ISCKMC 2020
International Scientific Congress «KNOWLEDGE, MAN AND CIVILIZATION»

TOPICAL ISSUES IN THE SYNTAX OF THE DAGESTAN LANGUAGES

Daniyal Magomedovich Magomedov (a)*, Magomed Ibragimovich Magomedov (b)
*Corresponding author

(a) G. Tsadasa Institute of Language, Literature and Art, Dagestan Federal Research Center of the Russian Academy of Sciences, 45, Gadzhiev str., Makhachkala, 367000, Russia, m.daniyal@yandex.ru,
(b) G. Tsadasa Institute of Language, Literature and Art, Dagestan Federal Research Center of the Russian Academy of Sciences, 45, Gadzhiev str., Makhachkala, 367000, Russia, rafrus1@yandex.ru

Abstract

The paper presents the analysis of topical issues in the syntax of the Dagestan languages and provides different standpoints of a number of authors on these issues. As is known, a sentence is a unit of speech that conforms to the laws of a particular language and performs the communication function. As an independent unit of information, a sentence is opposed to a word and a word combination, although formally they may coincide. A sentence is a communicative unit, and words and word combinations are nominative units. Although the issues of the ergative structure and the ergative structure of a sentence prevail in all works on the syntax of the Dagestan languages, there is still no consensus on many general theoretical issues. The issues of the structure of a simple sentence are still relevant due to different opinions of researchers on differentiation of intransitive (intrasitive) and transitive (transitive) verbs, on the characteristics of the structure of constructions with transitive (and affective) verbs as two-part or three-part constructions and, in this regard, the determination of the number of principal parts in the sentence. The issue of the subject in the Dagestan languages also remains relevant. The paper considers the latest achievements in the linguistics in order to comprehend a number of theoretical issues of the syntax of the Dagestan languages.

Keywords: Dagestan languages, syntax, word combination, sentence

1. Introduction

Over the past decades, the study of the syntax of the Dagestan languages has made significant progress. Dagestan linguists have achieved considerable success in the study of a sentence and a word combination. The contribution of Dagestan linguists to the theory of subordinate clauses and participial, adverbial, and masdar constructions is appreciated in Caucasian studies.

The syntactic structure of the Dagestan languages has faced significant changes. Thus, the study of new tendencies and new phenomena in the development of the syntax of the Dagestan languages in modern grammatical theory is relevant.

As is known, the basic syntactic units of any language are sentences and texts. However, these syntactic phenomena are investigated using conventional methods and techniques. Modern syntax deals with the syntactic structure of a language in terms of a structural aspect and studies the formal schemes of the model word combinations and sentences. At present, such issues as the syntax of colloquial speech, the actual or semantic division of a sentence, that is, the content and problems of functional, communicative and semantic syntax, are topical.

The syntactic structure of the Dagestan languages has been comprehensively studied: monographs, manuals, and textbooks focus on various aspects of the syntax of simple, complex and compound sentences. However, there are many gaps in the theoretical syntax of the Dagestan languages. A sentence, as the main unit of syntax, with regard to its functional and communicative role in Dagestan linguistics, has not yet been sufficiently studied.

A number of monographs and dissertations are devoted to the description of syntactic phenomena that stand outside the hierarchical organization and classification structure of the syntactic tier and, accordingly, manifest themselves at almost all stages of functioning of speech segments of various lengths and communicative status.

On the one hand, a number of works pose new questions, test new research methods, verify new theoretical hypotheses, etc. On the other hand, the compilation of textbooks and normative descriptions of the syntactic system of the Dagestan languages is underway.

The development of Dagestan linguistics is marked by the creation of fundamental works on topical issues of linguistics, an increase in the theoretical level of these issues, and the creation of collective monographs on the grammatical structure and lexical composition of the Dagestan languages.

2. Problem Statement

In Dagestan linguistics, a large number of works are focused on the study of the syntactic structure of modern Dagestan languages; however, such problems of syntactic theory as predicativity, types and methods of constructive-syntactic relations of words in a sentence, syntax of dialects, functional types of sentences, functions of word order and actual division of the sentence, as well as structural-semantic models of a simple sentence, have not yet become the subject of special research. This fact determines the relevance of this study.

3.   Research Questions

For the first time, the issues related to the structure of a simple sentence, the role of the verb agreement with nominal parts in the sentence and the peculiarities of the case system of the Nakh-Dagestan languages were thoroughly considered in the works by Uslar (1889). In accordance with the formal morphology, Uslar (1889) considers the subject in the nominative case as the principal part of the sentence and comes to the conclusion that in the Avar language there is not a real verb *to love*, but a middle or passive verb *to be loved.* In the Avar language, the sentence *I love my father* is expressed through *My father is loved by me*, in this case *father* becomes the subject.

Describing the relations of the Lak verb, Uslar (1890) writes: The ending is consistent with the person acting, if it is the 1st or 2nd person, and with the person to whom the action is directed, if the 3rd person is acting, that is, in the 1st and 2nd person the form has a real meaning, and in the 3rd person it is passive.

Although all researchers of the Dagestan languages deal with the issue of ergativity in one way or another, there are few monographic descriptions of the syntax of specific languages, such as *Syntax of the Avar language* (Bokarev, 1949), *Syntax of the Lezghin language* part 1 (Gadzhiev, 1954) and part II (Gadzhiev, 1969), *Essays on the syntax of the Dargin language* (Abdullaev, 1971), *Essays on the syntax of the Tabasaran language* (Khanmagomedov, 1970). These syntactic studies revealed the following. Bokarev (1949) identified four main types of sentences: 1. *эменрокъовевуссана* 'father returned home'; 2. *инсуцахурбекьана* 'father plowed the field'; 3. *инсуежиндирголъимербокьула* 'father loves his child'; 4. *инсудажиндирго вас вихьана* 'father saw his son'. Bokarev does not indicate the principal and secondary parts of a sentence, but, apparently, he considers the subject and object as the principal parts. The subject does not depend on the case, and the direct object in the nominative case is the object. A number of sections in his work are devoted to objects in indirect cases. Moreover, some of them also have a subjective meaning. With the verb *букIине* 'to be' (also with the negative form *гьечIо* 'not'), the dative case expresses the subject of ownership in a broad sense (Bokarev, 1949). However, the author does not consider these forms to be the subject. Thus, there is no single criterion for distinguishing between the subject and the object with subjective meanings, when they are expressed in indirect cases. It should be noted that the transitive verb in the Avar language is consistent with the object, except for the cases when the predicate is expressed by analytical forms of the verb *букIине* 'to be'.

Gadzhiev (1954), whose work on the syntax of the Lezghin language became outstanding in Dagestan linguistics, is somewhat close to the works by A.A. Bokarev, although their opinions on some issues are different. The Lezghin language does not have either a class category or a person category, so the formal approach to determining the status of a sentence member in this language is limited. Recognizing the presence of ergative, dative, locative constructions, Gadzhiev (1954) only recognizes the subject of an ergative construction as a subject, and the subject of other types of constructions is defined as an indirect object.

Khanmagomedov (1970) identifies six constructions in the Tabasaran language: impersonal, nominative, ergative, dative, genitive and locative. The author also considers the construction *Бал из гашдиву* 'The child is hungry' to be impersonal, although there is a subject in this construction, and personal endings in the Tabasaran language are characteristic of the 1st and 2nd person forms.

The ergative construction is defined as a three-part personal sentence. It is noted that the class of the verb is consistent with the object in the nominative case, and in the person form – with the subject in the ergative. However, personal agreement is not the main criterion for determining the ergative by the case of the subject, since agreement in the person in the Tabasaran language is possible with subordinate parts of the sentence. This means that the main criterion is semantic: the subject is equated with the subject (Dumézil, 1933).

The issue of determining the principal parts of the sentence, more precisely, what is considered the subject – noun in the ergative or noun in the absolute case – is important not only in terms of the theory of ergativity but also terms of describing and teaching languages. This issue was relevant in Dagestan studies (Abdullaev, 1971; Bechert, 1971; Khanmagomedov, 1970). A complex of contradictory criteria was put forward, including the case of the subject, the sphere of use of this subject, agreement criteria, word order, transformation criteria (Klimov & Alekseev, 1980).

The methods of expressing subject-object relations promote extensive coverage of the features of the morphology of the Dagestan languages in the special literature, first of all, their case system. The issues considered in this study were touched upon to a greater or lesser extent in the integral descriptions of the declension systems of individual Dagestan languages (Haspelmath, 1993; Khanmagomedov, 1970; Meilanova, 1960; Magomedov, 1997), or their subsystems, which refer primarily to the expression of subject-object relations. In addition, considerable attention was paid to the peculiarities of the functioning of individual cases typical of the ergative system – ergative (Abdullaev, 1948; Alekseev, 1979; Bokarev, 1954; Chikobava, 1948).

In these works, a wide range of meanings of the ergative case was noted, which 'combines' the functions of the instrumental, the genitive, or one of the locative cases, which was caused by quite different processes and phenomena. A special role of the ergative case in the declension system of the Dagestan languages was also established. The opinion that dative case is a non-serial aditive seems to be quite reliable.

The presence of a multi-case form of the subject expression in the Daghestan languages is due to a special syntactic structure used to designate transitional relations in these languages, which includes a structural diagram of a transitional sentence, consisting of a predicate, a subject in the ergative case and an object in the nominative case, while a simple sentence with an intransitive the verb corresponds to a structural diagram, compositionally consisting of a predicate and a subject in the nominative case. As is known, in the case of transitive verbs of sensory perception (verbasentiendi), the subject is expressed in the dative case and the object – in the nominative case. It should be noted that there is no consensus among linguists regarding the syntactic function of the subject and object in such constructions. For example, the point of view expressed by Gadzhiev (1954) is generally accepted in Lezghin linguistics. According to Gadzhiev (1954), the subject in the dative case "does not act by itself, but is affected" and is an indirect grammatical object, and the direct object in the nominative case is a grammatical subject. He wrote about dative constructions: in the grammatical analysis of this construction, the noun in the indirect (dative) case should still be considered as an indirect object, and the noun in the nominative case – as a grammatical subject.

Similar to other languages of the ergative system, in Dagestan studies, there is no consensus not only regarding the nature of the principal parts of the sentence – the subject and the predicate, but the number of the principal parts of the sentence is also controversial: some researchers believe that there are two principal parts in ergative languages, whereas others consider that there are three principal parts in the sentence. This controversy is caused by different interpretations of the sentence members, primarily in the ergative construction. There are two opposite, mutually exclusive points of view regarding the nature of the sentence members in the ergative construction: 1) the subject takes the position of the subject, the object takes the position of the object; 2) the object takes the position of the subject, the subject takes the position of the object. The latter point of view goes back to P.K. Uslar and other researchers of the Dagestan languages, who identified the ergative construction in the Caucasian languages and the passive construction in the Russian language.

To date, the second point of view, according to which there are three principal parts in the sentence in ergative constructions, is generally accepted in almost all studies devoted to the classroom languages of Dagestan, as well as in the practice of teaching these languages at school.

In the Lezghin and Agul languages, the action verb content is reflected in the case of the subject when the predicate form is neutral, which is currently devoid of morphological features of the subject and the object. Therefore, due to the fact that the direct object (object) not always affects the morphology of the predicate and not in all ergative languages, researchers propose to solve this problem depending on specific relations between the direct object and the predicate verb.

Khanmagomedov (1970), researcher of the Tabasaran language, defines the number of principal parts of the sentence depending on the nature of the syntactic construction: With a nominative construction, the sentence consists of two principal parts: a subject and a predicate, and with an ergative construction, the sentence consists of three principal parts: a subject, an object (direct object) and a predicate. The criterion for determining the principal parts in this case was morphological features of the predicate verb, which relate to the subject in intransitive constructions and to the object in transitional ones.

In the Avar language, the functions of preverbs are mainly performed by adverbs expressing local directional relations and occupying a preposition relative to the verb. Preverbs are formed both analytically and synthetically (Magomedov, 2016).

The combination of a preverb and a verb, i.e. the use of the analytical method, leads to formation of a verbal phrase. For example: *тӀаде кӀанцӀизе* 'attack' (lit. 'jump up'); *данде чӀезе* 'resist' (lit. 'against stop'); *цебебиччазе* 'let through' (lit. 'forward let').

When expressing local meanings synthetically, preverbs, being in preposition, are joined to the verb stems. In this case, the preverbs, merging with the verb stems, form new verbs, the semantics of which is different from the semantics of the original verbal roots. For example: *жанитӀамизе* 'to arrest' (lit. *жани* from the adverb *жаниб* 'inside' + *тӀамизе* 'to force into'); *тӀасабахъизе* 'subtract' (lit. *тӀаса* 'from above' + *бахъизе* 'to remove'); *нахъбахъизе* 'to postpone' (lit. *нахъ* from the adverb *нахъа* 'behind' + *бахъизе* 'to remove').

It should be noted that the number of verbs to combine with preverbs is insignificant. The number of preverbs is also limited in terms of quantity and the nature of the relations they express. However,

despite the limited use and unproductive formation, preverbs have the properties inherent in the languages (Dargin, Lezghin, etc.) with the developed system of preverbs, although in the Avar language such prefixed elements do not have the systemic character that characterizes preverbs (Chikobava, 1948).

As is known, changes in the structure of a sentence (in syntax) occur much more slowly than at other levels of the language. Hence, there are fewer differences in the syntax of dialects. Elements common to all dialects significantly prevail over private, distinctive ones. Moreover, it is the common elements of all dialects that determine the syntactic structure of the Dagestan languages. These include types of word combinations, ways of combining words as part of phrases and sentences, types of sentences and basic methods of their construction, etc. However, despite the fact that basic features of dialects of Dagestan languages are similar, their syntactic structures are different. For example, there is a tendency for the loss of dialectal features under the impact of the literary language and the Russian language, some dialects preserve archaic syntactic constructions, others have changed in the course of the development of the language. We consider the differences established in more or less distant time. The identification of general and particular patterns of inter-dialectal interactions is a necessary stage in the study of dialects of the Dagestan languages (Charachidzé, 1981).

In Dagestan languages, the analytical method, which consists of a combination of nouns and postpositions, is widely used to convey spatial relations.

Along with postpositions, there is a small group of adverbs that perform the functions of preverbs. In addition to the forms of local cases, postpositions and preverbs in constructions and in sentences express local meanings.

For example, in the Avar language, there is a developed system of postpositions. As for preverbs, they have not yet received wide development. In the special literature, the presence of preverbs is questioned. Khaidakov (1983) noted that in the Archinian and Avar-Ando-Tsez languages there are no verbs with preverbs, and therefore local and directional relations are expressed mainly analytically: *нахъа* 'behind' – *довнахъахутIана* 'he was left behind', 'lagged behind', *гъоркь* 'under something' – *гъоркьгохутIизе* 'to lag behind'. In the Avar language, there is only the preverb *нахъ*, which is derived from the adverb *нахъа* 'behind': *нахъгIунтIизе* 'to catch up'. Magometov (1983) shared this opinion: In the Avar-Andian-Dido languages, there are postpositional cases, but they do not contain preverbs in verbs. Thus, the system of preverbs and their spatial meanings were not covered by researchers, except for the work by Gamzatov (1983).

All types of relations of words, including coordinate one, are a widespread phenomenon in the Dagestan languages. Their function in speech is of a certain constructive, syntactic and semantic-communicative nature. Various types of relationships contribute to the expression of predicative, objective, attributive, concretizing and explanatory relations.

The word order, which is determined by the peculiarities of the syntactic structure of each language, is a necessary feature of a sentence in the Dagestan languages and performs three main functions: grammatical, semantic and stylistic.

One of the features of the syntactic structure of the Dagestan languages is the direct word order, when the subject is prepositive relative to the predicate, but such a sequence of words is a feature of a

stylistically neutral narrative sentence. In literal, especially in poetic speech, the stylistic function of is performed by changing the position of the subject, which is postpositive to the predicate (Comrie, 1981).

The issue of the word order cannot be considered within a single sentence, out of context, without taking into account its communicative purpose. Each sentence, being a communicative unit, has a communicative task and is formed depending on this task, which is realized in the process of speech.

4. Purpose of the Study

The study aims to reveal the most controversial and topical issues of the syntax of the Dagestan languages and to interpret them in terms of modern aspects of syntactic theory, as well as to substantiate the inclusion of some of its new branches as full-fledged sections of the scientific syntax of the Dagestan languages. In other words, the study offers solutions to some fundamental theoretical problems of the Dagestan languages.

In addition, the study covers theoretical issues of a simple sentence, describes a sentence as a functional unit of language, describes the predicative structure of a sentence in terms of logical relations, and reveals the types and methods of constructive-syntactic relations of words in a sentence.

5. Research Methods

A complex of linguistic methods and techniques was employed to analyze the factual material: functional-stylistic, descriptive, comparative and comparative-historical.

The syntactic and semantic-contextual methods were also significant for the purposes of the study.

6. Findings

The results of the study can be used to describe the Dagestan and other Caucasian languages on a functional basis of the syntactic structure.

The main provisions of the study can be used in higher education to create lecture courses on syntax, to conduct special courses and seminars, as well as to prepare programs, textbooks and teaching aids on the Dagestan languages for higher and secondary schools.

Analysis of the structural-semantic and communicative types of sentences, the problem of word order and actual division can become the basis for further study on the issues of a simple sentence in the Dagestan languages.

7. Conclusion

The paper provides the investigation and description of a sentence as a functional communicative unit, which is a set of multi-level and interactive methods of expressing judgment (narration, question and command), since conceptual categories, which indicate various relations of objects of reality, find their implementation only in functional and communicative types of sentences.

A sentence is a complex and multidimensional concept characterized by two main features – communicativeness and structural content, which have a specific form and content.

The main function of the sentence is the informative function, which distinguishes the sentence from other syntactic constructions. In other words, a sentence is a syntactic unity that has semantic and intonation completeness. All types of sentences are formed according to certain laws of a particular language. Sentences express a relatively complete thought and are associated with a certain type of judgment, they are characterized by predicativity and modality, which are the 'soul of any sentence.'

Both in general and in Caucasian linguistics, the issue of studying the syntactic relations of words in a sentence has a rich history. At the same time, it should be noted that there is no single interpretation in determining the nature of the relations of words in Dagestan linguistics.

References

Abdullaev, S. N. (1948). Ergative case functions in the Dargin language. In *Proc. of the first sci. session, Dagestan sci. res. center of the USSR Acad. of Sci.* Makhachkala.

Abdullaev, Z. G. (1971). *Essays on the syntax of the Dargin language.* Moscow.

Alekseev, M. E. (1979). *Ergative case functions in the Archinian language. Nominal declension in the Dagestan languages.* Makhachkala.

Bechert, J. (1971). Zu den Teilen des einfachen Satzes. *A.KZ, 85.*

Bokarev, A. A. (1949). *Syntax of the Avarian language.* Nauka.

Bokarev, E. A. (1954). Ergative case in the languages of the Ces group of the mountain languages of Dagestan. *Lang.of Dagestan, 2.*

Charachidzé, G. (1981). *Grammaire de la langue Avar (langue du Caucase Nord-Est).* Jean-Favard.

Chikobava, A. S. (1948). From the history of the formation of the ergative (active) case in the Avar language. *Languages of Dagestan, I.*

Comrie, B. (1981). *Language Universals and Linguistic Typology.* Univer. of Chicago Press.

Dumézil, G. (1933). *Introduction a la grammaire comparée des langues caucasiennes du Nord.* Paris.

Gadzhiev, M. M. (1954). *Syntax of the Lezghin lang., 1.* Makhachkala.

Gadzhiev, M. M. (1969). *Syntax of the Lezghin lang., 2.* Makhachkala.

Gamzatov, R. E. (1983). On the pre-verbal-post-misleading system of the Mazadin (Tash) dialect of the Avar language. In *The system of preverbs and postpositions in the Iberian-Caucasian languages.* Cherkessk.

Haspelmath, M. (1993). *A grammar of Lezgian. B.* Mouton-de Gruyter.

Khaidakov, S. M. (1983). Nature of the functioning of postpositions, preverbs and local cases in the Dagestan languages. In *The system of preverbs and postpositions in the Iberian-Caucasian languages.* Cherkessk.

Khanmagomedov, B. G-K. (1970). *Essays on the syntax of the Tabasaran language.* Makhachkala.

Klimov, G. A., & Alekseev, M. E. (1980). *Typology of the Caucasian languages.* Moscow.

Magomedov, D. M. (2016). Syntactic relation of the definition with the defined word in the Avar language. *Bull. of Tsadasa Inst. of Lang., Literat. and Art, 9.*

Magomedov, M. I. (1997). The syntax of the Dagestan languages: state and problems of study. In *Semant. of linguistic units of different levels, 2.* Makhachkala.

Magometov, A. A. (1983). The system of postpositions and preverbs in the Dargin language (according to dialectal data). In *The system of preverbs and postpositions in the Iberian-Caucasian languages.* Cherkessk.

Meilanova, U. A. (1960). *Morphological and syntactic characteristics of the cases of the Lezghin language.* Makhachkala.

Uslar, P. K. (1889). Ethnography of the Caucasus. In *Linguistics, IV, Avar language.* Tiflis.

Uslar, P. K. (1890). Ethnography of the Caucasus. In *Linguistics, IV, Lak language.* Tiflis.