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ARMENIAN AND TYPOLOGY

1.

Diachronically speaking, the Armenian language is very interesting from the typological point of view. Nevertheless, this aspect has not been taken into a great consideration by overall studies of typology.

As regards morphology, from an inflected language Armenian becomes an agglutinative one and restructures the verbal system. As regards syntax, it would be transformed from a VO language into an OV one. This shift has been underestimated because it has been ascribed to interference between Turkish and Armenian (Donabedian-Ouzonian: 2008): if the interferences on the side of lexicological level are certain, it seems difficult that a language completely changes its syntactic system for this reason.

The shift from a VO language into an OV one is anomalous according to the theory of the Antisymmetry of Syntax (Kayne 1994): the structure would always be Head-Complement and, consequently, VO: the OV languages have to move (too) many phrases and tend to become VO ones. This shift is observed in VO languages as French, Italian, Spanish which are descended from the OV Latin. Although this opinion is a little old-fashioned, according to the new studies about Minimalism by generative grammarians (Graffi 2008: 82-3), however it is worth taking it into consideration and investigating the question as regards Armenian.

I prefer to speak of VO and OV languages because this parameter is related to the relationship Head-Complement, with the implications that follow it, as in the label 1:

VO	OV
Preposition-Noun	Noun-Postposition
Noun-Genitive	Genitive-Noun
Head in compounds on the left	Head in compounds on the right

Label 1

Subject tends to be at the beginning of the sentence because it usually is the Topic. For instance, Classic Arabic is VSO (where O is the

Object) but less formal Arabic is SVO, however according to Greenberg's (1963) Universal 6.: "All languages with dominant VSO order have SVO as an alternative or as the only alternative basic order". As regards Greenberg's Universals, in Universal 3.: "Languages with dominant VSO order are always prepositional" it is not clear why only VSO languages are prepositional: evidently, it is only a question of statistical data.

## 2.

Modern Armenian is OV certainly:

The word order is basically Subject-Object-Verb, and the noun phrase is also basically head-final, except that finite relative clauses follow (Asher-Moseley 2007: 7.3.1.4.).

Classical Armenian is considered as VO (Dum-Tragut 2002). On the contrary, after Meillet (1936: 138-9), more recently Clackson affirmed that the order of the constituents has a pragmatic function:

In Classical Armenian, word order has mostly a pragmatic, rather than syntactic, function. Modern Armenian is a fairly rigorous head-final language, but the earlier language had different preferred orders depending of the nature of the syntactic constituent. Armenian has prepositions, rather than postpositions; in noun phrases the unmarked order is *adjective-head noun*, but *head noun-dependent genitive*. Armenian prose exhibits great variety in the position of the verb in the sentence, with verb-initial placement particularly frequent in historical narrative (Clackson 2004: 937).

Consequently, the question is the word order in Classical Armenian. Let me verify the most important parameters.

The position of Subject is free (Jensen 1959: 137). The preferred position of Object is after V (Dum-Tragut 2002: 305), but, if it is preferred, it is free. Therefore the feature is not as mandatory as in Modern Armenian where the OV order is canonical (Dum-Tragut 2002:305). The parameter VO/OV appears strong only in the languages with straight word order, but in the languages with freer word order the position of O tends to change depending on the pragmatic context. Consequently, the individual parameters are not very valuable and especially VO/OV appears as a label. In spite of this fact, we can infer the word order from the combination of the parameters.

Auxiliary is after V both in Classical and in Modern Armenian. This is a strong parameter because it is a grammatical feature, and it is an OV feature.

The Head in the endocentric compounds is on the right both in Classical and in Modern Armenian. Also this parameter, which is a morphological feature but depending on the relationship between Head and Complement, appears strong because men tend to follow a dominant pattern in word-formation; so, if the productive rule puts the Head on the right, the new words will follow this pattern. Nevertheless, the presence of the pattern weakens the strength of the parameter; for instance, English is a VO language now but the head in compounds remains on the right.

The Noun-Genitive order is preferred in Classical Armenian (Dum-Tragut 2002: 305), but, although it is preferred, it is free. Therefore the feature is not so mandatory as in Modern Armenian where the G-N order is canonical (Dum-Tragut 2002:305). The Genitive is both after N and before N according to Jensen (1959: 171) who mentions as examples some Eznik's phrases: *tarr hroy* "das Element des Feuers" (Eznik 96) vs *wardoy bnowt'iwn* "die Natur des Menschen" (Eznik 61).

As regards Adjective, the parameter A-N/N-A appears less strong because it is out of the relationship Head-Complement. The position of Adjective can be significant only when the order is straight, as in English. As regards Italian, as a matter of fact it is a VO language with Prepositions, NG, head in compounds on the left; so Coleridge's 'dungeon-grate' is translated > 'grata di galera' by Fenoglio (Aliffi 2010: 11). On the contrary the Adjective, usually considered in a before N position, can be in an after N position, as in *La bella macchina* (A+N) vs *La macchina bella* (N+A), where it appears marked. Some more examples in Crima (1994:197): *Un attacco aeronavale* (N+A) vs *\*Un aeronavale attacco* (A+N), *Il probabile licenziamento* (A+N) *di 600 dipendenti renderà difficile le trattative* vs *?\* Il licenziamento probabile* (N+A) *di 600 dipendenti renderà difficile le trattative*, *La saggia partenza* (A+N) *di Gianni* vs *?\*La partenza saggia* (N+A) *di Gianni*. Besides, there are the "perfect" loan translations, cmp. in *Un ragazzo alto* (N+A) vs *Alta fedeltà* (A+N), loan translations from English *High fidelity*, according to Bombi (2009: 96). In Classical Armenian, the Adjective is inflected if it is after N; it is not inflected, especially the polysyllabic one, if it is before N (Jensen 1959: 158). There are some exceptions, above all in the mark of the number, according to Meillet (1936:139), Jensen (1959: 158), Clackson (2004: 937). I can affirm that

the position of the Adjective is dependent on pragmatic variation, with preference for AN, as Meillet noticed, owing to simplification.

The comparative is after A, OV feature, in Classical Armenian; in Modern Armenian it is also after A if A does not modify the Subject, it is before A if A is a modifier of the Subject (Dum-Tragut 2002: 305).

The Relative is after N both in Classical and in Modern Armenian. This language uses the strategy which Comrie (2006: 136) calls “Relative Pronoun Strategy”, with the relative and external Head, the strategy used by European languages, including Russian. On the contrary, Turkish follow another pattern, without relative and with participle in order to relativize the Subject (strategy used secondarily by many (Indo)European languages, including Modern Armenian) and the nominalization in order to relativize the non- Subject.

Other parameters as Intensifiers are not very important because they are in Spec of AP(hrase), position which is not a subject for this discussion.

Besides, the after N position of the clitic Article, although it does not concern this research because the structure is obtained through the raising of N on the left of D(eterminer), may be interesting since, as a matter of fact, it puts the D Head after N; the same thing happens to the indefinite *mi*.

To sum up, some parameters do not change between Classical and Modern Armenian and no parameter among the ones taken into consideration up to now for Classical Armenian is definitely VO, as in following Label 2:

Class. Armenian	Class. and Mod. Armenian	Modern Armenian
VO/OV		OV
	V Aux	
	Head in compounds on the right	
NG/GN		GN
AN/NA		AN
	N-Rel	
	A m S	S m A (A = Subject)

Label 2

The parameter that changes is the one of the Adposition: Classical Armenian has Prepositions, feature VO, Modern Armenian has Post-

positions, feature OV. It is a strong parameter because it depends on grammar: if I translate West. Arm. *covown meć* > ‘the sea in’ or, vice versa *in the sea* > ‘meć covown’ I pronounce wrong sentences.

All the simple Prepositions of Classical Armenian are Prepositions, certainly: *ař, and, ast, z, i, c*. Among these simple Prepositions, only *ast* remains in Modern Armenian, and only as a Preposition: *ast is* ‘according to me’, *ast kams* ‘ad libitum’ (Vahan Ohanian 1996: s.v.).

Modern Armenian has Postpositions even if Hagège finds also Ambipositions:

There are fewer doubts on (Eastern and Western) Armenian, where *batsi* “in addition to, except” (which requires the ablative with which it forms a complex Adp) is a Po when it governs a proper noun, as in *Hakopits batsi* “besides Hakopits” and a Pr when it governs a demonstrative, as in *batsi deranits* “in addition to that”. Armenian has other ambipositions, like *ankax* “independently of”, *hakarak* “in contradiction with” (also Classical), *hamajayn* “in accordance with”, *handerj* “despite”, *sksac* “from”, *šnorhiv* “thanks to” (Hagège 2010: 122).

As a matter of fact, these Ambipositions are adverbial Adpositions; according to Jensen (1959: 123), some adverbial Prepositions can be postponed also in Classical Armenian: *ařaji, dēm, artak’oy, šowrĵ, vasn, p’oxan, p’oxank, p’oxarēm, handerj, het*. Besides, the complex Preposition *i veray* has three possible orders: (Jensen 1959: 124): *i-SN-veray, i-veray-SN, i-SN-i-veray*.

The disappearance of the simple Prepositions, which can not depend on the fact that they were monosyllabic because *ast* remains, can entail a reorganization of the adpositional system, perhaps depending on external interference. It has to be noticed that in Latin the identical Postpositions became Prepositions: *cum Caesare – mecum, quoad – ad quem*. On the contrary, in Armenian, an ancient Preposition as *ast* remains as a Preposition. Some adverbial Prepositions like *ařaji* (>*ařaj*) and *yet* become Postpositions (Dum Tragut 2002: 67), like they were sometimes in Classical Armenian.

This external interference is inserted into a fluid situation of Ambipositions and into an order that is still OV as regards many parameters. The new system has Postpositions, some Ambipositions and fewer Prepositions. It is a lexical matter that becomes a word order matter.

Then, it has to be said that, when the word order is not straight, parameters do not always give exact informations and can change also for other reasons. It is true that not all of the languages show clear

situations: there are OV languages with Prepositions, like Classical Latin, which is OV but has over all Prepositions. English has Prepositions and a straight order VO but it has a double Genitive, the Saxon one with postponed *-s* and the Norman one with *of*+Noun. Apart from the heavy Noun Phrase which has always *of*+SN/SD, the Saxon Genitive seems to be increasing according to Rosenbach (2002:39). I think that this increase is reinforced by the obliged before N position of the Adjective, the same position of the Noun with an adjectival function and of the Saxon Genitive too.

The question is that the shift is not simultaneous, obviously, and not all of the parameters work at the same time. For instance, according to a study of mine, Classical Latin is VO 50% and OV 50%; on the contrary Italian is absolutely VO in the not-marked sentence.

I agree with Baldi and Cuzzolin when, in the Conclusions about Latin, they affirm:

Typology remains a valuable tool of classification, but as a catalyst for change it has severe limitations, at least when applied to the diachrony of a single language (Baldi-Cuzzolin (2011: 889).

### 3.

It has to be noticed that Armenian remains an inflected language; so, theoretically, the word order should be free, however can be freer than the one in a language without inflection. Besides, the word order changes step by step and we have many certainties only when the word order is straight. Classical Armenian was not absolutely VO, because of the fluid position of O, (either after or before V), and in spite of the presence of Prepositions. Orengo (2010: 455 n.27) notices some difference between the word order in original texts and the one in translations:

in uno spoglio esaustivo dell'*Elc Alandoc* di Eznik Kołbac'i, dei *Vark' Maštoc'i* di Koriwn, e del vangelo di Giovanni, una leggera prevalenza dell'ordine OV nelle prime due opere, mentre nella terza, testo ovviamente non originale, si preferiva l'ordine VO. Inoltre, nel Giovanni armeno era senz'altro preferita la posposizione dell'aggettivo al nome, mentre nelle due opere originali si optava piuttosto per l'ordine inverso. Dando per scontato che il vangelo sia stato tradotto perché i fedeli ne capissero il contenuto (le esigenze di evangelizzazione sono indicate come la causa che porta all'invenzione della scrittura armena), e che quindi dovesse essere scritto in una lingua comprensibile, se il testo giunto fino a noi effettivamente rispecchia quello originale, bisogna

ammettere una certa libertà nella collocazione degli elementi della frase, nell'armeno del V secolo.

Meyer (2013: 95) gets to similar conclusions about relative clauses:

As the data suggests, there are statistic significant differences between the realizations of relative clauses in Armenian of the New Testament on the one hand and that of non-translated texts on the other hand. Free relative clauses in the New Testament are subject to different case matching restrictions than those applying in the works of Agat'angelos, Eznik and Elišē .

For these reasons, we can not affirm that, diachronically speaking, Armenian was transformed from a VO language into an OV one: some parameters, which were already OV, remain, others, which were already existing but not central, became either primary or even exclusive. Somehow, it is the same process noticed by Scala (2011) as regards some morphological features which have penetrated into Armenian from Turkish and become central in the former where, however, they already existed as peripheral.

Nevertheless, there is a question that seems more important than the word order. A language labelled as VO ramifies on the right: certainly, Italian ramifies on the right. English ramifies on the right too, for instance in the heavy phrase with *of*, examples: *The car of the man that is talking to you vs ?\* The man that is talking to you's car* (Kreyer 2003: 180). A language labelled as OV ramifies on the left and Modern Armenian ramifies on the left. Classical Armenian seems to ramify on the right, although we do not have "competence" in order to verify this fact and it is possible that there can be a difference in ramification between original texts and the translated ones. According to me and the neurologist I spoke with, prof. Matilde Vigneri, different directions of the ramification entail different ways of expressing thought: this opinion paves the way for further researches in the field of cognitive linguistics. Nevertheless, it has to be noticed that the different direction of the expansion can be limited to only a phrase: English ramifies in the Noun Phrase often on the left, as in the title of CNN Breaking News - 12<sup>th</sup> of October 2014 - *DALLAS HEALTH CARE WORKER CONTRACTS EBOLA*, title that was not immediately comprehensible for a speaker of a language which absolutely ramifies on the right like Italian. Different ramifications of a single phrase, compared to the general ramification of the language, can explain the fact that there are single OV features in a VO language and vice versa.

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### Մառիա Լուչիա Ալիֆֆի Հայերենը և տիպաբանության խնդիրներ

Ըստ շարահյուսության անտիսիմետրայի տեսության՝ հայերենի վերափոխումը *VO* (բայ-խնդիր) *OV* (խնդիր-բայ) տիպի լեզվի նորմալ չէ: Մինչ արդի հայերենը *OV* տիպի լեզու է, չի կարելի վստահաբար պնդել, որ դասական հայերենը *VO* տիպի լեզու է, քանի որ որոշ չափանիշներ չեն փոխվել, և առկա են *OV* տիպի լեզվի առանձնահատկություններ: Բացի այդ շարագասության որոշ տարբերություն է գիտվում ինքնուրույն և թարգմանական բնագրերի միջև: Փոխվել է նոր բառ կցելու սկզբունքը. գրաբարին հատուկ պարզ նախադրումը արդի հայերենում ամբողջովին փոխարինվել է հետագիր լրացումներով, հավանաբար արտաքին ազդեցության հետևանքով: Այնուամենայնիվ ինչպես դասական, այնպես էլ ժամանակակից հայերենում կան դեպքեր, երբ երկու դիրքն էլ հնարավոր է: Այդ պատճառով չի կարելի դասական հայերենը միանշանակ *VO* տիպի լեզու համարել:

Տիպաբանական գործոններն աստիճանաբար են գործում. բացի այդ նրանք կարող են փոխվել՝ արտաքին ազդեցության կամ այլ պատճառով: Առաջին հերթին անհրաժեշտ է ուսումնասիրել «ճյուղավորման» խնդիրը. երբ այն իր հետևից բերում է միտքն արտահայտելու այլ միջոցներ, տիպաբանական և կոգնիտիվ հետազոտության նոր հեռանկարներ են բացվում: