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Exclamative clauses in the languages of the Caucasus and the problem of finiteness.

1. Typology of exclamative clauses and theory-related problems.

The typology of exclamative clauses has been studied in (Michaelis&Lambrecht 1996), (Michaelis 2004). Semantic and pragmatic features of exclamatives, identified in those papers, can be summed up as follows:

1) exclamatives contain an open proposition, which is in itself presupposed (He eats *X*);
2) possible values of X form a scale;
3) the value of X is higher than the hearer expects it to be;
4) the hearer can identify the exclamative clause referent
5) both the speaker and the hearer can access the situation thet the relative clause refers to.

In (Zanuttini&Portner 2000, 2002) the authors analyze exclamatives within some formal frameworks, but the problem posed in this paper is framework independent: the question is, how illocutionary force is expressed via specific elements of syntactic structure. The authors define exclamatives in terms of compositional semantics: they point out two principal constituents of the exclamative clause meaning, and they are 1) a set of scalar implicatures plus a bound variable (which normally corresponds to the question word in the exclamative clause); 2) they are factive – the proposition expressed by the exclamative is presupposed; the authors introduce an abstract marker of factivity in exclamatives.

So, all authors converge on the idea that exclamatives contain an operator that binds a variable whose values lie at the extreme end of some scale of esteem or scale of expectations; the variable is an argument of an open proposition which is presupposed. Exclamatives expand the set of values of the variable, adding some values that are least expected or least desirable.

2. Strategies of exclamative clause formation in the languages of the Caucasus.

The structure of the Caucasian exclamatives fits nicely into the proposed analysis, though with some exceptions.

2.1. In Adyghe and Circassian there are four exclamative constructions – finite, "non-finite", possessive and relative clause-like. In "finite" exclamatives the verb is in its finite form, and the sentence contains a wh-word. In "non-finite" exclamatives the verb is in the same form that heads dependent predication in complement clause constructions.(cf.: *How intelligent he is! vs. I know how intelligent he is*). In possessive exclamatives the verb takes the form of verbal noun, and its subject is marked with the genitive case. In relative clause-like exclamatives the structure of exclamatives is identical to relative clauses.

2.2. In the languages of Daghestan (Bagwalal, Archi, Bezhta, Avar) there is no equivalent of the "finite" strategy. I have registered the masdar strategy, the participial strategy and the relative clause-like stratgegy.

3. Finite vs. non-finite distinction in view of the Caucasian data.

The data of the Caucasian exclamatives demonstrates that in these languages the syntactic finite vs. non-finite distinction (based on the use of verb forms in dependent vs. independent clauses) is overruled by the expression of information structure categories: verb forms expressing presuppositions can be predicates of independent clauses if the clause contains a presupposed proposition. The exclamative clause is the case in point.