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Non-quantificational distributive quantifiers in Besleney Kabardian

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It is sometimes claimed that true distributive adnominal quantifiers like *every* cannot form DPs with the predicate interpretation; cf. Partee 1986. One possible counterexample is presented by the Yuman language Maricopa (David Gil, pers. com.). This generalization is also violated in the Circassian languages (Kabardian and Adyghe) of the Northwest Caucasian family. We illustrate this with examples from Ulap Besleney, a Kabardian variety spoken in the village of Ulap (Adyghe, Russia).

The Circassian languages are highly polysynthetic, with many arguments cross-referenced in the predicate. It has been suggested that such languages express arguments by morphological rather than syntactic elements (cf. Jelinek and Demers 1994, Van Valin 1985 among others, see also Baker 1996) and lack true adnominal quantifiers (Jelinek 1995; Baker 1995; Faltz 1995). As we will see, in Besleney, the apparent adnominal distributive quantifiers do not behave as true quantifiers in many respects.

We consider two Besleney quantifiers: *q'as*, found with time expressions, and *pabʒ*, found elsewhere. Their interpretation is strictly distributive:

- (1) ma:x^wa-**q'as** a:-bəm zə q^wəja-χ^wərja j-a-š̂'
day-every that-OBL one cheese-circle 3SG.ERG-DYN-make
'She makes one cheese every day.'
- (2) ma:x^wa-**q'as** səha:tə-r t'^wafj̄'-ra p^l'ə-ra-ʃj̄'a j-a-g^wafj̄ / ja:-g^wafj̄
day-every hour-ABS twenty-COORD four-COORD-INS 3SG.ERG-DYN-divide /
'Every day divides (the time) into 24 hours.' 3PL.ERG-divide
- (3) ʃj̄'a:ħa-**pabʒ** swam-jə-ʃa sa Ø-ja-s-t-a: / ja:-s-t-a:
boy-every ruble-LNK-hundred I 3SG.IO-DAT-1SG.ERG-give-PST /
'I gave 100 rubles to each boy. 3PL.IO+DAT-1SG.ERG-give-PST

However, these quantifiers appear in constructions non-typical for distributive quantifiers.

First, DPs containing distributive quantifiers may behave as if they refer to plural entities. As (2)-(3) demonstrate, they are optionally cross-referenced with plural prefixes, a property that seemingly has not been observed outside of the Northwest Caucasian family (Tatevosov 2002: 80). Moreover, phrases with distributive quantifiers appear as “heads” of internally-headed relative clauses, where the predicate takes the “external” case and the internal head is marked with the predicative suffix (which usually marks various adverbials including secondary predicates). Semantically, such “heads” have scope over the relative clause (cf. Grosu 2000): for example, (4)

lacks the narrow scope interpretation ‘He gave his friends certain books such that each of them was read by him’. Yet as the same example shows, the whole DP may be marked as plural despite the wide scope of the quantifier:

- (4) a:-bə [txəl-**pabz**-wə z-a-dʒj-a:(-xa)-r] jə-drug-xa-m
 that-OBL book-every-PRED REL.IO-DAT-read-PST-PL-ABS POSS-friend-PL-OBL
 ja:-r-jə-t-a:
 3PL.IO-DAT-3SG.ERG-give-PST
 ‘He gave each book he had read to his friends.’

Second, when focused, the DPs under discussion appear as predicates in pseudocleft constructions, clearly violating the predictions made earlier:

- (5) qʷəja jʃj-jə-š' ə-r ma:xʷa-**q'**as
 cheese TEMP-3SG.ERG-make-ABS day-every
 ‘She makes cheese every day.’
 Lit.: ‘When she makes cheese is every day.’

- (6) sa zə swam z-a-s-t-a:(-xa)-r fʃj'a:lʒa-**pabz**-q'əm,
 I one ruble REL.IO-DAT-1SG.ERG-give-PST-PL-ABS boy-every-NEG
 pʃa:ʃa-**pabz** na:h
 girl-every more
 ‘I gave a ruble to every girl rather than to every boy.’
 Lit.: ‘Whom I gave a ruble is not every boy, rather every girl.’

Although not mentioned in the otherwise detailed description Nikolaeva 2012, similar patterns are found in Adyghe (Lander 2012):

- (7) ha:lʒə ʷa qə-zə-tja-fa:-ka-r fʃj'a:lʒa-**papf**
 pie DIR-REL.IO-LOC-fall-PST-ABS boy-every
 ‘Every boy got a pie.’
 Lit.: ‘On whom a pie fell is every boy.’

These constructions clearly show that in Circassian languages DPs with quantifiers may refer to properties/sets of individuals, or plural individuals and hence need not be true quantificational phrases.

While these properties of quantifiers may correlate with the typological features of Besleney, their compositional interpretation is problematic and probably requires a treatment where distributivity need not be related to quantification proper.

Abbreviations. ABS – absolutive; COORD – coordination; DAT – dative preverb; DIR – directive preverb; DYN – dynamic marker; ERG – ergative cross-reference; INS – instrumental; IO – indirect object cross-reference; LNK – linker; NEG – negation; OBL – oblique case; PL – plural; POSS – possessive; PRED – predicative; PST – past; REL – relative; SG – singular; TEMP – temporal preverb (‘when’).

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