Argument realization of psych-verbs in an active language: the
case of Laz (Ardeşen variety)

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1 Introduction
As a sister language of Georgian spoken on the south-eastern coast of the Black Sea, Laz is
the only member of the South Caucasian family which is spoken primarily outside of Georgia.
The vast majority of its speakers live in Turkey and are bilingual. Laz is a severely
endangered language (Kutscher 2008b). While most Laz older than forty are competent
speakers of the language, an increasing number of young Laz are fluent only in Turkish with a
rapid decline of language competence with ethnic Laz younger than twenty.
The variety of Laz discussed here is the one spoken in the city of Ardeşen and the villages of
the Ardeşen region. Although this dialect (Ardeşen-Laz) differs from other Laz varieties with
respect to the case marking system (cf. Kutscher 2001, chapter 5), it is similar to the other
dialects with respect to verb morphology.

2 Grammatical Sketch
Laz is basically an SOV language, exhibiting the categories case and number in nominal
expressions and a rich inventory of verbal categories with up to eight different morphological
slots to be filled in the predicate:

\[
\begin{array}{cccccccc}
 A & B & C & D & E & F & G & H \\
\text{NEG/MOD} & \text{- preverb} & 1/2\text{person} & \text{- version vowel} & \text{- root} & \text{- CAUS} & \text{- TAM+P} & \text{- number} \\
\text{(A or U)} & & (A\text{ or U}) & \text{(voice, applicative)} & & & (\text{non 3rd A}) \\
\end{array}
\]

example of an inflected verb form: \[elebuxedit\]
\[ele-b-u-xed-i-t\]
B-C-D-E-G-H
'we sat beside him/her/it'
Predicates are head marking. Up to two arguments are represented in the verbal inflection.

(1)  
\[ \text{ce-k-çare} \]  
PRV-2U-beat:[1>2]SG:FUT.PFV  
'I will beat you!'  

Laz is a primary object language (in the sense of Dryer 1986), that is, Laz' verbal morphology does not distinguish between direct and indirect objects but the patient/theme of a transitive and the recipient/beneficiary of a ditransitive predicate are marked the same ("Primary Object"). The patient/theme in a ditransitive predicate, on the other hand, is marked differently from the one in a transitive predicate ("Secondary Object"), cf. examples in (4).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Patient/Theme</th>
<th>Beneficiary/Recipient</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>transitive:</td>
<td>m-, g-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ditransitive:</td>
<td>Ø-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m-, g-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(2) a.  
\[(si) (ma) ce-m-çam\]  
2s 1s PRV-1U-beat:[2>1]SG:PRS  
'You beat me.'  

b.  
\[(si) (ma) (ham) me-m-çam\]  
2s 1s this PRV-1U-give:[2<1]SG:PRS  
'You give it to me.'  

Alignment principles
- one-(and two)-place predicates: semantic alignment ("active language")

In contrast to its sister varieties, Ardeşen-Laz is of the active / semantic alignment type, i.e. the linking of semantic role and syntactic realisation of verbal arguments is licensed purely by the semantic parameter [+/-control], cf. (3).

(3) a.  
\[b-ulur\]  
1A-walk:SG:PRS  
'I walk.'  

b.  
\[m-açinden\]  
1U-sneeze:SG:PRS  
'I sneeze.'  

As is also demonstrated with the data in (4), the semantic alignment is not influenced by the aspectual feature stative vs. dynamic, which is relevant in other semantic alignment systems (Van Valin 1990, Mithun 1991). In Laz, one-place non-stative predicates (cf. (3)) as well as stative predicates (cf. (4)) can be found with A- as well as U-inflection.

(4) a.  
\[m-ışkun 'wissen'\]  

b.  
\[b-orė 'sein'\]  

State predicates do not inflect for perfective aspect (4c), only for imperfective aspect (4d):

(4) c.  
\[* m-ışku, *b-oru\]  
d.  
\[m-ışk-urłu, b-orľu\]  

- three-place predicates:

Argument realisation in Laz follows from the interaction of two alignment principles, namely ability to control the event / position in causal chain and pragmatic prominence (animacy-hierarchy), cf. (2b).
marking:  | ACTOR | SO | UNDERGOER
---|---|---|---
causal chain / starting point | | theme | endpoint
control: | [+ ctrl] | [- ctrl] | [- ctrl]
prominence: | d.n.a. | [- prom] | [+ prom]
semantic roles: | | | 
transfer / giving | agent | theme | recipient 
e external possessor constr. | agent | possessum | possessor

figure (1): alignment principles for three-place predicates in Laz

**Version vowel**

In addition to the personal inflection, information on the number and the semantic role of core arguments is also coded in a pre-root vowel, the so called version vowel (Boeder 1968). Laz has three version vowels, each of which expresses the way in which the arguments of a predicate are related (for details, see Kutscher 2001; Kutscher 2008a, chap. 6).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>version vowel</th>
<th>function</th>
<th>example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>o- (neutral version)</td>
<td>derives 2-place predicates; U not in relation with A; U is affected; semantic roles of U = patients, theme, causee</td>
<td>(5), (6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i/u- (subjective version)</td>
<td>for 1-place predicates: A acts on him/herself or on sth. in possession of/in relation to A; for 2- and 3-place predicates: U is in relation to another argument of the construction; U is not-affected; semantic roles of U = beneficient, recipient, possessor, ground</td>
<td>(7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a-</td>
<td>potential mood, psych verbs, superessive (non-productive); semantic roles: U = potential agent, experiencer, ground, A = figure</td>
<td>(8), (9), (10)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table (2): Functions of version vowels in Laz

Version vowel o- derives 2-place predicates from 1-place predicates and codes that the referent the event is directed to is not in a relationship to the Actor and /or is affected by the event (neutral version), cf. (5a) vs. (5b).

(5) a. *cindo c-o-ğedey* 
above PRV-VV-see:3A.PL:PAST.PFV
'They observe it from above (top of mountain).’ (Kutscher/Genç 1998:14)

b. *ceketi-și xe gama-ğedu*
jacket-GEN arm PRV-see:3A.SG:PAST.PFV
'He looked through the sleeve of the jacket.' (Kutscher/Genç 1998: 5)

c. *yayi b-o-nšinam*
fat/butter 1A-VV-melt:[1 > 3]SG:PRS
'I melt the butter'.
Morphological causatives (-ap 'CAUS') are obligatorily marked by this version vowel, cf. (6).

(6) çanta b-o-tor-ap-am
   bag 1A-VV-carry-CAUS-[1>3]SG:PRS
   'I make him/her carry the bag. / 'I let him/her carry the bag.'

The version vowel i/u- (subjective version) indicates that in monovalent predicates the state-of-affairs is directed towards the actor, cf. (7). For 2- or 3-place predicates the primary object stands in a relation to the Actor-referent and/or is not affected by the event, e.g. has the semantic role of beneficiary/recipient or goal, (7b). External possessor constructions do also exhibit subjective version, cf. (second reading in (7b, 7c)).

(7) a. çay b-i-ţiıl-am
    tea 1A-VV-pluck:1A.SG:PRS
    'I pluck tea for myself.'

b. çay b-u-ţiıl-am
    tea 1A-VV-pluck:[1>3]SG:PRS
    'I pluck tea for him / I pluck his tea.'

c. nana toma m-i-mbonay
    mother hair 1U-VV-wash:[3>1]SG:PRS
    'Mother washes my hair.'

The function of version vowel a- is rather diverse. With verbs of the physical domain it derives potential mood, cf. (8).

(8) çay m-a-ţiilen
    tea 1U-VV-pluck:POT:<1SG:PRS
    'I know how to pluck tea'

Version vowel a- also occurs with experiencer predicates (9) and occasionally with expressions of topological configurations where surfaces are involved, cf. (10a) vs. (10b).

(9) him koçi zade m-a-oropen
    DEM man much 1U-VV-love:<1SG:PRS
    'I love this man very much.' (Kutscher/Genç 1998: 136)

(10) a. gza dolv-a-ntxen
    road down-VV-plunge:>3SG:PRS
    'It plunges down onto the road'

b. tikina dol-i-ntxen
    basket down-VV-plunge:>3SG:PRS
    'It plunges down into the basket.'

The verbal paradigm is rather uniform in all Laz dialects (apart from phonological differences), but this does not hold for the case inventory. While most Laz dialects have argument marking (absolutive, ergative, dative) as well as adjunct marking cases, in the dialect of Ardeşen argument-NPs are always unmarked for case, as can be seen in (11), where, in contrast to the benefactive bere şeni 'for the child', the theme-NP kitabi 'book' is neither inflected for case, nor marked by any other formal means.

(11) bere-şeni kitabi me-m-çi-i ?
    child-BEN book PRV-1U-give:[2>1]SG:PRS-QU
    'Did you give me the book for the child?'

The case system in Ardeşen-Laz is restricted to mark adjunct phrases, such as instrumentals, comitatives, benefactives, goals and sources.
3 Argument realisation of psychverbs in Laz

3.1 Psych verbs in ACC languages

Verbs expressing emotions and body feelings (psychverbs) exhibit a wider range of constructional variation than canonical transitive verbs like *kill* or *break*. In contrast to these canonical transitive verbs, which uniformly align the agent with the subject and the patient with the object position, for psychverbs we find at least two constructional variants, namely SE and OE-verbs.

(12) Subject-Experiencer: *I fear it, I like it*

Object-Experiencer: *It frightens me, It pleases me*

This variation has been discussed intensively during the last 20 years (e.g. Grimshaw 1990, Dowty 1991, Croft 1991, 1993, Pesetsky 1995, Van Valin/LaPolla 1997, Härtl 2001, Kailuweit 2005, Kutscher 2008a). The motivation for these converses of argument structure is based either on *causality* differences between SE and OE-verbs, i.e. OE: causer stimulus (Pesetsky 1995) or causal event structure of OE-verb (e.g. Grimshaw 1990, Van Valin/LaPolla 1997). Or, as a second line of argumentation the constructional variation is motivated by differences in the *aspectual structure* (Dowty 1991): SE-verbs are states, while OE-verbs imply a change-of-state in the experiencer and thus entail a proto-patient property for the experiencer-argument. Both lines of argumentation are problematic, cf. Kutscher (2008a, chap. 2).

3.2 What do we find in Ardesen-Laz?

- No lexical converses (*like – please*)
- but a lot of verb pairs with two argument structures (1-place vs. 2-place predicates with the same root but different VV and personal inflection properties): A/Stim&U/Exp vs U/Exp.

(13) a. *ele-m-i-nkalam*

PRV-1U-VV-touch:[2>1]SG:PRS

'I feel touched by you.'

b. *ele-m-a-nkalen*

*(heçaye bogni-si, elemankalu)*

PRV-1U-VV-touch:SG:PRS story I.heard.it-when

'I feel touched.'

(‘When I heard the story, I was touched.’)

(14) a. *korba dolo-m-i-gzam*

belly PRV-1U-VV-blaze:[2>1]SG:PRS

'You worry me (lit.: you blaze my belly).'

b. *korba dolo-m-a-gzen*

*(heçaye bogni-si, korba dolomagzu)*

belly PRV-1U-VV-blaze:SG:PRS

'I feel worried (lit.: my belly blazes/it blazes me in the belly).'

cf. also table (3) below

- expectation: semantic alignment, thus only one linking possibility for Exp?

  -> emotion [-ctrl], or Stim [+ctrl] => Exp/U ?, or
  -> Exp=agentlike => Exp/A]?

In fact, the vast majority of psychverbs in Laz are Exp/U (58 of 74 verbs = approx. ca. 80%). But in a minority of cases (16 of 74 verbs = approx. 20 %) we find Exp/A, cf. (15). These allow both for imperfective as well as perfective aspect inflection, i.e. are non-statives.

(15) a. *oxori-şkimi na molaxenan askere-pe*

house-POSS:1SG REL reside:3A.PL:PRS soldier-PL

*oko-b-i-toram*

PRV-1A-VV-lug:1A.SG:PRS

'I bear the soldiers which are residing in my house.'
Semantic regularities/metaphor and semantic alignment
The vast majority of psychverbs in Laz (at least 50 of 63 = 83% [74 verbs - 11 N+COP constructions or Turkish copies]¹) are semantically transparent figurative expressions. 45 of these 50 verbs are external possessor constructions involving a body part and a verb of the physical domain, cf. (16).

(16) a. **guri mo-m-a-¹katen**
    heart/stomach PRV-1U-VV-cut:SG:PRS
    'I am concerned (lit.: my heart is cut at).'

b. **xoskurlay na me-b-o-kvataten**
    die[animals]:3A.SG:OPT.PFV SUB PRV-1A-VV-cut:[1>3]PL:FUT.PFV
    'Should (the cow) perish, they will cut her up immediately.'

(Kutscher/Genç 1998: 32)

(17) a. **üzü kahve g-u-nlam**
    spoon coffee PRV-VV-dip:[3<3]SG:PRS
    'The spoon is dipped into the coffee(powder).' (Kutscher/Genç 2007:1054)

b. **çxindi go-b-u-nlam**
    nose PRV-1A-VV-dip:[1>3]SG:PRS
    'I pry (lit.: I dip my nose around).'

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exp/U, external possessor constructions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>body part</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>guri</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'heart/stomach'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ce-m-i-¹k3-in-ay</strong></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>guri</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'heart/stomach'</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>ce-m-i-ªor-in-ay</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>guri</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>'heart/stomach'</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>mo-m-i-nkt-in-ay</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>guri</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>'heart/stomach'</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>ce-m-i-³-in-ay</strong></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>cigeri</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'liver'</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>m-i-çv-in-ay</strong></td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹ 5 NOMINAL+COPULA constructions: e.g. **xazi m-a-en** 'be glad' [< trk. haz 'joy']
6 verbal roots of Turkish origin: e.g. **go-m-šas-um** 'astonish' [< trk. šas-mak 'astonish']
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Verb Phrase</th>
<th>Sense</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>cigeri</td>
<td>dolo-m-a-gzen</td>
<td>'have sorrow'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'liver'</td>
<td>PRV-1U-VV-ignite/blaze:SG:PRS</td>
<td>'give sorrow'</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>dolo-m-i-gzay</td>
<td>'give sorrow'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PRV-1U-VV-ignite/blaze[3 &gt; 1]SG:PRS</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>korba</td>
<td>dolo-m-a-gzen</td>
<td>'worry'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'belly'</td>
<td>PRV-1U-VV-ignite/blaze:SG:PRS</td>
<td>'give worry'</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>dolo-m-i-gzay</td>
<td>'give worry'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PRV-1U-VV-ignite/blaze:[3 &gt; 1]SG:PRS</td>
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<tr>
<td>toli</td>
<td>m-a-pšen</td>
<td>'be sad'</td>
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<tr>
<td>'eye'</td>
<td>1U-VV-fill:SG:PRS</td>
<td>'make sad'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>m-i-pšay</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1U-VV-fill:[3 &gt; 1]SG:PRS</td>
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<tr>
<td>odi</td>
<td>m-a-tvažim</td>
<td>'panic'</td>
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<tr>
<td>'gall'</td>
<td>1U-VV-burst:SG:PRS</td>
<td>'stampede'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>m-i-tvažay</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1U-VV-burst:[3 &gt; 1]SG:PRS</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Additionally, there are 5 simplex verbs (= 27% of the simplex psychverbs) that have sense alternations between the physical and the mental domain, cf. (18).

(18) PRV-bonkalam 'to touch with the tips of the fingers/toes; be emotionally touched'
   a. ce-b-o-nkalam  
      PRV-1A-VV-touch.with.tip.of.finger/toe:[1>3]SG:PRS  
      'I walk on tiptoe (lit.: I touch the ground with the tips of my toes).'
   b. Ali-ši  heçaye-ša  ele-m-à-nkalen  
      Ali-GEN Geschichte-MOT  PRV-1U-VV-antipp:SG:PRS  
      'I am touched by Ali's story (lit: I am touched by fingertips at side of my body.'

(19) PRV-toram 'carry a heavy load, lug; bear, endure'
   a. nžixi  eke-b-i-toram  
      brushwood  PRV-1A-VV-lug:1A.SG:PRS  
      'I lug a bundle of brushwood along behind me.' (Kutscher/Genç 1998: 160)
   b. -> (15b)

In Laz we basically find 3 types of figurative constructions:

I. [Agent/ACTOR]⇒[Exp/ACTOR]
Constructions that express gestures and mimics which are figuratively used to express emotional concepts, i.e. controlled movement of body part by possessor of body.

(20) a. Ali  leške-pe  golo-b-u-cimošam  
    Ali lip-PL  PRV-1A-VV-purse:[1>3]SG:PRS  

alignment principle:  
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTOR</th>
<th>UNDERGOER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>control</td>
<td>[+ ctrl]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[- ctrl]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>metaphorical shift:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reading of physical domain:</td>
<td>agent patient/theme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>target reading of mental domain:</td>
<td>experiencer body part</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

figure (2): Scheme of metaphorical shift for type I
II. \[\text{Agent/A} - \text{affected body organ/SO} + \text{possessor of body/U}\] \[\Rightarrow \text{[Stim/A} - \text{Exp/U]}\]
Psychverbs with U/Exp express body sensations that occur with emotions. These feelings within the body accompany emotional states and are not volitionally controlled by the experiencer in order to raise an emotion.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Alignment Principle:</th>
<th>ACTOR</th>
<th>SO</th>
<th>UNDERGOER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>[+ ctrl]</td>
<td>[- ctrl]</td>
<td>[- ctrl]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prominence</td>
<td>d.n.a</td>
<td>[- prom]</td>
<td>[+ prom]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Metaphorical shift:
- Reading of physical domain: agent, possessum, possessor
- Reading of mental domain: stimulus, body part, experiencer

Figure (3): Scheme of metaphorical shift for type II

III. [AG - PAT/TH ⇒ Stim/A – Exp/U]:
Only marginal in my Laz data: metaphorical shift, cf. (18) \(PRV\)-bonkalama). Note that this type of semantic regularity seems to be one of the major types e.g. in ACC languages (Kutscher 2008a, chap 4).

Non-transparent psychverbs:
(21) \(m\-a\-oropen\) 'love', \(m\-o\-m\-žondun\) 'like', \(m\-a\-tamaxer\) 'envy', \(b\-i\-xelam\) 'rejoice', \(m\-o\-škurinay\) 'frighten', \(m\-a\-škurinen\) 'fear', \(golo\-m\-i\-perdayay\) 'discourage', \(b\-u\-çibram\) 'bear', \(e\-p\-škundur\) 'wince at'

5 Conclusion
The alignment problem of the semantic role experiencer seems to be a universal coding problem for language systems in general. As the data on Laz show, semantic alignment languages allow a different solution to the coding problem than is debated for ACC languages. As section 3 illustrated, for the active language Laz most psych-verb-expressions are polysemous/semantically transparent metaphors. The alignment of these metaphor expressions follows general alignment properties of Laz, which hold for the physical domain (control, causal chain, prominence, cf. section 2). Experiencers are treated like controlling agents (type I) or as possessors (type II), and in some minor cases as affected patients (type III). Hence, the principle of semantic alignment holds not only for verbs of the physical domain but also for psychverb expressions, notwithstanding the fact that experiencers are not clearly controlling agents or affected patients and vice versa stimuli do not control the arousal of an emotion in the experiencer.
**References**


Kutscher, Silvia 2008b. The language of the Laz in Turkey: Contact-induced change or gradual language loss? *Turkish Languages* 12:82-102.


**Abbreviations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DAT</td>
<td>dative case</td>
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<tr>
<td>DEM</td>
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[>] verbform is marked for two arguments, predication base/subject (= actor) acting on object (= undergoer)