
Steal Me an Apple: Version in Georgian

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This paper examines a set of valency-affecting constructions in Georgian marked by pre-stem vowels on finite verb forms, known as *version*. I explore the morphosyntactic and semantic functions of each version construction and the relationship between these constructions and the larger morphosyntactic context.¹

1. Introduction

This paper examines a set of valency-affecting constructions in Georgian marked by pre-stem vowels on finite verb forms. These constructions, known collectively as *version*², are at the core of Georgian morphosyntax. Aside from the common morphological distribution and general relation to valency, version constructions can be quite diverse. I explore the morphosyntactic and semantic functions of each version construction and how these functions are determined and affected by the larger syntactic and semantic contexts in which they are embedded.

Version vowels are used for a variety of valence-related functions, which are the focus of this paper. Examples include valency-increasing marking of beneficiaries, reflexivity, marking of passives/impersonals,

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²The term ‘version’ is a translation of the Georgian *kceva* meaning ‘change’.

causatives, and the marking of indirect object agreement. In addition, version vowels have in some cases become grammaticalized and perform purely morphological functions, although such cases will not be discussed here in detail.

1.1 Version as Participant Affectedness

The data described in this paper suggest that for most cases, the slot in which version vowels appear has a coherent general function. Overall, the elements in this slot indicate changes in valence and grammatical voice. However, the syntactic arguments over which such elements take scope, and their precise function, are determined by the larger syntactic and semantic context in which the verb forms appear, as well as the lexical semantics of the verbs. The functions of the version elements can be further subdivided into several subsystems.

The most prototypical and most often described uses of version vowels involve the marking of *participant affectedness*, meaning that some discourse participant is directly affected by the action denoted by the verb. This term is related to the cognitive notion of *salience* or *prominence* (cf. Langacker 1991).

Version as participant affectedness is most often seen on active verbs, where version vowels differentiate the largest number of types of affectedness. Here, objective version (affected participant is the indirect object), subjective version (subject), and locative version (indirect object) are possible. Version markers can also express participant affectedness on passive and impersonal verbs, but, as will be demonstrated below, the types of affectedness distinguished for these verbs are more restricted and less differentiated than for active verbs. In each of these cases, the function of version vowels crucially depends on the surrounding morphosyntactic contexts.

The body of the paper describes the various functions of version vowels, following a brief overview of Georgian verb morphosyntax.

2. Morphosyntactic preliminaries

The properties of Georgian morphosyntax relevant to understanding version include verb conjugation classes, the tense/aspect/mood (TAM) system, and the morphotactic structure of the Georgian verb.

2.1 Conjugation Classes

Georgian verbs are traditionally divided into conjugation classes. Following Harris (1981) and Aronson (1990), I distinguish four conjugation classes identified by morphological criteria. The classes largely correspond to valence generalizations, though there are notable exceptions.

SERIES I		SERIES II (AORIST)	SERIES III (PERFECT)
PRES. SUBSERIES	FUT. SUBSERIES		
Present	Future	Aorist	Perfect
Imperfect	Conditional		Pluperfect
Present subjunctive	Future subjunctive	Aorist subjunctive	(Perfect subjunctive)

TABLE 1 Series and screeves (“Present”, “Future”, etc. are screeves)

The conjugation classes are as follows.

- Conjugation I: “Transitive”; mostly active transitive verbs, e.g. ‘build’, ‘draw’.
- Conjugation II: “Unaccusative (Passive)”; mostly intransitive, non-active verbs often derived from transitives, e.g. ‘be written’. Includes passive and impersonal verbs.
- Conjugation III: “Unergative (Medioactive)”; mostly intransitive, active verbs, e.g. ‘dance’, ‘walk’.
- Conjugation IV: “Indirect”; mostly transitive, non-active verbs where the subject is the experiencer of the action, e.g. verbs of experience and possession, e.g. ‘like’, ‘have’. The grammatical subject of these verbs is marked by dative case and by object markers on the verbs.

2.2 TAM System

Georgian verbs inflect according to a set of tense, aspect, and mood (TAM) parameters. A collection of TAM properties is called a *screeve*, from *mc’k’rivi* ‘row’; it is similar to a traditional inflectional paradigm with a collection of cells for different combinations of subject and object properties with the same TAM values.

A collection of screeves with common morphosyntactic properties is called a *series*. There are three distinct series in Georgian. Table 1 shows the distribution of screeves in series.

Series III of transitive and unergative, and all series of indirect verbs have dative-marked subjects and nominative-marked objects. This phenomenon is known as *inversion*, and its relation to version vowels is discussed in section 9..

2.3 Structure of the Georgian Verb

An inflected Georgian verb has a fairly complex structure with up to eleven distinct slots. The structure of the verb is most commonly described in terms of a template, as in (1).

- (1) Simplified verb template in linear order:

(PV₁)-(Pron1₂)-(Ver₃)-root₄-(TS₅)-(Scr₆)-(Pron2₇)³

The functions of the slots are briefly explained in (2).

(2) Functions of other slots:

1. Preverbs (PV), e.g. *uk'u-* 'back', *she-* 'into', *mo-* 'towards the speaker', indicate aspect and spatial orientation.
2. Prefixal pronominal marker (PRON1), e.g. *v-* '1SUBJ', *m-* '1SGOBJ'
3. Version vowel (VER), e.g. *i-*, *u-*, *a-*, *e-*
4. Root, e.g. *xat'* 'draw'
5. Thematic suffix (TS), e.g. *-av*, *-eb*, has no independent meaning and indicates lexical class.
6. Screeve (tense) marker (SCR), e.g. *-i*, indicates inflectional class and TAM category.
7. Suffixal pronominal marker (PRON2), e.g. *-s* '3SGSUBJ', *-en* '3PLSUBJ', *-t* 'PL'

Not every verb has all of these parts, and the only required part is the root.

The version vowels *i*, *u*, *e*, *a* occupy a slot immediately before the root. Only one version vowel can occupy the slot. The function of the version vowels depends on the larger syntactic context in which it is used, i.e. verb conjugation class, valency, and TAM.

The types of version constructions are described below. They have been grouped according to the type of function served and the type of morphosyntactic context in which these uses occur.

3. Active Verbs—Objective Version

'Objective version' indicates that the event is directed towards and/or affects a participant which is most often coded as an indirect object. Objective version is the least lexically restricted type of version, and is most often optional. It is attested on transitive (Conjugation 1) verbs, and some active intransitive (Conjugation 3) verbs.

3.1 Objective Version in Transitive Verbs

If the indirect object is 1st or 2nd person, the version vowel is *i*. In (3), the beneficiary of the action (1sg pronoun) is expressed in a postpositional phrase. By contrast, in (3b), the beneficiary is encoded as

³Abbreviations: Aor=aorist; Dat=dative; Erg=ergative; Nom=nominative; Obj=object; Pass=passive; Pl=plural; Pron=pronominal marker; PV=preverb; Scr=screeve marker; Sg=singular; Subj=subject; TS=thematic suffix; Ver=version

an indirect object; the verb agrees with it by means of the pronominal affix *m-*, and indicates the affectedness relationship with the version vowel *i-*.

- (3) a. meri-m da-xat'a **chem-tvis** surat'i
 Mary-ERG PV-paint.AOR **1sg-for** picture-NOM
 'Mary painted a picture for me.'⁴
- b. meri-m da-**m-i**-xat'a (**me**) surat'i
 Mary-ERG PV-1SGOBJ-**ver**-paint (**1sg**) picture-NOM
 'Mary painted a picture for me.'

If the indirect object is 3rd person, the version vowel is *u-*, as in (4). There is no indirect object marker on the verb. It has been suggested that *u* is a fusion of 3rd person object marker *s/h-* and *i-*, but there is no independent phonological evidence for this.

- (4) meri-m da-**u**-xat'a (**mas**) surat'i
 Mary-ERG PV-**ver**-paint (**3sg**) picture-NOM
 'Mary painted a picture for him/her.'

The syntactic effect of objective version is to elevate the affected participant to 'core argument' status. It is marked by the dative case and is cross-referenced on the verb by object markers. The direct object is often possessed by the indirect object, or becomes his/her possession. The indirect object is usually animate. The thematic role of the indirect object is often a recipient or beneficiary.

The discourse factors affecting the use of objective version are discussed in more detail in section 3.4.

3.2 Objective Version in Ditransitive Verbs

When objective version is used with a ditransitive verb, the syntactic effect is the addition of a (second) indirect object. The object markers on the verb co-reference the same direct object referred to by version. In (5b) and (5c), the use of a version marker coincides with the addition of a fourth argument to the verb, essentially creating two indirect objects. Pronouns are often dropped in Georgian, but the argument structure can be recovered from verb agreement.

- (5) a. man mo-**h**-p'ara (mas) vashl-i
 he.ERG PV-**1sgObj**-steal.AOR (3SG.DAT) apple-NOM
 'He stole an apple **from him/her**.' (Boeder 1969)

⁴Unless otherwise indicated, all data are from native-speaker elicitation by the author.

- b. man mo-**m-i-p**'ara mas vashl-i
 he.ERG PV-**1sgObj-ver-steal**.AOR 3SG.DAT apple-NOM
 'He stole an apple **for me** from him/her.'
- c. gtxov, (me) gada-**m-i-c-e** es c'igni
 please, (1SG) PV-**1sgObj-ver-give**-AOR this book.NOM
 P'avles!
 Paul.DAT
 'Please give this book to Paul for me!' (Boeder 1969)

3.3 Objective Version in Intransitive Verbs

The uses of objective version with intransitive verbs are more restricted than with transitive verbs. The result of the action is always directed at the affected participant, but exactly how this is done is determined by the lexical semantics of the verb, and not all verbs can combine with objective version.

In many cases, the impossibility of a version marker seems to be motivated by the lack of a semantic connection between the affected participant and the object / result of the verb's action.

In (6a), the objective version form of the verb means to perform the dancing action for someone; this is the most productive use of objective version consistent with transitive examples above.

- (6) a. shen m-**i-cek**'v-eb (me)
 you 1SG**OBJ-ver-dance**-TS (1SG)
 'You will dance **for me**.'
- b. shen **u-cek**'v-eb (mas)
 you **ver-dance**-TS (3SG.DAT)
 'You will dance **for him**.'

In (7b), the objective version verb form becomes transitive and idiomatic, meaning to make someone fly / go away.

- (7) a. da-v-pren
 PV-1SUBJ-fly
 'I will fly.'
- b. exla da-g-i-pren shen
 now PV-2OBJ-VER-fly 1SG
 'I will fly you away (=make you go away).'

In other cases, the only context in which intransitive Conjugation 1 verbs allow objective version is by adding an object which is somehow related to/possessed by the affected participant (8b), thus making the verb transitive.

- (8) a. *shen me m-i-cxovr-eb
 2SG 1SG 1SGOBJ-VER-live-TS
 ‘You (will) live for me.’
 b. am bich’s tu k’argad m-i-cxovr-eb, me
 this boy.DAT if well 1SGOBJ-VER-live-TS, 1SG
 da-g-a-sachukreb
 PV-2OBJ-VER-reward-TS
 ‘If you give this boy a good life for me, I will reward you.’

Finally, in some cases the use of version forms implies a possessed object even when it is not overtly present (9).

- (9) mo-m-i-mat’-eb
 PV-1OBJ-VER-increase-TS
 ‘you will increase for me (e.g., my salary)’

3.4 Discourse Factors Relevant for Objective Version

The indirect object is usually affected via some connection to the object or the result of the action. The object is very often inalienably possessed by the affected participant, as in (10).

- (10) is g-i-t’ex-s shen mk’lavs
 he 2OBJ-VER-break-3SG your arm.DAT
 ‘He breaks (your) arm for you.’

The object can be in an animate relation to the affected participant like relatives or children (11, 12)

- (11) she-m-i-k-e me shvili
 PV-1SGOBJ-VER-praise-AOR 1SG child.NOM
 ‘You praised my child for me.’
 (12) is kali ga-m-i-gizh-eb-s bavshvebs
 this woman.NOM PV-1SGOBJ-VER-crazy-TS-3SG child.PL.DAT
 ‘This woman will drive (for me) my kids crazy.’

Finally, the object can simply be in possession of the affected participant. In such cases, the version form implies possession (13a); the *-tvis* form implies non-possession (13b). A non-version construction, if possible, has a different meaning from its version counterpart, and the meaning difference is motivated by the general meaning of “participant affectedness” carried by version.

- (13) a. is g-i-t'ex-s shen doks
 he 2OBJ-VER-break-3SG your clay-jug.DAT
 'He breaks a clay jug for you.' (Implication: your jug)
- b. is shentvis doks t'ex-s
 he you.for clay-jug.DAT break-3SG
 'He breaks a clay jug for you.' (Implication: not your jug)

When there is a choice between using a version and a non-version construction, the general deciding factor seems to be the degree to which a participant is affected by the action. Greater degree of affectedness usually corresponds to use of version, whereas lesser degree of affectedness corresponds to a *-tvis* postpositional phrase or some other device. This choice works both ways: given that a version construction was used, the interpretation has to be that of more affectedness. In addition, the non-version constructions can sometimes be interpreted as either the more affected or the less affected option, whereas the use of version unambiguously signals the more affected variant.

The more specific parameters affecting the choice are as follows, with the more affected variant on the right:

- Possession by indirect object vs. non-possession
- Inalienable possession vs. alienable possession
- Goal / recipient of action vs. beneficiary of action

In some cases, the postpositional and version constructions are equivalent and freely interchangeable. However, the version construction is preferred when the affected participant is directly linked to the action denoted by the verb, directly affected by it, and/or present at the event. The interpretation of (14a) is ambiguous between a recipient (more affected) and a beneficiary; however, the recipient interpretation sounds odd in (14b) and is impossible in (15b).

- (14) a. shen **m-i**-mgheri.
 2SG **1sg-ver**-sing.PRES.2SG
 'You sing **for me / to me.**'
- b. shen **chem-tvis** mgheri.
 2SG **1sg-for** sing.PRES.2SG
 'You sing **for me / ?to me.**'

The difference in affectedness is stronger for verbs that may include an implicit affected participant.

- (15) a. is **me m-i**-q'viris.
 3SG **1sg 1sg-ver**-yell.PRES.3SG

meaning of the verb form is non-compositional. Rather, the presence of the vowel *i-* in an active verb form in conjunction with an indirect object and corresponding verb markers can be interpreted as objective version. On the other hand, the presence of *i-* in conjunction with a subject marker and no affected indirect object marks subjective version. In other words, the larger construction and the combination of other morphs determines the function of the version vowel.

5. Active Verbs—Locative Version

Locative version (also known as *superessive*, cf. Hewitt 1995), indicates that the action was performed in some spatial relation to the indirect object. The spatial relation is usually ‘onto’, but metaphoric extensions are also possible. Locative version is marked by version vowel *a-*.

In (24a), the landmark of the breaking action (his head) is encoded as an indirect object, and the verb has the version vowel *a-*. The same notion can be paraphrased with a postpositional phrase as in (24b).

- (24) a. me v-**a**-t'ex-av j'ox-s mis tav-s
 I 1SUBJ-**ver**-break-TS stick-DAT his head-DAT
 ‘I break a stick **over** his head.’
- b. me v-t'ex-av j'ox-s mis tav-**ze**
 I 1SUBJ-break-TS stick-DAT his head-**on**
 ‘I break a stick **over** his head.’

The spatial relation can be interpreted metaphorically, as in (25).

- (25) (me) (shen) mo-g-**a**-mghere
 (1SG) (2SG) PV-2OBJ-**ver**-sing.AOR
 ‘I sang you off / sang as you were leaving.’

Locative version appears to be restricted to transitive verbs, but it is too rare for any definitive conclusions.

6. Version as Participant Affectedness, Non-Active Verbs

Version can also indicate participant affectedness and valency changes in some passive and impersonal verbs in Conjugation 2. However, the types of distinctions marked by version in Conjugation 2 are different from those marked in Conjugation 1. In particular, the types of affectedness are not differentiated to the same extent as in Conjugation 1. The main point of this section is to demonstrate the difference between version in the two conjugation classes, and to argue that the larger

contexts (conjugation class and series) again determine the function of version vowels.

Conjugation 2 includes many passive or impersonal counterparts of Conjugation 1 verbs. There are three ways to form Conjugation 2 verbs: by addition of a pre-stem vowel, addition of suffix *-d*, and without adding any extra elements. The two latter verb types follow the same pattern as active verbs with regards to version vowels.

For passives with prefixal formation, version vowels *-i-* and *-e-* can mark the presence (*-e-*, 26b) or the absence (*-i-*, 26a) of an affected participant, encoded as an indirect object.

- (26) a. *i-xat'eba*
ver-draw.INTR.PRES
 'It is being drawn.'
- b. *e-xat'eba* (mas)
ver-draw.INTR.PRES (he.DAT)
 'It is being drawn **for / in front of / on him/her.**'

The syntactic function of *e-* is to add an indirect object to the verb frame. Only the presence of an affected participant is marked; the way in which this participant is affected is either not specified or is provided by the lexical semantics of the verb. Further, subjective and locative versions are not possible. In a sense, the version vowel *e-* combines the functions of objective and locative versions.

Example (27) demonstrates that Conjugation 2 verbs are not always passive. Rather, this conjugation signals that the subject is not entirely in control, or the direct object is not prominent.

- (27) *i-landzgheba*
VER-curse.PASS
 '(S)he is engaged in cursing' (not relevant who (s)he is cursing).
 (Nino Amiridze, p.c.)

Conjugation 2 verbs often become lexicalized as allowing only one or the other version marker. In (28b), the root meaning 'to use' plus version marker *-e-* have become lexicalized as a bivalent verb 'to help'. This verb is no longer transparently connected to the verb 'use', and thus removing the version marker would take away its core meaning.

- (28) a. *is shen g-e-xmar-eba*
3SG 2SG 2OBJ-VER-help-SCR
 'He helps you(sg).'

- b. is i-xmar-eb-a
 3SG VER-help-SCR
 ‘It is being used / (*help).’

When both vowels are possible, *-e-* carries a very strong implication of an added affected participant, even when that participant is not overtly present in the sentence as an indirect object. In (29b), the implied second participant (1sg pronoun) is not present in the sentence. It does not trigger verbal agreement and therefore cannot simply be the result of pro-drop.

- (29) a. she-i-k’vreb-i
 PV-VER-group-SCR
 ‘You will group yourself / concentrate.’
 b. she-e-k’vr-ebi
 PV-VER-group-SCR
 ‘You and I will group / do something “under the table” together.’

The affected participant interpretation is often blocked by more strongly lexicalized inceptive or patientive interpretations. In (30), the addition of the version marker *-e-* is interpreted according to the productive pattern, meaning that the action affects some participant X. In (30), there is a strongly lexicalized interpretation of ‘feeling like X’ and something appearing to someone.

- (30) a. i-xat’-eba
 VER-draw-SCR
 ‘It is drawn.’
 b. e-xat’-eba
 VER-draw-SCR
 ‘It is drawn for him/her.’
 c. m-e-xat’-eba
 1SGOBJ-VER-draw-SCR
 ‘(*It is drawn for me) / I feel like drawing / It (an image) appears to me.’

In (31b) and (31c), the lexicalized meaning of ‘register’ is more entrenched, and the simple beneficiary interpretation of the form with *-e-* is completely impossible.

- (31) a. i-c’er-eba
 VER-draw-SCR
 ‘It is written.’
 b. e-c’er-eba
 VER-write-SCR

‘(*It is written for him/her) / (S)he is registering / feels like writing / It will be written.’

c. m-e-c’er-eba

1SGOBJ-VER-write-SCR

‘(*It is written for me) / I am registering / I feel like writing.’

Many Conjugation 2 verbs share roots with Conjugation 1 verbs. However, it is unclear how they came to have the vowels *i-* and *e-*. It is plausible that the use of *i-* is related to subjective version (reflexive) *i-* in Conjugation 1 verbs: it is quite common cross-linguistically for passive, impersonal, and reflexive verbs to have the same morphology (cf. Klaiman 1991, Blevins 2003). The use of the same morphological marker for directedness (as in objective version) and lack of volitionality (as in Conjugation 2 verbs) is also not unprecedented: a somewhat similar phenomenon is described for the Salish language family (Demirdache 1997). However, the direction of the historical development in Georgian is not known.

7. Causativization

The version vowel *-a-* can be used in forming causatives, accompanied by the thematic suffix *-eb*. Causatives formed from intransitive verbs are illustrated in (32).

(32) Intransitive causatives:

a. v-q’ep

1SUBJ-bark

‘I bark.’

b. v-a-q’ep-eb

1SUBJ-**ver**-bark-**ts**

‘I make him bark.’

Causatives formed from transitive verbs may contain an extra suffix *-in*, as in (33b).

(33) Transitive causatives:

a. v-c’er mas

1SUBJ-write it.DAT

‘I write it.’

b. v-a-c’er-**in-eb** mas

1SUBJ-**ver**-write-**caus-ts** it.DAT

‘I make him write it.’

The same pattern, including the version vowel *a-* and the thematic suffix *-eb*, is also a very common way of forming verbs from adjective and noun stems. This class contains around 2700 verbs and is quite

productive (Melikishvili 2001). Historically, the use of *a-* in these cases may signal a verbalizing function (an increase in valency as compared to a noun or adjective). However, many of the verbs in this class no longer share a synchronic connection with the stem from which they were derived.

In this class of verbs, the version vowel *a-* often occurs in complementary distribution with other version vowels. Most verbs in this category belong to Conjugation I, as in (34a). When the pre-stem slot is occupied by version vowel *a-*, it cannot express version-like meanings, so that beneficiaries of actions have to be expressed in postpositional phrases (34b). However *a-* can be replaced by other version vowels to form objective or subjective version, as in (34c).

- (34) a. saxl-s **a**-shen-**eb**
 house-DAT **ver**-build-**ts**
 ‘You build a house (beneficiary not specified).’
- b. saxl-s **a**-shen-**eb** mis-tvis / *mas
 house-DAT **ver**-build-TS he.GEN-for / *he.DAT
 ‘You build a house for him.’
- c. saxl-s **u**-shen-**eb** *mis-tvis / mas
 house-DAT **ver**-build-TS *he.GEN-for / he.DAT
 ‘You build a house for him.’

Because it stands in contrast with other possible version vowels, *a-* has been called ‘neutral version’ in the Georgian linguistic tradition (Boeder 1969, Hewitt 1995). However, its meaning and function are not related to the ‘participant affectedness’ meanings of the other version vowels, and it is not required on all verbs.

8. Version Markers as Experiencer Agreement

8.1 *i/u-*

For many verbs, version vowels have become grammaticalized as experiencer agreement. Such verbs subcategorize for an indirect object and may or may not have a direct object. This may be an intermediate stage between semantically / pragmatically motivated objective version and fully grammaticalized, morphological uses of version vowels.

The verbs in (35) do not subcategorize for a direct object and belong to Conjugation 3.

- (35) a. m-i-chivl-**eb**
 1SGOBJ-VER-sue-TS

- ‘You will sue me.’
 b. m-i-chkmet’ xelze
 1SGOBJ-VER-pinch hand.on
 ‘You will pinch me on the hand.’

In (36), the verb ‘approve’ is phrasal, consisting of a required direct object, and the patient is encoded as an indirect object and cross-referenced on the verb with a version vowel.

- (36) k’rebam da-**u**-ch’ir-a mxari am
 council.ERG PV-**ver**-hold-SCR shoulder.NOM this
 k’andidat’uris sheq’vanas saarchevno biulet’enshi.
 candidacy.GEN inclusion.DAT electoral ballot.in
 ‘The council approved the inclusion of this candidacy in the
 electoral ballot.’ (Internet)

8.2 *s/h-*

Object agreement in Georgian also sometimes includes the prefix *s/h-*, where the two consonants are phonologically conditioned allomorphs. The prefix cross-references 3rd person indirect objects and cannot co-occur with a version vowel (37a); the indirect object can fulfill a number of thematic roles. Often, constructions which use *s/h-* can be contrasted with other constructions in which the affected participant is expressed in a postpositional phrase, similar to the contrast between version vowel-containing constructions and those with *-tvis* phrases (37b).

- (37) a. man mo-**h**-p’ara (mas) vashl-i
 he.ERG PV-**s/h**-steal.AOR (3SG.DAT) apple-NOM
 ‘He stole an apple from him/her.’
 b. man mo-p’ara mat-gan vashl-i
 he.ERG PV-steal.AOR 3SG.GEN-from apple-NOM
 ‘He stole an apple from him/her.’

Thus, in some ways, the constructions with *s/h-* can serve to elevate a participant to an indirect object (core argument) status, and are functionally similar to version vowels. Such classification has been suggested by Shanidze and by Boeder (p.c.). The forms with *s/h-* are not as common in modern Georgian as they once were, are less productive than forms with version vowels, and their lexical distribution requires a more thorough investigation. However, it does seem that such forms, along with *i/u-* object agreement forms, serve as the morphological basis for the inversion constructions discussed in the next section.

9. Inversion

The inversion construction de-emphasizes the agentivity of the subject. Inversion can occur in series III (perfect and pluperfect screeves) of active verbs (i.e. Conjugation 1 and 3) and in all forms of Conjugation 4 ('indirect') verbs. Inversion in series III coincides with an evidential interpretation of the perfect and pluperfect screeves. Indirect verbs do not have evidential semantics, but tend to include patient-like verbs, e.g. verbs of experience, perception, and possession.

In inversion, semantic subjects appear in the dative case and semantic direct objects appear in the nominative. Agreement markers of the verbs are correspondingly flipped. Harris (1981), working within the framework of Relational Grammar, has argued that the initial subject in inversion is realized as an indirect object (see Blevins (forthcoming) for a rendition of this analysis in Lexical Mapping Theory). It is a matter of some theoretical debate whether the syntactic phenomenon is the same in series III and in indirect verbs (Tuite, p.c.), but its effect on case-marking, version vowel use, and agreement is the same in both cases. Under any interpretation, dative subjects in inverted series III and indirect verbs have some properties in common with indirect subjects in non-inverted contexts, a fact that was also pointed out by Tschenkeli (1958) and Shanidze (1973).

9.1 Inversion in Active Verbs

Instead of normal version vowels, the pre-stem slot in these verbs has obligatory markers *i/u-* or *e-*, which indicate screeve (TAM) in series III. In the perfect, forms with a 1st and 2nd person initial subject have the version vowel *i-* (38a); forms with a 3rd person initial subject have the version vowel *u-* (38b). A beneficiary of the action can only be expressed in a postpositional phrase.

- (38) a. (turme) saxl-i a-m-**i**-sheneb-ia.
 (apparently) house.NOM PV-1SGOBJ-**ver**-build-PERF
 'I have (apparently) built a house (for a friend).'
- b. mas saxl-i a-**u**-sheneb-ia.
 3SG.DAT house.NOM PV-**ver**-build-PERF
 '(S)he has built a house (for a friend).'

In the pluperfect screeves, all forms have the version vowel *e-* (39).

- (39) a. saxl-i (amxanag-is-tvis) unda
 house.NOM (friend-GEN-for) must
 a-m-**e**-sheneb-ina.
 PV-1SGOBJ-**ver**-build-PLUPERF

- ‘I was supposed to have built a house (for a friend).’
 b. saxl-i (amxanag-is-tvis) unda a-e-sheneb-ina.
 house.NOM (friend-GEN-for) must PV-**ver**-build-PLUPERF
 ‘(S)he was supposed to have built a house (for a friend).’

Subjective or objective versions are not possible in inversion (40).

- (40) *saxl-i amxanag-s unda
 house.NOM friend-DAT must
 a-m-**i/u**-sheneb-ina.
 PV-1SGOBJ-**ver**-build-PLUPERF
 ‘I was supposed to have built a house for a friend.’

In inversion, the semantic subject appears to have some the formal properties of an indirect object, including version vowels. This connection may have arisen through the types of verbs described in section 8.. The version vowels thus have some connection to the syntax, and are not simply morphological or lexical. However, the syntactic function of the version vowels does not explain why *i/u-* is used in the perfect and *e-* is used in the pluperfect.

9.2 Inversion in Indirect Verbs

Some indirect verbs can have an obligatory marker *i/u-* or *e-* in series I and II (41). Their series III forms are usually participial and thus do not contain version vowels.

- (41) a. m-**i**-q'vars / **u**-q'vars
 1SGSUBJ-**ver**-love / **ver**-love
 ‘I love it / (S)he loves it.’
 b. m-**e**-mgher-eba
 1SGSUBJ-**ver**-sing-PASS
 ‘I feel like singing.’

Other indirect verbs use object markers and *s/h-*, although the future tends to be marked by *e-* for all indirect verbs (42).

- (42) a. mo-**m**-c'ons / mo-**s**-c'ons
 PV-1SG-like / PV-3SG-like
 ‘I like it / (S)he likes it.’
 b. mo-**e**-c'oneba
 PV-**VER**-like
 ‘I will like it.’

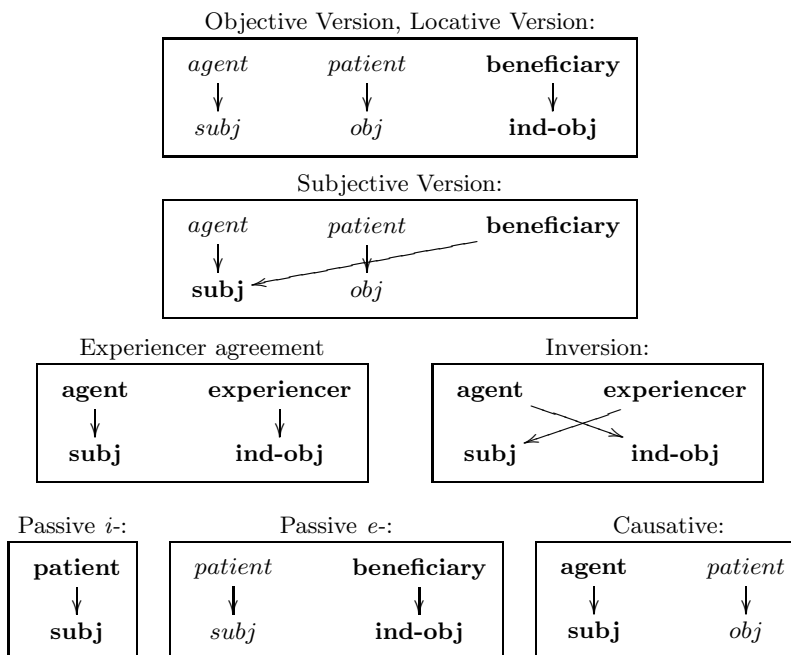


FIGURE 1 Argument-linking representation of version constructions

The contrast between *i/u*- and *s/h*- is reminiscent of the contrast between these markers in grammaticalized patient marking. In the case of indirect verbs, however, the motivation for using one construction over another seems to be even more lexicalized.

10. Conclusion

The pre-stem slot on the verb is most often related to valency and voice. Most of the syntactic differences between different version constructions can be represented in terms of linking between thematic roles and syntactic arguments, as in Figure 1. The parts of the linking structure that are contrasted with other version constructions or constructions without version vowels are in bold-face. Additional semantic differences, such as the distinction between objective, locative, and *s/h*-version are not indicated in the linking diagrams.

This generalization is not without exception. In some contexts, pre-stem vowels may have purely morphological functions, quite unrelated to syntactic valency or voice. The so-called ‘neutral’ version *a*- in section

7. is one such example; others abound, but their description is beyond the scope of this paper.

On the other hand, the pre-stem slot is not the only part of a verb form involved in expressing valency changes or voice. As mentioned in section 7., thematic suffixes (especially *-eb*), and the suffix *-in* also participate in the formation of causatives. Some passive and impersonal verbs, on the other hand, are formed by adding the suffix *d-* instead of a version vowel. In short, the valency-changing function is not uniquely associated with the pre-stem slot—there are exceptions on both formal and functional sides of the relationship.

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