Georgian
V-final or V-medial

Stavros Skopeteas

University of Göttingen

Göttingen, October 25, 2021

basic facts

(1)   OV

dʒarisk'ac-i   monadire-s   da-č'r-i-s.

soldier-NOM   hunter-DAT   PV-(FUT.B.3)cut-THM-A.3.SG

'The soldier will wound the hunter.'
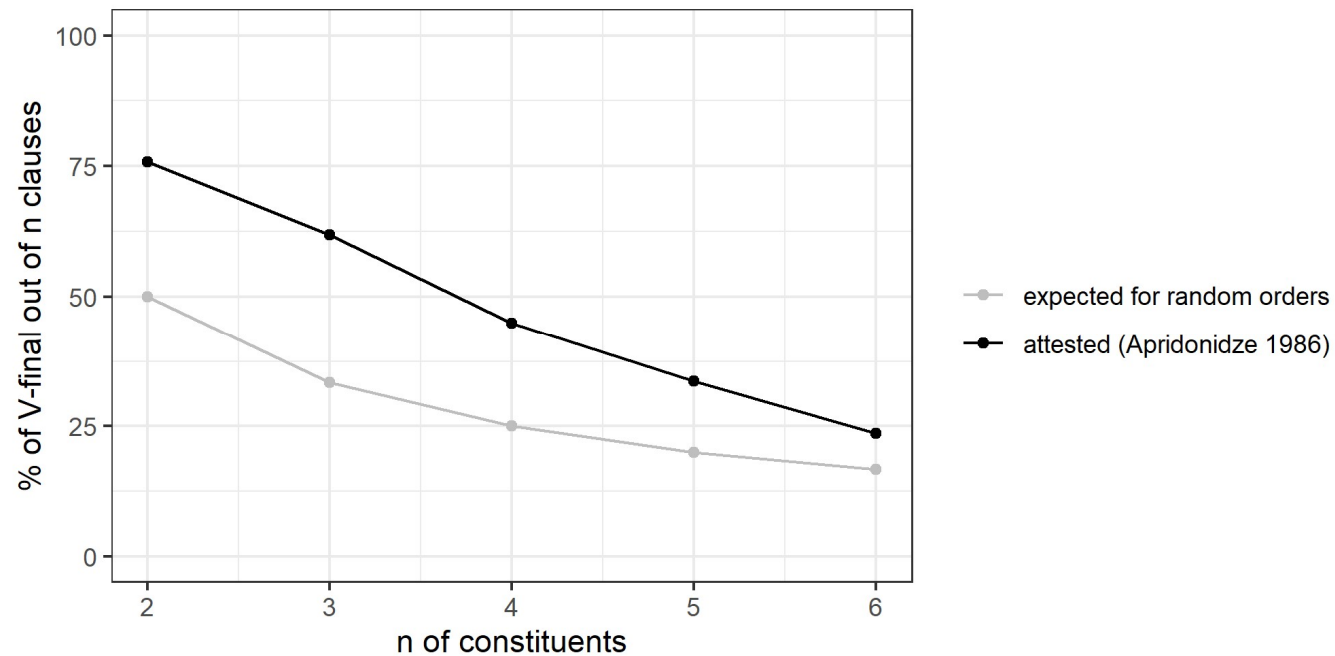
(2)   VO

dʒarisk'ac-i   da-č'r-i-s   monadire-s   .

soldier-NOM   PV-(FUT.B.3)cut-THM-A.3.SG hunter-DAT

'The soldier will wound the hunter.'

corpus frequencies

The following figure visualizes the counts reported by Apridonidze (1986):

Questions

- Is there evidence for basic word order?

- Which factors trigger word order variation?

targets and contents

Goal

asymmetries between V-final and V-medial orders in Georgian

Contents

- auxiliaries and non-finite verbs

- idiomatic and compositional VPs

- prepositional complements

- conclusions

auxiliaries and non-finite verb forms

Examples from periphrastic perfects and passives indicate that the unmarked order is $V_{fin} \succ V_{non\text{-}fin}$ (the opposite order being possible); Harris (2000:145).

(3) es   movlena   še-nišn-ul-i   a-kv-s.

    this(NOM) phenomenon(NOM)   PV-note-PTCP-NOM (S.INV.3)NV-have-O.INV.3

    'He has noted this phenomenon.' (preferred order)

(4) es   movlena   a-kv-s   še-nišn-ul-i.

    this(NOM) phenomenon(NOM)   (S.INV.3)NV-have-O.INV.3 PV-note-PTCP-NOM

    'He has noted this phenomenon.' (focus on movlena)

Conclusion:

the highest V-head (auxiliary) governs the embedded verb on its left.

idioms

Basic assumption: Syntactic operations that affect word order (e.g., focus-fronting) do not apply to the subconstituents of idiomatic VPs.
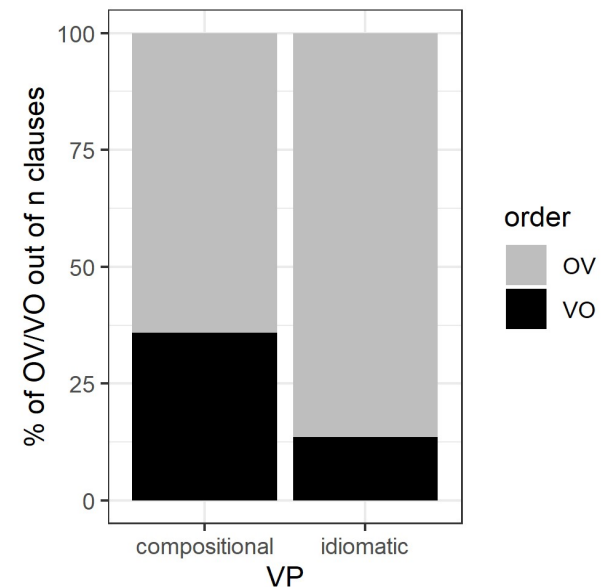
(5) nino-m   xel-i   a-iɣ-o.

    Nino-ERG hand-NOM PV-take-AOR.S.3.SG

    'Nino took a hand.' / 'Nino gave up.'

(6) nino-m   a-iɣ-o   xel-i.

    Nino-ERG PV-take-AOR.S.3.SG hand-NOM

    'Nino took a hand.' / 'Nino gave up.'

    (restricted, only possible if subject in focus)

Table 1. Order frequencies in VP [1]

	idiomatic VP		compositional VP	
	n	%	*n*	%
OV	3410	86.5	593	64.1
VO	530	13.5	332	35.9
total	3940	100	925	100

[1] Data retrieved from Google, 27.03.2009. V = 'take'; possibly idiomatic O = 'hand'; compositional O = 'money'/'vacation'/'book'/'salary')

linearization of P-complements

Basic assumption: Prepositional complements are more informative for the directionality of V-projections than objects, because objects have often special properties (see details in Janke & Neeleman 2012).

(7)   comitative > theme (preferred)

ramdenime masc'avlebel-tan   q'ovel mosc'avle-ze   i-saubr-a.

some   teacher(DAT)-at   every   pupil(DAT)-on   CV-talk-AOR.3SG

'I talked with a teacher about every pupil.'

(8)   theme > comitative (possible)

q'ovel   mosc'avle-ze   ramdeni-me   masc'avlebel-tan   i-saubr-a.

every   pupil(DAT)-on   some   teacher(DAT)-at   CV-talk-AOR.3SG

'About every pupil I talked with a teacher.'

scope of P-complements

Basic assumption: the basic word order is expected to have rigid scope (reflecting the constituent structure). Displacements create new scopal possibilities.

(9) comitative$_\exists$ > theme$_\forall$

ramdenime masc'avlebel-tan q'ovel mosc'avle-ze i-saubr-a

some   teacher(DAT)-at   every   pupil(DAT)-on   CV-talk-AOR.3SG

'I talked with a teacher about every pupil.' ($\exists>\forall$, *$\forall>\exists$)

(10) theme$_\forall$ > comitative$_\exists$

q'ovel   mosc'avle-ze ramdeni-me   masc'avlebel-tan i-saubr-a

every   pupil(DAT)-on   some   teacher(DAT)-at   CV-talk-AOR.3SG

'About every pupil I talked with a teacher.' ($\exists>\forall$, $\forall>\exists$)

conclusions

- Georgian word order is quite flexible, OV and VO appear very frequently in discourse.

- Asymmetries between V-medial and V-final orders suggest that the basic word order in Georgian is V-final:

  - if information structure does not influence linear order, the highest verbal head (auxiliary) is following the embedded verb (non-finite verb);
  - idiomatic VPs (i.e., VPs whose subconstituents are not displaced for information structural reasons) show a stronger preference for V-final orders.
  - prepositional complements are linearized as expected for V-final languages (comitatives preceding themes) and have rigid scope in the basic order.

recommendations

- The most important corpus study on Georgian word order is:

  Apridonidze 1986

- no substantial study on spoken data; some findings from spoken narratives are reported in the following study on prosody:

  Skopeteas, Féry, Asatiani 2019

- Reflections about word order and constituent structure in Georgian:

  Nash 1995, Harris 2009, Skopeteas and Fanselow 2011, Asatiani and Skopeteas 2012

- most important current study:

  chapter 3 of Borise 2019

ideas

- If you want to conduct quantitative studies on word order variation in spoken corpora, you can use a glossed corpus of narratives:

  Asatiani, Rusudan (recording/transcription,annotation) Stavros Skopeteas (design/supervision), Veronika Ries (recordings), Caroline Brokmann and Florian Fischer (revisions) 2019. Georgian spoken data corpus. *The Language Archive*, Corpus resource; persistent identifier: https://hdl.handle.net/1839/00-0000-0000-0021-4DA3-5. (data annotations in ELAN).

  various possibilities to define a targeted research agenda for examining corpus data (starting with the available literature), e.g., the order of verb clusters, direct/indirect objects, several classes of adjuncts, etc.

ideas

- The OV/VO variation is pervasive in the languages of Anatolia, Caucasus, Iran, Mesopotamia.

    You may be interested to conduct a cross-linguistic study comparing various languages of the area (or address issues related to language contact). A starting point are the available grammatical descriptions and studies on word order.

references

Apridonidze, Šukia. 1986. *Sit'q'vatganlageba axal kartulši* [Word order in modern Georgian]. Tbilisi: Mecniereba.

Asatiani, Rusudan and Stavros Skopeteas 2012. The information structure of Georgian. In Manfred Krifka and Renate Musan (eds.), *Information Structure*. Berlin: Mouton De Gruyter, 126-157.

Borise, Lena. 2019. *Phrasing is key: The syntax and prosody of focus in Georgian*. PhD dissertation, University of Harvard.

Harris, Alice. 2009. Word order harmonies and word order change in Georgian. In Rosanna Sornicola, Erich Poppe and Ariel Shisha-Halevy (eds.), *Stability, Variation and Change of Word-Order Patterns over Time* (pp. 133-164). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Janke, Vikki and Neeleman, A. 2012. Ascending and Descending VPs in English. LinguisticInquiry, 43 (2). 151-190.

references

Nash, Lea. 1995. *Portée argumentale at marquage casuel dans les langues SOV et dans les langues ergatives: l'exemple du géorgien*. Ph.D. Dissertation. Université de Paris VIII.

Skopeteas, Stavros, Gisbert Fanselow 2011. Focus and the exclusion of alternatives: On the interaction of syntactic structure with pragmatic inference. *Lingua* 121.11, 1693-1706.

Skopeteas, Stavros, Caroline Féry, Rusudan Asatiani 2018. Prosodic separation of postverbal material in Georgian: A corpus study on syntax-phonology interface. In Evangelia Adamou, Katharina Haude and Martine Vanhove (Eds.), *Information Structure in Lesser-described Languages. Studies in prosody and syntax*. Amsterdam: Benjamins, 17-50.

this lecture

is part of the series *Glottothèque: Languages of the Anatolia, Caucasus, Iran, Mesopotamia; grammatical snippets online*, ed. by. C. Bulut, A. Donabédian-Demopoulos, G. Haig, G. Khan, P. Samvelian, S. Skopeteas, N. Sumbatova. Bamberg/Cambridge/Göttingen/Moskow/Nicosia/Paris: LACIM network.

You may find related lectures and further information at the Glottothèque website at: https://spw.uni-goettingen.de/projects/lacim/

glottothèque

Anatolia, Caucasus, Iran, Mesopotamia
grammatical snippets online