Rarum begets rarum: A rare clitic and morphosyntactic reduplication in Chechen and Ingush
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1 Introduction

[1] Clitics with form ’a are ubiquitous in Chechen and Ingush.1

[2] An important use of them is to mark chained clauses and coordinated verb phrases.
Maliika [loomax hwal ’a jeelara.] [ohwa ’a joessara].
Malika mountain.LAT up and J.go.WP down and J.descend.WP
“Malika climbed up and down the mountain.” CHECHEN

[3] As discussed by Peterson (2001), this clitic appears to be of a rare type—a ditropic clitic (see Cysouw (2005)) of Klavans’ (1985) “type 5”.

[4] This clitic participates in another rare type of construction, morphosyntactic reduction (see Conathan and Good (2001)).
Maalik [viela ’a viilara.] [vialxa ’a vilxara].
Malik V.laugh.INF & V.laugh.WP V.cry.INF & V.cry.WP
“Malik laughed and cried.” CHECHEN

[5] Peterson (2001:149) suggests that ’a actually triggers reduplication of the verb in order to allow it to have a host within the verb phrase.

[6] Could one rarum be the cause of another?

[7] Outline of presentation

[8] Give background on clitics with form ’a, with a focus on PREVERBAL ’a
[9] Give background on verbal copying in Chechen and Ingush
[10] Develop an analysis suggesting the presence of these two rara in the same environment is not coincidental

1 I would like to acknowledge Johanna Nichols for her help in collecting and analyzing much of the data found in this handout.

2 Clitics with form ’a

2.1 Overview

[1] Clitics with form ’a have a wide range of uses in Chechen and Ingush.
@Cyna’ chulaacaman maewna hu’ hu hwuona aelcha, daaxariahw ’a,
3S.GEN content meaning what B.be.PRS 2S.DAT say.CVTEMP life.ADV FOC
duezaliawh ’a, micchanhwa ’a, hu’-’a lielosh shaa valawh ’a,
family.ADV FOC everywhere FOC what-FOC engaged-in.CVSIM 3S.REFL V.be.CVIRR FOC
daggaaw caw ’a dyucush, bagahw qi’ dyucush volu
heart.FOC.LOC one.NZ FOC say.CVSIM mouth.ADV any-more say.CVSIM V.be.PRS.PART
starg cz’aa ’a q’uonax xir vaac boomurg du iza.
person never FOC man be.FUT V.be.NEG.PRS say.NZ D.be.PRS that
“Its meaning is that in life, in your family, everywhere, no matter what you are engaged in, anyone who thinks one thing and says another will never be a real person.” CHECHEN

[2] Roughly speaking, we can classify the uses of ’a as emphatic, conjunctive, or some combination of the two.


book write-D.DO.INF & picture D.paint.INF & want.WP woman.DAT
“The woman wanted to write a book and paint a picture.” CHECHEN

meat dog.ERG & D.eat.WP cat.ERG & D.eat.WP
“Both the dog and the cat ate the meat.” (Peterson 2001:146) INGUSH

[6] Conjunctive (chaining)
Ahwmad, sialxana wa ’a wiina, dwa-vaghara.
Ahmed yesterday stay.INF & stay.CVANT DX-V.go.WP
“Ahmed stayed yesterday and left.” CHECHEN

[7] Emphatic and conjunctive
Ahwmad, sialxana ’a wiina, dwa-vaghara.
Ahmed yesterday FOC stay.CVANT DX-V.go.WP
“Ahmed stayed yesterday (too) and left.” CHECHEN
Enclitic status of 'a

Impressionistically, it phrases prosodically with the word that precedes it. It can be reduced to a glottal stop which is pronounced in the coda of the final syllable of the word it attaches to. It is associated with a high pitch and, when reduced to a glottal stop, the high pitch shifts to the end of the element preceding it.

The circumstances under which 'a can appear after a verb are quite limited. The cases I am aware of are (i) after an infinitive and (ii) after the irrealis converb in a concessive construction.

2.2 Preverbal 'a

The most important use of 'a here is PREVERBAL 'a. This use is associated with verb phrase coordination and clause chaining (see Good (2003)).

Verb phrase coordination examples

Maliika [loomax ]wa 'a jeelara ]VP [ohwa 'a joessara ]VP. Malika mountain.LAT up & J.go.WP down & J.descend.WP “Malika climbed up and down the mountain.” CHECHEN


[Hwal 'a jeelira ][ohwa 'a joessira ] Malika loomax. DX & J.go.WP down & J.descend.WP Malika mountain.LAT “Malika climbed up and down the mountain.” CHECHEN

Clause chaining examples

Maliika, [tykana 'a jaghna, ] [zheina 'a iacna, ] c'a je'ara. Malika store.DAT & J.go.CVANT book & buy.CVANT home J.come.WP “Malika went to the store, bought a book, and came back home.” CHECHEN

@Jaghana, cuo. [cwa hwoqa 'a be'ana, ] [doogha 'a duoxiina, ] J.go.CVANT 3S.ERG one stick & B.come.CVANT lock & D.break.CS.CVANT [chu 'a jaghna, ] ju'urg swa-iicara. in & J.go.CVANT food DX-take.WP “(Having Gone) she took the stake and broke the lock and went and took the food.” CHECHEN

The position of preverbal 'a in different verb phrase types

SIMPLEX INTRANSITIVE
Ahwmad, wa 'a wiina, dwa-vaghara. Ahmed stay.INF & stay.CVANT DX-V.go.WP “Ahmed stayed (for a while) and left.” CHECHEN

DEICTIC ELEMENT-VERB

PREVERB-VERB

OBJECT-VERB
Ahwmad, zhwala 'a iacna, vilxira. Ahmed dog & buy.CVANT V.cry.WP “Ahmed bought a dog and cried.” CHECHEN

Klavans’s (1985) clitic types—'a would seem to be best classified as type 5

Schematic Chechen and Ingush verb phrase structure

Additional requirement of 'a: It must be preceded by an element in the core verb phrase.
The prosody of a “typical” core verb phrase

Malika [dhwá-jédira].
Malika DX-1.run.WP
“Malika ran away.” CHECHEN

Ahwmad [óegháx-vághára].
Ahmed anger-V.go.WP
“Ahmed got angry.” CHECHEN

The prosody of a verb phrase containing preverbal ‘a

Malika loomax [hwál ’a jéelara] [óhwá ’a jóessara].
Malika mountain.LAT up & 1.go.WP down & 1.descend.WP
“Malika climbed up and down the mountain.” CHECHEN

Maliikina Ahwmad [gá ’a gira] Mariam [sátzā ’a kêzara].
Malika.DAT Ahmed see.INF & see.WP Mary hear.INF & hear.WP
“Malika saw Ahmed and heard Mary.” CHECHEN

3 Copy infinitive

3.1 Basics

Emphatic uses of copy infinitive

Aala ma aala.
say.INF &NEG say.IMP
“Don’t even tell!” CHECHEN

Maliikina Ahwmad ga ’a gira Mariam xaza ’a xezara.
Malika.DAT Ahmed see.INF & see.WP Mary hear.INF & hear.WP
“Malika saw Ahmed and heard Mary.” CHECHEN

Obligatory uses of the copy infinitive

Maalik viela ’a viilara, viałxa ’a vilsara.
Malik V.laugh.INF & V.laugh.WP V.cry.INF & V.cry.WP
“Malik laughed and cried.” CHECHEN

Kixat, daat’a ’a daeit’a, telxara.
paper tear.INF & tear.CVANT spoil.WP
“The paper ripped and was spoiled.” CHECHEN

Form of the copy infinitive for some irregular verbs in Chechen

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INFINITIVE</th>
<th>PRESENT</th>
<th>COPY VERB</th>
<th>GLOSS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>dala</td>
<td>lo</td>
<td>dala or la</td>
<td>‘go’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>da”</td>
<td>dahwa</td>
<td>da” or dahwa</td>
<td>‘bring’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>daghia</td>
<td>duedu</td>
<td>daghia or duoda</td>
<td>‘go’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>daa”</td>
<td>dooghu</td>
<td>daa”</td>
<td>‘come’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ingush does not show the above pattern, but there are some irregular verbs. The verb gaa ‘delay.INF’, for example, has a copy infinitive with form ga. The verbs gu ‘see’ and lie ‘die’ are also in this irregular class.

3.2 Some possible syntactic analyses

Some kind of topicalization?

Comparable data from Yiddish (Davis and Prince 1986:90)

redn red
ikh mame-loshin
“As for speaking, I speak Yiddish.”

veysn/*visn
know.INF
?
veyst know.
PRS.3s er he
gornit nothing
“As for knowing, he knows nothing.”

Multiple consultants consistently report no special “emphasis” in constructions where the copy infinitive is obligatory.

Also, unlike prototypical topicalization, a peripheral clause position is not involved.

Some kind of predicate cleft?

Data from Edo (Stewart 2001:87)

Ózó kpólnó.
Ozo be.big
“Ozo is big.”

Úkpólnówên óré Ózó kpólnó.
NZ.be-big.NZ FOC Ozo be.big
“Ozo is big.”
As before, there is no special pragmatic force associated with the copy infinitive, making such an analysis uninsightful.

Also, there is no evidence that the copy-infinitive construction is biclausal.

Some kind of cognate object?

Data from Edo (Stewart 2001:93)

Ozo walk PFX.walk
"Ozo walked."

The copy infinitive (i) morphologically resembles a verb, (ii) is not marked for case, (iii) does not trigger verb agreement.

In addition, there are productive nominalization processes in Chechen not used in this construction (see Good (2003) for examples).

Something to do with unaccusativity/unergativity?

Some Chechen data

Maalik viela 'a viilara, vialxa 'a vilxara.
Malik V.laugh-INF & V.laugh.WP V.cry-INF & V.cry.WP
"Malik laughed and cried." CHECHEN

Kiexat, daat'a 'a daett'a, telxara.
paper tear-INF & tear.CVANT spoil.WP
"The paper ripped and was spoiled." CHECHEN

Some Ingush data

Xygh dyza 'a dyzaa, piila wa-'ottadyr.
water.LOC fill.INF & fill.CVANT glass DX-put.CS.WP
"(Someone) filled the glass and put it down." INGUSH

Xygh dyza 'a dyzaa, piila t'ix-daxar.
water.LOC fill.INF & fill.CVANT glass BESIDE-D.go.WP
"The glass filled with water and fell over." INGUSH

At present, there is no indication the unaccusative/unergative distinction plays an important role in this construction (or in Chechen and Ingush grammar generally).

3.3 Features of a non “syntactic” analysis

A first approximation of an analysis—a template for preverbal 'a

While such a template can account for the facts, it raises an important question: Why such a template here?

4 Deconstructing the template

4.1 Characterizing the template prosodically

Serbo-Croatian topicalization template (Zec and Inkelas 1990:373–4)

Most verb phrases will fulfill the template “naturally”

Revision of Chechen template

Most verb phrases will fulfill the template “naturally”

SIMPLEX INTRANSITIVE
So voelu.
1s V.laugh.PRS
"I am laughing." CHECHEN

DEICTIC ELEMENT-VERB
Malika dwa-jedira.
Malika DX-J.run.WP
"Malika ran away." CHECHEN
Ahmad anger-vaghara
“Ahmed got angry.” CHECHEN

Ahmedna Maliika gira
“Ahmed saw Malika.” CHECHEN

A two phonological word restrictions like Serbo-Croatian
An inserted dummy element like Ndebele

The prosodic characterization of the template treats preverbal ‘a as a second-
position clitic in its prosodic phrase.

4.2 The development of preverbal ‘a

From here on out, a good degree of speculation...

We saw before that preverbal ‘a was one kind of rarum.

Obligatory morphosyntactic copying also seems to be a rarum (though how rare it
is isn’t as clear)

Can we connect these two rara?

Some assumptions

Preverbal ‘a developed from conjunctive emphatic ‘a
The obligatory copy infinitive developed from the non-obligatory contrastive
copy infinitive construction

Schematized chaining construction in information structure terms

Comparing the Chechen template to other cases

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Schematic overview of reanalysis in chaining constructions

[[SUBJ] [. . . = a_{EMPH} VERB ]CVB [. . . FINITE VERB ]]
[[SUBJ] [. . . = a_{PVBL} VERB ]CVB [. . . FINITE VERB ]]

4.3 The rise of the template

Under this analysis 'a’s templatic restrictions can be viewed as a holdover from its use as a conjunctive emphatic marker.

We can further speculate that the special prosodic characteristics of verb phrases containing 'a also played an important role in the reanalysis.

The preverbal 'a construction would, thus, have had definable formal and functional characteristics:

- Formal characteristics: Two phonological words, special pitch pattern
- Functional characteristics: Marker of clause chaining and verb phrase coordination—unifiable under the notion of cosubordination (see Good (2003))

5 Conclusion

Consistent with Peterson’s (2001) suggestion, we can posit a link between the wrong-leaning preverbal 'a and the presence of the copy infinitive.

The template seen here would seem to instantiate a rarum but looks less rare if we assume the division between morphology and syntax is more clinal than absolute.

Some rara may be rare because they require the right combination of circumstances, not because of anything “intrinsic” to them.

Circumstances needed for the Chechen and Ingush case on this analysis:

- A conjunctive emphatic clitic with special prosody
- A contrastive construction involving a copy verb and that clitic
- Frequent OV word order with a well-defined prosodic pattern
- Clause chaining (helpful)
- Preponderance of complex verbs (helpful)

Works cited


Inkelas, Sharon and Draga Zec (Eds.). 1990. The phonology-syntaxis connection. Stanford: CSLI.


