Linguistics

Basic Cases in the Tsova-Tush Language

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ABSTRACT: The Tsova-Tush language belongs to the Nacho-Dagestanian branch of the Ibero-Caucasian language family and is spoken in the only Georgian village Zemo-Alvani by particularly low number of the native speakers. According to the current data, the number of the Tsova-Tush families is just 421, with the family members hardly about 1558 people. The dative case of the Tsova-Tush language raises an important question. The function of the Georgian language dative case is distributed among four different cases in the Tsova-Tush language. Each case has clear, distinct formant and equally clearly restricted functioning area. There are specific forms in relation to the contextual nuances of the accompanying verbs. We consider that all these four forms should be united as basic cases since the agents' relation to verbs is linked to them. Considering that these cases have common syntactic functions and have interrelation of additional distribution with each other from the viewpoint of formation, we mark them with the same name – dative– and number them on the purpose of distinguishing them from each other as follows: dative I, dative II, dative III, dative IV. With such a term there will be elicited their relation to each other, on the one hand, and to Georgian, on the other. As a result, 7 basic cases can be outlined: nominative -∅, ergative-s/-v, genitive-ĭ, dative I-n, dative II-go, dative III-gô, dative IV-x. *© 2018 Bull. Georg. Natl. Acad. Sci.*

Key words*: Tsova-Tush language, nominative, genitive, ergative, dative*

The Tsova-Tush language has long been facing the threat of complete and ultimate shift to the Georgian language by steady waves of Tsova-Tush -Georgian bilingualism through the centuries. The process will be even further accelerated by the fact that Tsova-Tush - Georgian bilingualism is of asymmetrical nature. Tsova-Tush population speak both their native and Georgian languages, while Georgians do not know Tsova-Tush at all.

Proceeding from the results of her fieldwork, professor Gigashvili concludes: 'if we take the current state into consideration, the life span of the Tsova-Tush language is 80 years and this in the case if the youngest native speakers today (twenty-year-old youths who comprise a very low percent of native speakers) will live up to 100 years'[1].

The issue of case number of the Tsovatush language in scientific literature. Scientific studies of the Tsova-Tush language began in the 19th century. The number of researchers interested in the language has rapidly grew since then. A Number of papers, monographs and dissertations were written exploring various units of grammatical structures of the language.

Researches show that mostly it was a truly wide-ranging and independent system of nouns'

declension of the Tsova-Tush language that attracted linguists' attention. However, we consider that there are many issues to be studied and specified in the essential field of morphology. On the one hand, the difficulties arise due to the abundance of word-building cases and, on the other hand, due to the abundance of case forming formants and prepositional forms. For instance, the number of cases reached 22 with A. Shiffner [2]. The researchers agree on the issue of the number of basic cases in the Tsova-Tush language identifying for basic cases: nominative, genitive, ergative and dative.

Discussion

We agree with professor D. Imnaishvili's opinion on the special role of these cases in the given language. However, we have a different opinion on the number of basic cases.

The dative case of the Tsova-Tush language raises an important issue. The function of the Georgian dative case is distributed among four different cases of the other language. Each of the cases has a clear, distinct formant and equally clearly restricted functioning area. Here we have specification of forms in relation to the contextual nuances of the accompanying verbs. Thus, we have:

I. vaš-e-n ecĩ'(She) bought for the brothe'r;

II. vaš-e-go daqĩ'(He) took away from the brother';

III. vaš-e-gôtagditẽ'(He) had it done by brother';

IV. vaš-e-x xattĩ'(She) asked brother'.

All four forms that are being explored have the base of genitive case as a foundation. Forming affixes are different and the verbs that agree with them are of different content. We can produce a long row of verbs with similar content for each presented example, those that have steady syntactic relations with these forms of nouns.

All the researchers of Tsova-Tush place the first four forms in the category of case and refer them as

dative. Their approach to the rest three forms varies.

We consider that all these four forms should be united as basic cases since the agents' relation with the verbs is linked to them.

Considering that these cases have common syntactic functions and have interrelation of additional distribution with each other from the viewpoint of formation, we mark them with the same name – dative and number them on the purpose of distinguishing them from each other as follows: dative I, dative II, dative III, dative IV.

We will start our reasoning with the universally recognized dative case as the semantic plan of the rest cases is delineated namely through their relation to it. This universal dative will be referred to as dative I by us. It thoroughly justifies its name in the Tsova-Tush language since it agrees with only those verbs which denote the action aimed in favor of indirect object. In the Georgian language this kind of semantic dependence is regulated by verb's objective version form. However, in the Tsova-Tush language all the job is done by the case formant as there is no category of version in this language.

For instance:

siḳvdlecĩ buh gmirbeɣ čatlodbiẽ važḳace-n '(They) regarded the brave man's war with the death as heroism'.

We have an infinite row of verbs with similar content.

Dative II is also founded on the base of genitive case and uses a suffix –go as a formant. On the content level, it is completely opposite to dative I and expresses the action which is harmful or undesirable for the indirect object. Comp.:

Dative I. nan-e-n diḳẽ'brought to mother'

Dative II. nan-e-go daqĩ'Took it away from mother'

For instance:

kazdr-e-go daḳmakā daha pšellara, 'The earth's chest was getting cold.'

We have a number of verbs which, according to their content, agree only with nouns with –go as indirect objects.

The contradiction between these two suffixes alone determines whether an action is performed for or against the wish of indirect object or whether it harms indirect object or not. We think that function of –go suffix is precisely creating this kind of opposition.

Dative III as well has its main and additional functions. It is also founded on the base of genitivecase and uses a suffix –gô as a formant. The main function of this suffix is to express the real agent of the action in causative forms. For instance:

hun-gô iš tepsitor maxava 'The wind made the forest sound'.

In Tsova-Tush, all the verbs of the active voice have the form of indirect contact, which is formed by the special suffix –it and which is used only for this occasion. It implies three arguments that agree with the predicate (one subject argument and two object (direct and indirect) arguments. They are as follows: the leader of the action, the agent and the object the action is directed to. The leader of the action is the subject argument and is in ergative case. The real agent of the action is the indirect object argument and is in dative III. The third part is regarded as the direct object argument and is in nominative case. It is evident, that using dative III in this specific function is almost unlimited since in Tsova-Tush all the verbs of Active Voice have this kind of structure (causative). For instance:

1.ninos nan-e-gô băder daqd-it-ē 'Nino had her child brought up by her mother'.

2.ilḳos ṗetr-e-gô dõ danalodb-it-ē 'Iliko had his horse shod by Peter'.

3.tamros tin-e-gô xē dargodb-it-ē 'Tamar had a tree planted by Tina'.

The forms that we called dative IV, have completely different functions. It differs from the rest of the datives both in function and formation, namely: nouns ending on consonant again use genitivecase as the base, while nouns ending on vowel agree with the base of nominative case. Suffix –x acts as the case formant.

It is quite difficult to unite under some common feature these numerous verbs which agree with a noun in dative IV case. There is only one way left; this is to apply the method of exclusion and state that a verb which on the content level does not agree with any of dative cases, that is I, II or III, it will agree with its accompanying member – indirect object in dative IV.

For instance:

dani' tamar mep matxo-x dadralô, 'All were swearing by King Tamar'.

There is one particular moment which we should not overlook, namely: there is a particular field in grammar where nouns operate only in the given dative IV case. This is the category of comparative degree. Thus, the object to which the comparison is directed to, is always in dative IV. This is a rule without any exception and forms a solid system. For example:

nana-x (than Mother):

γaziv-xô 'better'; lamzur-xô 'more beautiful'; laqiv-xô 'taller'; gõliv-xô 'cleverer'; …

This suffix is very productive when it has this function. We can have endless row of similar examples with any other noun. To express comparative degree is one of the chief functions of the case with –x suffix in Tsova-Tush. Through this feature the given case is opposed both to the rest three dative cases and all the other cases as well. In addition, it maintains the status of independent case.

Academician Arnold Chikobava makes a very interesting general conclusion based on the Avar language: 'As it is already known, the directive case has a certain functional connection with dative case' [3]. It is noteworthy to mention that in Georgian as well we have the similar relation between dative case and adverbial modifier of place.

As we can see, all the four datives in Tsova-Tush have precisely outlined all the functions which in Georgian are performed only one general dative that is connected to verb. We believe that designating them by

one common name, that is by dative, underlines both similarities and differences between the two languages in this respect. As for the question whether or not include them in basic cases, we have a positive answer; it is in these cases where actants being agreed with verbs are usually found in.

Tsova-Tush is not the only language where one and the same syntactic function is performed by several cases. In this respect, two datives of Udi language should be mentioned. Furthermore, it is very interesting to observe that formants of dative case of these two languages are identical on the language level [4, 5].

As we have already mentioned, three out of four datives (II, III, IV) have been partially or entirely included by D. Imnaishvili and other researchers in prepositional cases. The only reason for this is that in a number of occurrences they express adverbial modifier of place as well. It is not without interest that on the expression level there is a similar picture with dative in Georgian. Yet, this case is not regarded as prepositional because of this. The main thing is that it expresses the verb's agent. We believe that the same factor should define the statuses of the abovementioned three cases.

Conclusion.

Based on the studied material, we can conclude that the function of the Georgian language dative case

is distributed among four different cases in the Tsova-Tush language. Each of the cases has a clear, distinct formant and equally clearly restricted functioning area. Here we have specification of forms in relation to the contextual nuances of the accompanying verbs.

Considering that these cases have common syntactic functions and have interrelation of additional distribution with each other from the viewpoint of formation, we mark them with the same name – dative– and number them on the purpose of distinguishing them from each other as follows: dative I, dative II, dative III, dative IV. With such a term there will be elicited their relation to each other, on the one hand, and to Georgian, on the other.

Taking into consideration all the above-mentioned, we can outline 7 simple cases which are formed with the following formants and in this order: nominative -$\varnothing$, ergative -s/-v, genitive -$\tilde{\imath}$, dative I-n, dative II-go, dative III-gô, dative IV-x.

ენათმეცნიერება

წოვათუშური ენის ძირითადი ბრუნვები

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თავისებური ვითარება იქმნება წოვათუშური ენის მიცემითთან დაკავშირებით: ქართული ენის ერთი – მიცემითი – ბრუნვის ფუნქციები ამ ენაში ოთხ სხვადასხვა ბრუნვას შორის არის განაწილებული. თითოეულ მათგანს აქვს საკუთარი მაწარმოებელი და მკვეთრად შემოზღუდული სამოქმედო არე: ადგილი აქვს სახელის ფორმათა კონკრეტიზაციას შეწყობილ ზმნათა შინაარსობრივ ნიუანსებთან დაკავშირებით, რაც დასტურდება მაგალითებით ცოცხალი მეტყველებიდან. მიგვაჩნია, რომ ოთხივე საკვლევი ფორმა ძირითად ბრუნვათა რიგში უნდა მოექცეს, რადგან მათთან დაკავშირებულია აქტანტების ზმნებთან მიმართება. იმის გამო, რომ ეს ბრუნვები ერთსა და იმავე სინტაქსურ როლს ასრულებენ და დამატებით დისტრიბუციულ მიმართებაში არიან ერთმანეთთან, ჩვენ მათ ერთი და იმავე სახელით – მიცემითით – აღვნიშნავთ და ერთმანეთისგან გასარჩევად ვნომრავთ; გვაქვს: მიცემითი I, მიცემითი II, მიცემითი III, მიცემითი IV. ასეთი სახელდებით გამოიკვეთება, ერთი მხრივ, მათი მიმართება ერთმანეთთან, მეორე მხრივ კი – ქართულ მიცემითთან.

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