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On the Reinterpretation of the Terms
Denoting Evidential Tenses in the Kartvelian Languages

Abstract

In the Kartvelian (South Caucasian) languages Georgian, Megrelian, Laz and Svan, the tenses of Evidentiality are being attested, out of which a part is found in all four languages, whereas the second part was developed only in the non-written languages - Megrelian, Laz and Svan. In the Linguistic literature, these tenses are referred to by different terms depending on the criterion which the scholar gives preference - morphology or semantics.

The article analyses the confirmed verbal forms of Evidentiality which are common for all four Kartvelian languages, as well as those found in the non-written languages - Megrelian, Laz and Svan; the traditional forms of Evidentiality are being displayed and an approximately accurate naming is being provided. The image of the terminological reinterpretation of the evidential verb forms is clearly reflected by means of a special table; namely, the terminological diversity of each Kartvelian language is solved through using common terms for all Kartvelian languages. Such an approach eases the translation of the evidential verb forms into foreign languages.

Key words: *Tenses, Screeves, Evidential Perfect, Evidential Imperfect*

Introduction

The term „Kartvelian languages" has been introduced by Austrian scholar Hugo Schuchardt. This term denotes related languages – Georgian, Megrelian, Laz and Svan. The Kartvelian languages listed in the given paper are also known in the European and American scientific literatureas as South Caucasian languages.

Out of the Kartvelian languages, only Georgian has alphabetic writing system and a literary tradition which counts sixteen centuries; therefore, Georgian has always been the language of religion and education for other Kartvelian peoples[1].

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[1] Georgian, Megrelian and Svan are widespread on the territory of Georgia. As for the speakers of the Laz language, their compact population inhabits one village of Georgia (Sarpi); some Laz families also live in other villages of Georgia - Gonio, Kvariati and Anaklia. A big part of Laz population lives in Turkey. As we have already mentioned, literary Georgian has always been the language of religious rituals and education for other Kartvelian peoples. Other Kartvelian languages – Megrelian, Laz and Svan are non-written languages.

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The Issue under analysis

Evidentiality is a universal category. It is widespread in numerous languages, although the linguistic means of its expression differ even in related languages. From the viewpoint of related languages and, in general, language typology, research of universal categories gains utmost significance.

It is well known that the literary language is conservative, whereas non-written languages are based on spontaneous oral speech and, unlike the literary language, have more freedom regarding the development of forms expressing grammatical categories. In the Kartvelian languages, the category of evidentiality is developed both lexically and grammatically (morphologically, syntactically). The axis of the grammatical expression of evidentiality is the verb. Some evidential verb forms are found in all the four Kartvelian languages and they have the same morphological structure. Separate evidential forms can be found only in non-written Kartvelian languages – Megrelian, Laz and Svan.

The Problem

Evidential forms found in all the four Kartvelian languages, as well as the evidential forms that are different from those in the literary Georgian i.e. the evidential forms found in non-written languages – Laz, Svan and Megrelian, are denoted by diverse terms in the Georgian scientific literature. The reason for this is that various scholars attach priority to various criteria – morphological formation or semantics. As a result, there is a diversity of terms denoting evidential forms in the Kartvelian languages. This diversity is more or less clear for Georgian scholars. However, it frequently leads to confusion of terms when translating the linguistic literature into European languages. The complexity of translation of the terms is not only caused by their diversity, but also by the absence of the adequate correlates of the Georgian terms in the European languages:

One of the most prominent examples of the above-mentioned is the Georgian term მწკრივი *(mçkrivi),* introduced by Georgian academician Akaki Shanidze to denote the verb forms differing in tense and mood (Shanidze, 1980, p. 215). In the European languages its adequate correlate is not found, whereas a similar term "tense" refers only to the time of action. In order to denote the Georgian term მწკრივი

'*mcḳrivi*' – *(row),* Howard Aronson uses the term *screeve* as the English version of the Georgian term (Aronson, 1990, p.41). However, without explanation, this term seems vague to English readers. In the Kartvelian languages screeve is a complex category of the verb, denoting various semantic nuances. Various forms of screeves are used to express the evidential content. Above, when we discussed **the terms denoting evidential forms, we implied the terminological diversity of evidential screeves and the related difficulties of translation.**

Goal

The given paper has been prepared within the project "The Category of Evidentiality in the Kartvelian Languages" (#217300) financed by Rustaveli National Scientific Foundation. Its aim is to **reinterpret the terms denoting evidential tenses**, namely, by sticking to the principles of uniformity.

Analysis of the issue

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. Evidentiality may be expressed by morphological, syntactic and lexical means. All the three are found in the Kartvelian languages. However, the given paper focuses on **the morphological expression of evidentiality,** which, as we have already mentioned, is achieved by means of the **verb**.

In all the four Kartvelian languages, evidential verb forms, screeves are termed as Evidential I and Evidential II. It should be mentioned that the initial function of these screeves was to denote result. Later, on the synchronic level, they developed evidentiality, the traces of which can be found in Old Georgian. The initial function – denoting result – was weakened on the synchronic level. Taking into account the initial and current functions, these screeves are termed both as Resultative and Evidential. However, on the synchronic level, their main function is evidentiality (in detail see: Shanidze, 1980; Sarjveladze & Ninua, 1985; Pkhakadze, 1984; Beridze, 2009; Topadze, 2011). Therefore, the term denoting the above-mentioned screeves, should be based on ***Evidentiality.*** There are other several kinds of evidential verb forms in the Kartvelian languages. It is necessary to differentiate their names and make corresponding terms more precise.

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Evidential Perfect

As we have mentioned, Evidential I and Evidential II combined the functions of result and evdentiality on different stages of development of the literary Georgian language (from diachrony to synchrony). The permanent characteristic feature of these forms is **Perfect tense.** According to scientific literature, "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; see also Bybee, 1994 and Kozinceva, 2007).

In all the Kartvelian languages perfect verb forms are obtained from the reinterpretation (inversion) of ancient forms – stative verbs (Shanidze, 1980):

Georgian:

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

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

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

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

Megrelian:

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

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

(7) Stat. aorist: უჭარუდუ *uçarudu* – 'It was written for him/her'';

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

Laz:

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

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

(11) Stat. aorist: უჭა(რ)უტუ *uča(r)uţu* – 'It was written for him/her'';

(12) Evidential II: უჭა(რ)უტუ *uča(r)uţu* – 'It turned out that he/she had written it'.

As for the Svan, albeit with slight changes, perfect verb forms are obtained in the same way; namely, the form of a stative verb does not express the semantics of the unseen, its function is to denote experience; however, by substitution of version prefix and adding suffix *-ენ '-en',* it becomes only evidential:

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

(14) Evidential I: ხ-ო-ირ-ა *x-o-ir-a* – 'it has turned out that he/she has written it' (**Result+experience);**

ხ-ა-ირ-ენ-ა *x-a-ir-en-a* – 'it has

turned out that he/she has written it'
(**Evidential**);

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

(16) Evidential II: *ბ-ა-ირ-ჷნ x-a-ir-ăn* – 'it turned out that he/she had written it'= 'he/she wrote it at least once' (**Result+experience**); *ბ-ა-ირ-ენ-ჷნ x-a-ir-en-ăn* – 'it turned out that he/she had written it – (**Evidential**).

There are some other terms for Evidential I and Evidential II in the Svan Language such as: Resultative I or past complete and resultative II and past perfect (Topuria, 1967*).*

Taking into account all the above-mentioned, we argue that, based on the main function of expressing unseen actions, on the synchronic level, Evidential I and Evidential II should be termed as **Evidential Perfect I** and **Evidential Perfect II.**

Evidential Perfect in Svan and Laz *Languages*

Among the Kartvelian languages, additional **evidential perfect screeves are found in** Svan and Laz**.**

The traditional terms denoting these tenses in the Svan language are: **Conditional-Resultative I and**

Conditional-Resultative II;

The origin of these screeves is similar to that of evidential perfect verbs in other Kartvelian languages. These forms are interpreted and inverted forms of incomplete future and incomplete conditional forms of stative verbs:

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

(18) Stative passive: *ხეიროლ xeirol* 'it would be written for him/her' > dynamic active: *ხეიროლ xeirol* 'he/she had probably written it' (cf. *ხოირან xoiran* 'it turned out that he/she had written it').

The evidential screeves characteristic solely of the Laz language are termed as **non-inversive**

evidential screeves. According to the opinions of scholars, perfect evidential screeves are formed analytically: the aorist form of the main verb is added by auxiliary verb, which is different in various dialects; according to prof. G. Kartozia, these screeves should pertain to the II series and they should be termed as: **Former Aorist Evidential I**, **Former Aorist Evidential II** (Kartozia 2005, 96, 102-103). According to another opinion, it is

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necessary to distinguish separate series IV to denote these screeves in the Laz language, whereas the screeves should be termed as: **Evidential III and Evidential IV** (Kiria et al. 2015,574-576).

Laz - Vitsian-Arkabian, Atinian-Artashenian dialects: (19) ჭარუ-დორენ /*čaru-doren*

to write.AOR-CLTC:be.PRS.S3.SG

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

(20) ჭარუ-დორტუნ/*čaru- dorṭun*

to write.AOR-CLTC:be.IMP.S3.SG

ეწერა / დაეწერა 'it turned out that he/she had written it'

Laz – Khofian-Chkhalian dialects: (21) ჭარ-ელ+ერენ/*čar-el+eren*

to write.AOR-CLTC:be.PRS.S3.SG

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

(22) ჭარ-ელ+ერეტუ /*čar-el+ereṭu*

to write.AOR-CLTC:be.IPM.S3.SG

ეწერა / დაეწერა 'it turned out that he/she had written it'

The perfect evidential tenses found in the Svan and Laz languages should be termed **Evidential**

Perfect III and Evidential Perfect IV.
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. However, opposite evidential forms are rarely developed from neutral imperfect forms. It should be noted that **Evidential Imperfect Forms** are found in non-written Kartvelian languages, namely, *in the Svan language*

There are evidential screeves with present tense stems, termed Evidential I and Evidential II (Topuria, 1967, 130) these are not perfect Evidential I and Evidential II, discussed above and characteristic of all the four the Kartvelian languages; The homonomy of terms in the scientific literature underlines the importance of **precision of terms** and bringing more clarity into the names of grammatical forms.

In the Svan language, **Imperfect Evidential I** is formed by adding suffixes **-უნ** '-un' and **-ა**

-'a' to the locative version of present tense form, although, depending on the context, the version may be objective as well:

(23) Evidential I: ხ-ä-ир-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 first and second person, Imperfect Evidential II is formed by means of an auxiliary verb, whereas in the third person the auxiliary verb may be omitted:

(24)   ლჷ+მ+იჭრ-ჳ̈ნ lǝ+m+ijr-ün

to write-EVDM

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

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

There are other names for these screeves in Svan, namely evidential III and evidential IV (Oniani, 1998; Chumburidze, Nijaradzse & Kurdadze, 2007).

In Megrelian:

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

(25) Present: *ჭარუნს čaruns* 'he/she is writing it' – Evidential III *ნოჭარუე(ნ) noč̣arue(n)* 'it has turned out that he/she is writing it':

ჭარ-უნ-ს čar-un-s   ნო-ჭარუ-ე-(ნ) no-č̣aru-e-(n)

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

(26) Imperfect: *ჭარუნდუ čarundu* 'he/she was writing it' – Evidential IV *ნოჭარუედუ noč̣aruedu* 'it turned out that he/she had been writing it':

ჭარ-უნ-დ-უ čar-un-d-u – ნო-ჭარუ-ე-დ-უ no-č̣aru-e-d-u

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

According to Prof. Kobalava, it is not necessary to distinguish separate IV series for the Megrelian forms. Therefore, taking into account the basic stem, these screeves should be viewed as screeves of the I series and be termed as **Present Evidential** and **Past Imperfect Evidential** (Kobalava, 2001,132)**.**

In Laz:

As we have already mentioned, the common name of screeves differing from the common Kartvelian ones is **Non-Inversive Evidential Tenses.** Imperfect evidential forms are based on the imperfect screeves stems, and their formation in the Laz language differs by dialects (Kartozia 2005,102-103); The name of the screeve itself is Former Past Incomplete Evidential: Laz - Vitsian-Arkabian and Atinian-Artashenian dialects:

(27) ჭარუპტუ-დორენ *č̣arupṭu-doren* 'it turned out that he/she had been

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writing it'; ჭარ-უპ-ტ-უ-დორენ *čar-up-ṭ-u-doren*

to write-THM-EXTM-IMP.S3.SG-CLTC:be.PRS.S3.SG Laz – Khofian-Chkhalian dialects:

(28) ჭარუპტ-ერენ *čarupṭ-eren* 'it turned out that he/she had been writing'

ჭარ-უპ-ტ-Ø-ერენ *čar-up-ṭ-Ø-eren*

to write-THM-EXTM-IMP.S3.SG-CLTC:be.PRS.S3.SG

As all the above-mentioned evidential forms of Svan, Megrelian and Laz languages denote imperfect actions, they may be termed as **Evidential Imperect I** and **Evidential Imperfect II.**

The table below represents a comparison of current and new terms (proposed by us) denoting evidential screeves in the Kartvelian languages:

#		Terms denoting evidential tenses	GEO	MEGR	LAZ	SVAN
1	New term	**EVIDENTIAL PERFECT I**	√	√	√	√
	Old term	Evidential I – for all Kartvelian languages; in addition for Svan:				
2	New term	**EVIDENTIAL PERFECT II**	√	√	√	√
	Old term	Evidential II – for all Kartvelian languages; in addition for Svan:				
3	New term	**EVIDENTIAL PERFECT III**	-	-	√	√
	Old term	Conditional-Resultative I – for Svan; Former Aorist				
4	New term	**EVIDENTIAL PERFECT IV**	-	-	√	√
	Old term	Conditional-Resultative II – for Svan; Former				
5	New term	**EVIDENTIAL IMPERFECT I**	-	√	-	√
	Old term	Evidential III, Present Evidential – for Megrelian; Evidential I, Evidential III – for				
6	New term	**EVIDENTIAL IMPERFECT II**	-	√	√	√
	Old term	Evidential IV, Past Imperfect Evidential – for Megrelian; Former Past Incomplete Evidential – for Laz; Evidential II, Evidential IV – for Svan				

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