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Teaching Verb Person Relation to Non-Georgian Speakers

Abstract

At the initial stage of language learning, when all the attention is focused on the use of phrases for communication, a particular approach is needed in order to solve one problem: what dosage of theoretical material of grammar is recommended for learners to be provided with? The issue can't be resolved unilaterally without considering various circumstances. It's necessary to take into consideration subjective and objective circumstances. Namely, the category of language learner (level of language knowledge, duration of learning process...) and motivation to learn the language. In all cases we believe that the initial stage should be directed towards strengthening the competence of communication, more specifically, grammatical material should be provided with the dose required for practical communication. This can be reflected by ready-to-use communicational phrases, exercises, schemes...

One of the difficult problems that affect the language teaching process for non-Georgian speakers is the fact of understanding and realizing various forms of the Georgian verb, especially the ones that show person relation, person combinations, etc. and using them in communication. As a result of polypersonalism of the Georgian verb, it's difficult for a non-Georgian speaker who is used to using a completely different system of language to perceive grammatical persons indicated in the Georgian verb, to use them in the form of verbal expressions and to express their thoughts in the right way. For example, the language learner may say: "Tsigni **megobartan** gaugzavnet, tu sheidzleba!" instead of the proposal: "tsigni **megobars** gaugzavnet, tu sheidzleba!" (send the book to a friend). In this sentence the person relation is expressed by the word with **-tan** suffix, which is characteristic to languages having different systems (Turkish, English...).

What method should we use in order to make the beginner language learner better understand verb person relation? We think that the verbs that are related to persons should be selected by means of active forms, necessary for simple communication, such as: **gaketeba (to make)** (vuketeb (I am making it to him/her) – miketeb (He is making it to me)...), **darekva (to call)** (girekav (I'm calling you) – mirekav (you're calling me)...). Furthermore, we can introduce the verbs of expressing hither-thither orientation: **mitsera-motsera** (write to him – write back to me) (vtser – mtsers...) (I write to him – he writes back), **mitsema-motsema** (give it – give it back) (vadzlev – madzlevs...) (I give it to him – he gives it back)... as well as: "speech of circle" **velaparakebi – melaparakeba** (I talk to him – he talks to me), **veubnebi – meubneba** (I say it to him – he says it to me)... with auxiliary verbs **mikvarhar** (I love you), **vukvarvar** (He loves me)... These verbs should only be provided to the learner at the present time, by means of phrases.

After studying the main tenses of the verb, we can introduce the table of verb person combination of active usage, including three basic tenses. Thus, according to levels of language knowledge in language learning process, we provide learners with verbal and non-verbal means of the scheme of person combinations at first, then – ready-to-use phrases easy to perceive and memorize and later, at the last stage of the study, according to verb groups, we move to a systematic study, which involves studying different types of verbs expressing person relation by means of tables.

Key words: *Communication, method, phrases, person, combination*

Introduction

At the starting level of language learning, when all the attention is focused on the use of phrases for communication, a particular approach is needed to solve one problem: what dosage of theoretical material of grammar is recommended to provide the learners with? The issue couldn't be resolved unilaterally, without considering various circumstances. It's necessary to take into consideration subjective and objective

circumstances. Namely, the category of language learner (level of language knowledge, duration of learning process...) and motivation to learn the language. In all cases we believe that the starting level should be directed towards strengthening the competence of communication, more specifically, grammatical material should be provided with the dose required for practical communication. As pointed out, “the main reason for teaching the second language is to understand, to give the content and to express an opinion, so, knowing lexical grammatical structures of the second language should not be the end in itself, but it should serve the development of communicative skills” (<http://mastsavlebeli.ge/?p=3707>). According to the given approach, during our research, we use the communicative method of learning, which “implies mainly using the system of communicative activities that are by themselves based on grammatical legitimacy” and we depend on the theory and practice of diathesis by D. Meliqishvili. We obviously take into consideration, that interactive principles of learning will make the learners be more active and take part in a communicative system, which involves working in couples and in groups. We think that the aim will be reached by verbal and non-verbal means, which should be reflected by ready-to-use communicational phrases, dialogues, different types of exercises suitable for a specific communicational situation, schemes and tables.

The Main part

One of the major problems that affects the language teaching process for non-Georgian speakers is that of understanding and realizing various forms of the Georgian verb, especially the ones that show person relation, person combinations, etc. and using them in communication.

According to the polypersonalism of the Georgian verb, some objective persons can be simultaneously related to the subjective person of the verb. A. Shanidze distinguishes possible and impossible combinations of the verb persons, on the basis of which he mentions the number of possible forms. In the given number, the scientist excludes the repeated (similar) forms: “the number of unrepeated forms in one screeve of the verb with two persons (except the imperative) is about 18 (nine – of subjective in the singular and nine – of subjective in the plural), but sometimes there can be more than that: 19, 20, 21 and even 22! It depends on the ability of this or that verb to give unrepeated forms” (Shanidze, 1980: 228). Verb personality doesn’t influence the number of possible persons, it doesn’t matter if the verb takes two persons or three. As A. Shanidze explains, in the verb with three persons “whatever combination we take of these three persons, from the two objectives, one will definitely be the third in the set, this third objective person is usually direct, which has no mark, but even if it had, the person is unchanged and therefore it cannot affect the number of markers – the difference in forms here depends only on the relationship between the subjective and indirect-objective persons and their change in number” (thereby, 229).

A. Shanidze has given all these in his table of combinations, where there is evidence, that it is impossible to combine I person with the I and II person with the second (thereby, 234).

As it is pointed out by D. Meliqishvili “Stative verbs cannot be merged with more than two persons and cannot express them either. Dynamic can take two, three and sometimes four persons as well. But it can express only two of them with personal markers and by the one with vowel prefix – correlation with the third person m-khatav-s is me (he draws me), m-i-khatav-s is me mas (draws he it to me), da-m-i-tchir-a man me (he caught me), da-m-i-tchir-a man me is (he caught it to me)...“ (Meliqishvili, 2014: 129). In his opinion, the main function of vowel prefixes **a, e, i, u** to express the verb person correlation, is an indication of the existence of the objective person in the verb. From **a, e, i, u** vowel prefixes, **i** is considered as retreatment formant by B. Jorbenadze (**tsers – i-tsers, aketebis – i-ketebis...**), **a, e, u** prefixes are called the prefixes pointing to the indirect objective person (Jorbenadze, 1983: 209).

D. Meliqishvili, with the help of the tables, shows us, that in case of **S₁O₂** and **S₂O₁** combinations there is the objective person marker presented in the verb. But in case of **S₃O₁**, **S₃O₂** and **S₃O₃** combinations, it is the possibility of marking – both persons **L**-subject and **L**-object, because “the marker of **L**-S₃ is a suffix and in all other cases markers are prefixes. At this point, it’s easy to notice that the actant in narrative (agent subject of

active verb) is expressed by v-set marks (**L-S₁ – 3-**, **L-S₂ – Ø**, **L-S₃ – -s, -s, -o**); actant in dative **m**-set marks (**O₁ – m-**, **O₂ – g-**, **O₃ – h-, s-, Ø**); actant in nominative case is expressed by the mark of both sets“ (Meliqishvili, 102). According to this rule, person combinations will be expressed by markers like the following: **g**-tser me shen (**S₁O₂**) (I am writing to you), **m**-tser shen me (**S₂O₁**) (you are writing to me), **m**-tser-s is me (he is writing to me); (**S₃O₁**), **g**-tser-s is shen (**S₃O₂**) (he is writing to you) and **s**-tser-s is mas (he is writing to her) (**S₃O₃**).

It's difficult for non-Georgian speakers, having completely different system of language to perceive and understand the number of persons merged with the verb, to express them in a verb form and give a clear opinion. For example a language learner may say: “**gamigzavne** tserili!” (send a letter for me) instead of the proposal “**gamomigzavne** tserili!”(send me a letter) – in this proposal the **ga**-prefix of hither orientation is used instead of **gamo**-prefix of thither orientation. In this case the addressee is the one who asks for sending the letter for him/her. This is the **S₁** person. The language learner is focused on this person and expresses this relation by the verbal form with **i**-prefix; in other cases the language learner may say: “Tsigni **megobartan** gaugzavnet, tu sheidzleba!” instead of the proposal: “tsigni **megobars** gaugzavnet, tu sheidzleba!” (send the book to a friend). In this sentence the person relation is expressed by the word with **-tan** suffix, which is characteristic to languages having different systems (Turkish, English...).

What method should we use in order to make the beginner language learner better understand the verb person relationship? We think that the verbs that are related to persons should be selected by means of active forms, necessary for simple communication, such as: **gaketeba (to make)** (vuketeb (I am making it to him/her) – miketebs (He is making it to me)...), **darekva (to call)** (girekav (I'm calling you) – mirekav (you're calling me)...). For a better explanation and understanding of these verbs, the constructions with markers can help: **miketebs is me mas (she is making it to me)** (miketebs deda me satchmels) (mother is making dinner to me) = **aketebs is mas chemtvis (she is making it for me)** (aketebs deda chemtvis satchmels) (mother is making dinner for me); **mirekavs is me** (she is calling me) (mirekavs megobari me) (a friend is calling me) = **rekavs is chemtan** (she is calling me) (rekavs megobari chemtan) (a friend is calling me)...

I – Verb + prepositional constructions:

miketebs is me mas (she is making it to me) miketebs deda me satchmels (mother is making dinner to me)

mirekavs is me (she is calling me) mirekavs megobari me (a friend is calling me) = **rekavs is chemtan** (she is calling me) rekavs megobari chemtan (a friend is calling me)...

Futhermore, we can introduce the verbs of expressing hither-thither orientation, as well as: “speech circle” and with auxiliary verbs **mikvarkhar** (I love you), **vukvarvar** (He loves me)... These verbs should only be provided to the learner in the present form, by means of phrases. For example, *me megobars vurekav* (I am calling a friend); *deda koveldghe mirekavs...* (Mum calls every day)... *me mshoblebs tserils vtser* (I write a letter to my parent); *mama internetshi mtsers* (Dad writes to me in the internet)... *mdzghols tankhas vazlev* (I give some money to the driver); *gamkidveli purs madzlevs* (The shop assistant gives me some bread)... *mezobeli koveltvis kartulad melaparakeba* (My neighbour always talks to me in Georgian); *me dzalian mikvarkhart* (I love you very much)... *me mas dzalian vukvarvar* (he loves me very much)...

Therefore, at this stage of language learning, when we are not yet in the grammar field and we try to focus learner's attention on person relations and make him memorize the relevant forms only for communicative purpose, we bring:

II – Verbs of various forms and semantics:

a) The verbs of expressing hither-thither orientation: **mitsera-motsera** (write to – write from) (vtser – mtsers...) (I write to him – he writes back), **mitsema-motsema** (give it – give it back) (vazlev – madzlevs...) (I give it to him – he gives it back)...

b) Verbs of the “speech circle”: **velaparakebi – melaparakeba** (I talk to him – he talks to me), **veubnebi – meubneba** (I say it to him – he says it to me)...

We may distinguish auxiliary verb forms as well: **mikvarkhar** (I love you), **vukvarvar** (he loves me).

At this stage of the language learning process, it's necessary to use every form of teaching in order to make it easy to perceive and understand the verbs expressing person relation. We mean: listening, speaking, writing,

reading. Appropriate material should be included at each level of studying, phrases, verbs ... At first they should listen to the given material, then repeat it, read it, write it and make a dialogue.

a) Dialogue, in which the verbs expressing person relations should be used. Then we will take similar dialogues or give them gap-filling exercises in order to use person relation correctly.

b) Working on the text: We will choose the text, in which the **relative** verbs will be given. Then they should copy out such kind of verbs.

Thus, at the starting level, the language learner will memorize such kind of verb forms by using verb person combinations several times in reading texts and other type of materials.

At the next (III) level, attention will be paid to the following, which person of the verb is related to which person and show this by means of the table of person combination. We have already mentioned the possibility-impossibility of the verb person combinations by A. Shanidze. We will make a simple table with the help of this one, in which only subject and object persons will be presented:

Table 1.

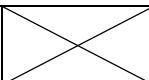
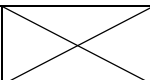
Person		objective					
		I	you	He/she Him/her	we	you	them/they
subjective	Me (I)	X			X		
	Shen (you)		X			X	
	Is (he/she) Mas (Him/her)						
	Chven (we/us)	X			X		
	Tqven (you)		X			X	
	Isini/ mat (they/them)						
Number of ob. person		singular			plural		

Note: The cells of impossible combinations are crossed out in the table.

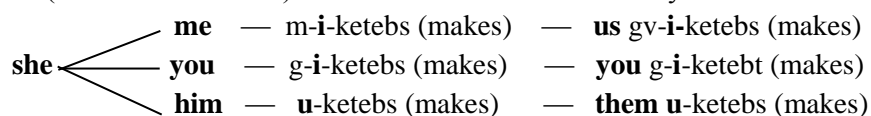
After paying attention to the possibility-impossibility of verb person combinations, we will show another table to the language learner, in which one of the verb person combinations will be given in the form of present tense. Repeated form will be marked by the star.

Table 2.

Person		objective					
		I	you	Him/her	us	you	them
subjective	I	X	gtser (write to)	gtser (write to)	X	*gtsert (write to)	*vtser (write to)
	you	mtser (write to)	X	stser (write to)	gvtser (write to)	X	*stser (write to)
	He/she	mtsers (writes to)	gtsers (writes to)	stsers (writes to)	gvtsters (writes to)	*gtsert (writes to)	*ststers (writes to)
	we	X	gtsert (write to)	vtsert (write to)	X	*gtsert (write to)	*vtsert (write to)

	you	mtsert (write to)		stsert (write to)	gvtsert (write to)		*tsert (write to)
	they	mtseren (write to)	gtseren (write to)	stseren (write to)	gvtseren (write to)	*gtseren (write to)	*stseren (write to)
Number of ob. person	singular				plural		

After studying the main forms of the verb we slowly give learners verb combination tables of past and future. At the same time his attention should be paid to the function of the vowel prefix. We take one verb for example: **m-i-keteb**s is me mas (she makes it to me), **g-i-keteb**s is shen mas (she makes it to you), **u-keteb**s is mas mas (she makes it to him)... We will show this material by the scheme:



After working on relevant material, at this stage we may show the verb person combination table of active use to the language learner, in which there will be given only three basic tenses.

Conclusion

Thus, in the process of language learning, according to the level of knowledge, we give the ready phrases to perceive and memorize, then we give the scheme of person combination by verbal and non-verbal means and later, according to verb groups, we get on more systemic teaching, which means to study various types of verbs expressing person relation by means of tables.

So, when we teach the verb person combinations, a language learner's attention should be focused on the following: a) possibility-impossibility of the verb person, b) correlative markers of the person (person marks and vowel prefixes); c) distinguishing marks of formal expressing of the person. For example, number: **gtser me shen** (I am writing to you) – **gtsert me tqven** (I am writing to you (as many of you))... d) similar forms (coinciding forms): **vtser me mas** (I am writing to him) – **vtser me mat** (I am writing to them); **gtsert me tqven** (I am writing to you) – **gtsert chven shen** (we are writing to you)...

Hereby, the verbal and nonverbal means should be used in the process of learning the verb person relation, which will make it easy for language learner to analyze one of the hardest issues of Georgian language and use it in communication.

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