

Subjects in Pazar and Ardeseni Laz¹

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Summary: The aim of this study is to discuss the impact of the loss of case morphology on the structural vs. semantic subject asymmetry in Ardeseni Laz with specific emphasis on verbal agreement morphology associated with subjects. We will show that in comparison to Pazar which still retains its case morphology Ardeseni has acquired different subject agreement patterns to encode the distinction between structural vs. semantic subjects, which in a sense made it become similar to nominative-accusative systems.

Key words: *Laz, case, agreement*

Özet: Bu çalışmanın başlıca amacı, Ardeşen Lazcası'ndaki durum biçimbirimlerinin kaybolmasının, yapısal-anlamsal özne ayrımı üzerindeki etkilerini özellikle öznelerle ilişkilendirilen eylemsel uyum biçimbirimleri açısından tartışmaktır. Halen durum biçimbirimlerini koruyan Pazar Lazcası'na kıyasla Ardeşen Lazcası'nın yapısal ve anlamsal özneleri ayırt etmek için daha farklı özne uyum biçimleri geliştirdiği ve böylelikle bir anlamda nominatif-akuzatif sistemlere benzer özellikler kazandığı gösterilecektir.

Anahtar sözcükler: *Lazca, durum, uyum*

1. Introduction

Pazar (Atina) and Ardeseni are the two western dialects of Laz spoken in Turkey. Pazar, which has a split-ergative case system,² exhibits alternating case patterns for arguments depending on the semantic denotation of the verb used, as well as on the tense and aspect system the sentence is introduced in (Holisky 1991). Ardeseni, on the other hand, has lost its morphological case system. Yet, both dialects make use of a rich verbal agreement system. This paper aims to investigate the impact of the absence of case morphology on the morpho-syntax of Ardeseni with specific emphasis on how subjecthood is expressed via agreement morphology. We will argue that this change has led Ardeseni to acquire different subject agreement patterns and thus to encode the structural (syntactic) vs. semantic subject asymmetry in ways different than the ones

found in Pazar.

Subjecthood can be defined in various ways. Syntactically it can be assumed to be the argument that bears a specified case feature associated with a specific syntactic position, and shows agreement with the verb in terms of person, number and gender features (e.g. the nominative in the nominative-accusative systems). In English, for example, structural subjects are the arguments that bear nominative case and agree with the verb occupying a particular position within the sentence as illustrated by the pronouns *they* and *he*. Semantically, on the other hand, the subject can be the most prominent argument in terms of the theta-role hierarchy as the pronoun *them* denoting the agent in (1b). Note that as seen in the contrast between (1a) and (1b) syntactic and semantic subjects do not necessarily overlap but can be different in a given sentence.³ Furthermore, structural subjects can be fully disassociated from semantic subjects and expressed via functional elements like expletives, which may require the use of a default agreement pattern. As seen in (2a) the expletive *it* acting as the structural subject triggers default 3rd ps agreement on the verb, even though the semantic subject *the students* is plural. But when the semantic subject also acquires the structural subject status as in (2b), then 3ppl agreement is realized on the verb in agreement with the person-number features of the semantic subject.

- (1) a. **They** beat him.
 b. **He** is beaten by **them**.
- (2) a. **It** seems that **the students** are happy.
 b. **The students** seem to be happy.

Now let us turn to the issue of subjecthood within the two dialects of Laz which are of concern here. We see that both in Pazar and Ardesen, subjects are associated with specific agreement markers on the verb. These markers involve both prefixes and suffixes. Example (3) presents the prefixes for subjects and objects and (4) illustrates the verb final suffixes associated with subjects:

(3) Subject Markers:		Object Markers:		
1ps	/v-/ ⁴	1ps	/m-/	
2ps	∅	2ps	/g-/	
(4)				
a. Pazar:				
Present Set:		Past Set:	Modal Set:	
1p&2p	∅ (-r)	1p & 2p -i	1p & 2p ∅	
3ps	-n,-s	3ps	-u	3ps -s
3ppl	-nan, -an3ppl	-es	3ppl	-n

b. Ardeshen:

Present Set:		Past Set:		Modal Set:	
1p&2p	∅ (-r)	1p & 2p	-i	1p & 2p	∅
3ps	-n,-y	3ps	-u	3ps	-y
3ppl	-nan, -an	3ppl	-ey	3ppl	-n

In the following, we will argue that both in Pazar and Ardeshen prefixes and suffixes given above fulfill different tasks. The set of prefixes used for subjects are associated with semantic subjects, whereas the verb final agreement suffixes are used to encode structural subjects. However, we will also show that there is a significant asymmetry between the two dialects in terms of the way these affixes are used to establish subjecthood. We will propose that this asymmetry results from the fact that as opposed to Pazar, Ardeshen has lost its morphological case system which is used to mark different kinds of semantic subjects based on their theta-roles.

2. General information on case and agreement patterns of subjects in Laz

In this section, we will briefly discuss the general case and agreement patterns associated with subjects in both dialects of Laz.

2.1 Case and Agreement in Pazar

As discussed by Holisky (1991), agreement patterns in Pazar alternate according to three tense-aspect series; namely Series I for imperfectives, Series II for perfectives and Series III for evidentials.⁵ Let us consider how the agreement morphology given in (3) and (4a) above is used depending on the tense-aspect series the sentence is introduced in:

- (5) a. Ma **v**-i-bgar-∅ ← Series I
 I 1p.subj-preroot-cry-1ps.present
 I cry
- b. Ma **m**-i-bgar-ap-u-n ← Series III
 I 1p.obj-preroot-cry-serieI-serieIII-3ps.present
 I have cried.
- c. Ma si go-**m**-o-c'ondr-u. ← Series II
 I you preverb-1p.obj-preroot-forget-3ps.past
 I forgot you.

As illustrated in (5a), the semantic 1ps subject *ma* “I” would require the 1p subject marker *v*- in Series I. However, in (5b) we see that the 1p object marker *m*- is chosen for it under Series III. This is a case of inversion, where object prefixes are used to encode semantic subjects (Holisky 1991).⁶ Thus, although we have a 1ps semantic subject both

in (5a) and (5b) due to the difference in tense-aspect series different prefixes, namely subject vs. object prefixes, are chosen to encode the semantic subject. As discussed for Georgian inversion by Harris (1981, 1982), the use of an object prefix implies that the semantic subject in (5b) behaves structurally like an internal argument of the verb, i.e., like a derived object. That is why the object prefix is chosen instead of the subject prefix. Psychological predicates, on the other hand, always exhibit inversion regardless of the tense-aspect series they are in. That is why even in Series II, which normally does not require inversion, the subject is indicated by the object marker *m-* on the verb as seen in (5c).

As clearly illustrated by the data in (5) the prefixes are in agreement with the person and number information of the semantic subject,⁷ that is, given that all the subjects in (5a-c) are 1ps, the set of prefixes encoding the same information is selected depending on the tense-aspect series. Now let us turn to agreement suffixes. In (5a) both the prefix and the verb final agreement suffix depict 1p. However, as seen in (5b-c), although the semantic subject is 1ps as depicted by the agreement prefix on the verb, the verb final agreement suffix is in the default 3ps form. We take this mismatch to imply that verb final agreement suffixes denote the covert structural subject of the sentence, whereas the slot filled by prefixes is associated with the semantic subject. In a sense, these examples are in parallel to the English example (2a) above, which involves an overt default expletive pronoun acting as the structural subject. Thus, in Pazar, when the morphological composition of the verb is considered, person agreement prefixes regularly denote the semantic subject of the sentence, whereas agreement suffixes depict the structural subject:

- (6)+ person agreement prefixes+... + verb root +...+ person agreement suffixes
 SEMANTIC SUBJECT STRUCTURAL SUBJECT

In addition to verbal agreement morphology, Pazar – unlike Ardeshen – makes use of case morphology to encode semantic subjects, which alternates based on the theta-roles of the arguments as required by the semantics of the predicate class. As discussed in Holisky (1991) there are four different predicate classes in Laz, which exhibit different case morphology patterns. The predicate in (7a) below is a transitive verb with an agentive subject and a theme object, and belongs to Class I. The predicate in (7b), on the other hand, belongs to Class III, which includes intransitive unergative predicates with agentive subjects. The common point of these two classes is that their predicates take agentive subjects, which are marked with the ergative case in Pazar. When we take a look at (8), on the other hand, we see a Class II predicate, which is an unaccusative with a theme subject. For theme subjects, Pazar makes use of a different case marker namely the bare nominative case, which also overlaps with the case of the theme object of the transitive predicate in (7a). That is, themes are marked as nominatives in Pazar. Finally, in (9) we find a verb from Class IV, which includes

psychological predicates with experiencer subjects marked with dative case. Thus, the distribution of case morphology on subjects we see in (7-9) in Pazar is sensitive to their theta-roles determined by the predicate class as summarized in (10):

- (7) a. Bere-**k** tzari -Ø shum-s. Class I
 child-erg water-nom drink-3ps.present
 The child is drinking water.
- b. Bere-**k** i-bgar-s. Class III
 child-erg preroot-drink-3ps.present
 The child is crying.
- (8) Bere-Ø do-ğur-u. Class II
 child-nom preverb-die-3ps.past
 The child died.
- (9) Bere-**s** ma g-o-c' ondr-u. Class IV
 child-dat me preverb-preroot-forget-3ps.past
 The child forgot me.
- (10) Agents → Ergative
 Themes → Nominative
 Experiencers → Dative

Structures of inversion illustrated in (5b-c), however, pose an exception to this generalization in Pazar as it disrupts the one-to-one mapping between case markers and theta-roles. When inversion applies to Class I and Class III predicates with agentive subjects under Series III in Pazar, the ergative case on the subject is replaced by a dative case marker as illustrated in (11). Thus, the dative-ergative asymmetry observed between agentive versus experiencer subjects gets neutralized in favor of the dative case when predicates with agentive subjects are introduced in Series III which always requires inversion:

- (11) a. Bere-**k** i-bgar-s.
 child-erg preroot-drink-3ps.present
 The child is crying.
- b. Bere-**s** u-bgar-ap-u-n. ← Inversion
 child-dat preroot-cry-s.m.-SeriesIII-3ps.present
 The child has cried.

Furthermore, Pazar does *not* allow unaccusative predicates of Class II with theme subjects to be inflected for Series III, where inversion is obligatory. Inversion for such predicates lead to ungrammaticality as in (12b), therefore, they require a periphrastic construction formed with the simple past tense from Series II and the predicate

doren “to be” to express the intended evidential reading as shown in (12c). Thus, as unaccusatives with nominative theme subjects cannot undergo inversion, we do not observe a nominative-dative alternation due to inversion in Pazar.

- (12) a. Bere do-ğur-u. ← simple past
 child particle-die-3ps.past
 The child died.
- b. *Bere-epe u-ğur-ap-u-n. ← Series III with inversion
 child-pl preroot-die-s.m.-SerieIII-3p.modal
 Children have died.
- c. Bere-epe do-ğur-u do-r-t³-u. ← periphrastic construction
 child-pl preroot-die-3ps.past preverb-Be-imp-3ps.past
 Children have died (Literally: It is the case that children have died)

If we are to sum up what we introduced above regarding the case and agreement patterns of subjects in Pazar, we see that the information regarding subjects in Pazar is expressed via three means:

- (i) Verbal agreement prefixes express the person information of the *semantic* subject.
- (ii) Verbal agreement suffixes express the person information of the *structural* subject.
- (iii) Case markers express the semantic role of the *semantic* subject – except for agents in the case of inversion.

Note that Ardeshen also has access to the means in (i) and (ii), however, because it has lost its case morphology, (iii) does not hold for Ardeshen, whose consequences we will discuss in Section 3.

2.2 Case and Agreement patterns in Ardeshen

As we have seen in Section 2.1 Pazar uses both case and agreement morphology to express the information associated with subjects. Ardeshen, however, has lost its morphological case system and only makes use of agreement affixes on the verb to convey the information regarding subjects, as given in (3) and (4) above.⁸ Due to the loss of case system in Ardeshen, as seen in (13-15), where the Ardesheni counterparts of Pazar (7-9) are given, all arguments including subjects simply appear without any case morphology. In (13a) and (13b) we have predicates from Class I and Class III with agentive subjects,⁶ appearing without any case markers although they would take ergative case in Pazar. In (14), on the other hand, we have a theme subject of a Class II unaccusative predicate which again appears without any case morphology. Finally in (15), the experiencer subject of a Class IV predicate is morphologically unmarked for case. Thus, all subject types in Ardeshen as illustrated in (13-15) unlike what we see in

Pazar appear without case markers:

- (13) a. Bere-∅ tzari -∅ shum-s. Class I
 child water drink-3ps.present
 The child is drinking water.
- b. Bere-∅ i-bga-y. Class III
 child-nom preroot-drink-3ps.present
 The child is crying.
- (14) Bere-∅ do-ğur-u. Class II
 child-nom preverb-die-3ps.past
 The child died.
- (15) Bere-∅ ma g-v-o-c' ondr-u. Class IV
 child-nom me preverb-1p-preroot-forget-3ps.past
 The child forgot me.

Ardesheni agreement patterns are also sensitive to three tense-aspect series; namely Series I for imperfectives, Series II for perfectives and Series III for evidentials. In Series III Ardeshen also exhibits inversion, however, due to the loss of case system inversion can be indicated only through the alternation in verbal agreement morphology but not via any case alternation of the type found in Pazar. As in (16a), predicates with agentive subjects under Series I and II would require a 1p subjective prefix *v-*. However, they exhibit inversion when they appear in Series III. Therefore, instead of the subject marker *v-* the 1p object marker *m-* is chosen to mark the subject as in (16b). Agentive subjects which appear in ergative in Series I and II but in dative in Series III in Pazar all appear as bare in all series in Ardeshen as illustrated in (17):

- (16) a. Ma **v-**i-bgar-∅
 I 1p.subj-preroot-cry-1ps.present
 I cry
- b. Ma **m-**i-bgar-ap-u-n
 I 1p.obj-preroot-cry-s.m-serieIII-3ps.present
 I have cried.
- (17) a. Bere-∅ i-bga-y. → Series I
 child-nom preroot-drink-3ps.present
 The child is crying.
- b. Bere-∅ u-bgar-ap-u-n. → Series III
 child preroot-cry-s.m-SerieIII-3ps.present
 The child have cried.

Parallel to inversion structures in Pazar, in Ardeshen, too, agreement prefixes and suffixes are associated with semantic and structural subjects respectively. As clearly illustrated by the data in (16a) the person agreement prefix is in agreement with the person and number information of the semantic subject, that is, 1ps pronoun *ma* ‘‘I’’. The same holds for the verb final agreement suffix. However, in (16b) although the semantic subject is 1ps and this information is reflected by the agreement prefix on the verb, the verb final agreement suffix is in the default 3ps form. We again take this mismatch to imply that verb final agreement suffixes denote the structural subject of the sentence. Thus, in Ardeshen, too, the morphological composition of the verb holds two distinct slots for the semantic and the structural subject information. That is, person agreement prefixes regularly denote the semantic subject of the sentence, whereas the verb final agreement suffixes depict the structural subject:

(18)+ person agreement prefixes+... + verb root +...+ person agreement suffixes
 SEMANTIC SUBJECT STRUCTURAL SUBJECT

3. The morphosyntactic consequences of the loss of case morphology on subjecthood in Ardeshen

As introduced above, subjects in Pazar bear different case markers based on their theta-roles. However, this asymmetry has been neutralized in Ardeshen, which has lost its case system, therefore all subjects appear as bare. The loss of case morphology has certain reflections on the morpho-syntax of Ardeshen with regards to subjecthood. We will discuss three phenomena where Ardeshen exhibits patterns different from the ones in Pazar, namely: (i) lack of case-sensitivity of structural subjects, (ii) deriving structural subjects from focused theme objects under inversion, (iii) availability of unaccusatives in Series III.

3.1 Case-sensitivity of structural subjects

The first difference between Pazar and Ardeshen is related to what can act as the structural subject in both dialects in non-inversion constructions. This is sensitive to the morphological case-marking of semantic subjects. The person/number information of ergative semantic subjects are always *fully* reflected on the verb final agreement slot reserved for the structural subject. They are not compatible with the default 3ps agreement. This means that if there is an ergative semantic subject in the structure it has to act as the structural subject simultaneously. However, non-ergative semantic subjects, that is, nominative and dative marked subjects have the option to occur with the default structural subject marker. The evidence for this comes from agreement patterns with plural subjects. As can be seen in (19a) and (19b) respectively, the verb final agreement

denoting the structural subject of the sentence can either fully agree with nominative and dative semantic 3ppl subjects, or appear as the default 3ps. Thus, nominative and dative semantic subjects bearing the theme and the experiencer roles, respectively, can optionally act as the structural subject of the sentence. As illustrated by (19c) and (19d), ergative semantic subjects with the agent role, on the other hand, have to trigger full agreement with the verb, otherwise ungrammaticality arises.

- (19) a. Bere-epe-∅ col-es/-u ← Nominative theme subject
 child-pl-nom fall-3ppl/3ps
 The children fall.
- b. Bere-epe-s ma go-condr-es/-u ← Dative experiencer subject
 child-pl-dat me preverb-forget-3ppl/3ps
 The children forgot me.
- c. Bere-epe-k u-k'ap'-es/*-u ← Ergative agentive subject
 child-pl-erg preroot-run-3ppl/3ps
 The children ran.
- d. Bere-epe-k kart'ali do-t'k'v-es/*-u ← Ergative agentive subject
 child-pl-erg letter preverb-write-3ppl/3ps
 The children wrote the letter

As the data above illustrates Pazar, which distinguishes between different semantic subject types via different case morphology, makes a clear distinction between ergative agentive and non-ergative theme and experiencer subjects. Ergative semantic subjects bearing the agent role are also *obligatorily* the structural subject of the sentence, that is why they are not compatible with verb final default 3ps agreement markers. Non-ergative theme and experiencer subjects, on the other hand, can *optionally* act as the structural subject. Therefore, they can appear with the 3ps default verb final agreement.

In Ardeshen, however, due to the loss of case morphology semantic subjects bearing different theta-roles are no longer distinguished with different case markers but all appear as zero-marked for case. This change has led Ardeshen to neutralize the ergative vs. non-ergative asymmetry that we observe in Pazar with respect to what can act as a structural subject. Given that there is no case-based morphological distinction between different types of semantic subjects, all semantic subjects are obligatorily promoted to the structural subject status regardless of whether they are agents, experiencers or themes semantically. When the Ardesheni counterpart of the data in (19) as given in (20) is considered, we see that all 3ppl subjects obligatorily require 3ppl agreement morphology in the verb final structural subject slot. They are not compatible with the 3ps default agreement marker, which marks the default structural subject in the absence of a semantic subject fulfilling the structural subject role.⁷ Thus, we see that in non-inversion constructions all semantic subject types in Ardeshen have to obligatorily act as the structural subject all the time, as opposed to the optional case we observe for non-ergative semantic subjects bearing theme and experiencer roles in Pazar:

- (20) a. Bere-epe-∅ col-ey/*-u ← Theme subject
 child-pl-nom fall-3ppl/3ps
 The children fall.
- b. Bere-epe-∅ ma go-condr-ey/*-u ← Experiencer subject
 child-pl-nom me preverb-forget-3ppl/3ps
 The children forgot me.
- c. Bere-epe-∅ u-k'ap'-ey/*-u ← Agentive subject
 child-pl-nom preroot-run-3ppl/3ps
 The children ran.
- d. Bere-epe-∅ kart'ali do-t'k'v-ey/*-u ← Agentive subject
 child-pl-nom letter preverb-write-3ppl/3ps
 The children wrote the letter.

As evidenced by the data above, due to the loss of case morphology in Ardeshen the morphological asymmetry between different semantic subject types observed in Pazar got neutralized and all semantic subject types have obligatorily acquired the structural subject status in non-inversion constructions. The fact that semantic subjects can bear different theta-roles does not effect their structural subject status in the absence of case morphology.

3.2 Focused objects acting as derived subjects under inversion

Another difference between the two dialects regarding subjecthood comes from agreement patterns observed when theme objects are focused in inversion constructions. In Ardeshen, but not in Pazar, it is possible to promote a theme object to the structural subject status via focus.

As discussed above, Pazar exhibits inversion in Series III, which leads to two kinds of changes: (i) the ergative subject becomes a dative internal argument and (ii) instead of subject prefixes, object prefixes are used to denote the semantic subject. Also under inversion the verb final agreement marker in Pazar always appears as the default 3ps regardless of the person information of the semantic subject. This implies that the actual semantic subject cannot act as the structural subject of the sentence, but a default 3ps agreement marker is used to denote the structural subject. As in (21) the 1ps semantic subject *ma* ‘I’ is marked by an object prefix and the verb final agreement appears as the default 3ps. As indicated by the presence of an object prefix, the semantic subject behaves structurally like an internal argument of the verb. That is why a 3ps default verb final agreement appears in the absence of a semantic subject fulfilling the structural subject role.

- (21) Ma si ce-m-i-ç-am-u-n. → Series III (inversion)
 I you preroot-1p.obj-tr-beat-s.m.-SeriesIII-3ps.present
 I have beaten you.

- (23) a. Himu si c-u-ç-am-ap-u-n. ← 3p semantic subj
 s/he you preverb-preroot-beat-s.m.- SeriesIII -3ps - 3p structural subj
 S/he has beaten you.
- b. Himu **SI** c-u-ç-am-ap-u-r. ← 3p semantic subj -
 s/he you preverb-preroot-beat-s.m.- SeriesIII -2ps 2p structural sub
 S/he has beaten YOU, (not someone else) =semantic object
- (24) a. Si řku ce-g-i-çam-ap-u-n ← 2nd person semantic
 you us preverb-2p.obj-preroot-beat-s.m.- SeriesIII -3ps subject-3p
 You have beaten us. structural subject
- b. Si **řKU** ce-g-i-çam-ap-u-r-t¹² ← 2nd person semantic
 you us preverb-2p.obj-preroot-beat-s.m.- SeriesIII-1p-pl subject –
 You have beaten US, (not someone else). 1ppl structural
 subject=semantic object

As discussed above, psychological predicates from Class IV also exhibit inversion and the same agreement pattern under contrastive focus is also possible with such predicates in Ardeshen as seen in (25). The 3ps default verb final agreement marker in (25a) appears as agreeing with the contrastively focussed semantic object in (25b). This implies that in (25b) the semantic object behaves as the structural subject:

- (25) a. Ma si **m-a-orop-e-n**. ← 1st person semantic subject -
 I you 1p.obj-preroot-love-abl-3ps.modal 3p structural subject
 I love you.
- b. Ma **SI m-a-orop-e-r**. ← 1st person semantic subject -
 I you 1p.obj-preroot-love-abl-2ps.modal 2p structural subject=
 I love YOU, (not someone else) semantic object

Note that the agreement pattern where the contrastively focussed object triggers agreement in Ardeshen leads to ungrammaticality in Pazar as seen in (26). Even when the semantic object is focused, the verb final agreement has to remain as the default 3ps and cannot agree with the semantic object:

- (26) Ma **SI ce-m-i-ç-am-ap-u-n/*r**.
 I you preverb-1p.obj-tr-beat-s.m.-SeriesIII-3ps.modal/2p.modal
 I have beaten YOU, (not someone else).

We again conjecture that the loss of case morphology in Ardeshen also contributes to the above mentioned asymmetry between the two dialects. Since there is no case-based morphological difference between subjects and objects in Ardeshen, when the semantic subject fails to act as the structural subject due to inversion, then the object

can be promoted to this status.

3.3 Unaccusatives in Series III

The final difference which arises between the two dialects due to the loss of distinctive case morphology is illustrated by the (un)availability of unaccusatives under Series III, which strictly requires inversion. As shown above, in Pazar, unaccusative predicates from Class II with semantic theme subjects cannot be inflected for Series III but a periphrastic construction is used for the evidential reading as in (27). However, predicates with agentive ergative subjects from Class I and III are allowed to undergo inversion in Series III, which yields an ergative-dative alternation as in (28). Psychological predicates from Class IV with experiencer subjects marked as dative also require inversion regardless of the tense-aspect series as in (29), and as such they are compatible with Series III. Thus, Pazar exhibits a very well-defined restriction as to which types of predicates can undergo inversion, where unaccusative predicates of Class II are strictly excluded. Therefore, the dative case alternation that is obligatorily observed under inversion for subjects is possible only for ergative agentive subjects but not for nominative theme subjects.

- (27) a. *Bere-epe u-ğur-ap-u-n. ← Nominative theme subject
 child-pl preroot-die-s.m.-SerieIII-3p.modal
 Children have died.
 b. Bere-epe do-ğur-u do-r-t'-u. ← periphrastic construction
 child-pl preroot-die-3ps.past preverb-Be-imp-3ps.past
 Children have died (Literally: It is the case that children died)

- (28) a. Bere-k i-bgar-s. ← Ergative agentive subject
 child-erg preroot-drink-3ps.present
 The child is crying.
 b. Bere-s u-bgar-ap-u-n. ← Inversion: Dative agentive subject
 child-dat preroot-cry-s.m.-SeriesIII-3ps.present
 The child have cried.

- (29) Bere-s ma g-o-c'ondr-u. ← Dative experiencer subject
 child-dat me preverb-preroot-forget-3ps.past
 The child forgot me.

Now let us consider inversion in Ardesheh. As introduced above there are also four predicate classes in Ardesheh identical to the ones in Pazar. Semantic subjects in Class I and Class III bear the agent role, whereas the ones in Class II and Class IV are themes and experiencers respectively. The difference between the two dialects arises in the case marking of such subjects. Although Pazar differentiates subjects by using different case markers based on their theta-roles, (agents → ergative, themes → nominative,

experiencers → dative), given that Ardeshen has lost its case morphology all subjects appear as bare, even though they bear different theta-roles. Thus, all subject types in Ardeshen morphologically appear identical. Therefore, it is not possible to differentiate predicate classes based on the morphological case marking of their subjects. As discussed above Pazar strictly avoids unaccusative predicates with nominative theme subjects to undergo inversion. If we assume that in Pazar predicates are discriminated for inversion based on their semantics reflected in their subject case morphology, given that there is no case-based asymmetry in Ardeshen, we predict that all predicate types should be able to undergo inversion without any discrimination. This prediction is borne out. In Ardeshen, not only predicates with agentive and experiencer subjects but also predicates with theme subjects can appear in inversion constructions. Thus, unaccusative predicates can also appear in Series III without recourse to a periphrastic construction unlike the ones in Pazar. As seen in (30) below, the very same unaccusative predicate which leads to ungrammaticality under inversion in Pazar in (27b), generates a grammatical construction in Series III in Ardeshen. Examples in (31) further illustrate how unaccusatives are compatible with inversion in Ardeshen. Note that these examples are ungrammatical in Pazar and must be introduced with a periphrastic construction formed with *doren* as shown in (32):

- (30) Hako dido bere u-ğur-ap-u-n.
 here many child preroot-die-s.m.-SeriesIII-3p.modal
 Here many children have died.
- (31) a. Hako kaltopi u-y-ap-u-n.
 here potato preroot-be-s.m.-SeriesIII-3p.modal
 Here potato has grown.
 b. Ham oxori i-çv-ap-u-n.
 this house preroot-burn-s.m.-SeriesIII-3p.modal
 This house has burnt down.
 c. Ham cerma-pe turi i-nzin-ap-u-n.
 this mountain-pl snow preroot-melt-s.m.-SeriesIII-3ps.modal
 The snow in these mountains has melted down.
- (32) a. Hako kaltopi i-y-u do-r-t'-u.
 here potato preroot-exist-3ps.past preverb-Be-imp-3ps.past
 Here potato has grown.
 b. Ham oxori i-ç-u do-r-t'-u.
 this house preroot-burn-3ps.past preverb-Be-imp-3ps.past
 This house has burnt down.
 c. Ham cerma-pe turi i-nzin-u do-r-t'-u.
 this mountain-pl snow preroot-melt-3ps.past preverb-Be-imp-3ps.past
 The snow in these mountains has melted down.

As discussed above, once its morphological case system dissolved, Ardeshen has neutralized the semantic-role based morphological asymmetry for subjects. This in return lead to the neutralization of the difference between predicate classes with respect to different tense-aspect series. Thus, as a consequence of the loss of case morphology, all predicate types can appear in all tense-aspect series. In that respect, Ardeshen behaves similar to languages with nominative-accusative case systems, where the semantic nature of the predicate does not impose any restriction onto the tense-aspect system that can be used, unlike what is observed in Pazar. As illustrated by the examples in (33), in a nominative-accusative system like Turkish – a language that Laz is in close contact with – semantic subjects of all predicate types appear as nominative and regardless of their semantics all predicate types can be inflected for all tense-aspect systems.¹³

- (33) a. Sen- \emptyset kitab-ı oku-du-n. → Agentive subj of a transitive predicate
 you-nom book-acc read-past-2ps
 You read the book
- b. Sen- \emptyset koş-tu-n. → Agentive subj of an unergative predicate
 you-nom run-past-2ps
 You ran.
- c. Sen- \emptyset düş-tü-n. → Theme subject of an unaccusative
 you-nom fall-past-2ps
 You fell.
- d. Sen- \emptyset on-u sev-di-n. → Experiencer subj of a psych predicate
 you-nom s/he-acc love-past-2ps
 You loved him/her.

Thus, the loss of case system in Ardeshen has contributed to the neutralization of the semantics-based distinction between predicate classes for tense-aspect series in Pazar. This implies that Ardeshen has acquired subject-related patterns which are also observed in nominative-accusative systems and thus in a sense has become closer to languages with such systems. Given that Laz has been in close contact with languages with nominative-accusative case systems like Turkish, Armenian and Greek this change might have risen due to language contact. Note that given the insufficiency of historical evidence, we are not in a position to make any specific claims regarding whether Ardeshen might have had contact with the nominative-accusative systems more than Pazar has.¹⁴ But the loss of case morphology along with the contact with nominative-accusative systems might have lead to such a change in Ardeshen. However, whether this is truly a language contact phenomenon or whether it is a language-internal change requires further investigation and does not fall within the scope of this study.

4. Conclusion

To conclude, as the discussion above shows, the loss of case system lead to several changes in the morpho-syntax of Ardeshen in relation to the agreement morphology denoting subjecthood. As the semantic arguments of a verb are no longer distinguished via case markers based on the theta-roles they bear and simply appear without any case marking, Ardeshen exhibits more flexibility in allowing different kinds of semantic arguments to act as the structural subject of the sentence. Pazar, on the other hand, still retaining distinctive case morphology associated with different theta-roles, fails to exhibit such a flexibility. Furthermore, as all subject types in Ardeshen appear to be identical regardless of their theta-roles due to the loss of case morphology, predicate classes can no longer be differentiated based on the case markers they require on their subjects. This in return has lead to the neutralization of differences between predicate classes for different tense-aspect series and in a sense caused Ardeshen to exhibit properties similar to languages with nominative-accusative systems to a certain extent.

Notes

- 1 This study is part of a project (No: 07HB402) supported by Boğaziçi University Research Fund. I would like to thank my Pazar informant İsmail Avcı Bucak'lışı and Ardesheni informants İrfan Çağatay and Mustafa Özkurt for the Laz data they generously provided me with. I am further grateful to İsmail Avcı Bucak'lışı for being a wonderful liaison between the staff of this research and the Laz community, as well as for his invaluable support for various aspects of this project.
- 2 See Laka (2007), Legate (2007) and Ura (2007) for the properties of split-ergative systems.
- 3 For defining subjects see Keenan (1976), Harley (1995), McCloskey (1997).
- 4 See Kojima and Bucak'lışı (2003) for the phonological conditions governing the distribution of the *lps* prefix.
- 5 Note that the agreement markers given in (4) above do not necessarily overlap with the three tense-aspect series. As can be seen in (5b) even though the sentence is in Series III, the verb final agreement suffix is from the present set given in (4).
- 6 Note that *m-* in a non-inversion construction is used to mark the object. As seen in (i) the first person singular object is marked with the prefix *m-* on the verbal complex:
 - (i) Si ma ce-**m-ç-i**
 you I preverb-1p.obj-beat-2ps.past
 You beat me.
- 7 There is no grammatically realized gender feature in Laz.
- 8 Note that although Ardeshen has lost its case morphology, very few examples of case markers still survive as unparseable frozen units:

(i) Ardeshen:	hu-y	k'-arti-k'-arti	Pazar:	hu-s	arti-k'-arti
	now-dat	erg-one-erg-one		now-dat	one-erg-one
	now	one another		now	one another

⁹ Ardeshen also makes use of the same set of predicate classes that Pazar uses.

¹⁰ Note that full agreement in Ardeshen emerges not only in the presence of [+animate] subjects, but also with inanimate subjects as seen in (ia). However, it is not required with semantically plural nouns (ib) and with mass nouns (ic):

- (i) a. Svava-pe-∅ col-ey/*-u
book-pl-nom fall-3ppl/3ps
The books fell.
b. Ordu-∅ ko-moxt-u/*ey.
army preverb-come-3ps/3ppl
The army came.
c. Çveri-∅ nih-u/*ey
flour spill-3ps/3ppl
The flour spilt.

¹¹ This can be considered in parallel to passive constructions in languages like English, where the semantic object can be promoted to the structural subject status when the actual semantic subject is introduced as an adjunct.

¹² The suffix *-t* denotes plurality for 1st and 2nd persons (Holisky 1991).

¹³ For the properties of case in Turkish see Aissen (1974), Zimmer (1976), Sezer (1991), Göksel (1993), and Öztürk (2004, 2005).

¹⁴ It is obvious that Pazar also had close-contact with other nominative-accusative systems. For example, as discussed in detail in Emgin (2009) Ardeshen has not, but Pazar has acquired the agreement bearing infinitival constructions from Turkish, which denote events. In Pazar these are formed with a masdar verb bearing possessive agreement morphology fully in parallel to the Turkish construction. Compare (i) with the Turkish examples in (ii):

- (i) Ali-şi göma-(*neri) Ayşe-s ham svava-∅ meçamu-*(musi)-şe m-ak'iskanu.
Ali-gen yesterday-(adj) Ayşe-dat that book-nom give-masdar-3poss-to 1ps.obj-get.jealous.
I got jealous that Ali gave Ayşe this book yesterday.
(ii) Ali-nin dün-(*ki) Ayşe-ye bu kitab-ı ver-me-si beni kıskandırdı.
Ali-gen yesterday-(adj) Ayşe-dat this book-acc give-inf-3ps.poss me got.jealous
That Ali gave this book to Ayşe yesterday made me jealous.

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