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Teaching Grammatical Topics Focused on the Optimal Outcome

ABSTRACT

This research aims to **optimize the teaching process** for Georgian grammatical topics, specifically, the **parts of speech**, in order to **improve learning outcomes** for students studying Georgian as a second language. We are proposing a new model for classifying parts of speech in modern Georgian. It **deviates from the traditional classification** to emphasize the **practical application and functional roles** of these linguistic units.

Keywords: *Georgian language, second language, parts of speech, language teaching.*

Introduction

Every word that exists within a language is classified and assigned with its specific position within the system of parts of speech. In other words: there is no word that does not belong to one of the various groups of the parts of speech. The central objective of this research is to optimally and effectively teach a range of grammatical topics to individuals for whom Georgian is a second language.

The present study is based on the authors' extensive, long-term experience within a Georgian language educational program, whose primary beneficiaries are Azerbaijani- and Armenian-speaking students.

Literature Review

Parts of Speech in Georgian

According to traditional description, the classification of the parts of speech in modern Georgian takes the following form:

1. Noun
2. Adjective
3. Numeral
4. Pronoun
5. Verb
6. Adverb

7. Postposition
8. Conjunction
9. Particle
10. Interjection (Shanidze, 1980, p. 34).

The parts of speech are presented in this same arrangement in Georgian language school grammars and other types of grammar resources.

Furthermore, teaching of grammatical material also proceeds in this order: specifically, the analysis of **nominal** categories is presented first, followed by the formal and functional specificities of **verbal** forms, and concluding with a discussion of **uninflected** words.

Discussion

Topics on Teaching Nominal Inflection

It is a well-known fact that teaching the **nouns** is easier as compared to verbs. This is defined by the fact that the nominals (noun, adjective, etc.) have only two categories: case and number.

The category of case represents an **inflectional system**, and every case has its own identifying marker.

This circumstance, when the dynamic progression **from the simple to the complex** - is naturally represented in existing Georgian grammar (Shanidze, 1980; Gogolashvili and others, 2011; Kvachadze, 2018; Chikobava, 1998). It therefore appears logical that none of these resources analyze verbal forms before nouns.

While the nominal system is genuinely simpler compared to the verbal system, operating with any nominal (noun, adjective, numeral, or pronoun) for communicative purposes still requires a specific grammatical foundation: a **nominal** does not have just one form; rather, it has a considerably wide spectrum of forms.

What forms are these?

Firstly, these are the case forms.

There are seven cases, but this does not mean that the nominal form analysis ends only with these seven forms. These seven forms share a common **lexical stem**. The case forms are distinguished from one another by **case markers**.

Seven main case markers are distinguished accordingly:

Nominative Case -ი (-i)

Ergative Case -ძ (-ma)

Dative Case -ს (-s)

Genitive Case -ის (-is)

Instrumental Case -ით (-it)

Adverbial Case -ად (-ad)

Vocative Case -ო (-o)

These are the case endings for consonant-stem nouns.

It is difficult to say why preference is given to consonant-stem nouns and why vowel-stem nouns are given a secondary position.

It is also necessary to mention here that even among the vowel-stems themselves, the picture is not consistent, in terms of the endings of the case forms; the endings for nouns with a contractive stem, are as follows:

Nominative დღე Zero ending

Ergative დღე -მ (-m)

Dative დღე -ს (-s)

Genitive დღე -ის (-is)

Instrumental დღე -ით (-it)

Adverbial დღე -დ (-d)

Vocative დღე -ვ (-v)

Case markers of nouns with a non-contractive stem:

Nominative წერმა Zero ending

Ergative წერმა -მ (-m)

Dative წერმა -ს (-s)

Genitive წერმა -ის (-is)

Instrumental წერმა -ით (-it)

Adverbial წერმა -დ (-d)

Vocative წერმა -ვ (-v)

To this can be added the declension paradigm for anthroponyms: in the Nominative and Vocative cases, such vowel-stem names are represented by the stem form, while in the Nominative case of consonant-stem names appears the –[i] marker and the Vocative case is shown by the stem form.

It is already evident that the system of nominal forms involves significantly more forms than just seven.

To fully clarify this system of forms, the **stem factor** is an essential and key issue to consider. This is not a grammatical end in itself. The **correct representation** of the case forms, that is the **orthography**, without which a literary language cannot exist - is tied to establishing the stem (we have different versions of the formants that produce the case forms according to structures of stems). On the other hand, the case **formants** act upon the stem structure, causing either the **reduction** (or **elision**) of its **last vowel** or a change of a similar nature (reduction) **within the stem itself**.

As a result, the **number of forms increases** even further.

We have:

Incompressible stems	კაცი, სახლი..
Compressible stems	კალამი, კედელი...
Contractive stems	მიწა, დაფა..
Non-contractive stems	ოქრო, კუ...
Compressible-contractive stems	ფანჯარა, ქვეყანა..

Obviously, such an analysis begins with the **definition of the stem** itself.

What is the stem for nominals?

This is the simplest topic: the **stem** is the part of the noun that carries the **lexical meaning**. It is followed by one or another case marker (though not always).

Traditionally, the stem is defined as follows: the noun must be put into the **Ergative case**, the case marker must be removed and then what remains will be the stem (Shanidze, 1980, p. 33).

At first glance, this is a simple operation, but it can be performed **only if we already know what the stem is** (!): accordingly, we will either attach the **-ma** ending to the stem, or the **-m** suffix.

This method in no way helps someone who practically does not know the Georgian language and is learning it: he will not know whether to write and say **katsim** or **k'atsma**.

Often, the noun is **represented by the stem form even in the Nominative case** itself (these are the nominals or **substantivized** nominals that end in the vowels - [a], -[e], -[o], and -[u]: *mits'a... tv'e... okr'o... b'u... p'at'ara... mekhut'e... r'a...*), **from which, for some reason, we must transfer the noun into the Ergative case, add the appropriate case marker, and then remove this marker again.**

So, we will end up with the very same forms we started with. Then the question arises: **How logical and rational is such a procedure?**

The issue might be simply resolved if we state that: **all nominals or nominalized (substantivized) words that end in - [a], -[e], -[o], and -[u] are vowel-stem nouns** (K'iria, 2021, pp. 54–58).

Nouns ending in - [i] are **consonant-stem nouns**. There are certain exceptions in this case (when the noun ends in - [i], but this - [i] is part of the stem and not the Nominative case marker).

For example: *zhiur'i..., visk'i..., maiam'i..., somal'i ..., Giorg'i, Ak'ak'i* (Akaki...), which are necessary and possible to memorize.

Unlike the verb, the noun **forms** have a **transparent structure**, which allows for free operation using simple formulas and rules.

If we denote the stem with **R**, then we can say that:

R-[i] / R-[e'b]-[i]	Nominative Case
R-[m'a] / R-[e'b]-[m'a] or R-[m]	Ergative Case
R-[s]	Dative or Genitive Case
R-[e'b]-[s]	Definitely Dative Case
R-[i's] / R-[e'b]-[i's]	Definitely Genitive Case
R-[I't] / R-[e'b]-[i't] or R-[t'i]	Instrumental Case
R-[a'd] / R-[eb]-[a'd] or R-[d]	Instrumental Case
R-[o] / R-[e'b]-[o] or R-[v]	Vocative Case
R-[zero]	Nominative or Vocative Case
R-[m] pattern	indicates that the noun's stem ends in a vowel.
R-[v] formula	we can say that this is a vowel-stem noun in the Vocative case.

Declension of Nouns with Postpositions and Particles

The system of noun forms is not ended up solely by these rules.

Postpositions may be affixed to the cases - this information is also crucial, especially since sometimes the case marker is not visible at all, and the only means of identifying the case is the postposition itself. For example, if we do not know that – [ze] (on) and –[shi] (in/into) are postpositions of the **Dative case**, then we cannot assign a grammatical qualification to forms of the type *mits'aze* (on the ground/earth) and *mits'ashi* (in the ground/earth).

This is essential **to know that particles** may also be affixed to the main form of the noun: *orive* (both), *samigha* (only three), *k'ats'its* (the man, too/also).

Thus, it follows that in order to include a noun in a communicative operation, **one appropriate form** must be selected from the **many forms** available in the database. For example, if the construction **Stem + ma/-m** is fixed within the communicative structure, this indicates that the noun fixed in this form is the **performer of the action** (the agent); yet, for the performer of the action, the **Ergative Case** must be selected, **however** the **Nominative** and **Dative** cases are also **alternatives** for this purpose.

According to the research, it becomes clear that the system of noun forms is quite robust and comprehending it is not so easy to - it requires knowledge of the considerable amount of information. **However, it certainly cannot be compared to the complexity of verbal form derivation.** The Georgian verb almost has **no specific form of its own** and **no special affixes** that produce, let's say, the form for the **Present** tense, Future or Aorist Tense and so on.

The system of the noun is simple not because there are only two categories here, while there are significantly more in the verb. Actually, the specifics of the Georgian verb - its **polypersonalism** and the peculiarity of the relationships between the person markers - is what makes the study of the verb difficult.

We believe that the **traditional arrangement of grammatical materials** - that is, the manner and order in which the material is presented - could be **reviewed** and **corrections should be introduced** in the teaching of the language for those learners for whom Georgian is a second language.

Uninflected and Minimally Inflecting Parts of Speech

There are parts of speech that are "simpler" than nouns. These are parts of speech that are either uninflected or have **limited resources for inflectional change**.

One group consists of words with full lexical meaning: *dghes* (today), *khval* (tomorrow), *zeg* (day after tomorrow), *gushin* (yesterday), *ak* (here), *mashin* (then), *uk'an* (behind), *ik* (there)... *sad* (where), *rodis* (when), *rogor* (how)... *amit'om* (therefore), *imit'om* (because)... *odnav* (slightly)...

The second group does not have lexical meaning but has grammatical function and meaning.

These include: *-tvis (for), -k'en (towards), -vit (like)...* *rom (that/if), magram (but), tu (if/ whether)...* *diakh (yes), k'i (yes), ara (no)...* *vakh (oh!), vai (oops), ui (oops) ...*

We believe it is logical and methodologically justified to teach the uninflected words first - memorizing these words already offers the possibility of activating them and automatically including them in a communicative situation: there is no need to know the stem of these words, nor is it necessary to select any of their alternative forms (alternatives practically do not exist). It should also be noted that these words are quite functionally loaded, and the frequency of their usage is high.

It is known that in **continuous speech**, the words most frequently used are precisely those that stand on the periphery of the lexical stock when studying vocabulary from a purely **semantic** perspective: out of the approximately one hundred most frequently used words, which cover one-fifth of the text, only about ten are typical full-meaning words (*tqva* (said), *itsis* (knows), *guli* (heart), *dghe* (day), *sakme* (business), *kheli* (hand), *khma* (voice), *k'argi* (good), *khalkhi* (people)...).

Here are the remaining frequently used words:

Particles (*ar* (not), *ara* (no), *agha r* (no longer), *arts* (neither/nor), *vera* (cannot), *aba* (well then), *ai* (here is), *gana* (surely), *maints* (still/anyway), *mash* (so/then), *khom* (isn't it?...)),

Postpositions (*ts'in* (in front), *t'avze* (on top)...),

Conjunctions (*an* (or), *da* (and), *tu* (if), *rogorts* (as/like), *rots'a* (when), *ro* (that), *kholo* (while/and),

Auxiliary Verb (*aris* (is), *khar* (are), *var* (am), *iq'neba* (will be), *iq'o* (was), *iq'os* (may be)...),

Numerals (*ert'i* (one), *didi* (big/great), *met'i* (more), *q'vela* (all)...).

Pronouns are also frequently used words (*me* (I), *shen* (you), *chven* (we), *tqven* (you, plural), *is* (he/she/it), *igi* (he/she/it), *es* (this), *chemi* (my), *sheni* (your), *chveni* (our), *imis* (his/her/its), *imas* (to him/her/it), *imat* (to them)... *mas* (him/her/it)... *ra* (what), *rats* (that which), *rad* (for what), *ram* (what, ergative)... *vin* (who)...), the meaning of which, as is known, is **determined by the context**.

Adverbs also fall into this category, their meaning, as of pronouns, is dependent on the speech situation (*ak* (here), *ik* (there), *ase* (thus/so), *ekhla* (now), *mashin* (then), *dghes* (today), *dzher* (yet/still), *upro* (more), *k'idev* (still/again), *mkholod* (only)... *sad* (where), *rogor* (how)...)

(Pochkhua, 1974, p.129).

Conclusion

Based on the presented research, it was **determined** that the order of learning materials in the grammar books, in current curriculums, are presented **exactly in that order and adherence** as demonstrated in the **usual classification of the parts of speech**.

When working on **Georgian as a second language**, we consider the following version as the optimal variation for the classification of the parts of speech and, consequently, the arrangement of the grammatical materials:

1. **Adverb**
2. **Postposition**
3. **Conjunction**
4. **Particle**
5. **Interjection**
6. **Noun**
7. **Adjective**
8. **Numeral**
9. **Pronoun**
10. **Verb**

The teaching method we have proposed is **optimal** and provides the possibility for **easier, step-by-step deepening of knowledge** and, consequently, **better linguistic expression**.

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