

Floating agreement and information structure in Sanzhi Dargwa and Lak

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The current discussion about person agreement in relation to information structure predominantly centers on optional agreement and topicality: in languages with optional agreement the agreement markers are more likely to occur with topical controllers (e.g. Nenets (Dalrymple & Nikolaeva 2011: 127-132) and Northern Ostyak (Nikolaeva 1999)).

This paper aims at drawing attention to a hitherto neglected side of the relationship between person agreement and information structure, the position of agreement markers and their function in focus constructions. This will be done by investigating floating agreement in Sanzhi Dargwa and Lak, two Nakh-Daghestanian languages spoken in the northern part of the Caucasus. Floating agreement markers are person enclitics that are normally found on the verb (1) but can under certain circumstances float off and attach to other constituents such as nouns, pronouns, adverbs, etc. (2). Floating agreement has a marked pragmatic effect that informally can be described as emphasizing or highlighting the constituent that serves as the host. Floating agreement markers belong to a close set of particles/enclitics that also includes the auxiliary 'be', tense markers, interrogative enclitics, etc. All these markers have a narrow grammatical function and at the same time serve as discourse markers.

Within a functionally-oriented framework (cf. Lambrecht 2001), I will provide an analysis of the pragmatic function of the floating agreement markers in Sanzhi Dargwa and Lak and compare them to similar constructions in other Dargwa languages (e.g. Kalinina & Sumbatova 2007, Sumbatova 2013) and Udi (Harris 2002). I will discuss the suggested analysis of floating agreement in Lak as synchronic *in situ* clefts (Kazenin 1998, 2002) and show that a similar account for the Sanzhi data must be rejected. I will further examine whether a diachronic left account similar to what has been proposed for Udi (Harris 2001) is tenable for both Lak and Sanzhi. The data discussed in this talk have been gathered during fieldwork in Daghestan and originate from natural texts, enriched by elicitation whenever necessary.

Examples from Sanzhi Dargwa, collected during fieldwork

- (1) *du-l hana t'ala^h-ne ic-ul=da*
1sg-ERG now dishes-PL wash.IPFV-ICVB=1
'Now I am washing the dishes.'
- (2) *du-l hana t'ala^h-ne=da ic-an, c'il ...*
1sg-ERG now dishes-PL=1 wash.IPFV-OBLG then
'Now I am washing THE DISHES, ...' (e.g. later I will clean the windows).

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