

Book Review

Ksenia Shagal. 2019. *Participles. A typological study.* Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton, pp. xx + 346. ISBN: 9783110627527.

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The book under review is a revised version of Ksenia Shagal's doctoral dissertation, defended at the University of Helsinki in 2017 and honoured by the ALT Greenberg Award in the same year. The book is a first comprehensive functional-typological study of participles, that is, non-finite verbal forms used for adnominal modification, based on a large language sample and offering an illuminating discussion of issues such as the very definition of the term 'participle' as a cross-linguistically applicable concept, the relativisation capacities of participles, the morphological and syntactic aspects of their deverbalisation and nominalisation, and of the participial systems attested in the languages of the world.

The book consists of eight chapters and several large appendices. In Chapter 1 'Introduction', Shagal sets the main object of her study, namely participles, outlines the goals, data, approach and methods of her investigation as well as the organisation of the book. The initial sample was based on WALS (Dryer and Haspelmath 2013) and included 388 languages from those genera listed in WALS on which reliable information about relative clauses was available. The core sample of the study includes 100 languages where participles were found and sufficient information about them could be obtained. The languages of the sample cover all major linguistic areas, but participles seem to be especially common in Eurasia and along the western coast of the Americas. Although the data for the study comes mainly from reference grammars and other published sources, the author also includes data from her own fieldwork on languages such as Kalmyk, Nanai, Erzya, Nivkh and Uilta.

Chapter 2 'Defining participles' is devoted to the definition of the object of study. Shagal starts with a critical discussion of the existing definitions of participle, evaluating them as sometimes too broad (e.g. as non-finite verbal forms in general) and sometimes too restrictive (e.g. referring to the non-universal notion of adjective). Then Shagal develops her own definition of participle as a typological comparative concept (in the sense of Haspelmath 2010, refined by Rijkhoff 2016). This comparative concept is based on the notion of headed relative clause and requires that a candidate for participial status should be a verbal form serving as

the primary locus of subordination marking in such a clause, showing morpho-syntactic deranking, generality and productivity (i.e. being inflectional). Importantly, Shagal's definition is not restrictive as to other functions that forms qualifying as participles can have in a particular language. Hence, her database also includes verbal forms expressing arguments and called 'nominalisations' in the grammars of individual languages. Shagal offers clear definitions of all the relevant concepts as well as a careful discussion of borderline phenomena and of those cases she excludes from consideration. The last section of the chapter lists all the languages included into the core sample arranged by genus and macroarea. The list reveals that participles are especially common in language families such as Indo-European, Nakh-Daghestanian, Sino-Tibetan, Uralic and Uto-Aztecan, whereas they are not attested in large genealogical groupings such as Bantu or Athabaskan.

Chapter 3 'Participial orientation' deals with the relativising capacity of participles. The orientation of a participle is defined as a set of syntactic positions or semantic roles on the refined version of the Accessibility Hierarchy (Keenan and Comrie 1977) that the participle is able to relativise. A primary distinction is drawn between 'inherently oriented' participles, which relativise just one particular participant, and 'contextually oriented' participles, which are able to relativise several different participants. Inherently oriented participles can be oriented towards a subset of the core participants (i.e. S, A and P). For example, active participles relativise subjects (A and S), while passive participles relativise direct objects (P). Less familiar types include 'agentive' participles restricted to the relativisation of the transitive A (in the languages of Amazon), and 'absolutive' participles that relativise the transitive P and the intransitive S. Notably, absolutive participles are quite widespread and include the traditional 'passive' participles of a number of European languages, including English (in *a murdered politician* and in *a rotten apple*). Importantly, the presence of absolutive participles does not correlate with other syntactic or morphological ramifications of ergativity, but can be explained by the statistical preference for S/P relativisation in discourse (Fox and Thompson 1990). Shagal also shows that languages can have participles oriented towards non-core participants such as locatives (for example, in Muna) and instruments (in Apatani).

Regarding contextually-oriented participles, a distinction is drawn between participles with 'full' and 'limited' contextual orientation, this being defined with respect to the core participants S, A and P. Participles with full contextual orientation are usually able to relativise a contiguous segment of the Accessibility Hierarchy from subject downwards, at least the subject and the direct object. In fact, most contextually oriented participles are able to relativise broad segments of the hierarchy including obliques and even possessors. By contrast, the most

common type of participle with limited contextual orientation is the one covering all positions other than the subject, for which a specialised active participle is used (e.g. Meadow Mari). Languages with contextually oriented participles limited to the relativisation of non-core participants are much rarer (e.g. Tundra Nenets or Japhug rGyalrong).

Shagal also discusses phenomena such as orientation extension by means of valency-adjusting affixes and resumptive elements. While it has usually been assumed that resumptive pronouns do not occur in participial relative clauses, Shagal shows that an optional and even obligatory use of resumptive pronouns in such relative clauses is attested in a considerable number of languages across the world, which predictably correlates with contextual orientation and syntactic positions that are low on the Accessibility Hierarchy.

The chapter concludes with a general discussion of the findings, where Shagal suggests possible functional explanations of the types discovered and contends that languages with only inherently oriented participles tend to also have finite relative clauses compensating for the limited relativising capacity of their participial systems.

Chapters 4–6 are devoted to different facets of morphosyntactic deranking of participles and participial relative clauses. In Chapter 4 ‘Desententialization and nominalization’, Shagal discusses scalar approaches to morphosyntactic deranking in functional-typological literature such as Lehmann (1988), Cristofaro (2003), Malchukov (2004) and Nikolaeva (2013), and outlines the parameters considered in her own study. These parameters include expression of tense-aspect-mood (TAM) categories, negation, subject agreement and agreement with the modified noun, as well as expression of the relative clause participants.

Chapter 5 ‘Morphological desententialization of participial relative clauses’ presents an overview of deranking features that are manifested in the morphology of participles. In the domain of expression of TAM, Shagal distinguishes between those participial markers that do not themselves encode any temporal, aspectual or modal information (–TAM participial markers) and those that “not only derive a participle from the verb stem, but also convey some information on the TAM meaning of the resulting form” (p. 158) (+TAM participial markers). In the languages of the sample, –TAM and +TAM participles are attested with the same frequency. Languages exhibit large variation in the extent to which either +TAM or –TAM participial markers can combine with further expression of tense, aspect and mood. In fact, many languages (e.g. Motuna) are reported not to allow for additional expressions of TAM in their participial systems. Interestingly, there are languages that feature single +TAM participles, and such participles tend to be habitual (e.g. in Garrwa) or resultative (in some European languages). It is shown that the TAM features or values particularly prone to loss in participial systems are

evidentiality, modality and future tense, while the feature most likely to be retained is aspect – largely in line with the predictions of the hierarchies proposed by Malchukov (2004).

A whole section is devoted to the expression of negation in participial relative clauses, a phenomenon often neglected even in the descriptive literature. While about half of the languages for which data are available seem to use standard negation with participles, attested deviations from independent clauses include the use of nominal (non-finite) negation (e.g. Kalmyk), the existence of specialised negative participles (e.g. Yakut), as well as complete ban on negation in participial relative clauses (e.g. Nias). The latter option is attested in only four languages, while the former two alternatives are fairly widespread. As regards verbal subject agreement in participial clauses, most languages predictably lack it, with few exceptions (e.g. Krongo and Aguaruna, using special non-finite paradigms for that purpose, and Hinuq, which employs the same set of gender-agreement markers with the absolutive argument in both finite forms and participles). An interesting pattern is found in Modern Standard Arabic, where participles in non-subject relative clauses agree in case and definiteness with the head noun but in gender and number with the subject. Finally, agreement (or nominal concord) of participles with their head nouns in categories such as gender, number or case is one of the primary manifestations of the nominalisation or adjectivalisation of participles. Such concord is attested in more than 30 languages of the sample and can either be obligatory (the default case) or depend on factors such as the linear adjacency of the participle and the head (e.g. in some Uralic languages participles agree with their heads only when they are non-adjacent) or the position of the participle with respect to the head (e.g. in Imbabura Quechua only postnominal participles agree with their heads).

In Chapter 6 ‘Participant expression in participial relative clauses’, Shagal discusses the different ways in which the encoding of arguments of participles can deviate from that of independent clauses. These deviations mostly affect subjects, which are often encoded as possessors or non-core participants (usually in the same way as passive agents), in some languages different strategies being employed depending on various factors (e.g. the presence of a resumptive element in Kalmyk or the referential type of the subject in Meadow Mari). Deviations in the expression of direct objects are also attested, for example, as a possessor in Georgian or as a Dative non-core participant in several Pama-Nyungan languages. Patterns of differential object marking in participial clauses can differ from those found in main clauses (e.g. in Kolyma Yukaghir). Incorporation of the direct object into the participle is also attested, for instance in Ket. Finally, there are languages (e.g. Georgian) where non-core participants can also be expressed as possessors in participial relative clauses, and in some languages (e.g. Kalmyk) not all types of

adjuncts are allowed to combine with participles. Shagal observes that given a dearth of available data in most descriptions, no systematic conclusions regarding the encoding of participants other than the subject and the direct object in participial clauses are possible.

Chapter 7 'Participial systems' is devoted to the organisation of the participial paradigms in the languages of the world. Some languages have a single participle, which can be either inherently oriented, mostly towards the subject (e.g. Kobon) or contextually oriented (in 20 languages, e.g. Lezgian). The only language with a single passive participle is Nias, contradicting Keenan and Comrie's (1977) Accessibility Hierarchy. More elaborate participial systems can be organised along parameters like orientation and TAM expression. Purely orientation-based systems can be active-passive (e.g. Mapudungun), absolutive-agentive (e.g. Panare) and subject versus other participants (e.g. Dolakha Newar). There are also languages distinguishing participles relativising each of the core participants (Kamaiurá), and languages that feature participles oriented towards oblique participant(s) in addition to the active and passive participles (e.g. Ma'di). Purely TAM-based systems are mostly found in languages with contextually oriented participles. The majority of such languages have tripartite systems usually combining temporal, aspectual and modal meanings (e.g. Tanti Dargwa has present, past and potential participles, while Telugu has past, future-habitual and durative participles). Bipartite systems can be based on aspect (perfective versus imperfective participles in Nanga) or tense (past vs. non-past in Nanai, future versus non-future in Tamil). The only language with a TAM-based system of inherently oriented participles is Koryak, with future versus non-future absolutive participles.

It is quite common for participial systems to be organised along both orientation and TAM. Such systems can be symmetric, with orientation and TAM values freely combining with each other (e.g. Fula), or asymmetric, with the two parameters restricting each other. The simplest asymmetric systems include a present active and a past passive participle (as in Modern Standard Arabic); more complex systems show gaps in certain cells of the participial paradigm (e.g. Tümpisa Shoshone lacks a past/perfective subject-oriented participle) or the contextual orientation of participles with certain TAM values (e.g. Meadow Mari distinguishes between subject and non-subject non-future participles, but has a contextually oriented future participle). A separate section of the chapter is devoted to a discussion of particularly complex participial systems found in individual languages, such as Kalmyk, with an opposition between a passive resultative participle and past, future and habitual contextually oriented participles, or Matsés, with a large system of forms based on orientation, tense and evidentiality. Finally, participial systems exist that cannot be fully accounted for in terms of either orientation or

TAM; for example, in Kolyma Yukaghir the choice between the two participial forms depends on the (in)definiteness of the head noun.

The analysis of participial systems allows Shagal to suggest two important cross-linguistic generalisations. The first one constitutes the refinement of the implicational universals based on the Accessibility Hierarchy: “[i]f a language has a participial form inherently oriented towards a certain participant, then it tends to have participial forms inherently oriented towards all the participants more accessible to relativization” (p. 237). The second generalisation pertains to the relation between TAM and participial orientation and states that “these two parameters are not independent from each other but rather highly intertwined” (p. 237), which itself “can be seen as strengthening the status of participles as a cross-linguistically valid category” (p. 237). The chapter concludes with a map and tables listing all the languages of the sample with particular participial systems.

Chapter 8 ‘Conclusions and further prospects’ summarises the findings of the book and offers prospects for further research together with some preliminary observations about possible correlations between the kind of participial system and other typological parameters such as basic word order (languages with only contextually oriented participles are predominantly verb-final, while VO languages tend to have only inherently oriented participles) and position of the relative clause with respect to the head (languages with only contextually oriented participles tend to use them prenominal, while postnominal participles are predominantly inherently oriented). Other questions which have remained outside of the scope of Shagal’s study include polysemy of participial forms, i.e. their ability to occur in syntactic contexts other than the head of relative clause, the position of participles on the verb-to-noun cline and the degree of their nominalisation in comparison to other non-finite verbal forms, and, finally, the diachrony and areal typology of participles and participial relative clauses (see e.g. Shagal 2018 on Uralic languages).

The book contains several appendices listing the languages investigated (those both with and without participles, with a separate list of sources on the latter), the properties of the languages of the core sample (alignment of case and verbal person, order of verb and object, and presence of finite relative clauses and adjectival agreement), and the features of the participial forms considered (their relativising capacity, position with respect to the head and morphosyntactic signs of desententialisation, and argument expression).

Shagal’s book is undeniably an important and valuable contribution to the typology of non-finite verbal forms and relativisation, for the first time presenting a rich and balanced overview of the most important properties of participial forms and participial systems in the languages of the world and laying foundations for typologically-informed investigations of participles and related

constructions in specific language families and linguistic areas. It offers a wealth of empirical data, accurately and logically organised and discussed with attention to both cross-linguistically recurrent and rare and even unique features and systems. The author can be praised for clarity of exposition of her own ideas, as well as for useful and critical summaries of existing research and theories, especially in Chapters 2 and 4. A clear advantage of the book is the consistent use of maps showing the distribution of particular features of participles and participial systems, as well as a good balance between the quantitative and qualitative aspects of the investigation.

Criticising this book is not an easy task, since I could not find in it virtually any important points that I could take issue with. One could possibly disagree with the exclusion of the peculiar West Caucasian relative verbal forms (p. 28), which Shagal refuses to consider participles due to the fact that participial markers belong to the same paradigm as person cross-reference (see e.g. Lander and Daniel 2019, Arkadiev and Lander 2021: 408, 417, 438–441). However, if considered participles, such forms would be hard to accommodate in the typological space developed in the book (for example, to treat them in terms of orientation), so setting them aside is quite reasonable. The passage on p. 69 regarding agreement of passive participles in Modern Standard Arabic as an argument in favour of subject relativisation remains cryptic to me, since while one could indeed argue that the nominative noun phrase inside the relative clause with which the participle agrees in gender and number is its subject, this can hardly be a case of subject relativisation. Example (90) from Chimariko on p. 92 is consistent with absolute orientation, so a comment on the possibility of A relativisation would have been welcome. The reference to “pragmatic inefficiency of characterising a participant by referring to an event that has not yet taken place, but is still regarded as factual” as a putative explanation of the rarity of purely future tense participles requires elaboration in the light of expressions like *a cold front that will arrive tomorrow*, whose “pragmatic inefficiency” can be questioned. Example (174a) on p. 194 does not show that Mëbengokre has accusative alignment in main clauses. Finally, contrary to what is stated in Appendix 3b on p. 291, the Lithuanian past passive participle in *-t* does not combine with the habitual suffix; besides that, one could wonder why Shagal remained hesitant as to the type of negation used with participles in Lithuanian.

The book is remarkably well edited and proofread – I could find just a couple of typos, e.g. the bracketing in the Hungarian example (62) on p. 63 seems to wrongly exclude the definite article, and the fourth sentence of Section 5.6 on p. 193 should probably read as “*Lack of verbal subject agreement is generally among the first signs of desententialization*”.

To conclude, I would like to recommend this book to everybody interested in the typology of relative clauses and non-finite verbal forms, and praise the author for producing a work of such a high scholarly value.

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