suffix seems quite natural). In such cases, we regard the predicative constituent as the
finite form of the present tense. The direct object is in the nominative case when the
verbal component is presented by the finite form in aorist ("bartkichamia" – "bartki
chama" ‘nestling-eater’ – ‘he ate a nestling’, "bakakiklapia" ‘frog-gulper’). The finite
forms corroborate the hypothesis of sentence-compression.

There are over two hundred such forms in Georgian and they are increasing in
number.

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ГРУЗИНСКИЙ МЕДИОАКТИВНЫЙ ГЛАГОЛ

В современном грузинском языке выделяется класс медиоактивных
gлаголов. Эти глаголы выражают ателиковый(нецелевой) процесс, который
сам по себе не предполагает завершения, поэтому у этих глаголов нет
регулярно образованных форм совершенного вида - будущего и аориста.

Во временных формах грузинских медиоактивов выделяется
посессивный префикс i-, который представлен также в рефлексивных
формах, выражая направленность действия на субъект или отношение
предназначения - принадлежности.

В грузинской лингвистической традиции формы аориста и футурума
медиоактивов трактуются как рефлексивные формы, которые заполняют
defектную парадигму медиоактивных глаголов, а префикс i- в этих формах
opределяется как маркер рефлексивности. По мнению некоторых авторов,
в грузинских медиоактивных глаголах префикс и- выражает семантику
совершенного вида.

Эти гипотезы опираются на формальное сходство рефлексивов и
видовременных форм медиоактивных глаголов, не учитывая при этом ни
tипологию ателиковых глаголов, ни установленный в современной
лингвистике принцип дефиниции рефлексивных глаголов, вследствие чего
языковая основа появления в грузинских медиоактивных глаголах
префикса с посессивным значением остается неясной. В грузинских
медиоактивах префикс i- функционирует во всех временных формах,
nезависимо от вида. Уже этот факт однозначно указывает на то, что
префикс i- в этих глаголах не выражает ни темпоральную, ни видовую
семантику.

В докладе показано, что в современном грузинском соотношение: актив-
медиоактив по структурно-семантическим признакам не совпадает с
соотношением нерефлексив-рефлексив. Следовательно, грузинский
медиоактивный глагол не имеет рефлексивную семантику и в этих
глаголах префикс i- не может быть маркером рефлексивности.

Особенно значителен тот факт, что во многих языках непереходные
нецелевые глаголы выполняют атрибутивные функции.

Если язык допускает одинаковое глагольное выражение нецелевого
процесса и атрибутивной семантики, то с уверенностью можно
утверждать, что нецелевой процесс в медиоактивном глаголе так
соотносится с субъектом, как качество - с его посессором.
Во многих языках инактивные личные показатели непереходных ателиковых глаголов тождественны с именными аффиксами неотчуждаемой принадлежности и так сигнализируется в этих глаголах неотчуждаемость нецелевого процесса от субъекта.
Проанализированные в докладе языковые данные показывают, что присваивание нецелевого процесса субъекту, обозначенное в глаголе маркером принадлежности, один из словотворческих принципов, действующих при глагольном выражении процессуально-нецелевой ситуации. Семантическая структура ателиковых непереходных глаголов в языках реализуется поразному, в зависимости от разных средств выражения посессивности.
На основе Теории диатез и типологических данных в докладе доказано, что медиоактивные глаголы выражают принадлежность нецелевого процесса субъекту; посессивный префикс i- в этих глаголах маркирует “неотчуждаемость” нецелевого процесса от субъекта; медиоактивные и рефлексивные глаголы разные языковые единицы в современном грузинском языке.

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Prefix verbs in Cushitic are not exceptions

Some Cushitic languages have a small class of verbs that are exceptions in the verbal inflectional system: whereas most verbs have only suffixes, these exceptions also use prefixes. For example, one can find 5 verbs in Somali or 14 in Rendille. This class of prefix verbs exists in Qafar (cf. Hayward R.J., 1978), but the numbers of verbs in this class is much more relevant: there are more than 300 verbs (cf. Parker E.M. & R.J. Hayward, 1985). These verbs are treated as exceptions and require either a specific marking in the lexicon or specific rules adjustment (cf. Bliese L.F., 1981).

I will argue that prefix verbs are not exceptions to the inflectional verbal system of Qafar and that the roots of the verbs provide enough information to understand the possibility of having prefixes for those verbs and not for others.

In Qafar, I claim that verbs with prefixes and verbs with suffixes can be represented within a single template that allows one to derive every surface structure. This template unifies the verbal category within a specific prosodic domain.

Following this hypothesis, I argue that the difference between prefix inflection and suffix inflection depends on the association of the root with the verbal template: prefix verbs never exhibit a vowel between the two first root consonants whereas suffix verbs always do. Within the Government Phonology framework (cf. Kaye J. & J. Lowenstamm & J.-R. Vergnaud, 1990; Lowenstamm J., 1996), the initial CV position (cf. Lowenstamm J., 1999) of verbal templates must be properly governed at the phonological level to remain empty.
In suffix verbs the initial CV is always properly governed and remains empty: the inflectional markers are suffixed. On the other hand, prefix verbs never exhibit a vowel that could properly govern the initial CV: this last cannot remain empty. However, it has to be identified: inflectional markers are the best candidates to do that. Then, one can derive the expected verbal forms.

Thus, I argue that the prefix verbs are not lexical exceptions and that they don’t need specific rules. The identification of a verbal template allows one to unify the prefix verbal class and the suffix verbal class and to predict the expected inflected forms that seemed to be exceptions at first. It is possible to extend this analysis to other Cushitic languages such as Bedja, which has a large class of prefix verbs too. This class seems to be the core of the verbal system in Cushitic and the few exceptions in other Cushitic languages might be explained as well.


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On a Class of Resultatives in English

Consider sentence (1):

(1) I had pestered my father [. . .] into letting me create a small conifer and heather garden . . . (UK Books, COLLINS-COBUILD)

The matrix verb in (1) is *pester* and it selects three arguments. The first is the subject argument, realized by the NP *I*, the second the direct object argument, realized by the NP *my father*, and the third the prepositional complement *into letting me create a small conifer and heather garden* . . . The complement is sentential, with its own understood
subject, which may be represented by PRO, and the understood subject is controlled by the matrix object. The pattern is called the transitive into -ing pattern.

The paper examines the properties of the transitive into -ing pattern in recent British English on the basis of two electronic corpora, about a hundred years apart. The first is the British English part of the Corpus of English Novels CEN, developed very recently at the University of Leuven. The corpus is some 12 million words in size, representing usage in the period 1880-1920. The second is the British Books text type segment of the COLLINS COBUILD Demonstration Corpus, about 5.5 million words in size, representing current usage. The author identifies the matrix verbs that select the pattern in the two corpora. He adopts the view that the pattern is a caused motion construction and a type of resultative (Goldberg 1995), and proceeds to set up semantic classes of the verbs selecting the pattern in each of the two electronic corpora, taking earlier work -- based on evidence from other electronic corpora -- on the pattern into account, including Francis et al. (1996) and Rudanko (2000).

The study thus offers a historical survey of the pattern in recent English. At the same time, the semantic classes raise questions for discussion, in particular: to what extent are the verbs selecting the pattern amenable to semantic generalizations? To what extent do such generalizations admit of exceptions? Given that verbs of certain semantic types permit the pattern, are there verbs that are apparently similar in meaning that do not permit it? The paper considers a potential example of this type.

References

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On the specification of basic colour terms in Georgian

Since 1969, when B.Berlin and P.Kay’s theory about colour term systems was published, linguists have more actively paid attention to colour term systems in different languages. According to Berlin and Kay’s theory the type of colour term system is defined by the number of basic colour terms in a given language. The authors formulate criteria consisting of four main and four additional points to identify basic colour terms.

Why are basic colour terms so important? They are the main structural units in the organization of a colour term system, and basic colour categories characteristic of a given language is encoded by them. In other words, basic colour terms reflect how the colour space is categorized in the corresponding language.

Berlin and Kay’s theory establishes regularities as well, according to which the categorization of colour space operates.
In the paper the colour term system of Georgian is studied, based on Berlin and Kay’s theory. All the words denoting any kind of colour hues were written out from the Georgian Explanatory Dictionary (8 volumes); then according to Berlin and Kay’s criteria all nonbasic terms were excluded from the list, whereby the terms encoding the categories BLACK, WHITE, RED, YELLOW, GREEN, BLUE and GREY seem to be basic. In this list the term denoting the category GREY (ruxi) looks like a lexical exception because according to Berlin and Kay’s universal model GREY is categorized in a language if and only if BROWN has been categorized as a basic category. But the term denoting BROWN seems to be nonbasic due to its morphological structure and besides, it contains the word denoting the thing whose colour is encoded by the whole word (q’avic’h’eri – literally meaning ‘the colour of coffee’). So we had to check the basicness of the term ruxi resting especially on the criteria which says that basic colour terms are salient. For checking we conducted a so-called list test and some experiments. After their results had been analyzed we came to the conclusion that BROWN is a basic category in Georgian, and so the corresponding term, in spite of its morphological structure, has to be regarded as a basic one.

The list test and some other experiments are described in the paper and the results are analyzed as well.

So a lexical exception found among the Georgian colour terms helped us to specify (more exactly) the basic colour term system in Georgian.

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Passive in Georgian

The category of voice is one of the main verbal categories in Georgian. There are three kinds of voice: active, passive, and neutral (or medium). The goal of our paper is to discuss the issues of passive voice in Georgian.

It seems that passive in Georgian is quite different from the same category presented in many languages as English, German, French, etc., where passive constructions are derived from the corresponding active by conversion. In Georgian in many cases it is difficult to speak about conversion. Verb forms are only regarded as passive voice ones according to their morphological structure. There are several different markers of passive: the prefixes e- and i-, the suffix –d, and the zero (Ø) marker:

\[
\begin{align*}
  i \ - \ xat \ - \ eb \ - \ a \\
  \text{PASS.-draw-THEMATIC-S3} \\
  \text{‘(it) is being drawn’}
\end{align*}
\quad \begin{align*}
  \text{(active: } xat' \ - \ av \ - \ s) \\
  \text{draw-THEMATIC-S3} \\
  \text{‘(he/she) draws/is drawing’}
\end{align*}
\]

\[
\begin{align*}
  e \ - \ k'er \ - \ eb \ - \ a \\
  \text{PASS.-sow-THEMATIC-S3} \\
  \text{‘(it) is being sewed (to him/her)’}
\end{align*}
\quad \begin{align*}
  \text{(active: } u \ - \ ker \ - \ av \ - \ s) \\
  \text{VERSION-sew-THEMATIC-S3} \\
  \text{‘(he/she) sews/is sewing (it to him/her)’}
\end{align*}
\]

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It is clear even from the forms presented here that in spite of different markers of passive they have a common characteristic – the ending \(-eb-a\) (for S3 sing. in present tense), or \(-eb-i\) (for S1/S2 sing. in present tense).

Despite the common morphological formal ground, semantic diversity is characteristic for the Georgian passive voice forms: some of them are so-called deponents (\(i-mal-eb-a\) ‘(he/she) is hiding’), some are like reciprocals (\(e-lap'arak'-eb-a\) ‘(he/she) is speaking to (him/her)’), some of them are called passive of mood (\(e-cekv-eb-a\) ‘(he/she) is in the mood of dancing’), some are called as passive of opinion (\(e-p'at'ar-av-eb-a\) ‘(it) seems small to (him/her)’, etc. All the forms mentioned here could be regarded as lexical exceptions and due to them the question arises: Is it correct to call this category passive? It is clear that the answer is negative. In our paper we try to make clear the problem of so-called passive in Georgian, but a final interpretation has not yet been reached.