

Meaning resides in fully inflected forms: The Georgian “unwillingness” construction¹

Alice C. Harris
University of Massachusetts Amherst
acharris@linguist.umass.edu

1. Introduction

Subject and object agreement on the verb are generally highly regular in Georgian, if a bit complex. But in an obscure corner of the grammar, there are forms traditionally referred to as *uneblieroba* ‘unwillingness’. These can be used only with certain verbs of dark meaning, including ‘kill’, ‘beat’, ‘curse’, or ‘insult’, and the forms include the meaning that the agent acted ‘unwillingly’. The construction is illustrated by the sentence in (1).

- (1) še-mo-g-e-lanzy-eb-i²
 PV-PV-2O-E-insult-SM-SCM
 ‘I will unwillingly make you insult me.’

(The form in (1) is a complete, grammatical sentence.) As indicated by the translation line, the meaning involves three arguments, here ‘I’, ‘you’, and ‘me’. As shown here, the prefix *g-* in (1) indicates agreement with the “causee”, the argument that carries out the forced action, here ‘you’. As an indirect object, the causee conditions object agreement, *g-*. Because of slot competition, the matrix agent, here ‘I’, cannot be marked overtly; nevertheless, it can be unambiguously discerned in this form, just as in other regular forms in Georgian. But what of the direct object ‘me’? It cannot be represented as an independent pronoun as most arguments can, and it does not condition agreement in the verb form as other arguments in Georgian do. We may assume that the first person direct object cannot be marked on the verb because of slot competition. But the person of this object is not discernable in the sense that the first person subject is in this same form. Georgian has a special way of marking first person direct object when the indirect object is second person, Object Camouflage, a manifestation of the person case constraint. Object Camouflage cannot be used in (1). This is in stark contrast to ordinary simple sentences and to ordinary causatives formed with these and other verb roots and lacking the meaning ‘unwillingly’.

The puzzle here is that nothing obviously represents

- ‘me’
- ‘unwillingly’
- causation, or even transitivity.

The ordinary way to express ‘unwillingly’ in Georgian involves one of the independent adverbs *uneburad* or *unebliet* ‘unwillingly’. In §2 of this paper, I discuss the meaning of each morpheme of (1) in other contexts and show that the notions bulleted above are not overtly expressed; rather, these meanings emerge only from the

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² The following abbreviations are used in this paper: CAUS causative, CISL cislocative, DAT dative, ERG ergative, NOM nominative, O object marker, PV preverb, S subject, SCM screeve (tense-aspect-mood category) marker, SM series marker. All arguments in these examples are singular, and number is not glossed.

construction as a whole. These three meanings are entirely non-compositional. It is not even possible to say here that the meanings are borne by zero morphemes, in the usual sense of that notion, since there is no minimal contrast with another form and no appropriate place for such a morpheme to occur.

In §3 I argue, instead, for a schema which includes certain morphology and occurs only with certain verb roots. It contains the meanings of (i) the presence a direct object coreferential with the subject, (ii) ‘unwillingly’, (iii) transitivity and causation even though these meanings are not expressed by any specific morpheme. I argue that forms of this kind constitute another argument for Construction Morphology or some other approach in which the structure of the whole word is taken into account in determining meaning.

2. The core meanings of morphemes

2.1. Person agreement

In Georgian, subjects, direct objects, and indirect objects condition verb agreement, as illustrated (for subjects and direct objects) in (2).

- (2) (a) m-xat'av-s
10-paint-3S
'S/he paints me.'
- (b) g-xat'av-s
20-paint-3S
'S/he paints you.'
- (c) xat'av-s
paint-3S
'S/he paints him/her/it/them.'

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(In order to focus the discussion on agreement more clearly, I have not separated and glossed some morphemes here and below.) (2c) illustrates the fact that third person direct objects do not ordinarily condition agreement, although first and second person objects always condition agreement. All other arguments in (2) are overtly marked for person (with no gender distinction). Some affixes are used in both singular and plural, while others are used only in the singular; this is not indicated in the glosses, in order to keep the material simpler.

The prefix *g-* in (1) indicates agreement with the “causee”, the argument that carries out the forced action, here ‘you’. Thus, that portion of the meaning is accounted for straightforwardly.

So-called slot competition prevents more than one agreement prefix from appearing, as shown in (3), where both the first person subject marker, *v-*, and the second person object marker, *g-*, would otherwise be expected.³

- | | | | |
|-----|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| (3) | g-xat'av | *v-g-xat'av | *g-v-xat'av |
| | 20-paint | 1S-20-paint | 20-1S-paint |
| | 'I paint you.' | 'I paint you.' | 'I paint you.' |

In spite of slot competition, it is generally possible to discern the person of each argument unambiguously, though number is less unambiguously marked. This difference in the person of each form is illustrated in (4).

³The slot-competition approach does not account easily for the occurrence of the sequence *v-h-/v-s-*, which occurred in Old Georgian and remains in literary Modern Georgian (see Harris 2006).

- (4) (a) g-xat'av
20-paint
'I paint you.'
- (b) v-xat'av
1S-paint
'I paint him/her/it.'
- (c) m-xat'av
10-paint
'You paint me.'
- (d) xat'av
paint
'You paint him/her/it.'
- (e) m-xat'av-s
10-paint-3S
'S/he paints me.'
- (f) g-xat'av-s
20-paint-3S
'S/he paints you.'
- (g) xat'av-s
paint-3S
'S/he paints him/her/it.'

Because third person subjects are not zero-marked in Georgian, the pattern illustrated in (4) makes it possible to discern the person of each argument unambiguously. For example, in (4a), the object 'you' is clearly marked by the prefix *g-*. The subject of this verb form could not be second person, because a reflexive would be expressed differently. Its subject could not be third person, because this would require a suffix, which is not present. Thus, in this example the subject can only be first person.

The meaning of the 'unwillingness' construction involves three arguments, in (1) 'I', 'you', and 'me'. Because of slot competition, the matrix agent, here 'I', cannot be marked overtly, just as in (3) above. Nevertheless, it can be discerned in this form just as unambiguously as in (3) and (4a). That is, if the matrix subject were third person, it would require a suffix, which is not present. If the matrix subject were second person, a reflexive would be used. By process of elimination the subject can only be first person. Thus the first person subject in (1) is not a problem for us.

I now turn to the direct object of (1), 'me'. In general, in case of a first or second person direct object and an indirect object of any person in the same clause, we resort to the construction called Object Camouflage, illustrated in (5b).

- (5) (a) *vano m-adareb-s givi-s.
Vano.NOM 10-compare-3S Givi-DAT
'Vano compares me to Givi.'
- (b) vano čem-s tav-s adareb-s givi-s.
Vano.NOM my-DAT PRO-DAT compare-3S Givi-DAT
'Vano compares me to Givi.'
- (Harris 1981: 49)

By analogy to (4e), we would expect the form in (5a), which, however, is ungrammatical. Instead, in (5) the first person direct object is expressed as a third person object with the proform *tav-*, derived from and homophonous with the noun 'head', as its syntactic head. This form is grammatically a third person direct object and as such conditions no agreement. The semantic person of the direct object is expressed in the person of the possessor of *tav-*, here *čem-* 'my'.

Although Object Camouflage is expected in (1) from the meaning, it is not used. It cannot be included optionally either.

- (6) *še-mo-g-e-lanzy-eb-i (čem-s) tav-s
 PV-PV-2O-E-insult-SM-SCM my-DAT self-DAT
 'I will unwillingly make you insult me.'

The object 'me' cannot be represented as *m-*, as it is in (4e). Nor can the meaning 'me' be represented as an independent pronoun, and indeed it cannot be expressed in any way in the verb form. We may assume that the first person direct object cannot be marked on the verb because of slot competition. But the person of this object is not discernable in the sense that the first person subject is in this same form, and it is not expressed in any other way. This is in stark contrast, not only to (5), but also to ordinary causatives formed with these and other verb roots and lacking the meaning 'unwillingly'.

- (7) ga-g-a-xat'-v-in-eb čem-s tav-s
 PV-2O-A-paint-SM-CAUS-SM my-DAT self-DAT
 'I will make you paint me.'

Although the meaning of (7) is similar to that of (1), in (7) the direct object is obligatorily expressed as a camouflaged object, *čems tavs* 'me'. (1) has nothing comparable; the object is not overtly expressed in any way.

An ordinary causative such as (7) can also be constructed with the "dark" predicates that can appear in the "unwillingly" construction. (8) is such an ordinary causative, lacking the meaning 'unwillingly'.

- (8) merab-i ga-g-a-lanzy-v-in-eb-s čem-s tav-s
 Merab-NOM PV-2O-A-insult-SM-CAUS-SM-3S my-DAT PRO-DAT
 'Merab will make you insult me.'

In (8), as in most clauses in Georgian, the person of every argument is unambiguously represented. (Number is not always unambiguously represented.) The matrix subject is expressed by the suffix *-s*, the embedded subject (causee) 'you' by the prefix *g-*, and the direct object by the phrase *čems tavs* 'me' (literally 'my head').

The morphology in (8) is very different from that in (1). First, the verb in (1) must have the preverbs *še-mo-*, discussed in more detail below, while the verb in (8) has the preverb *ga-*, which might be different with a different lexeme. Second, the vowel that precedes the verb root in (1) and similar constructions is *e-*, a characteristic of intransitives, while that in (8) is *a-*, which is found with all standard causatives and with some other transitives. The verb in (8), but not that in (1), contains the causative suffix *-in*. And finally, (1), but not (8), contains the suffix *-i*, another characteristic of intransitive verbs.

Because the direct object is coreferential with the subject, we might expect it to be expressed as a reflexive. With an ordinary causative, reflexivization is possible, as in (9).

- (9) ekim-ma alap'arak'a vano tavis tav-ze
 doctor-ERG talk.CAUS Vano.NOM self's self-on
 'The doctor_i got Vano_j to talk about himself_{i,j}.' (Harris 1981: 72)

But with the 'unwillingness' construction, this is not possible.

- (10) *še-mo-g-e-lanzy-eb-i čemi tavi

PV-PV-2O-E-insult-SM-SCM my self
 'I will unwillingly make you insult me.'

In Georgian, reflexives are expressed as *tav-* 'self', or as a possessed phrase, such as *čems tavs* 'myself' (see Amiridze 2006), homophonous with the Camouflaged proform in (5b). It is not used in the 'unwillingness' construction.

Georgian also has a morphological marker, *i-*, which is sometimes associated with reflexivity, as when a benefactive indirect object is coreferential with the subject.

- (11) *gela* *i-k'er-av-s* *axal šarval-s* (Harris 1981: 95)
 Gela.NOM *i-sew-SM-3S* *new trousers-DAT*
 'Gela sews himself new trousers.'

Clearly this marker is not present in the forms in (1). Thus reflexive morphology and syntax are entirely absent from the form in (1). The object, 'me' in (1), unlike those in the similar causatives (7), (8), and (9) are not marked in any way.

Thus the object 'me' of (1) is not expressed through direct marking, as in (2a), through the inferences connected with slot competition as the subject 'I' is in (4a) and (1), through Object Camouflage as in (5b) or (7), through syntactic or morphological reflexivization as in (9) and (11). How to account for this aspect of (1) remains a problem.

The form in (1) occurs in other person-number combinations.

- (12) (a) *še-mo-g-e-lanzy-eb-i* (= (1))
 PV-PV-2O-E-insult-SM-SCM
 'I will unwillingly make you insult me.'
- (b) *še-mo-m-e-lanzy-eb-i*
 PV-PV-1O-E-insult-SM-SCM
 'You will unwillingly make me insult you.'
- (c) *vano* *anzor-s* *še-mo-e-lanzy-eb-a*
 Vano.NOM *Anzor-DAT* *PV-PV-E-insult-SM-3SG*
 'Vano_i will unwillingly make Anzor_j insult him_i.'

But it is not possible to use this construction to express any of the following: 'I will unwillingly make Vano insult Anzor', 'Vano will unwillingly make you insult me', 'Vano will unwillingly make Anzor insult Merab'. Another such example is given in (13).

- (13) **vano* *anzor-s* *še-mo-m-e-lanzy-eb-a*
 Vano.NOM *Anzor-DAT* *PV-PV-1O-E-insult-SM-3S*
 'Vano will unwillingly make Anzor insult me.'

The sentences in (12) are not ambiguous; in particular (12a) cannot mean 'I will unwillingly make you insult someone'; the only possible meaning is the one glossed, 'I will unwillingly make you insult me'. Thus, the interpretation is consistently that the instigator, 'I' in (1), is also the recipient of the insult. While the person and number of the instigator (subject) and the one making the insult (indirect object) may vary to the full extent possible with other verbs (all three persons and both numbers), the subject must be coreferential with the recipient of the insult, the grammatical direct object.

In conclusion, I note that (i) subjects and indirect objects in the 'unwillingness' construction are marked in ways that are normal and compositional for Georgian, and (ii) the direct object is not marked at all.

2.2. Morphology of unaccusatives

The prefix *e-* occurs only with unaccusative verbs.⁴

- (14) (a) c'eril-i i-c'ereb-a
letter-NOM I-write-3S
'The letter is written.'
- (b) c'eril-i m-e-c'ereb-a
letter-NOM 1O-E-write-3S
'The letter is written to me.'
- (c) c'eril-i g-e-c'ereb-a
letter-NOM 2O-E-write-3S
'The letter is written to you.'
- (d) c'eril-i e-c'ereb-a
letter-NOM E-write-3S
'The letter is written to her.'

(1) and (12) appear to be transitive, in that they have direct objects, and causative. True causatives, and many other transitives, use *a-* instead in the position occupied by *e-*.

- (15) a-c'erinebs
A-write.CAUS.3S
's/he makes him/her write it'

The prefix *e-* generally occurs when an indirect object is associated with an unaccusative verb, and it has that purpose here. *e-* is entirely unexpected with a verb of transitive causative semantics.

Like *e-*, the suffix combination *-eb-i* is characteristic of unaccusatives.

- (16) v-dg-eb-i 'I am standing'
v-i-xat'-eb-i 'I am painted, I am being painted'
v-i-langy-eb-i 'I am being insulted'

Some transitives use *-eb* or *-i*, but never together. Causatives regularly use *-eb* in the present, as in (17).

- (17) g-a-xat'-v-in-eb čem-s tav-s
2O-A-paint-SM-CAUS-SM my-DAT PRO-DAT
'I am making you paint me.'

Yet (1) and (12) have *-eb-i*, characteristic of unaccusatives.

In the third person singular of the present tense, unaccusatives use the suffix *-a*, while transitives and unergatives use *-s*.

- | | | | |
|------|-------------|----------------------------|--------------|
| (18) | c'er-s | 's/he writes' | Transitive |
| | muša-ob-s | 's/he works' | Unergative |
| | e-c'er-eb-a | 'it is written to him/her' | Unaccusative |

⁴ A few unergative verbs, such as *lap=arak=obs* 'talks, speaks=', correspond to a form with *e-*, such as *elap=arak=eba* 'talks to him/her='. But the latter forms, too, unexpectedly have the grammatical characteristics of unaccusatives (see Harris 1981: 270-273).

The ‘unwillingness’ construction uses *-a* in the third person singular subject form in the present tense, as shown in (12c), even though it is apparently transitive.

Finally, like most unaccusatives, the ‘unwillingness’ construction uses the suffix *-od* in certain tense-aspect-mood categories, contrasting with the *-d-* suffix used by transitives and unergatives.

(19)	<i>c'er-d-a</i>	‘s/he was writing’	Transitive
	<i>mušaob-d-a</i>	‘s/he was working’	Unergative
	<i>kvd-eb-od-a</i>	‘s/he was dying’	Unaccusative
	<i>e-c'er-eb-od-a</i>	‘it was written to him/her’	Unaccusative
	<i>še-mo-g-e-lanzy-eb-od-a</i>	‘if he unwillingly made you insult him’	‘Unwillingness’

The ‘unwillingness’ construction is conjugated like an unaccusative verb except that it lacks forms in those tense-aspect-mood forms that are formed without a preverb. The preverb here is *še-mo-*, and it is discussed in detail below. The tenses formed with a preverb are illustrated in (20), keeping the persons of each argument the same.

(20)	<i>še-mo-g-e-lanzy-eb-I</i>	‘I will unwillingly make you insult me’	FUTURE
	<i>še-mo-g-e-lanzy-eb-od-I</i>	‘if I unwillingly made you insult me’	CONDITIONAL
	<i>še-mo-g-e-lanzy-eb-od-e</i>	‘I would unwillingly make you insult me’	SUBJUNCTIVEII
	<i>še-mo-g-e-lanzy-e</i>	‘I unwillingly made you insult me’	AORIST
	<i>še-mo-g-e-lanzy-o</i>	‘I would unwillingly make you insult me’	OPTATIVE
	<i>še-mo-g-e-lanzy-v-i-a</i>	‘I have evidently made you insult me’	EVIDENTIAL

The “unwillingness” construction seems morphologically closest the construction in (21), a relatively isolated (irregular) unaccusative that is sometimes interpreted as involving coreference (‘he/she/it will hide [self] from you’).

(21)	<i>da-g-e-mal-eb-a</i>	
	PV-20-E-hide-SM-3S	
	‘he/she/it will hide from you’	

I conclude from the evidence above that the ‘unwillingness’ construction is morphologically an unaccusative, similar to the unaccusative in (21). In spite of the fact that it is semantically causative and has a direct object, it has the grammatical characteristics of unaccusatives, including the prefixal vowel *e-*, the suffix combination *-eb-i*, and the suffix *-od*. Each of these contrasts with the morphology of regular transitive and unergative verbs.

2.3. Preverbs

The morphemes *še-* and *mo-* are both preverbs; *še-* has the core locative meaning ‘in’, and *mo-* is a cislocative, thus having the core meaning ‘hither, toward the speaker or hearer’, as illustrated in (22).

(22)	(a)	<i>še-vid-a</i>	
		in-went-3S	
		‘S/he went in.’	
	(b)	<i>mo-vid-a</i>	
		CISL-went-3S	
		‘S/he came.’	

The two preverbs can be combined compositionally.

- (23) *še-mo-vid-a*
in-CISL-went-3S
'S/he came in.'

Generally, preverbs in Georgian may have three functions. The adverbial meaning, as illustrated in (22) and (23), is the core meaning. In appropriate contexts, any preverb can make a verb form perfective, often retaining some of its core adverbial meaning. In the grammar of Georgian, futures are the perfective of the present, and the preverb is thus present.

- (24) *še-it'ans*
in-bring.3S
'S/he will bring it in, input it, introduce it'
- (25) (a) *i-g-eb-s*
I-win-SM-3S
'S/he wins, is winning it.'
- (b) *mo-i-g-eb-s*
PV-I-win-SM-3S
'S/he will win it.'

In (1), the preverbs also fill the function of marking perfectivity, and the tense-aspect-mood categories illustrated in (20) above are those that are grammatically perfective.

The third function of preverbs is that sometimes they combine with a specific root to create a lexeme whose meaning cannot be predicted compositionally. For example, *naxa* 'she saw it', combines with *še-* 'in' (and *i-*) to make a new lexeme *šeinaxa* 'she saved it, put it away, kept it'. Usually this function of preverbs occurs with single verbs, but there are also some sets of specialized meanings. For example, the preverb *c'a-* has the core adverbial meaning 'thither, far away' (translocative); but it has a further meaning that falls into this third function, 'for a little while' or 'superficially'. The examples below illustrate this in third person singular future forms.

- | | | | | |
|------|--------------------|-----------------|------------------------|--------------------------|
| (26) | <i>it'irebs</i> | 'will cry' | <i>c'a-it'irebs</i> | 'will cry a little' |
| | <i>daizinebs</i> | 'will sleep' | <i>c'a-izinebs</i> | 'will sleep a little' |
| | <i>ivarjišeb's</i> | 'will exercise' | <i>c'a-ivarjišeb's</i> | 'will exercise a little' |
| | <i>imušavebs</i> | 'will work' | <i>c'a-imušavebs</i> | 'will work a little' |
- (Jorbenaze et al. 1988: 459)

The preverbs in (26) thus add a semantic element, 'for a little while', but do not alter the argument structure.

While the preverbs in (1) make the verb perfective, their core meanings do not add up to 'unwillingly'. Nevertheless, the 'unwillingly' interpretation is best attributed to these preverbs, since this meaning is of the same general type as that illustrated in (26), and since similarity to other constructions provides some evidence that the meaning of 'unwillingness' is carried here.⁵ The selection restriction for "dark" predicates must also be associated with the preverbs, since the other morphology is more general. Thus, the combination of preverbs has a meaning that is non-compositional but still is definable, and an unusual selection restriction.

⁵ There are related meanings; see Jorbenaze et al. (1988:431) for additional information.

2.4. Interim summary

I summarize by listing the elements of (1) that are straightforwardly accounted for by the regular morphology and those that are not.

(27) Elements of (1) that are straightforwardly accounted for by the regular morphology

- (a) first person subject (instigator)
- (b) second person object (the one who insults)
- (c) root meaning 'insult'
- (d) future tense, indicative mood, perfective aspect

(28) Elements of (1) not accounted for by the morphology

- (a) first person object (the one insulted)
- (b) 'unwillingness' meaning
- (c) limitation to "dark" predicates
- (d) causation
- (e) transitivity

3. Analysis

What is predictable should be accounted for by regular rules. I suggest that simple schemas be used to account for what is not predictable. I propose the schema in (29)

(29) [*ʂe-mo*-PERSON.NUMBER.PREFIX-*e*-ROOT-TAM-PERSON.NUMBER.SUFFIX]_{CLASS 2 VERB}

Semantics:

- subject: instigator (agent)
- direct object: patient
- indirect object: actor (agent)
- 'unwillingly'

Constraints: Adark predicate

direct object coreferential with subject

"TAM" here covers a sequence of suffixes. "PERSON.NUMBER.PREFIX" and "PERSON.NUMBER.SUFFIX", too, include up to two affixes each. The designation "Class 2" focuses on the morphological class, rather than the semantic class of unaccusatives, which is less easily defined in Georgian (see Harris 1981). By designating the whole schema as a class 2 verb we make it possible to predict the correct endings for the various TAM categories. For example, an unaccusative (Class 2) verb requires the suffix *-od* in the conditional and the subjunctive II in (20), while a transitive or unergative verb would require *-d* instead. Although the prefix *e-* might be predicted from the fact that this is an *ʔintransitive*@ verb with an indirect object, since the verb is really transitive, I have preferred to specify the *e-* in the schema. The semantics of the arguments must be listed with the schema, since an unaccusative verb is not expected to have arguments with these theta roles. The semantics, >unwillingly=, and the constraints must be listed with the schema as well, since they are unique to it. Thus, it is essentially the use of an unaccusative (Class 2) verb form with the non-compositional preverb combination *ʂe-mo-* that creates verb forms meaning >unwillingness=, together with the other idiosyncrasies of these forms.

Gurevich (2006) presents a more complete analysis of Georgian grammar showing that many aspects of the grammar are best analyzed as form-meaning pairs (constructions) specifying associated morphology, syntax, and semantics. The construction described in the present paper is very restricted, but it shows that a similar

approach is needed to account for a specific construction that combines predictable and unpredictable elements.

4. Conclusion

The >unwillingness= construction presents a number of peculiarities. Morphologically it has the conjugation characteristics of an unaccusative, including the prefix *e-*, the tense-aspect-mood marker *-od*, and the endings *-eb-i* and *-eb-a*. Morphosyntactically, it requires that the subject and direct object be coreferential, though this is not indicated through any of the means usual for coreference. Semantically it has the meaning ‘unwillingness’, though this is not indicated compositionally. It has none of the characteristics of a causative, or even of a transitive.

I have proposed that these unexpected features can all be dealt with in terms of a schema that specifies these details in terms of the form of the word. This approach is situated within a construction- or schema-based view of morphology.

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