

ANOTHER INSTANCE OF DEPONENTY IN TSEZ: A PRESENT PARTICIPLE MASQUERADING AS PAST

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Anyone working with a morphologically rich language will have encountered instances where the morphology simply seems “bizarre”, to defy rational explanation, as in the list of typologically unusual properties of the Upper Kuskokwim verb in Kibrik 2002. Perhaps the most aberrant such morphological idiosyncrasy is deponency, where the morphology appears to be outright lying: it says that a form is of category X, when in fact it is of category Y.

The phenomenon was first described for so-called deponent verbs in Latin. Latin deponents have Passive form but Active function, and the main features can be summarized as follows, based on Baerman (2007: 2) and using Latin examples. Latin has a morphological Active/Passive opposition, e.g. Active *capi-ō* ‘I take’, Passive *capi-or* ‘I am taken’. Deponent verbs have a mismatch between form and function, since the form is Passive, but the function is Active, e.g. *sequ-or* ‘I follow’. The phenomenon is lexically restricted (even though the number of deponent verbs in Latin is quite large). The fact that a given verb is deponent precludes its Passive forms from having Passive function, i.e. *sequ-or* means ‘I follow’ and cannot mean ‘I am followed’. Since Latin has no other inflectional means of creating a Passive equivalent to a deponent, this leads to a gap in the paradigm of deponent verbs.

In Comrie 2001 I discussed one example from Tsez, Plural-like Singulars, which was subsequently analyzed in terms of deponency by Corbett (2007: 35–38). Tsez in general has an overt distinction between Singular noun forms (with no overt number marker) and Plural noun forms (with the suffix *-bi* in the Absolutive, *-za* in the Oblique). Two nouns, however, are exceptional, *xexbi* ‘child’ and *yʼanabi* ‘woman’, in that their Plural forms are also used as Singular, as shown in Table 1, including comparison with the usual pattern found with *uži* ‘boy’.

As noted by Corbett, these Tsez forms exhibit most of the properties of canonical deponency, except for the last one mentioned above: the use of a Plural form for Singular function does not preclude the use of the same Plural form with Plural function, i.e. here we have syncretism rather than a paradigmatic gap.

Table 1: Plural-like singulars in Tsez

	Most nouns		Anomalous nouns	
	Sg	Pl	Sg	Pl
Abs	<i>uži</i>	<i>uži-bi</i>	<i>xex-bi</i>	<i>xex-bi</i>
Genl	<i>uži-s</i>	<i>uži-za-s</i>	<i>xex-za-s</i>	<i>xex-za-s</i>

Another instance of deponency in Tsez, with slightly different properties from the anomalous plurals, is provided by its participles. Tsez has three participles, Present, Past, and Resultative, as shown in Table 2, alongside corresponding finite forms.

Table 2: Tsez participles and corresponding finite forms of verb ‘to write’

	Finite			Participle		
	Prs	PstWit	PstUnw	PrsPtcpl	PstPtcpl	ResPtcpl
	<i>cax-xo</i>	<i>cax-si</i>	<i>cax-no</i>			
Abs				<i>cax-xosi</i>	<i>cāx-ru</i>	<i>cax-äsi</i>
Obl				<i>cax-xozo</i>		<i>cax-äzo</i>

The Present and Resultative participles distinguish an Absolutive form (used as an attribute to a head noun in the Absolutive, or as head of a noun phrase in the Absolutive) and an Oblique form (used as attribute to a head noun in an Oblique case, or as a base to which case suffixes are attached as head of a noun phrase in an Oblique case). The Past Participle lacks this distinction. The Present Participle bears an obvious relation to the finite Present (Abs *-xo-si*, Obl *-xo-zo*), though for simplicity’s sake I do not reflect this in the glossing. The Past Participle bears no relation to either of the two finite Past tenses, and neutralizes the evidentiality opposition between them; it involves a morphophonological modification of the vowel preceding the last consonant of the stem. The Resultative Participle has no corresponding finite inflectional form, and will play little role in what follows. Examples of finite and participial forms, extracted from Abdulaev et al. 2010, 2022, are given in (1)–(6); these and other examples are identified by the text-line number in Abdulaev et al. 2022. Participles often translate into English with relative clauses, with no distinction according to the position relativized

- (1) *Xedyo-r mi dunyal-λ'-āy yaq'ⁱun y-eti-x.*
 husband-Lat 2 world-Super-Abl more II-love-Prs
 ‘Your husband loves you more than the world.’ (39-24)

- (2) *debe-r y-eti-xosi kid*
 2-Lat II-love-PrsPtcp girl
 ‘the girl that you love’ (4-20)
- (3) *mi y-ow-xozo baru-r*
 2 II-take-PrsPtcp.Obl wife-Lat
 ‘to the wife you are marrying’ (50-87)
- (4) *Dä-r ħumukuli-s ruyu hun-ä r-esu-s.*
 1-Lat camel-Gen1 track(IV) road-In(Ess) IV-find-PstWit
 ‘I found the camel’s track on the road.’ (3-90)
- (5) *Yedu řař-ā-yor y-ik’i-n.*
 3.nI village-In-Vers II-go-PstUnw
 ‘She went to the village.’ (2-11)
- (6) *debi r-āři-ru řebin*
 2.Gen1 IV-plant-PstPtcp thing(IV)
 ‘the thing that you planted’ (lit. ‘your planted thing’) (16-24)

Barring a handful of anomalous Imperatives, all Tsez verbs are conjugated regularly, once one takes into account relevant phonological and morphological alternations. There is only one exception, the verb ‘to be’, which has suppletive stems: *yoř* in the Present (with a suppletive Negative *ānu*) and *zow-* in the Past. *Zow-* conjugates regularly within the Past, as can be seen in the finite and participial forms in (7)–(8).

- (7) *ředu-t-äy sis zow-n Ø-igu.*
 3.Pl.I-Cont-Abl one be.Pst-PstUnw I-good
 ‘Among them one was good.’ (29-2)
- (8) *ředa-ř’ ř’iri zāw-ru q’ayn*
 3.Pl.nI-Super(Ess) on be.Pst-PstPtcp goods
 ‘the goods that were on them (sc. the camels)’ (25-60)

However, the Present of ‘to be’ is idiosyncratic. First, *yoř* lacks the usual Present suffix *-x(o)*, as shown in (9).

- (9) *Di řek’u yoř.*
 1 man be.Prs
 ‘I am a man.’ (15-12)

But more germane to our main concern, the Present Participle of ‘to be’ is formed by attaching the Past Participle suffix (with concomitant modification of the stem vowel), as in (10).

- (10) *ʒaλ-ā yāl-ru kidba-bi*
 village-In(Ess) be.Prs-PstPtcp girl-Pl
 ‘the girls that are in the village’ (50-90)

This is thus an instance of deponency: a form with the Past Participle suffix has the function of a Present Participle. This instance of deponency is in one respect closer to canonical deponency than the anomalous plurals in that the deponent form can only have the function of Present Participle, and not that of Past Participle, i.e. there is no syncretism. The Past Participle uses the same suffix, but attaches it to the Past stem, as shown in (8), so that Present and Past Participles remain distinguished, albeit anomalously by the choice of verb stem rather than the choice of suffix. There is thus one difference with respect to Latin deponent verbs, where not only is the deponent form unavailable as a Passive, but there is no inflectional means of creating a Passive from the given verb, leading to a paradigmatic gap. With Tsez participles of ‘to be’, by contrast, the use of the Past Participle suffix to form the Present Participle of ‘to be’ preempts that form from also serving as Part Participle, but does not preclude the formation of a distinct Past Participle; compare the discussion of the Past (“preterite”) tense of “preterite presents” in Gothic in Baerman (2007: 16–17).

The Resultative Participle of ‘to be’ is, incidentally, *yoł-äsi*, i.e. be.Prs-ResPtcp. This does not involve any deponency. The Resultative indicates the present result of a past situation, and is thus compatible with the Present stem of the verb.

As a final twist, consider the Present Negative of ‘to be’, which is *ānu* as a finite form as in (11).

- (11) *Yedu baru dey ānu.*
 this.nI wife 1.GenI be.Neg.Prs
 ‘This is not my wife.’ (20-39)

This can form its Present Participle either by attaching the Past Participle suffix, as in (12) — since the relevant stem vowel is already long, there is no stem-vowel modification — or by attaching part of the Present Participle suffix as in (13), on the analogy *cax-xo : cax-xo-si :: ānu : ānu-si*, despite the absence of the analogy *cax-xo : cax-xo-si :: yoł : *yoł-si*. There is no discernible (to me) functional difference between the two forms, though this of course merits further investigation.

- (12) *xex-bi ānu-ru y^ʃana-za-z id-āy*
 child-Pl be.Neg.Prs-PstPtcp woman-Pl.Obl-Gen2 house-Abl
 ‘from the house of a woman who has no children’ (66-59)

- (13) *moλ'oq^ʃoy ānu-si gulu-s baha*
 bridle be.Neg.Prs-PrsPtcp horse-GenI price
 ‘the horse’s price without the bridle’ (59-50)

The Present Negative Participle of ‘to be’ can thus be either deponent (*ānu-ru*) or not (*ānu-si*), i.e. is an optional deponent. Optional deponency is found with some Latin verbs, e.g. Cicero uses both *assenti-ō* and *assenti-or* ‘I agree’ (Clare 1982: s.v. *assentiō*, *assentior*). The Tsez element *ānu* is also used as a suffix to form the Present Negative of verbs other than ‘to be’, as illustrated in (14); the corresponding Present Participle only allows the Present Participle formation in *-xosi*, split by suffixal *-ānu*, as in (15).

(14) *Gulu-z-ā di akik'-x-ānu.*

horse-Pl.Obl-Erg 1 tire-Prs-be.Neg.Prs
‘Horses don’t tire me.’ (25-48)

(15) *qema r-egir-x-ānu-si butni*

rain(IV) IV-let_in-PrsPtcp-be.Neg.Prs-PrsPtcp burka
‘a burka that does not let in the rain’ (51-14)

The Present Participle of the verb ‘to be’ thus provides another instance of deponency in Tsez, one with its own variations on the general theme of deponency. Unlike Tsez anomalous plurals, there is no syncretism, but unlike Latin deponent verbs, there is no paradigmatic gap.

Abbreviations

1–3 grammatical persons; I–IV genders (nI indicates a form merging genders II–IV) (male human nouns belong to gender I, female humans to gender II, animals to gender III; inanimates are spread across genders II–IV; inherent gender is only indicated when it is not predictable semantically and is relevant to agreement between verb and absolutive argument); Abl — Ablative; Abs — Absolutive; Cont — location in mass; Ess — Essive; Gen1 — Genitive1; Gen2 — Genitive2; In — location inside; Lat — Lative; Neg — Negative; Obl — Oblique; Pl — Plural; Prs — Present; PrsPtcp — Present Participle; Pst — Past; PstPtcp — Past Participle; PstUnw — Past Unwitnessed; PstWit — Past Witnessed; ResPtcp — Resultative Participle; Sg — Singular; Super — location on; Vers — Versative

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