
Interactions between detransitive voice and TAM in Georgian

Hélène Gérardin*[†]

¹INALCO – Institut National des Langues et Civilisations Orientales – France

Résumé

Languages expressing diathesis by morphological voice often extend the use of voice to aspectual and modal meanings. Typical examples are modal passives, facilitatives, generic antipassives, etc. (Givón 2001).

The aim of this presentation is to study the interactions between detransitive voice and TAM in Georgian. The data are from my fieldwork.

Georgian has a morphological detransitive in *i-R-eb-a* (R = root) deriving intransitive constructions from transitive ones. Its main values are passive and antipassive:

(1)

a.

k'ac-i

pul-s

xar-av-s.

man-nom

money-acc

spend-prs-3sg

‘The man spends money.’

b.

is

*Intervenant

[†]Auteur correspondant: helene.gerardin@gmail.com

i-xar-eb-a.

3sg.nom

detr-spend-detr-3sg

- ‘1. [The money] is spent (by someone). passive
2. [The man] spends too much money.’ antipassive

The morphosyntactic features of the detransitive pattern are well-studied, but its aspecto-modal uses lack thorough analysis.

I argue that the ”passive” use of the detransitive has well-developed potential and deontic meanings (2), while the ”antipassive” presents imperfective values (durative, habitual, conative) (3).

(2)

eset-i

rame

ar

i-mal-eb-a.

such-nom

thing.nom

neg

detr-hid-detr-3sg

‘Such a thing can’t / shouldn’t be hidden.’

(3)

k’ac-i

i-lan γ -eb-a.

man-nom

detr-insult-detr-3sg

‘The man has been insulting for a long time / usually insults / tries to insult.’

Besides, passive and antipassive have generic meanings and are used to express permanent virtual semantic properties of the patient or the agent (e.g. ‘to be hidable’, ‘to be an insult-

ter').

I will then suggest that the voice and aspecto-modal categories being expressed by the same morphology has a decrease of semantic transitivity as its center: the non-referentiality of one of the core-arguments makes the sentence able to be interpreted as atelic and/or irrealis.

Mots-Clés: diathèse, antipassif, géorgien, (ir)realis