Experiencer predicates in Hittite

Silvia Luraghi - Università di Pavia

1.   Introduction

In this paper I discuss a number of experiencer predicates in Hittite and argue that they display

different constructions, which have parallels in other Indo-European languages, as well as cross-

linguistically. In particular, I show that experiencers can be coded as subjects of transitive and of

unaccusative verbs, as accusative arguments of impersonal verbs, as direct objects, or as

recipients/beneficiaries. I argue that the possibility for some experiencer verbs to occur with more

than one construction reflects a situation, common to other ancient IE languages, in which several

constructions were available for verbs in the domain of experience. In the light of current discussion

on non-canonical subject marking and its relevance for the reconstruction of alignment I also

address the issue whether it is possible to provide evidence for subjecthood of non-nominative

experiencers, and conclude that specific strategies for coding experiencer are not dependent on

specific alignment types.

   Experiencer predicates in Hittite have never received a unified treatment.[1] Indeed, when one

starts digging into the texts, one realizes that they display a variety of constructions, some of which

may bring about different interpretations of certain passages. Thus, this paper intends to provide a

summary review of Hittite experiential constructions, while in the meantime indicating possible

directions for further research.

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[1] Many passages discussed in this paper are also discussed in Patri (2007), and are mentioned in reference grammars in

the sections devoted to impersonal verbs. However, they are not grouped together as experiencer predicates, and are not

contrasted with other experiencer verbs that occur in different constructions.

2. The role experiencer and experiencer situations

The fact that constructions available for experiencer predicates are often disparate within the same language depends on the nature of experiencers. To illustrate this point, let us start with a number of experiencer predicates form English, a language which is quite exceptional in displaying consistent coding of experiencers as canonical subjects:

(1)   *Mary is hungry.*

(2)   *I'm getting annoyed at you.*

(3)   *John likes apples.*

(4)   *My mother fell ill.*

(5)   *The children learned the lesson.*

(6)   *The spectators couldn't see anything.*

(7)   *Shame forced him to leave the room.*

As shown in the examples, experiencer predicates may indicate states (as in 1, 3, 5) or be inchoative (as in 2 and 4), reverse counterparts can normally be provided. Experiencer situations[2] often contain a stimulus, which can be coded as an adjunct, as *at you* in (2). In addition, they are sometimes reflected in transitive verbs, as in (3), (5) and (6): in fact, while (3) is quite untypical of the IE languages, verbs such as 'learn' and its stative counterpart 'know', as well as perception verbs such as 'see', 'hear' etc. are typically transitive, that is, experiencer situations can be coded

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[2] Following a well established practice (see e.g. Lyons 1977), I use 'situation' as a cover term for all possible types of state of affairs.

using the schema of spontaneous events, as in (2), or of actions. In the latter case, the stimulus surfaces as a direct object, i.e. it is coded as a patient, as *apples* in (3), *the lesson* in (5), and *anything* in (6). Finally, experiencer situations may be coded through a non-experiencer predicate with a metaphorical reading: this typically happens when the stimulus is conceptualized as an agent, capable of bringing about a state of affairs, such as *shame* in (7), in which the experiencer is the direct object.

Experiencer situations include physical states and various types of mental states and activities. Verhoeven (2007) distinguishes among four sub-domains of experience: bodily sensations, emotions, cognition and volition. In my analysis of the Hittite data, I further distinguish between verbs of bodily sensations, such as 'be hungry', and verbs of perception, such as 'see' or 'hear', because the two groups of verbs tend to occur in different constructions. As remarked above, experiencer situations may indicate a change of state and be telic, but protoypically they do not: they are prototipically states (or activities, as in the case of the domain of cognition), thus atelic. Non-prototypicality of telicity in the domain of experience is indicated by the fact that across languages inchoative verbs are often morphologically more complex than those that indicate states. This holds especially for verbs of bodily sensation and emotion (see also Verhoeven 2007: 43; note that it is also often the case that such situations are expressed with nominal predicates, of the type *be afraid*, *be hungry*).

Let us now turn to typical features of experiencers, as compared to other partly overlapping semantic roles. Experiencers are typically human: in this respect, they are similar to agents, as well as to recipients and beneficiaries. However, while agents are necessarily human because they must be able to act intentionally, experiencers are human because, by definition, they must be sentient. Contrary to agents, experiencers do not act voluntarily and are not capable of exerting control on a situation. In this respect, experiencers are similar to patients. However, there is a crucial difference between prototypical experiencers and prototypical patients, i.e. that the latter, but not the former, necessarily undergo a change of state. Experiencer may undergo a change of state, in the case of

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inchoative verbs, but, as argued above, situations in which they occur are prototypically states. Note that experiencers share this feature with recipients and beneficiaries, which are distinct from patients, among other things, because they do not undergo a change of state. Thus, experiencer is a hybrid role, as shown in Table 1:[3]

TABLE 1. FEATURES OF SEMANTIC ROLES

	EXPERIENCER	AGENT	RECIPIENT/BENEFICIARY	PATIENT
HUMANNESS	+	+	+	
CONTROL	-	+		-
VOLITION	-	+		-
CHANGE OF STATE	-		-	+

In the IE languages, we find specific morphological coding for agents (nominative), recipients/beneficiary (dative), and patients (accusative), but not for experiencers. In fact, this is not only true of the IE languages: no language is reported to exist which has a dedicated experiencer case (cf. Haig 2009: 11). Thus, it comes as no surprise that experiencers may be coded as any of the other three roles. As Haig (*ib*.) remarks: "the syntax of Experiencerhood tends to be parasitic."

Frequent coding of experiencers as subjects responds to a discourse principle: experiencer situations may involve an experiencer and a stimulus, but the experiencer, being human, is typically the most prominent participant, thus it is more topic-worthy.

When experiencer is not coded as subject, it may be the case that the morphological properties of subjects (nominative case, verbal agreement) occur on the stimulus. However, the fact that the experiencer still remains the most prominent participant in the sentence may bring about mismatches between coding and behavioral properties: for example, non-subject experiencers often stand in sentence initial position, similar to subjects. As well known, it is out of such a mismatch

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[3] Empty cases refer to features which are not relevant to the role, or whose relevance would require a discussion which is beyond the scope of this paper.

that the English verb *like*, which occurred in the Dative-Nominative construction in Old English, acquired transitive syntax.[4] In many other languages, the extent of possible mismatches is such that dative experiencers are better regarded as non-canonical subjects, even though it is the stimulus that agrees with the verb (see e.g. Barðdal, Eythórsson 2005 on Germanic).[5]

In many ancient IE languages, experiencers can also occur with so-called impersonal verbs, that is, verbs that do not agree either with the experiencer or with the stimulus, and are always inflected in the third person singular. In such constructions, case marking can be regarded as only mirroring semantics (there is no participant which shares all agent properties, and hence no nominative coding), while the verb takes a 'default', non-referential inflection, similar to weather verbs, and only indicates the event in itself and not a privileged participant. In such cases, too, experiencer constituents are often regarded as non-canonical subjects (see sec. 6 for further discussion).

Some more words deserve to be spent on the stimulus. Let us start with Verhoeven's (2007: 23) definition: "the stimulus is an entity or proposition that triggers the experience or to which the experience is directed". Note that not all experiencer situation require a stimulus: in particular "in situations of bodily sensation, the stimulus is not a central role" (*ib.*). Indeed, if we go back to the examples, a situation such as (1) does not commonly require (or even allow) the addition of a stimulus. A stimulus must not be confused with the possible cause of a certain state of affairs: especially with verbs of emotion, causation is a complex matter, and the fact that the stimulus triggers an emotion does not mean that it is its ultimate cause, as we can see by comparing (2) with

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[4] Harris, Campbell (1995: 83-88) discuss the reanalysis undergone by the English verb *like* and show what factors motivated speakers at various stages to analyze the experiencer rather than the stimulus as the subject of the construction.

[5] A definition of non-canonical subject (NCS) is given in Haig (2009: 7): "NCS are NPs which, in terms of the their semantic and pragmatic properties, and of their participation in syntactic rules, display significant similarities to uncontroversial subjects in the language concerned. However, they lack some or all of the case and agreement features otherwise associated with subjects.". See further Onishi (2001).

(2)':

(2)'   *I'm getting annoyed at you because you're being noisy.*

In (2)' *at you* indicates the stimulus, while the cause is contained in the clause *because you're being*

noisy. Some Hittite examples are discussed below, sec. 3.2.

   With reference to possible argument structure of experiential verbs I make use of the notion of

construction, whose viability for the study of ancient languages has been highlighted in e.g. Lühr

(forthcoming; see further Barðdal 2006). As I argue in sec. 7, experiencer predicates exhibit both

verb-specific, verb subclass-specific, and verb class-specific constructions.

3.   Nominative coding

3.1.   Experiencer = agent

As remarked above, across languages experiencer predicates may be transitive verbs, and

experiencers may be coded as agents. This is also true in Hittite, where, in much the same way as in

the other IE languages, verbs such as *sak-* 'know', and *aus-* 'see' are transitive; the stimulus is

treated as a patient, and coded through the accusative case. That subjects of such verbs are treated

as agents is shown not only by nominative coding, but also by absence of third person clitics, even

when such verbs occur without a direct object (i.e. they are unergative). Verbs in this group are

typically active; they can have stative or inchoative meaning: the latter property is best exemplified

by the verb *sak-*, which can also mean 'learn'. Beside the verb 'know', this group includes

perception verbs and the verb *ilaliya-* 'desire, want'; transitive verbs of emotion are not frequent in

Hittite. Thus, the group of transitive experiencer predicates is rather restricted in Hittite, though

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covering a wide range of experiential situations.[6]

The verb *nah(h)-* 'fear' can be transitive, even though it also occurs in a variety of other (more frequent) constructions (see 3.2, 4.1, 5.2). An example with an accusative object is:

(1)   *nahmi=us* ^{MUŠ}*ill[iyankus]*

        "I fear them, the snakes" KUB 8.65 22.[7]

However, transitive use of this verb is mostly limited to occurrences with the negative indefinite *UL kuitki* which also contain a beneficiary in the dative, as in (2), in which the verb is spelled with the sumerogram ḪUŠ:

(2)   *ANA* SAG.DU ^{d}UTU-*ŠI* SIG^{5}-*in UL=si kuitki* ḪUŠ-*ueni*

        "(If) for the person of His Majesty (all will be) well, (and) we have nothing to fear for him" KUB 5.1 i 101.

Transitive usage of *nah(h)-* is in a sense exceptional. Indeed, there is no evidence that this verb displays unergative syntax when used without a direct object (as other transitive verbs do), while there is positive evidence for it to be unaccusative (see also Garrett 1990: 97, 139). In the case of negative clauses, it must be remarked that in some occurrences different duplicates have only *UL* instead of *UL kuitki*, as in (12) in sec. 3.2. The same negation also occurs with other verbs, such as *lahllahhiya-*, for which there is no further evidence for transitivity:

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[6] Note further that perception verbs such as *aus-*, *sakuwa-* and *istamas-* may indicate both experiencer situations ('see', 'hear'), and agentive ones ('look', 'listen to'), thus, the fact that they are transitive partly responds to possible agent properties (intentionality) of their subjects.

[7] Translations are from the *CHD* or from Puhvel (1984-) when available, with partial adaptation

(3)   UL=*kan kuitki lahlahhiy*[*aueni*]

        "We have nothing to worry about." KUB 16.62.

Some other occurrences of *nah(h)-* with possible direct object clitics can perhaps be explained differently, depending on how one interprets its so-called impersonal usage (sec. 4.1).

3.2.   Experiencer = non-agent subject

The biggest group of experiencer predicates is constituted by intransitive verbs, which indicate feelings or physical states. Examples are *armaniya-*, *irmaliya-*, *istark-* 'be/become ill', *arsana-*, *arsaniya-* 'envy', *anda impai-* 'be worried', *karpiya-*, *kartimmiya-* 'be angry', *katkattiya-* 'shiver, tremble', *kistanziya-* 'be hungry', *lahlahhiya-* 'worry', *lazziya-* 'recover', *lelaniya-* 'become furious", *nah(h)-* (mostly active), *nahsariya-* 'be(come) afraid', *dusk-* 'rejoice', *warsiya-* 'be satisfied' (the list is not exhaustive). Verbs in this group are unaccusative, and their subjects do not have agent properties, as shown by the occurrence of clitics in case of third person subjects not expressed by a NP. Even though verbs such as *istark-* and *nah(h)-* are consistently active[8] (but note that middle verbs with similar meaning also exist), verbs with experiencer subjects are most frequently middle. Some of them mostly indicate states; *karpiya-* and *kartimmiya-* have inchoative counterparts with the suffix *–es*, while others can have an inchoative interpretation depending on the context, as in:

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[8] Note further that these two specific verbs are also the ones that are most consistently used impersonally. Another group of experiential verbs which are typically active (but are not impersonal) includes *hassik-*, *ispai-* and *nink-* 'satiate oneself'. Arguably, these verbs are semantically similar to transitive perception verbs, because they often indicate intentional states of affairs. See Puhvel (*s.v.*), CHD (*s.v. nink-*).

(4) LÚ-*as witti meyani armaniyatta n=as* SIG^5-*atta*

"The man will become sick every year and will recover." KUB 4.72 rev. 2-3.

When a stimulus occurs with verbs of emotional or bodily state, it is usually in the dative-locative, both with animate and inanimate referents, as shown in (5) and (6) (another example with the verb *warsiya-* is in (23)):

(5) *nu ammeyantan sallin* DUMU.NITA *attas* DINGIR^{MEŠ}-*is pahsantaru n=at=za harsani=ssi*
     TI-*anni duskantaru*
     "May the father gods protect the son, little or big, and may they be delighted with his head and (his) life!" Bo 2555 ii 11-12 (cf. Neu 1968: 181);

(6)   [(*n=as n*)]*ahsaratti* [(*katkattiskizzi*)]
     "He trembles with fear." KBo 12.74 9.

The verb *nah(h)-*, already discussed in sec. 3.1, is most often intransitive and also takes a stimulus in the dative-locative, either animate or inanimate, as in:

(7) *nu=ssi* ^{LÚ}KÚR ^{URU}*Gasgas h*[(*ūmanza*) *nah*]*ta*
     "All the Kaskaean enemy feared him." KBo 5.6 i 30;

(8) *nu apēdani=ya memini nahun*
     "I became afraid of that matter too." KUB 31.66 ii 1.

In (9) the stimulus is the dative NP *kuedani memiyani* according to the translation in the CHD, but note that the adverb *piran* could also be taken as part of the phrase. Following the second interpretation, the stimulus is coded by the adpositional phrase headed by *piran*:

(9)   *piran=kan kuedani memiyani lahlahhesgaueni*

"The matter about which we constantly worry in advance" or: "The matter about which we

constantly worry" KBo 2.2 i 43-47.

As argued in sec. 2, especially with verbs of emotion causation may be complex: the stimulus

triggers a certain emotion in the experiencer, but it may also co-occur with a cause. An example is

given in (10), in which the stimulus is in the dative-locative and refers to a human participant, while

the cause is coded through an adpositional phrase:

(10)   DINGIR.MEŠ-*es=kan* ᵐ*Kessiya ispanduzzi ser kartimmiyatuwantes*

"The gods (were) angry at Kessi over the (lack of) libation." KUB 33.121 ii 12-13.

In (11), the cause is a NP in the ablative (the instrumental also occurs in similar passages):

(11)   ANA SAG.DU ᵈUTU-*ŠI* SAL.LUGAL ÚŠ-*za* KALAG.GA-*za* GIG-*za UL kuitki* ḪUŠ-*ueni*

"(If) we have nothing to fear for His Majesty or the queen from plague(?) or from a serious

illness." KUB 18.12 i 5

Note that it is not clear whether this sentence contains a stimulus constituent different from the

cause: the duplicate omits the word *kuitki* (cf. CHD *s.v. nah(h)-*). Note further that the feeling does

not directly concern the experiencer (here the subject), but it rather concerns the beneficiary. Thus,

the possible matter of fear is the cause of a complex feeling, rather than simply triggering fear in the

experiencer as a stimulus does in a normal experiencer situation.

3.3.   Nominal predicates

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Often, physical and mental states are denoted by adjectives, rather than by verbs, as in the case of *kisduwant-* 'hungry', which occurs in place of *kistanzya-*:

(12)   *kuis kisduwanza kuis kaniruwanza* DINGIR-*LIM-IS nu uwatten izzatten ekutten*

"Whatever god is hungry or thirsty, come eat (and) drink!" KBo 10.45 iv 11-12.

In fact, the corresponding verb 'be thirsty' is not even clearly attested (cf. Puhvel *s.v.*), and the adjective normally occurs, as shown in (12). This type of construction may also contain verbal participles. The copula, which is regularly omitted in the present, may occasionally also be omitted in the preterit. The use of nominal predicates containing an adjective to indicate experiencer situations is cross-linguistically common, especially for bodily states and emotions, and English, with predicates such as *be hungry, be cold, be afraid* etc., is an example.

3.4.   Nominative coding: summary

To sum up, nominative coding of experiencers is common in Hittite, and involves different types of verb. In the first place, we find verbs of volition, mental activity and perception, which occur in the Nominative-Accusative (or transitive) construction, with the stimulus treated as the direct object, and are unergative when used intransitively. Verbs of emotion are infrequently transitive; most often, emotions, as well as physical sensations, are indicated by intransitive unaccusative verbs, whose subject is the experiencer (Nominative construction); if a stimulus is present, it is usually coded through the dative-locative case.[9] Such intransitive verbs can often also be inchoative. States

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[9] In fact this construction could equally well be tagged Nominative-Dative: the reason why I only use the label Nominative is that several of these verbs never occur with a stimulus in the available sources.

can be indicated by verbs or by adjectives occurring in nominal sentences. Thus, the constructions analyzed in this section tend to be verb subclass-specific, even though the Nominative-Accusative construction can extend to (almost) the whole domain of experience, as shown by the its extention to some verbs of emotion; hence, it can better be regarded as verb class-specific.

4. Accusative coding

4.1. Impersonal verbs

The verbs *irmaliya-* and *istarak-* 'be(come) ill' often occur in impersonal constructions, inflected in the third person singular, with the experiencer NP in the accusative (Accusative construction), as in:

(13) m]*ān antuhsan* SAG.DU-*ŠU istara*[*kzi*] *n=an nassu apenissan ista*[*r*]*akzi*

"If a man has head pains, or if he has some similar illness" KUB 8.36 ii 12-13.

Since these verbs also occur, albeit less frequently, in personal constructions with the experiencer in the nominative (see also *armania-* in (4)), as well as with true experiencer objects in occurrences in which the illness is the subject (see below, example (17)), one may wonder which constructions reflects their original syntax. Chronology of texts cannot help us here, because none of the OH OS originals attests to the two verbs. Hoffner and Melchert (2008) consider the type given in example (17) below as the origin of the impersonal construction. I will return to this point after the discussion of impersonal uses of *nah(h)-*.

Some occurrences in which the verb *nah(h)-* had previously be taken as being accompanied by a beneficiary or reflexive dative 1st and 2nd person clitics have recently been interpreted as impersonal construction; following this interpretation clitics can be taken as either accusative (Hoffner,

Melchert 2008) or dative (Patri 2007). Examples are:

(14)   *nu=wa=ssan mān pāimi nahi=mu par(a)sni* UR.BAR.RA-*ni*

"When I go up there, I fear (lit.: "it fears me") the leopard and the wolf" (see Patri 2007:

115, Hoffner, Melchert 2008: 250 translate "I fear with respect to the leopard (and) the wolf;

the CHD translation is: "For my sake be fearful with respect to the leopard (and) the wolf")

KBo 21.103 rev. 28

(15)   *lē=wa=tta nahi*

"Let there not be a fearing to you" (translation from Hoffner, Melchert 2008: 192; the

translation given in CHD is: "Don't be afraid for yourself!") KUB 33.24 i 43 (OH/NS),

In the light of the above translations, one could perhaps also take (16) as an instance of impersonal

usage of *nah(h)-*, and the clitic *–an* as representing the experiencer, rather than the stimulus. Note

however that this interpretation depends on whether one considers first and second person clitics in

(14) and (15) as accusative or as dative, a decision which does not rest on any independent evidence

(see the discussion immediately following the example):

(16)   ᵈZA.BA₄.BA₄[(*-as IŠME*) ...] *s=an nahta*

"Zababa heard ... (the sound of the goat's horn?) and feared him/it (com. sg., either another

deity or the sound)" KUB 33.52 ii 6-7

    Hoffner and Melchert (2008: 250), arguing in favor of the new translation of (14) and (15),

remark that accusative experiencers occur with impersonal verbs of emotion in other IE languages,

and mention Latin *me veretur* and German *mich fürchtet*. In fact, such constructions occur not only

in the domain of emotions, but also in the domain of bodily states and sensations, as in German

mich hungert, Russian *menja tošnit* 'I feel sick', *menja znobit* 'I shiver'. If we accept the parallel for

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nah(h)-, it is not necessary to assume that impersonal use of verbs of illness is secondary with respect to occurrences where the word for 'illness' is the subject, as in:

(17)   *n=an idālus* GIG-*as istarkta*

"He was struck by a bad illness." KUB 14.15 ii 6.

It can further be remarked that the IE languages offer evidence for impersonal constructions of experiencer verbs to be 'normalized', with experiencers receiving canonical subject coding. This is true for example of Latin verbs of the type *me taedet* etc., which also occur in personal constructions as early as Plautus (see Hofmann, Szantyr 1965: 82), even though the impersonal construction is considered older. Similarly, the existence of personal constructions in Hittite may also be a later development, considering that evidence from other languages suggests that change goes from impersonal to personal. This is not only true of the IE languages, but it holds in general for so-called 'non-canonical subjects', such as arguments of impersonal verbs, as remarked by Haig (2009: 20): "there is often an observable tendency for NCS-constructions to blend towards canonical transitive and intransitive constructions."

Note that among types of experiencers those that occur with verbs of illness are most similar to patients, because they are highly affected. This brings about accusative coding for the experiencer, rather than, for example, dative coding (an example with the dative is discussed in sec. 5.2).[10]

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[10] In this connection, I would like to compare verbs of illness to weather verbs. With both types of verb, causation is an unclear matter for humans. Weather verbs are typically impersonal in the IE languages; however, in some ancient languages including Hittite there are occurrences of personal constructions, where the subject is the god which is assumed to govern them. Personal constructions are considered secondary (cf. Benveniste 1966: 230 on Greek). Clearly, weather verbs are impersonal as a reflex of the fact that they refer to situations in which there are no necessary participants, while illness require the participant who is ill. But unclear causation may cause partial extension of the construction of weather verbs, which does not involve a subject.

The case of the verb *nah(h)-* can be considered analogous to verbs of illness, as I have done thus far, but indeed it remains more complicated since, as remarked above, there is no external evidence that helps us decide whether first and second person clitics must be taken as accusative or as dative. Comparative evidence adduced in this section points toward the accusative interpretation; however, a case can equally well be made for taking this construction to contain a dative, as I will show in sec. 5.2.

Puhvel (*s.v. karpiya-*) compares the following occurrence of the verb *karpiya-* 'be angry' to impersonal usage of verbs of illness:

(18)   *man antuhsan DINGIR.MEŠ-naz karpiyan harzi*

          "If anger at a man is harbored by the gods" KBo 29.33 i 2-3.

In fact (18) is quite different, because here the accusative is the stimulus, and the experiencer is the NP in the ablative, which is coded as a cause or possibly as a source. However, it can be argued that in this occurrence the person at whom the gods are angry is conceived as being struck by some disgrace, in much the same way as s/he could be by an illness, and this explains the extension of the construction commonly used for illness verbs.

To sum up, the Accusative construction seems to be verb-specific (see also Patri 2007: 98-99), and it is limited to a small number of verbs in Hittite, namely verbs of illness and possibly the verb 'fear'.

4.2.   Metaphorical expressions

Emotions or physical sensations can be personified, and occur as subjects of action verbs. In such cases the experiencer is the direct object. Some Hittite examples contain inchoative predicates:

(19)   *nu=wa É-ir katkattimas ēpta* SAG.GEMÉ.Ì[(R.MEŠ=*ya*)] *nahsaraz=a ēpta*

"Trembling seized the house, and fear seized the servants." KUB 33.98 ii 7-8;

(20)   *nu apēl* ABU=*ŠU* AMA=*ŠU pittulias wemiyazi*

"Anguish will find his father and mother." KUB 8.35 obv. 7

Metaphors are frequently used across languages to refer to feelings and physical sensations: feelings are often represented as dominating human beings, and typically they cannot be controlled; physical sensations are also triggered unconsciously in humans and escape control. For this reason, they can be part of metaphors which attribute them agent properties, as shown in the above examples, where two nouns of feelings, *nahsaraz* and *pittulias*, and a noun that indicates a bodily state, *katkattimas*, are the subjects of action verbs. Metaphorical reference to emotions and bodily sensations is a wide field, which would deserve an in-depth investigation in Hittite.

5.   Dative coding

5.1.   Stimulus = subject

Especially the verbs *assiya-* (as well as the nominal predicate *assu- es-*) 'like', 'love', *warsiya-* 'feel pity/mercy' and *pugga-* 'dislike', 'hate' occur in intransitive constructions, in which the experiencer appears in the dative, and the stimulus, often human, in the nominative:

(21)   DAM-*KA=pat=wa=kkan āssiyattat*

"You only loved your wife (all the time)." KUB 33.121 ii 9;[11]

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[11] For the translation of this verb (stative or inchoative) see Neu (1968: 20), Puhvel (*s.v.*).

(22)   [*n*]=*as*=*mu*=*kan uwayattat* [*n*]=*an daliyanuyanun*

"(Because Armadatta was an old man) I took pity of him and left him go." KUB 19.67i 20-

21;[12]

(23)   *nu*=*ssi*=*kan ŠA* AMILUTTI UZU *puggataru namma nu*=*wa*=*ssan kattan kēdas*

UDU.ŠIR.ḪI.A *warsiyahhut*

"'May human flesh (lit. the flesh of mankind) be hateful to him once again. And may you,

(O deity,) be satisfied with these rams'" HT 1 iii 32-35

The verb *nakkes-* 'trouble', 'create concern' also occurs in this construction:

(24)   *n*=*as ammuk nakkestat*

"She (i.e. Hebat) troubled me." KUB 14.4 iii 23-25.

These verbs are unaccusative; their construction is similar to Latin *mihi placet / mihi displicet*.

Nominal predicates containing adjectives or participles with similar meaning also occur with dative

experiencers, as in:

(25)   *nu*=*kan* ᵈGAŠAN-*li* [*k*]*uit* É-*er pukkan*

"Whatever household is hated by IŠTAR, ..." KUB 24.7 i 24-25

(26)   *uk*=*wa at*[*ti*]=*mm*[*i natt*]*a assus*

"My father doesn't like me." KBo 22.2 rev. 4-5.

This is the only construction (together with the metaphorical expressions examined in sec. 4.2) in

which the stimulus is the grammatical subject. As already remarked, this verbs often occur with two

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[12] See Neu (1968: 186) with other examples.

animate participants: animacy may be the reason why the stimulus receives a privileged syntactic status. Thus, the Dative-Nominative construction is verb subclass-specific, and it is available for verbs of emotion.

5.2. Impersonal constructions

A number of verbs may be used impersonally, inflected in the third person singular, with a dative experiencer (see Friedrich 1960: 120). Examples include the following (several other occurrences of impersonal *nakkes-* can be found in Puhvel and CHD *s.v.*):

(27) *ANA* [m][*Pihu*]*niya=ma* GIM-*an nakkesta*

        "Since it became troublesome for Pihuniya" KUB 19.30 i 16;

(28) [(*nu*)]=*ssi mahhan kāsti kāninti nakk*[(*esta*)]

        "When they (=the population) started to suffer hunger and thirst" KUB 14.15 iii 45-46;

(29) *nu=kan ANA* ÉRIN.MEŠ *kasti āras*

        "It came to famine for the troops." HT 21 + KUB 8.80 9-10;

(30) *nu=ssi akuwas piran É-ri anda katkattiyati*

        "(If) it shakes for him before his eyes in his house" KUB 29.9 i 8;

In spite of not being numerous, the above examples contain a variety of experiencer situation, including emotion, as in (27), physical state, as in (28) and (29), perception, as in (30); in addition, Friedrich (1960: 131) also mentions the frequent expression *mān* LUGAL-*i assu* "if it (seems) good to the king", which indicates a mental activity.

   A passage also contains an occurrence of the verb *istarak-* used impersonally with an experiencer in the dative-locative:

(31)   ḪUR.SAG.MEŠ-*ass=a mahhan istamasta nu=ssi=kan* ŠÀ-ŠU *anda istarakkiat*

       "And when the mountain hear (this), it got ill in its heart." KBo 32.14 ii 10 (discussed in

       Patri 2007: 99).

The reason for the occurrence of a dative rather than an accusative experiencer in this passage may

be seen in a lower degree of affectedness: the experiencer is not said to fall ill, in fact the meaning

in this passage is rather 'suffer'.

    The evidence in this section shows that Dative construction was apparently available for all types

of experiencer predicate in Hittite (except verbs of volition), and it does not seem to be connected

with specific verbs or subclasses of verbs. In this connection, one may wonder whether occurrences

of the verb *nah(h)-* with 1st and 2nd person clitics should not be considered as instantiations of this

construction, rather than of the Accusative construction.

6.   Non-canonical subjects in Hittite?

Up to now, I have followed traditional accounts and used the label 'impersonal' for constructions in

sec. 4.1 and 5.2. As I have remarked occasionally during the discussion, both the Accusative and

the Dative construction for experiencers are attested in the other IE languages; they are especially

frequent in Germanic and Slavic. Especially for these two language families, recent studies have

shown that non-nominative constituents with verbs inflected in the third person singular display

subject properties, in spite of not triggering verb agreement. In addition, even experiencer

constituents in the Dative-Nominative construction (such as those in sec. 5.1) have subject

properties in various languages.

    Possible tests for subjecthood include word order, topic-worthiness, and control of equi-NP

deletion in coordinated clauses; apart from topic-worthiness, which, in the frequent case that the experiencer is the only animate participant, seems tautological, strictly syntactic test are not available for Hittite. Leaving aside word order, which in Hittite is largely free, even equi-NP deletion is not reliable.[13] In English, in a sentence like:

(32)   *John kissed Mary and Ø left.*

subject can be omitted in the second clause only if it is coreferent with the subject in the first one; however, this is not the case in Hittite, where occurrences such as (33) are by no means exceptional:

(33)   *pedi=ssi=ma antuhsan pai nu* É-*ri=ssi aniskizzi*

"He gives a man in his (=the wounded person) place, and he (=the man who has been given) works in his house." HG 10.26.

In (33) the omitted subject in the second conjunct is coreferent with the direct object of the first conjunct, and not with its subject.

Thus, in the absence of reliable tests for subjecthood, it may seem a matter of terminology whether one wants to speak of non-canonical subject marking rather than impersonal verbs. However, there can be a reason not to use the label impersonal for the verbs under scrutiny. Let us recall for what other types of verb this label is used. In the first place, there are weather verbs, which refer to situation that have no participants. In the second, there are occurrences where a middle verb form in the third person refers to an event without regard to participants, as in:

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[13] Another possible test is control of subordinated infinitives, for which the sources offer no evidence. On partial viability of such tests for experiencer subjects in Ancient Greek, see Lühr (forthcoming).

(34)   *nu=kan INA* ŠA KUR ^{URU}*Hatti apezza* UD.KAM-*az akkiskittāri*

"From that day there is continuous dying in the interior of the Hatti country." KUB 14.13 i

50.

In (34) the verb *akkiskittāri* refers to the event of dying in itself, in spite of the obvious fact that

this event involves participants: but the use of a subjectless construction, similar to the construction

of verbs that refer to natural phenomena, only profiles the event. In the experiencer constructions in

sec. 4.1 and 5.2, on the other hand, participants do occur, even though no NP triggers verb

agreement. Lack of verbal agreement is not connected with the absence of a possible subject, as in

(34), but with the occurrence of constructions that highlight specific semantic properties of the role

experiencer, which, as I have pointed out in sec. 2, shares various features with other roles not

prototypically coded with the nominative. In the light of these considerations, one may want to use

the label 'impersonal' only for verbs that occur without participants, and 'non-canonical subject

marking' for those that take the Accusative or the Dative construction.

Several scholars have argued that the existence of non-canonical marking of subjects in the IE

languages can be taken as evidence for reconstructing active alignment in PIE (see Barðdal,

Eythórsson 2008, which also contains further reference). This issue is highly speculative, and the

frequency with which experiencer trigger of non-canonical subject marking across languages should

at least be suspicious. Recently, Haig (2009) suggested that traditional alignment typology is based

on transitive constructions, and that experiencer verbs are not easily accomodated in such a

framework. He argues that experiential situations belong to an area of 'extra-transitivity', of which

non-canonical coding is a reflex, and that the occurrence of such coding in a language is not a

diagnostic for the alignment of prototypically transitive verbs. Following this suggestion, I would

like to conclude that the occurrence of non-canonical subjects with experiential predicates (i.e.

impersonal constructions) in Hittite reflects a common tendency of expereintial predicates and does

not constitute any evidence for the type of alignment system that must be reconstructed for

21

transitive verbs in PIE.[14]

7. Summary

Hittite experiencer predicates occur in a number of different construction. Leaving aside

metaphorical expressions such as those in sec. 4.2, which would deserve a separate treatment, a

number of generalizations can be made. Possible constructions are the following:

i. Transitive, or Nominative-Accusative

ii. Nominative

iii. Accusative

iv. Dative-Nominative

v. Dative

   Of these constructions, (ii), (iv) and (v) also occur with nominal predicates. Even though there is

a tendency for verbs that indicate mental activities and perception to be transitive, while verbs that

indicate emotions and bodily sensations are mostly intransitive, and occur in the Nominative

construction, some verbs of emotion can also be transitive. Thus, the Nominative-Accusative

construction covers the whole range of experiential situations, and is verb class-specific, while the

Nominative construction only covers two subtypes of experiential predicates, including bodily

sensations and emotions, and is verb subclass-specific. A smaller set of these verbs (apparently

limited to verbs of emotion) occurs in the Dative-Nominative construction, which must also be

regarded as verb subclass-specific. The Dative construction, though only attested by a small number

of occurrences, extends to all types of experiencer situations, except for volition, and can be

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[14] It follows that I would not speak of different types of alignment in connection with NCS even in Hittite, as Patri

(2007) apparently does.

considered verb class-specific, in much the same way as the (much more frequent) Nominative-Accusative construction. Finally, the Accusative construction is limited to specific verbs which denote experiencer situations in which the experiencer is highly affected, i.e. highly patient-like.

The findings are summarized in Table 2:

TABLE 2. CONSTRUCTIONS OF HITTITE EXPERIENCER PREDICATES[15]

SITUATION / CONSTRUCTION	VOLITION	MENTAL STATE/ ACTIVITY	PERCEPTION	BODILY SENSATION	EMOTION
NOM-ACC	▒▒▒	▒▒▒	▒▒▒		▒▒▒
NOM				▒▒▒	▒▒▒
DAT		▒▒▒		▒▒▒	▒▒▒
DAT-NOM					▒▒▒
ACC				/////////////////////	/////////////////////

From the above results, it appears that most types of experiencers predicates in Hittite can have more than one construction; the subfield of experience which appears to be most complex is the subfield of emotion, which allows for the whole range of available constructions.

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[15] Hatching indicates that the Accusative construction is verb specific, hence more restricted than other constructions. Note that its extension to the field of emotions is not certain: as we have seen, its existence with *nah(h)-* is a matter of interpretation.

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