

Some remarks on lexical aspects of evidentiality in Georgian

Georgian has no specific grammatical category for evidentiality, which is mainly encoded in the perfect tense. However, this language also employs lexical means (e.g. adverbial constructions, quotative and evidential particles) to express evidential values as an alternative to the evidential perfect or in those cases where the perfect is not possible.

Lexical evidentiality in Georgian has not been thoroughly investigated up to the present. Boeder (2000), in his comprehensive paper, focuses on the evidential perfect; in his analysis he also includes other morphosyntactic expressions of values which are somehow semantically close to the evidentiality (quotative, evidential and confirmative particles, future forms). However, many aspects of lexical evidentiality remain to be examined.

In this paper it will be shown that not all evidential particles have the same distribution. Particular attention will be paid to invariable evidentiality markers such as *turme* ‘apparently’ and *et’q’oba* ‘noticeably’. *Turme* can be combined with all kinds of evidential perfect in order to intensify the evidential value of the utterance. With *et’q’oba* such a combination is not possible. Also, *turme* can be used to mark a state or an event based on inference or hearsay, while *et’q’oba* is only inferential. On the basis of written and oral data it will also be shown to what extent the lexical expressions may occur as an alternative to the evidential perfect and where they may have some restrictions. Then, the factors determining such restrictions will be singled out.

Parallel data from languages genetically related to Georgian (Mingrelian and Svan) will be presented, posing the question of whether the expression of evidentiality by lexical means is a common feature in the South Caucasian sub-area.

References:

1. Boeder, Winfried (2000): Evidentiality in Georgian, in: Johanson & Utas : “Evidentials: Turkic, Iranian and Neighbouring Languages”. Mouton de Gruyter, Berlin-New York, (pp.275-328).
2. Giacalone Ramat, Anna and Manana Topadze (forthcoming): The coding of evidentiality: a comparative look at Georgian and Italian, in: “Italian Journal of Linguistics”.