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The Many Moods of Lak

The Lak verb has at its disposal a variety of grammatical and grammaticalized means of indicating the degree to which the speaker is committed to the statement. Among those means are the choice of verbal paradigm, the choice of case of the participants of the verb phrase, the choice of agreement between verb and participants, and the use of verbal particles and lexical items. In earlier work (Friedman 2003) I have examined the opposition assertive/nonassertive, the use of heterogeneous paradigms, analytic constructions (especially nonconfirmative ones), agreement patterns and case choices that are used to withhold confirmation or volition, and emphatic and nonconfirmative (quotative and other) particles, clitics, and lexical items. I have examined these phenomena as they intersect with present, past, and future paradigms. In this paper, I wish to look at Lak mood *sensu stricto*, but not without paying attention to its interaction with the categories and phenomena referred to above (cf., e.g., Kozinceva's 1994 analysis of Lak as having a reported imperative). In particular, I shall be concerned with the moods traditionally labeled as conditional, potential, optative, and imperative (and at times such combinations as conditional-optative). At issue are not simply the basic meanings expressed by the paradigms as well as the consistency in the terminology for their description (cf. Murkelinskij 1971, 1981 vs Zhirkov 1955, especially the use of 'conditional' to refer to various paradigms), but even the question of paradigmaticity itself (cf. Burch'uladze 1987). Moreover, the morphology of the imperative as well as the interaction of negation and interrogation with conjugation and focus present considerable additional complexities. In this paper, therefore, I plan to survey briefly the state of available descriptions and argue for a clearer and more ordered analysis using heretofore uncited examples. The paper should be of interest to typologists as well as Caucasologists.

References

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