

Rezensionen

MARTIN HASPELMATH, *A Grammar of Lezgian* (Mouton Grammar Library 9), Berlin, New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 1993.

0. Introduction

A grammar may be evaluated from at least two different perspectives. On the one hand, it may be evaluated from a language-internal perspective. The crucial question here is whether the grammar is a complete and coherent description of the language under consideration. On the other hand, it may be evaluated from a crosslinguistic perspective. The crucial question here is whether the grammar allows for a comparison of the structure of the language under consideration with those of other languages. In this review, the second perspective will be taken. Thus, HASPELMATH's Lezgian grammar will primarily be evaluated as an instrument for typological research.

1. Lezgian

Lezgian belongs to the Lezgian branch of the Daghestanian branch of the Nakho-Daghestanian language family. It is spoken in the Caucasus, more precisely, in Northern Azerbaijan and Southern Daghestan, by some 400,000 people. The grammar describes the standard language, which is based on one of the dialects of Lezgian. Virtually no descriptions of Nakho-Daghestanian languages are available to those who do not read Russian or are already familiar with the language itself¹. With his grammar, HASPELMATH thus makes available a detailed description of one member of a language family hitherto inaccessible to many typologists.

2. Organization of the grammar

From the perspective of the typologist, a grammar may be less than fully adequate in at least three different ways: (i) the phenomenon investigated is not adequately or sufficiently dealt with in the grammar; (ii) the grammar contains positive statements only, and does not state explicitly which structures are excluded; (iii) there is a lack of examples containing the (combination of) features the typologist is interested in. The first problem is purely a matter of content, to which I will return in section 3. The latter two have to do with the organization of the grammar, and will be treated in this section.

A grammar written from the perspective of the language itself, as all grammars in Mouton de Gruyter's Grammar Library are, as compared to the questionnaire-based grammars of, for instance, Routledge's Descriptive Grammar Series, has the advantage of allowing the author to pay attention to just those phenomena that are of relevance for the language under consideration, to give prominence to

¹ The publication of JOB & SMEETS eds. (fc.) will drastically change this situation, but will provide the typologist with brief sketches only.

salient features of the language, and to present the parts of the grammar in the most economical order. A general disadvantage of this approach is that such a grammar is generally exclusively formulated in terms of the structures allowed within a language. If one is interested in structures that are not permitted or non-existing within a language, then a grammar formulated in positive terms only does not provide one with the necessary data. Here the questionnaire-based grammars are clearly superior from the perspective of the typologist. HASPELMATH comes up with a simple but clever partial solution to this problem: the subject index to his grammar contains, apart from entries referring to phenomena described within the grammar, keywords naming grammatical phenomena that do not exist in Lezgian. So we learn from the index that in Lezgian there is no active-passive opposition, that there are no classifiers, relative pronouns, and definite articles, that tone is irrelevant for the description of Lezgian, etc.

Many typologists have experienced the problem of finding examples of the phenomena described within a grammar serving the specific purposes of their research. For instance, a typologist interested in aspectual categories may find a full description of the aspectual system of a language in a grammar, but no description of the ways in which aspectual categories interact with temporal and modal ones, a topic that this same linguist happens to be interested in. The only solution that is generally left to the linguist, is to go through the grammar page by page, and to scan the example sentences and texts searching for adequate exemplification of the phenomenon at hand, not seldomly finding out that the material scratched together on the basis of the lengthy procedure is insufficient. HASPELMATH solves this problem by supplying a list which takes numbers of example sentences as its point of departure and then provides cross-references to additional examples illustrating the same point, but used in other sections to illustrate other phenomena.

The preceding two points show that HASPELMATH has paid particular attention to the organization of his grammar, and betray the author's own experience with typological research. This same attitude is furthermore reflected in the presence of a user's guide to the grammar, the large amount of neatly glossed example sentences, and the presence of an index of affixes. From the typologist's perspective, these features would be highly welcome in any descriptive grammar.

3. Contents of the grammar

The grammar sticks, after the presentation of some preliminary points (1–2), to the traditional division into parts on phonology (3–6), morphology (7–13), syntax (14–24), texts (25), and vocabulary (26–27).

The part on phonology has chapters on segmental phonological units (ch. 3), phonotactics (ch. 4), phonological and morphophonemic alternations (ch. 5), and word stress (ch. 6). Somewhat surprisingly, at two points this part of the grammar takes the diachronic rather than the synchronic perspective. Lezgian has quite recently acquired a rule of Pretonic High Vowel Syncope: loss of pretonic high vowels after voiceless obstruents. In the section on syllable structure (4.2) and the chapter on word stress (6) HASPELMATH, for descriptive reasons, concentrates on the state of the language before this change and then briefly indicates in what way the current state of the language differs from its previous state.

The chapters in the part on morphology are organized according to the parts of speech relevant to Lezgian: noun (7), adjective (8), verb (9–10), pronoun (11), adverb and postposition (12), and numeral and particle (13). The division into parts of speech itself is more or less taken for granted (see below).

In the part on syntax, there are chapters on the structure of the noun and adjective phrase (14), verbal valence (15), the syntax of the clause (16), copular clauses (17), coordination (18), relative, complement, and adverbial clauses (19–21), coreference (22), questions (23), and comparison (24). It is particularly the extensive treatment of subordinate constructions and the presence of a chapter on coreference that draws attention here.

HASPELMATH's grammar presents part of the information from both an analytical (from form to function) and a synthetic (from function to form) perspective. The importance given by the author to the latter perspective is reflected in the comparatively large number of topics dealt with within the part on syntax. Nevertheless, and as readily admitted by the author (p. 9), the grammar, as most descriptive grammars, has an analytical bias. This is reflected in, for instance, the absence of a separate chapter on the expression of aspectual, temporal, and modal meanings (see below).

In order to see to what extent the grammar fills the need of the typologist as regards its contents, I searched the grammar for information on some topics that I investigated earlier from a typological per-

spective: (i) copular constructions, (ii) mood and modality, (iii) adverbial subordination, and (iv) part-of-speech systems.

(i) *Copular constructions*. As indicated above, there is a separate chapter on copular clauses. From the data presented in this chapter it may be deduced that Lezgian belongs to a widely attested language type, which uses one set of expression formats for identifying, classifying, and property assigning constructions, and another for locative, existential, and possessive constructions. In Lezgian the presence of a copular verb is obligatory except for some highly formulaic expressions. The chapter also shows that the verb expressing 'become' is used as a copula when tense-forms have to be encoded that cannot be expressed via the defective regular copula. This is a feature Lezgian shares with a far smaller set of languages, among which the neighbouring language Turkish and the Australian language Ngalakan.

(ii) *Mood and modality*. Information on the various expressions of categories of modality has to be collected from different chapters. In 9.7–9.8 there is a description of modal inflectional categories, which in Lezgian include Imperative, Prohibitive, Hortative, Optative, and Interrogative. Discourse particles are presented in 13.3, where a description of various mitigating and emphasizing particles may be found. Thus, grammatical expressions of modality are primarily illocutionary in nature. Modality in a more strict sense may be expressed by modal complement-taking predicates, including expressions of possibility and necessity, which are dealt with in 20.3.1. Modal adverbs do not figure in the chapter on adverbs, nor is there a negative statement with respect to their existence in the subject index, so it remains unclear what their status in Lezgian is. As compared with the previous topic, the lack of a description from the synthetic perspective is clearly felt.

(iii) *Adverbial subordination*. There is a separate chapter on adverbial clauses, which provides a clear description of the distribution of the various strategies for expressing subordinate clauses (converbs, nominalizations, quotative constructions, conditional moodforms) across various types of adverbial clauses (temporal, causal, etc.). In this chapter one learns, for instance, that the quotative construction is restricted to causal and purposive clauses, as in many other languages using this construction, that the conditional mood is not only used in conditional clauses but in concessive clauses as well, and that temporal clauses are always non-finite. The chapter offers a clearly much more extensive treatment of adverbial clauses than most grammars do.

(iv) *Part-of-speech systems*. The definition of the various parts of speech is not given special attention in the grammar, nor does the topic figure in the subject index. In the Introduction it is stated that "Nouns, adjectives, and verbs can be easily distinguished by morphological criteria" (p. 4), and indeed the material presented in the chapters on these parts of speech provides ample illustrations which confirm this claim. More difficult to distinguish are adverbs and postpositions, both treated in 12. One particularly wonders why forms like *q̄en-ez* (inside-DAT) '(to) inside' (p. 205) and *k'an-ik* (bottom-SUB-ESS) 'under' are classified as adverb and postposition, respectively, and not as case-inflected noun-phrases. Nevertheless, the material presented is extensive and detailed enough for the reader to come up with his own conclusions.

4. Conclusion

With his grammar, HASPELMATH provides the typologist with a very useful and well-written description of a language from a family hitherto hardly accessible to many linguists. The innovative organization of the grammar saves the typologist a lot of time and worries, and one can only hope that future grammar-writers will take over these innovations. As regards its contents, the grammar provides clear and richly exemplified descriptions of the phenomena relevant to the language. As shown above, the type of information generally needed by the typologist is clearly most accessible where the topic under investigation is presented from a synthetic perspective.

Reference

JOB, D. MICHAEL & RIEKS SMEETS eds. (forthcoming), *The North East Caucasian Languages (The Indigenous Languages of the Caucasus, Vol. 3)*. Delmar (NY): Caravan Books.

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