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On Some Issues of Verbal Inflection: At the Origins of the Georgian Perfect

The merging of the notions of ‘having,’ ‘state’ and ‘belonging’ and the expression of complex temporal (Past - Present) and functional relationships have been assumed as a universal principle for the formation of perfect (Benveniste 1966).

This principle is encoded in the following way in Georgian: the meaning of state was conveyed by a stative verb form, the meaning of possession – by an objective version form, eventually resulting in a Dative construction of verbal forms in Series III (Melikishvili 1998: 130-131).

The paper discusses some aspects of verbal inflection in Georgian, specifically, inflection of some stative verbs and Series III forms as a historical basis for the formation of Georgian perfect.

With various interpretations, the following approach has been accepted in Georgian linguistics literature: Resultative 1 forms of active verbs are derived from of Present forms of stative verbs. Some scholars assume that Series III forms have emerged as a result of inversion of those of Present, Aorist Indicative, and Conjunctive II of relative (Objective Version) verbs (Melikishvili 2001; 2014). Some assume that Resultative 1 applies only the pattern of a stative verb (Arabuli 1984). Other scholars neglect the occurrence of inversion both in stative Present and Series III forms, believing that the traditional opposition “subject person” – “object person” should be substituted by another one: “obligatory person” – “non-obligatory person” (Oniani 1978); “+volitional person” – “-volitional person” (Asatiani 1998), “agentive action” – “resultative, unseen, non-topical action,” “initiating person” – “performing person” (Uturgaidze 2002).

In our opinion, the formations of one part of stative verbs and of Resultative I of actives are based upon a single principle (**sceria/sceries; damiceria/damiceries**). The suffix **-ia**, occurring in stative verbs of contemporary Georgian (**mšia, mcquria... hkidia, gdia**), is a homogeneous (of one and the same origin) entity:

In the first case, it is a remainder of the desinence **-i-an** (3rd person plural of Imperfective II) where the **-i** is an Imperfective marker, and the **-an** is a Plural S3 marker: **hrkv-i-an > hrkvia, ešin-i-an > ešinia, rcxven-i-an > rcxvenia** (similarly as **s vevia, scadia, scquria, scalia**, etc.)

- In the second case, the **-ia** is a combination of the remainder of the suffix **-ev** (**-ev > -iv > -i**) and of the Aorist S3 marker (**-a**): **-eva > -iva > -ia**; in Old Georgian, a combination of the remainder of the **-ev** and S3 Plural marker (**-es**): **-ev-es > iv-es > -i-es** (**hg-i-es, u-ṗqr-i-es**, etc.)

Both in stative verbs and in Resultative 1, Type 1 formation has been a well known fact and acknowledged in scholarly literature (Shanidze 1973; Shinjiashvili 1972; Baramidze 2000;

Sukhishvili 1976). As for Type 2 formation, it is assumed for the verbs kind of **hgies** in Present and for actives in Resultative 1 (Beridze 1994; 2009).

Type 1 (**hrkvian**) implies an outcome of an continuous, active action performed by a 3rd impersonal person; Type 2 (**hgies**) implies an outcome of an active (causal), momentous action. In my opinion, the latter type should be associated with the forms like **hrcmena** and **asmies**, also occurring in earlier texts in the stative function, in that of Plu-Aorist, assuming a lost 3rd impersonal person in their construction (Baramidze 2000).

Stative verbs of both the **hrkvian** and **hgies** types represent an outcome of an active action necessarily implying:

- 3rd impersonal person
- Past Tense
- Activeness / Causativity of action

The aforementioned components attach a notion of resultativeness to stative verbs of the said groups, while the introduction of the semantics of possession by means of version prefixes transforms them into true perfect forms in Series III.

Naturally enough, the discussion sets forth the problem of inversion in the forms in question. The formation of Type **hrkvian** seems to be more transparent, overtly demonstrating “a gradation” path of an active form into a stative: loss of S3 was sufficient, on the one hand, for active forms of Series II to lose their reference to the past and to transfer to the present, and, on the other, to enhance the modality of volition thus forming screeves of a new Series. Essentially, in none of the instances has inversion (functional shift of persons markers) has occurred; however, a shift of functions of personal markers has been salient, having been caused by the said change (loss of the 3rd person) and the semantic reinterpretation.

The paper will deal with these and other problems of the perfectivization of active forms.

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