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Hyperagreement in Alashkert Armenian

Alashkert Armenian (AA) exhibits **hyperagreement**, (1), where the same set of agreement features are realized on the participle and the auxiliary and with the same form. We analyze this as post-syntactic lowering of features from the auxiliary to the participle motivated by morphological concerns.

(1) Yes Aram-in **enq**   k-ishk-**enq**
     I   Aram-ACC be:PST.1SG IMPFV-look at-PST.1SG
     'I used to look at Aram' Or 'I was looking at Aram'

Hyperagreement is limited to environments where the aspectual information on the participle is encoded as prefix (_k-_). Hyperagreement is not a general property of participial structures in AA as can be seen by considering (2) for past perfect structure, where the aspectual information is realized as a suffix _-e_.

(2) Yes Aram-in enq   ishk-e
     I   Aram-ACC be:PST.1SG look at-PERF
     'I had looked at Aram.' (AA)

(3) Yes Aram-in ei   nay-um
     I   Aram-ACC be:PST.1SG look at-IMPFV
   'I looked/was looking at Aram' (SEA)

Nor is it a general property of the imperfective as can be seen in the Standard Eastern Armenian (SEA) imperfective, (3), which is also suffixal. In fact, the presence of the prefixal participle is a significant dialectal marker of Western varieties of Armenian (Adjarian, 1911, Martirosyan, 2018, Bezrukov, 2022). In addition to (1), which has an auxiliary, we also find an auxiliary-less imperfective structure in AA, (4).

(4) Yes xndzor k-ud-enq
     I   apple IMPFV-eat-PST.1SG
     'I had the disposition of eating apples'

(5) Yes xndzor enq   k-ud-enq
     I   apple be:PST.1SG IMPFV-eat-PST.1SG
     'I ate/was eating an apple'

Despite featuring what looks like the same verbal form in (4) and (5) (k-ud-enq), the two structures have distinct and disjoint semantics. The structure with the auxiliary ((5), (1)) describes an ongoing/habitual event, while the auxiliary-less structure in (4) describes a disposition, a generic habitual property that does not need to be actualized. We will refer to the semantics associated with (5)/(1) as IMPFV and the semantics associated with (4) as DISP. Note that in SEA there is only structure (3) which is used to convey both these meanings.

Analysis: We locate the semantic differences between (1) and (4) in the participles, which we accordingly label IMPFV and DISP. IMPFV blocks head movement of the participle to T^0. The features on T^0 need a host and the auxiliary is inserted under T^0, i.e., (6). This is a kind of <u>be</u>-support. In contrast DISP allows for head movement to T^0, i.e., (7). There is no motivation for inserting an auxiliary verb and consequently, there is no auxiliary.

(6) No head-movement of participle to T^0

(7) Head-movement of participle to T^0
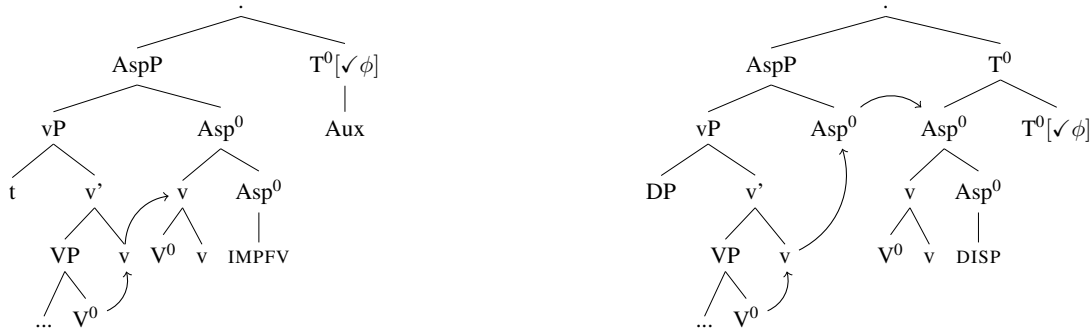
The role of verbal morphology: The structure in (6) does not actually deliver hyperagreement on its own. In fact, what it delivers is morphologically deviant as it involves a suffix-less participle. This morphological deviance created by a suffix-less participle motivates post-syntactic copying of the agreement features of the auxiliary onto the participle resulting in hyperagreement. Verbal roots in Armenian are morphologically not

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complete words. They become complete words by combining an aspectual/tense-agreement suffix, (9)-(11). In Armenian, most verbal morphology is suffixal, (9)-(11). The exception is the Alashkert imperfective that is realized as a prefix *k-* (e.g., (12)-(13)). Importantly, with the imperfective *k-* prefix the verbal root doesn't compose a complete word, (12), and requires a suffix to make a complete word, i.e., (13).

(8) *ishk
    look at

(9) ishk-el
    look at-INF

(10) ishk-e(r)
     look at-PERF

(11) ishk-enq
     look at-PST.1SG

(12) *k-ishk
     IMPFV-look at

(13) k-ishk-enq
     IMPFV-look at-PST.1SG

Evidence for a post-syntactic derivation: Support for a post-syntactic derivation of hyperagreement comes from intransitives where we find only one structure – the auxiliary-less one, (14) – realizing both the IMPFV and the DISP meanings. However, in the presence of a low adjunct, these meanings come apart again (see (15) and (16)).

(14) Yes k-vaz-enq
     I   IMPFV-run-PST.1SG
     'I used to run' OR 'I was running' (IMPFV) OR 'I had the disposition to run' (DISP)

(15) Yes arag enq   k-vaz-enq
     I   fast be:PST.1SG IMPFV-run-PST.1SG
     'I used to run/was running fast' (IMPVF)

(16) Yes arag k-vaz-enq
     I   fast IMPFV-run-PST.1SG
     'I had the disposition of running fast' (DISP)

This follows from general principles of the auxiliary placement in Armenian (Bezrukov, 2022, Kahnemuyipour and Megerdoomian, 2011, 2017) by which the default position for the auxiliary in transitives is immediately after the direct object yielding a [Subj DO Aux VPart] order (see (2)). With intransitives the default position of the auxiliary is post-verbal ([Subj VPart Aux], see (17)). Finally, if there is a low adjunct in an intransitive, (18), then the auxiliary follows the adjunct ([Subj Adjunct Aux VPart]).

(17) Yes vaz-er   enq
     I   run-PERF be:PST.1SG
     'I had run'

(18) Yes arag enq   vaz-e
     I   fast be:PST.1SG run-PERF
     'I had run fast'

We expect a structure with the DISP semantics to surface without an auxiliary as this participle involves head movement to T^0. The structure with IMPFV semantics does not involve head movement; instead here we find a lowering of features from T^0 to the participle. What we see here is that when the default placement of the auxiliary is immediately postverbal, the features of T^0 do not need to be lowered onto the participle. Adjacency with the auxiliary is able to satisfy the suffixal requirement of the k-participle. As a result, the string in (14) can convey both IMPFV and DISP meanings. The presence of a low adverb, (15), changes the default location of the auxiliary; it is no longer in an immediately post-verbal location and the IMPFV once again requires lowering of features to avoid morphological deviance. In a transitive, (1), the default position of the auxiliary is not immediately post-verbal; consequently lowering of features needs to take place.

Conclusion: This analysis explains the instance of a hyperagreement in AA imperfective aspectual structure and predicts why it is not possible in other aspectual structures. In the AA imperfective case, hyperagreement is a result of a post-syntactic feature-lowering that is a requirement of the verbal morphology. This analysis also predicts the behavior of intransitive structures where both IMPFV and DISP can be realized in one form.

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