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Category of Evidentiality in the Kartvelian Languages: Problems, Research History, Perspectives[1]

ABSTRACT

The given paper focuses on the problems related to the category of evidentiality in the Kartvelian languages, research history and future perspectives. The analysis of any linguistic category, above all, implies the study of its origin, especially if the category under analysis is universal. Scholars argue whether the category of evidentiality has been borrowed by the Kartvelian languages or it is the expression of the inner potential of these languages. As the verb plays a key role in the expression of evidentiality, the paper analyzes the morphological means of expression of evidentiality in the Kartvelian languages: perfect tenses characteristic of all Kartvelian languages, imperfect tenses existing in non-written Kartvelian languages (Svan, Megrelian and Laz), specific perfect tenses of the Svan language. Based on Svan and Megrelian material, markers of evidentiality have been identified. The research has yielded a preliminary conclusion on the authenticity of the category of evidentiality in the Kartvelian languages.

Key words: Evidentiality, Tense, Perfect, Imperfect, Kartvelian.

I. Introduction

The research focuses on the category of evidentiality in Kartvelian (South Caucasian) languages – Georgian, Megrelian, Laz and Svan. Out of these languages only Georgian has an alphabetic writing system and a literary tradition of sixteen centuries. Megrelian, Svan and Laz languages are linguistically independent language systems, however, according to their social function, they are equal to dialects. The literary Georgian language embraces old and modern Georgian and has its dialects both in Georgia and outside its borders. In order to achieve reliable results, the above-mentioned facts should be envisaged when dealing with a research of Kartvelian languages.

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The given paper has been prepared within the project "The Category of Evidentiality in the Kartvelian Languages" (№217300) financed by Rustaveli National Scientific Foundation. The research focuses on **problematic issues and novelties related to evidentiality, it analyzes the history of research regarding the topic, imeplement the analysis of the linguistic means used to express the category of evidentiality and outlines future perspectives**.

The category of evidentiality expresses the subjective attitude of the speaker to the context, i.e. whether the information is directly perceived by the speaker (or is equal to direct perception) and is therefore ideally reliable, or, whether the information has been obtained from some other source and, therefore, is far from "ideal knowledge" (S. DeLancey, 1979). The interest towards evidentliality is also due to the fact that this category is found in languages of different structures; Among them are the Kartvelian languages: Georgian, Megrelian, Svan. See Aikhenvald, 2004. It should be mentioned that the linguistic means

used to express evidentiality may be diverse in non-related as well as related languages.

II. Research History and Topic

Evidentiality is a universal category expressed by morphological, syntactic and lexical means. According to **E. Kordi's** classification, markers of evidentiality in languages of different types are as follows:

1. Specific grammatical forms for which these meanings are unique or essential;

2. Polysemantic grammatical forms used in their secondary meanings;

3. Lexical means in certain syntactic constructions (Корди, 2007, 256).

All the three above-mentioned markers of evidentiality are used in the Kartvelian languages.

Research of evidentiality on the material of the Kartvelian languages, based on corresponding methodology, was launched at the end of the 20th century by Georgian and foreign authors; research outcomes have been published in articles and monographs (Boeder, 2000; Сумбатова, 2007; Topadze, 2011; Margiani, 2012).

However, it should be mentioned that much earlier than the above-mentioned period Georgian scholars (A. Shanidze, Arn. Chikobava, V. Topuria, Sh. Dzidziguri, G. Rogava, Z. Chumburidze, I. Kobalava, G. Kartozia, Z. Sarjveladze, L. Kvantaliani, I. Chantladze, D. Pkhakadze and others) wrote articles and monographs focusing on issues directly linked to the grammatical expression of evidentiality, namely:

- *The formation of tenses related to the unseen* (=unseen actions/states);

- *Constructions with indirect speech particles and conditional clauses.*

Note: the list of works of the above-mentioned scholars is provided in the references.

Analysis of any linguistic category, above all, aims at identifying the **origin** of this category, especially when the category under analysis is universal. Scholars have diverse opinions regarding the **origin** of evidentiality in the Kartvelian languages: some think that evidentiality is a phenomenon specific for the Kartvelian languages, while others regard that evidentiality appeared in the Kartvelian languages as a result of the influence of the Turkish language. **In order to study the history properly** and, above all, **to solve the given problem, it is necessary to undertake a complex study of the category of evidentiality in the Kartvelian languages**. This will help understand whether the category of evidentiality in the Kartvelian languages is an expression of the inner potential of these languages or is a result of the external influence.

III. Morphological Expression of Evidentiality in the Kartvelian Languages

"Evidentiality, in a broad sense, is a textual category, whereas **evidentiality of the verb** is just one of the means, albeit central, of expression" (Ницолова, 2007, 122). The verb is the very language unit in non-written Kartvelian languages (Svan, Megrelian and Laz), for which evidential meaning is unique and essential (i.e. non-written languages, unlike the literary one, have different evidential tenses).

Evidential Perfect

According to the traditional opinion, **on the contemporary stage of language development, the perfect tense is one of the main means of expressing the**

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evidentiality of the verb.

Both in literary and non-written Kartvelian languages there are evidential perfect tenses: **Evidential I and Evidential II.**

The above-mentioned tenses fulfill the same function in old Georgian texts. On the synchronic level, their chief meaning is evidentiality, whereas their initial function – resultative – is, in fact, overshadowed. Georgian does not have a special morpheme to denote the category under analysis.

In this regard, mention should be made of the following:

On the synchronic level the evidentiality of the above-mentioned tenses is undoubted, however, opinions vary regarding the function of these tenses in Old Georgian, namely, whether they expressed evidentiality at least to a certain extent. A. Shanidze, Z. Sarjveladze and G. Ninua give a positive answer to the above question: "In Old Georgian the verb was capable of expressing the meaning of unseen action. However, this capacity of the verb was more developed in Middle and Modern Georgian" (Sarjveladze, Ninua, 1985, 85). The above-mentioned

opinion is shared by M. Beridze (2009) and M. Topadze (2011). We argue that the meaning of unseen action existed in the Old Georgian verb. For instance:

(1) „...შენი ადგილი *დაგიტევებიეს* და სხუად წასრულ ხარ"

šeni adgili *dagiṭevebies* da sxuad çasrul xar.[2]

'As it turned out, you have left your place and gone somewhere else'

("The Martyrdom of Shushanik", Old Georgian Hagiographic Literature, 1963, 15; (Tthis example is also provided in the work of Z. Sarjveladze and G. Ninua);

(2) და რამეთუ *მოეგუანა* წმიდასა მას ეპისკოპოსსა საზრდელი...

da rametu *moeɣuana* çmidasa mas episḳopossa sazrdeli ...

'As it turned out, the Bishop had provided food for her'… (ibid, 23);

(3) ...მამა გრიგოლს აქეთ *წამოუყვანებია*

mama grigols aket *çamouqvanebia*

'Father Gregory seems to have brought her here'

("The Life of Gregory of Khandzta", ibid, 297).

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[2] For transliteration there is used TITUS Bitstream Unicode http://titus.fkidg1.uni-frankfurt.de/ framee.htm?%2Findex.htm

IV. The Way of Formation of Perfect Tense Verb Forms

It is important to analyze the means of formation of perfect tense verb forms. In this way we can evidently see how language aspires to the natural development of the semantics of **unseen actions**. A quote of A. Arabuli proves the above opinion: In Georgian "the main function of Evidential I is to show result. However, it gradually developed the function (co-function) of evidentiality, unseen action or state". The scholar underlines that "the development of the model of unseen action or state on the basis of perfect verb forms can be witnessed in languages of various groups, therefore, it can be considered as universal and logical" (Arabuli,1984, 139-149).

Perfect tense verb forms are obtained from the reinterpretation (inversion) of ancient forms – stative verbs:

Georgian:

(4) Stat. Present: *უწერია uçeria* –'it is written for him/her';

(5) Evidential I: *უწერია uçeria* –'it has turned out that he/she has written it';

(6) Stat. Aorist: *ეწერა eçera* –'it was written for him/her';

(7) Evidential II: *ეწერა eçera* –'it turned out that he/she had written it'.

Perfect forms have been developed similarly in the **Svan** language:

(8) Stat. Presernt: *ხოირა xoira* – 'it is written for him/her';

(9) Evidential I: *ხოირა xoira* – 'it has turned out that he/she has written it';

(10) Stat. Aorist: *ხოირან xoiran* – 'it was written for him/her';

(11) Evidential II: *ხოირან xoiran* – 'it turned out that he/she had written it'.

The same is true for **Megrelian:**

(12) Stat. Present: *უჭარუ(ნ) uçaru(n)* – 'it is written for him/her';

(13) Evidential I: *უჭარუ(ნ) uçaru(n)* – 'it has turned out that he/she has written';

(14) Stat. aorist: *უჭარუდუ uçarudu* – 'It was written';

(15) Evidential II: *უჭარუდუ uçarudu* – 'It turned out that he/she had written'.

The same is true also for **Laz:**

(16) Stat. Present: *უჭა(რ)უნ uça(r)un* – 'it is written for him/her';

(17) Evidential I: *უჭა(რ)უნ uça(r)un* – 'it has turned out that he/she has written';

(18) Stat. aorist: *უჭა(რ)უდუ*

uča(r)udu – 'It was written';

(19) Evidential II: უჭა(რ)უდუ *uča(r)udu* – 'It turned out that he/she had written'.

V. Extra Evidential Perfect Tenses in Svan

The Svan language, being a non-written language, is both archaic and innovative. This can be proved by the existence of evidential perfect tenses that are not found in other Kartvelian languages, these tenses are: **Conditional-Resultative I and Conditional-Resultative II;** the origin of these tenses is similar to that of evidential perfect verbs in other Kartvelian languages. These forms are interpreted and inverted forms of continuous future and continuous conditional forms of stative verbs:

(20) Stative passive: *bჯირი xeiri* 'it will be written for him/her'>dynamic active: *bჯირი xeiri* 'he/she has probably written it' (cf: *bოირა xoira* 'it has turned out that he/she has written it');

(21) Stative passive: *bჯირロლ xeirol* 'it would be written for him/her'> dynamic active: *bჯირロლ xeirol* 'he/she had probably written it' (cf. *bოირან*

xoiran 'it turned out that he/she had written it').

VI. Evidential Imperfect

It is widely known, and it has also been proved by the material analyzed in this paper, that perfect tenses traditionally develop the semantics of unseen actions. It should also be noted that in non-written Kartvelian languages the neutral imperfect forms have developed opposite evidential forms, namely,

In the Svan language

There are evidential tenses with present tense stems, termed Evidential I and Evidential II (Topuria, 1967, 130) (these are not perfect Evidential I and Evidential II characteristic of the Kartvelian languages; simply, the homonymous terms existing in the scholarly literature need to be specified. The activities within the project are also aimed at the specification of terms):

Evidential I is formed by adding suffixes **-უნ/-un** and **-ა/-a** to the present superessive version form of the verb. However, in certain contexts, they may also bear the semantics of objective version:

(22) ხ-ä-ირ-უნ-ა x-ä-ir-un-a

Ind.O3-SPRS-to write-EVDM-PM

'it turned out that he/she was writing above something / it turned out that he/she was writing it for him/her';

In the Svan language, grammaticalization of evidential forms is most obvious as compared to other Kartvelian languages. This can be proved by the existence of a special marker of evidentiality in the verb form (Margiani, 2012, 47-48).

In the first and second person, Evidential II is formed by means of an auxiliary verb, whereas in the third person the auxiliary verb may be omitted:

(23) ლჷ+მ+იჲრ-ჳნ lə+m+ijr-ün

to write-EVDM

it turned out that he/she had been writing to him/her'.

Despite the difference in the structure of the tenses under analysis, they have a common present stem.

In Megrelian

There are two groups of present-stem tenses opposed by seen and unseen actions (Rogava, 1953, 30; Kobalava, 2001, 133-134):

(24) Present:

ჭარ-უნ-ს čar-un-s

to write-THM-PRS.S3.SG

'he/she is writing'

Evidential III:

ნო-ჭარუ-ე-(ნ) no-čaru-e-(n)

EVDM>-to write-<EVDM-(PRS.S3.SG)

'it has turned out that he/she is writing';

(25) Imperfect:

ჭარ-უნ-დ-უ čar-un-d-u

to write-THM-EXTM-IMP.S3.SG

'he/she was writing'

Evidential IV:

ნო-ჭარუ-ე-დ-უ no-čaru-e-d-u

EVDM>-to write-<EVDM-EXTM-IMP.S3.SG

'it turned out that he/she had been writing'

We argue that in the above-mentioned forms denoting unseen actions/states ნო- -ე / no- -e should be considered as markers of evidentiality.

In Laz

Non-inversive evidential tenses, the formation of which varies throughout dialects (Kartozia, 2005, 102-103). For instance,

Past Continuous Evidential

In Vitsean-Arkabian and Atinian-Artashenian dialects:

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(26) ჭარ-უპ-ტ-უ-დორენ *čar-up-ṭ-u-doren*

to write-THM-EXTM-IMP.S3.SG-CLTC

'it turned out that he/she had been writing';

Khofian dialect:

(27) ჭარ-უპ-ტ-Ø-ერენ *čar-up-ṭ-Ø-eren*

to write-THM-EXTM-IMP.S3.SG-CLTC

'it turned out that he/she had been writing'.

VII. Preliminary results and Conclusions

1. Like the majority of languages, in the Kartvelian languages **there are evidential perfect forms.** Non-written Kartvelian languages have developed other forms as well, namely, **Evidential forms of imperfect verbs**;

2. In the Svan language all evidential verbs (apart from the forms that have originated from stative verbs, which, naturally, retained the model of stative verbs!) are marked by suffix -უნ-/-un-. And in Megrelian, ნო- -ე / no- -e circumfix also seems to be the marker of evidentiality in tenses denoting unseen actions/states. The existence of a special morpheme that denotes certain grammatical category proves that the category is authentic for the given language.

Thus, based on the preliminary data and conclusions, we argue that the category under analysis may be organic and authentic for the Kartvelian languages.

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Abbreviations:

CLTC – Clitic

EVdM – Evidential marker

EXTM – Extention marker

Ind.O3 – Indirection object 3

IMP– Imperfective

PM – Paradigm marker

SPRS – Superessive version

S3 – Subject person 3

SG – Singular