Comparative Analysis of the Problem of Tense in Georgian and Turkish Languages

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Abstract

Georgian verb is rich in grammatical categories, however, some of these categories are the subject of debate, and category of time is one of these. According to some linguists, tense is one of the primary categories of the Georgian verb. It is known that a grammatical category must be expressed by an appropriate affix; however, Georgian verbs do not possess such. It is one of the elements of tense rows, i.e. it is expressed by one of the rows to which an appropriate question sign (?) is added. The subject of our interest is whether the tense is a grammatical or a semantic category in Georgian, and what answer we will obtain by comparing Georgian-Turkish linguistic data with one another.

The issue of grammatical tense is not clear in Turkish linguistic scholarly literature, either. According to the commonly accepted view in Turkish scientific literature, there are four grammatical tenses in literary Turkish language, however, some linguists divide past tense into two parts:

Simple tenses in Turkish are divided into five forms and,unlike Georgian, all Turkish grammatical tenses have their own markers: 1. Present-indefinite **(-yor)**: "Kızım sana söylü**yor**um,gelinim sen işit" –"I am appealing to my daughter, so may my bride hear my words"; 2. Future-affirmative **(- acak, -ecek)**: "Ben bu işi yap**acağı**m" –"I will definitely do this"; 3. present-future **(-r, -ar, -er, -ır, -ir, -ur, -ür)** "Son gülen – iyi gül**er**"–"He, who laughs the last, laughs the best"; 4. Future-outcome **(-mış⁴)**, Turkish: "Sevgisiz doğmuşsun, sevgisiz büyü**müş**sün" –"You were born without compassion and you have grown without it as well"; 5. Past-affirmative **(-dı⁴)**, Turkish: "Diyeceklerini unut**tu**, hiçbir şey söyleyeme**di**"–"He forgot what he was going to say, so he could not say anything". With these tense markers we can easily understand in which form a particular verb was used.

Accordingly, tense is a clearly expressed grammatical category in Turkish: each tense has its own marker. This very point makes it clear for Turkish language learners to distinguish the tense form in which the particular verb is. The same cannot be said about foreigners, namely,about the Turks learning Georgian. Regarding the above-mentioned point,the following can be suggested: when studying the Georgian language, foreigners should pay attention to the prefixes with which they can express the future tense by present indefinite, in all other cases attention should be paid to the semantics, i.e. the context.

The comparison of Georgian-Turkish linguistic data reveals difference which causes difficulty in comprehending the tense category in Georgian verbs. Indeed, in Georgian the tense category has the corresponding semantics and the function of tense in general, but is not expressed formally. Accordingly, we should consider the viewpoint of the scientists claiming that tense is a semantic category rather than grammatical one.
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Keywords: Tense, Turkish, Georgian, Verbs, Category

Introduction

Georgian language is distinguished among world languages as an ancient language with a structural diversity, mainly determined by the verb. It is rich in grammatical categories, however,there are different opinions on some categories; the category of tense is one of these: "none of other grammatical categories are as complex as the problem of grammatical tense"(Roberts, 1954, p. 131).

According to some scholars, tense is one of the basic categories ofthe Georgian verb. Languages differ in the number of sub-categories within a category (e.g. number of tenses in Georgian and Turkish). Both for linguistic issues and teaching

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purposes it is important to know whether tense is a grammatical or a semantic category in the Georgian language and what the answer will be with the consideration of Georgian -Turkish comparative data.

A grammatical category is defined as a system of grammatical forms contrastedto each other. In contemporary linguistics the term "grammatical category" is applied with different meanings. Sometimes, unlike a lexical category, it refersonlytothe "class" or "group" of the units with the same function, with similar grammatical meaning (case, person, number, time, aspect, etc.) or a group of elements, revealed in the description of particular languages (Kartuli Ena, 2008: 122).

The notion of time was the topic of discussion even in ancient philosophy. Later tense became the focus of scholars' attention. Linguists are still trying to have a clear perception of the time notion. Real time and grammatical time are differentiated from each other. The former expresses real time, where neither the beginning nor the ending is seen. The latter has been inculcated in language as grammatical time. According to traditional viewpoints,grammatical tense is the form of the verb, denoting the conformity between the moments of activity and speaking.

I. The Case of Simple Tenses in the Georgian Language

According to G. Gogolashvili, tense is one of the most complex and debatable categories not only in Georgian linguistics, but in general. It is not accidental, that in practical and sometimes even in scholarly grammars, the unit for conjugation and tense are equal;there are as many tenses as units for conjugation (Gogolashvili, 2010, p. 99).

For instance, Niko Marr enumeratesthe following tenses: present, past indefinite, *natvriti, aoristi*, subjunctive (the same as future), past perfect, *tsinaretsarsuli*, and past subjunctive (Marr, 1925: 142). According to Arnold-Chikobava, "in new Georgian we have one present, one future and four past tenses:Indefinite or Continuous: was doing, building, working… Past Basic or Past Interrupted: did, built, worked…*Pirveliturmeobiti: uketebia, ishenebia, ushromia…Turmeobitimeore: Eketebina, eshenebina, eshroma…* (Chikobava, 1952, p. 274).

It is true, that tense in Georgian, as the grammatical category of the verb, has no grammatical marker, but some scholars believe that this is supplemented by a prefix, sometimes by the marker or root of the row; for example, write/ am writing: *vtser* (present) – will write: *da-vtser* (future). In these examples present and futureare differentiated by the prefix (Kekelia, Davitiani, 1981, p. 179).

In connection with such an unusual way to express tense, A. Shanidze mentions, that "in special literature the problem of grammatical tense is not correctly put and solved. In general,the category of tense is mixed with one of the categories of the row (mode *ortanamdevroba*) or with the row itself and this mixture, reflecting the feeble state of the study

of general linguistic issue in the structural part of the language, has been transferred to Georgian soil. It is necessary and essential, to separate the category of tense from other categories and put it in its place and the others - to their place (Shanidze, 1973, p. 201). According to Shanidze,there can only be three tenses: present, past and future.

The variousperception of tense in the languages of various types, naturally, creates problems,when studying a foreign language. This determines our interest in the issue of expressing the basic tenses of the verb. Currently we will analyze the problem, based on Georgian-Turkish material. We aim to find specific reasons for problems and the ways to solve them.

In the first place, we regard the issue of grammatical tense according to Georgian material.

The Georgian language is structurally interesting and diverse, which is basically determined by the verb. It is rich in grammatical categories; however,some categories arouse different viewpoints. Such is the category of tense. In the Georgian language no other grammatical category is as complicated as grammatical tense.

It should be mentioned, that the category of tense is one of the most difficult and debatablecategories in general and particularly in Georgian linguistics. Some scholars are of the opinion that tense is one of the basic categories of Georgian verb.

Consideration of tense as a morphological category in Georgian linguistic literature put forward the issue of seeking the grammatical marker of this category, but as A. Shanidze mentions, tense has no such marker. It is one of the elements of the row i.e. in terms of content it is expressed by the form of one of the rows, to which appropriate question can be put.

Arn. Chikobava, V. Topuriaand others consider the affixes **-d, -e, -in, -i**and othersas tense markers. As it is known, a grammatical category should be expressed by an appropriate affix. "Morphological meaning without an affix is determined syntactically; by sentence construction, i.e. the meaning encompasses the entire model of verb. For example, the morphological meaning of tense is the meaning of the verb root. In the analysis of verb forms we distinguish tense formants (for uninterrupted **–d, -od,** interrupted **–e**), but this does not mean, that these formants, per se, express tense. Tense can be expressed by roots, e.g. **vtser** (write/ am writing) is present (Ertelishvili, 1965, p.178-179).

With the consideration of the viewpoints expressed in scholarly literature and basing on his researches, G. Gogolashvili concludes: The tense formant affixes (**-d, -od, -e, -in, -i**) cannot be considered as the markers of this category, because each of these have totally different functions (of the row, family, causative, etc.). Due to this, tense in Georgian is not a morphologicalform. It is only a semantic category. Tense meaning is variable within a row and cannot be elicitedwithout context. Tense is expressed by context and intonation (Gogolashvili, 2010 p. 103-105).

It is a fact that tense semantics and function exist in

the Georgian language,but it is not formallyexpressed. Correspondingly, here is a question: is tense a grammatical or a semantic category?Arn. Chikobavaindicates to this in his work of later period: "Tense, mode and modal categories approximated to mode (*tanaoba,reciprocal,involuntariness, and intension...*) seem to be basically of semantic-stylisticnature" (Chikobava, 1979, p. 165). B. Jorbenadzeconsiders tense and mode as semantic categories. In his opinion,semantic categories are expressed by means of special morphological (formal) means, but theycan also be expressed non-morphologically, by description, lexically or by context. Alsoother means (i.e. intonation) are used."Semantic features can be changed as a result of form, context changes" (Jorbenadze, 1984, p. 27). In Gogolashvili's opinion, too, tense and mode are semantic categories expressed by context and intonation. Other elements of row such as *gzisoba*,act, and sequence can also be considered assemantic category (Gogolashvili, 2010, p. 132).

Thus, the semantics of grammatical tense exists in the Georgian language, but it is not marked, or is not expressed by a tense marker. In our opinion, this is one of the reasons for foreigners to have problems when studying the Georgian language. Besides, the perception of tense forms is complicated by other peculiarities, such as:

1.   Verbs of subjective and objective are distinguished in the Georgian language. Subjective are the verbs with prefix **–v**: *I write/am writing/do/am doing/ work/am working: v-tser, v-aketeb, v-mushaob* (vis the markeroffirst person subjective), objective are verbs with prefix –m: love/like/am sleepy: *m-iqvars, m-omtsons, m-edzineba* (mis the marker of first person objective).

In the formation of subjective verbs the models with the following endings are created:

-i: lie/am lying/ will lie / was lyingvtsevar-vitsvebi-vitseki…

-av: call/am calling/called:vrekav-davrekav-davreke…

-am: tie/am tying /will tie/ tied:vabam-davabam-davabi…

-eb: prepare/am preparing/will prepare / prepared: vamzadeb - movamzadev - movamzade …

Mention should be made of the models with zero endings:

Write/am writing/wrote/will write:**Vtser-davtser-davtsere**

Eat/ am eating/will eat/ate:**Vcham-shevcham-shevchame…**

In the verbs with zero ending the distinctionbetween the present and the future is expressed by a prefix.

Georgian basic tenses of these models are more easily understandable for foreigners studying the language.

II. The Case of Simple tenses in the Turkish Language

As for the afore-mentioned models, these create difficulty, as proceeding from the nature of the mother-tongue:a Turk studying the Georgian languageseeks for a common model (in Turkish the marker of present tense is „-yor", used to express the present tense of any verb: writes (yaz-ıyor),comes (gel-iyor),sees (bak-ıyor),speaks (konuş-uyor)... When translating Turkish verb forms into Georgian it is seen that in common for the given four forms common is only the marker of the third person –s(no marker for common tense). This is why it is difficult for him to understand the basic tenses of various models.

Another problem is that in the Georgian language one verb may be both subjective and objective, for example, love:

Infinitive	Present	Future	Past
siqvaruli	*miqvars*	*shemiqvardeba*	*shemiqvarda*
	viqvareb	*sheviqvareb*	*sheviqvare*

2. In terms of tense formation,many problems arise with peculiar verbs, particularly those with changeable roots:

• The infinitive and tense forms of the verb are different, e.g., to be:qopna: var-viknebi-viqavi; to go:tsasvla: mivdivar-tsaval-tsavedi; to drink:daleva: -vsvam-davlev-davlie.

• Verbs with changeable roots in singular-plural: to sit: *jdoma: -vzivar / vskhedvart - davjdebi / davskhdebit - davjeki/davskhedit…*

• Verbs expressing politeness: to come: mosvla-modis/mobrdzandeba-mova/mobrdzandeba-movida/mobrdzanda…

• Verbs expressing momentary-continuous actions: to see: *naxva /vnakhav /vnakhulob - vnakhav - vnakhe ;to* take: *vigheb / vghebulob - avigheb - avighe ; vigeb/ vgebulob - gavigeb -gavige …*

• Verbs with and without prefixes:

• Prefix changes semantics: *ageba- gageba - dageba -mogeba - tsageba …*

To build :*Ageba: agebs-aagebs-aago*

To understand:*Gageba:* igebs-gaigebs-gaigo

To lay:*Dageba:* agebs-daagebs-daago

To win:*Mogeba:* igebs-migebs-moigo

To lose:*Tsageba:* agebs-tsaagebs-tsaago….

• Tense forms (present-future) coincide:

a) Verbs without prefix: to drink a toast in honour of: *dghegrdzeloba: vadghegrdzeleb - vadghegrdzeleb - vadghegrdzele; to have supper: vakhshmoba: vavakhs*

hmeb - vavakhshmeb - vavakhshme; to fish: tevzaoba: vatevzaveb - vatevzaveb - vatevzave…

b) Verbs with prefix: to compensate:aghdgena: agh-vadgen-aghvadgen-aghvadgine, to eradicate: aghmop-khvra: aghmovpkhvri-aghmovpkhvri-aghmovpkhveri, to continue / prolong: gangrdzoba: ganvagrdzob-ganvagrdzob-ganvagrdze…

The forms also coincide with the verbs to which a prefix can be added; e.g. to eat: chama: vcham-vchame;to teach:stsavleba:vastsavli-vastsavle… compare with vcham-shevcham, vastsavli-shevastsavli…

Sometimes the present form with a prefix is used to form the future tense: to go/leave:tsasvla-mivdivar-mivdivar-tsavedi…

• Tense forms (present-future) are different. Distinction is encountered without a prefix: to live: sitsotskhle: vtsotskhlob-vitsotskhleb-vitsotskhle andtskhovreba: vtskhovrob-vtskhovrob, vitskhovreb-vitskhovre;to learn:stsavla: vstsavlob, vistsavli-vistsavle...

• Forms denoting intensity with da prefix: ga-/da: to wash:retskhva-gavretskhe/davretskhe…

The ways for solving the problems in the study of Georgian language are as follows:

1. Attention should be paid to the prefix where it can switch the present form to the future, in other cases –to semantics (or context) and intonation;

2. It is necessary to get familiarized with the semantic nuances of the prefix;

3. It is necessary to study the group of verbs used without prefixes;

4. The models of the verbs with subjective structure should be processed well;

5. For the verbs of objective structure considered should be the semantic aspect, namely unintentional moment:that the activity takes place unintentionally (magviandeba/I am being late) or intentionally (vigvianeb/I am late);

6 . Consecutive explanation and study of the peculiarities of Georgian verb is necessary.

The problem of the tense category is not fully clear in Turkish linguistic literature,either. In this connection there is a diversity of viewpoints. For instance, contemporary Turkish scholar A. Benzer notes that:"There is no complete explanation and deep study of tense, aspect and mode categories not only in Turkish, but other languages of the world either. In everyday spoken language we apply the forms showing the conformity of act moment with the moment of speaking. This reality is expressed by means of the signs added to the verb root" (Benzer, 2008: 69).

In this regard thesituation is different in Turkish linguistic literature. As mentioned above,in the Turkish language each grammatical tense has its own sign: 1. Present-definite (-yor): "Ben, şu anda ders çalışıyorum" – "I am studying at this moment". 2. Future-emphatic (-acak, -ecek): "Tatilde Antalya'ya gideceğiz" – "We will go to Antalia for vacations" .

3. Present-Future (-r, -ar, -er, -ır, -ir, -ur, -ür) :"Sabreden kazanır" – "The patient wins". 4. Past-Consequential (-mış4): Gelin babasına:"Hem ağlarım, hem giderim" demiş "The girl has told her father: I am weeping and will go"; 5. Past-Categorical (-dı4): "Diyeceklerini unuttu, hiçbir şey söyleyemedi"- "He forgot what he wanted, so he could not say anything". With the markers of the afore-mentioned tense we can easily understand in which tense the verb has been used.

Alongside the elements of mode and tense,theelements of person and number are also present in the Turkish language conjugation. Hence, the relation of the action, expressed by the verb, to tense and person is possible only by means of person markers. These show who performs the action indicated by the verb (Korkmaz, 2009, p. 571).

It is difficult for a Georgian studying the Turkish language to understand a completely different system of expressing the grammatical tense. The picture is as follows:

1. When adding the present tense marker, the rule is: when the verb root ends in a vowel, the tense marker–yor is directly added to the root; e.g.Oku-yor- is reading; but when the verb root ends in a consonant, vowels -i,-ı,-ü,-u are inserted, according to the vowel harmony system characteristic of the Turkish language; for instance al-ı-yor – takes, ver-i-yor – gives, gör-ü-yor- sees, konuş-u-yor- speaks....Insertion of these vowels determines the difficultiesamong the Georgian students studying the Turkish language;they often use the marker without a vowel or incorrectly add a vowel.

2. It is hard to understand for a Georgian, as in the Georgian language there is no indefinite tense. Indefinite tense is peculiar, unlike other tenses, more precisely in the Turkish language the markers of this tense differ according to the verb root: a) vowel root -r:de-r (will say), anla-r (will understand), başla-r – (will begin)...; b) consonant root -ir/-ır/-ur/-ür: inan-ır (will belive), göster-ir (will show), çalış-ır (will work)… c) -ar/-ermarkersareadded to a single-syllable root:at-ar (will banish), dön-er(will return), döv-er (beats), yaz-ar (will write)… Besides these peculiarities, some single-syllableroot verbs (there are thirteen such verbs in the Turkish language) do not take the markers-ar/-er, butinstead they take the markerscharacteristic ofconsonant-root verbs ir/-ır/-ur/-ür:al-ır (will take),ver-ir (will give),gel-ir (will come), gör-ür (will see), etc.

3. In the contemporary Turkish language the morphological means for expressing person and number are:

a) Pronoun suffixes expressing being, used inmişli geçmiş zaman (analogous topirveli turmeobiti),present, future, indefinite tense:

SingularPlural

I - **(y)ım**[(4)]	I - **(y) ız**[(4)]
II -**sın**[(4)]	II – **smiz**[(4)]
III –	III -**lar, -ler**

Pronoun suffixes expressing indivisible possession, used in past tense:

I-**m**   I- **k**
II-**n**   II- **nız**[(4)]
III –   III-**ları, -leri**

(Korkmaz, 2009, p. 571-572; Ergin, 2009,p. 283; Kvantaliani&Janshia, 2009, p. 121).

Georgians studying the Turkish language have difficulty in adding person and number markers, because in Turkish these markers undergo changes according to the final vowel in the root, which is absolutely strange for the Georgian language. For instance, in the verb **al-ı-yor-uz** (I take) **-uz** is a person marker, but in the verb al-ır-ız (I will take)the personal marker is **–iz**. Another problem is the latter case; there is possessive pronoun in Georgian, but the absence of pronoun suffixcauses big problems; for example, in the verb form**al-dı-k** (we took)-k is the first person marker of past tense plural.

NodarJanashiaconsiders that,when characterizingpersonal forms of Turkish verbs,action and process should be distinguished. The process is expressed by adding the morphemes with aspect semantics to the verb root (Janshia, 1998, p. 120).

Thus, in the Turkish language tense is a more clearly expressed (marked) grammatical category than in Georgian: each tense has its own marker. This facilitates for Turkish language learners to distinguish the tense, however,in the process of study there still are problems, which we attempted to show above. In our opinion, these can be overcome in the following way:

1. In Turkish grammar the harmonic system of vowels is significant for adding amarker, this is why,in order to avoid the problem, it is necessary to have a good comprehension of Turkish vowel harmonic system;

2. In order to understand the indefinite tense,a learner should distinguish the signs of vowel- and consonant-endingone-syllable roots and exceptional cases.Besides, when teaching Turkish, the indefinite tense should be taught after other tenses, because this tense has most peculiarities;

3. When adding person markers to a verb, one should have good knowledge of vowel harmonic system, and of possessive pronoun markers, when adding pronoun suffixes.

III. Conclusion

In our opinion,tense is a clearer expressed grammatical category in Turkish than in Georgian: each tense has its own marker, which facilitatesto distinguish,in which tense the verb is. This cannot be said toa foreigner studying Georgian, particularly a Turk. At this stage we can say that,when studying the Georgian language,attention should be paid to the verb prefix in the cases where it can switch the present tense form to the future, in other cases attention should be paid to se-

mantics or context.

We think that the advancement of the problems observed by us when teaching basic tenses of Georgian and Turkish languages, and consideration of the suggested ways to deal with them will facilitate the study of the aforementioned problems in learning/teaching both languages.

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