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Subjectless Sentences in Georgian and the Specifics of their Translation into German

Abstract. *The represented article discusses the examples of subjectless sentences in Georgian and the specifics of their translation into German. Special attention is paid to the morphological-syntactic aspects, first of all, such points as valency and personality (person numbers) of the verbs; then, attention is paid to the peculiarities of their representation in sentences, and some nuisances from the content viewpoint are also mentioned. As for the viewpoint of typology, the common and the differing signs of the subjectless sentences in these non-related languages are analyzed. The semantic-stylistic varieties of the mentioned two languages are sorted out as the universal signs; their universal capabilities are analyzed, and special work is done towards the following points: abilities of transmission, the morphological-syntactic signs of the impersonal verbs in Georgian; as for the German language, the necessity of a formal subject. Some cases showing the equivalent forms are analyzed which are not met in the German language. Namely, some impersonal sayings and some forms of sayings expressing wishes. It can be concluded conclusion is made that the stylistic-semantic signs to be delivered, are universal. Still, in non-related languages, the means of expressing the stylistic-semantic peculiar signs are quite special. The material for analysis is taken from the Georgian and German linguistic corpora [1; 2].*

Key words: *Georgian language, German language, syntax, typology, valency of verbs, impersonal verbs, structure of sentence, sentence constituents*

1. Introduction.

1.1. To the terms.

The term “**subjectless**”, meaning “without a subject”, implies a sentence without any subject at all, it is even impossible to recover the subject or to replace it by any other means of the language. In Georgian linguistics, this term is used to denote the sentence in which impersonal verbs are included and such sentences are called also “one-component sentences” according to the number of components (constituents). It must be mentioned, that in Georgian we have examples of sentences with two or three constituents and still without a distinctive subject. The term “**pirnak’li**” meaning “person-missing” by **Akaki Shanidze** [3, p. 89; 4, p. 190], is quite exact for the phenomenon implying that it is characteristic of third-person verbs though the first and second personal forms do not exist there.

1.2. The Situation of Studying the Subjectless Sentences in the Georgian Linguistics

The first who paid attention to the impersonal verbs in Georgian, as early as

1923, was the well-known Georgian psychologist **Dimitri Uznadze** who considered such verbs of the old origin with the ability to express the peculiar view of the Universe by humans [5, p. 1-27].

The subjectless constructions should be discussed on the morphological and syntactic levels as neither morphology nor syntax apart can fully involve the problematics of the given matter. The personal verbs and the constructions in which they are met have a long history of investigations in Georgian linguistics. **Akaki Shanidze** paid special attention to these verbs and called them in Georgian “**pirnak’li**” which means person-less verbs because they show only the third person, the rest of the personal signs are missed [4, p. 190, 529]. Quite large and useful works on the mentioned issue are done by **Nikandro Basilaia** [6, p. 367-406] and by **Leo Kvachadze** in all the editions of his manual on Georgian syntax [7, p. 207-208]. The works by **Akaki Davitiani** are also very useful [8, p. 190-195]. The works by **Anton Kiziria** are notable from the viewpoint of analysis of the situation comparing the data of the Old Georgian and Modern Georgian [9, p. 101-110; 10, p. 38-47]. The author discusses generalized sentences and sentences with generalized and indefinite persons and gives quite several interesting examples from literature. The constructions with personless and impersonal verbs in Georgian and German are also discussed in the works by **Rusudan Zekalashvili** [11, p. 38-43; 12, p. 96-102]. The same problems are discussed in short in the monography by **Dali Bakhtadze** [13, p. 376-378].

The above-mentioned issue is studied profoundly in German linguistics with all its aspects. Absolutely all kinds of scientific works on morphology or syntax, and dissertation papers reveal an interest in these issues as well. We rely on the works about grammar issues written by **Gerhard Helbig/Joachim Busha** [14, p. 53-54, 117, 554- 555] and **Lutz Götze/ Ernest W. B Hess-Luttich** [15, p. 70-71] in the spheres of morphology and syntax.

Studying the subjectless sentences is still important and actual. Especially this can be said from the typological viewpoint (among not-related languages) to highlight the diversity of the issue and specific features of every language. The views and understanding of any language towards the same issue enable people to use correctly the sentences, sayings, types of constructions, and so on, during the process of translating.

2. Subjectless Sentences and Impersonal Verbs.

The impersonal verbs and the sentences in which they are used can be met in any language but their forms and functions can’t coincide within typologically different languages such are Georgian and German languages.

In Georgian the personless (impersonal) verbs are included in different semantic groups. Here we meet so-called verbs of physiological issues having two personal markers but are exposed as one person (so, they are non-valent = aivalent verbs).

The construction with such kinds of verbs is called one-constituent sentence but it should be noted that there can be two persons in some of such cases in the Georgian language because the verb itself is polypersonal. Such construction reveals two

personal markers but the understanding of only one person (thus, it is a monovalent or bivalent verb) and there is also an objective person marker (but this is a bi-personal verb with two markers. The verb can be compared with the English pronoun which shows the sign of the objective person which is the real subject. The verb form shows the marker of the object (subject in fact = real subject) and this means that some researchers are mistaken regarding the subjectless forms of the verbs as being the kind of one-constituent verbs. In our opinion, this resulted from mistakes under the influence of Russian linguistic viewpoints.

In German there is a special pronoun 'es' which is used in the function of **formal subject**, of course, it does not express the real subject, it shows the impersonal verbs. The sentence must be right (comp. with the English impersonal pronoun 'it'). It can be said that the pronouns 'es' and 'it' have the same function in English and German, as in Russian there is no such.

When the structure of the sentence is discussed, the sentence that contains such kinds of verbs is a-valent. That is why they are called one-constituent sentences. The specific nature of the Georgian language is revealed in the examples when besides the one constituent, there are also two- or three-constituent sentences with non-personal verbs: *ts'vims* – 'it is raining'; *ats'vims* – 'the rain falls on something'; the same can be said about *tovs* – 'it snows' and *atovs* – 'it snows on something', *etsineba*, *aslok'inebs*.

3. The Types of the Subjectless Sentences.

3.1. Subjectless Sentences in the Georgian Language.

Mostly, the constructions with verbs that lack a person are called subjectless constructions. We think that this term can be used in a broader meaning, just as it is used in foreign linguistics, and give this name to all the defective constructions in which the subject is shown only by personal marker (or by formal pronoun) if it cannot be restored anymore, or if it is indefinite and is not concrete – all such kinds of subjects, also if those constructions of that kind, cannot be simply discussed as parts of the simple sentences – in all such situations, which can be seen almost in any sentence and any language and subject is not concrete and sometimes is generalized – all such constructions can not be discussed as simple sentences because such forms can be met in all sentences (simple, compound and complex: hypotaxis and parataxis).

The sentences containing the **impersonal verbs**. From the semantic viewpoint, such constructions involve some groups (the classification given by A. Kiziria is almost the same and involves several groups. I have added only some corrections to the mentioned discussion) [10, p. 38-40].

1. The sentences describing the meteorological (natural) phenomena; *ts'vims* – 'it is raining', *tovs* – 'it is snowing', *elavs* – 'it is lightning', *tsiva* – 'it is cold, and so on (*kukhs*, *grgvinavs*, *q'inavs*, *uberavs*... *tbila*, *grila*, *bnela*...).

2. The verbs denoting the natural phenomena just in the given time; *tendeba* – 'it is getting light', 'the sun is shining', *bneldeba* – 'It is dark', *ghamdeba* – 'the night is coming', and so on (*mosaghamovda*, *garizhrazhda*, *gazapkhulda*, *dazamtrda*, *gamoidarebs*, *gaavdrdeba*...).

3. There is quite a large group of words denoting physiological processes taking place in the human body, they are as follows: *akhvelebs* – ‘is coughing’, *atseminebs* – ‘is sneezing’ (*atrtlebs*, *azhrzholebs*, *atsiebs*, *atskhelebs*, *ak'ank'alebs*, *atsakhtsakhebs*, *adzagdzagebs*, *aslok'inebs*, *aboaq'inebs*, *amtknarebs*, *azmorebs*, *opls askhams*, *ami'vrevs dzylebshi*) and so on... (statistical data of some impersonal verbs see in Table 1).

4. Words denoting human feelings (spirits, sentiments, or moods): *etsineba* – ‘he wants to laugh’, *et'ireba* – ‘he wants to cry’... Sometimes, the interrogative forms are added with the pronoun ‘ra’ (what). Which has lost its function of interrogative pronoun in the given case: *ra ets'igneba* – meaning: someone wants to read a book and the other judges that it is not the proper situation for reading, or someone does not want to read and the other justifies him because it is not proper time to read; (*ra*) *echkhubeba* – one quarrel with somebody and the others judge because it is not proper time for quarrel or someone does not quarrel and the others justify – yes, it is no time for quarreling.

5. To show possibility: *ar itskhovreba*– ‘impossible to live’, *ar etskhovreba*– ‘he can't live’, *ts'aisvleba*– ‘impossible to go’, *ts'aesvleba* – ‘he can't go’, *ar daedgomeba*– ‘he can't stay’...

6. The forms expressing dreams, wishes – *net'a gadamaktsia* – ‘I wish to turn’/‘I wish to be’/‘I dream about’... *man me adamiand maktsia*– ‘he turned me into a man’, compare: *net'avi chit'ad maktsia*– ‘It would be nice if I could turn into a bird’.

Table 1.

Statistics (Impersonal verbs in the corpora)

Verbs	The Georgian National Corpus [1]		dwds-corpus [2]
<i>ts'vims</i>	949	<i>es regnet</i>	497
<i>tovs</i>	516	<i>es schneit</i>	107
<i>tsiva</i>	693	<i>es ist kalt</i>	119
<i>mtsiva</i>	180	<i>es ist mir kalt</i>	1
<i>akhvelebs</i>	364	<i>er hustet</i>	–
<i>makhvelebs</i>	13	<i>es hustet mich*</i>	–
<i>vakhveleb</i>	14	<i>es hüstelt mich</i>	–
		<i>ich huste</i>	11
		<i>ich hüstelte</i>	1
		<i>es hüstelt ihn</i>	–
<i>matsiebs</i>	18	–	
<i>mamtsivnebs</i>	5	<i>es fröstelt mich</i>	1

3.2. Translation of Subjectless sentences into German.

When translating the part of the mentioned semantic groups, we see that in the German language a pronoun is used, namely, this is the pronoun ‘es’ which is the so-called **formal subject** being the necessary part of the structure and it retains two-

component construction (*ts'vims – es regnet, tovs – es schneit...*). But not all of the Georgian examples have the correspondence. Especially in the case of the third, fourth, fifth, and sixth groups in German, and some of them are translated using the usual personal verbs (*ghamdeba – es wird Nacht...*). Sometimes the opposite phenomenon occurs *tagt –dghe dgeba, es taut – tovli dneba*.

Interestingly, the commonly used construction in German – **es ist/wird + Adj** or **Subst (noun)** construction: *bnela – es ist dunkel, tsiva – es ist kalt* – historically it is known as the same construction which once was used in Georgian and during the time, the descriptive form was later replaced by the organic form. As for the auxiliary verb, it is a part (the vowel **-a**) used with some verbs. The same construction existed in Old Georgian and time by time the descriptive form was replaced by the organic form, as for the auxiliaries, they are parts and this fact is shown by vowel **a**, which is considered as the third person marker in Georgian, Compare: *tsiv+ars → tsiva – es ist kalt* 'it is cold' and *tbil+ars → tbila – es ist warm* 'it is warm'.

To express possibilities (fifth group), the German language uses the construction: **es lässt sich + Infinitive**.

For example, *500 dolarad tveshi akar itskhovreba*– Mit 500 Dollar im Monat lässt **es sich** hier nicht **leben** 'it is impossible (in meaning 'very bad') to live here for 500 dollars monthly'.

We shall pay special attention to the sixth group there. There is also one more ability that distinctly shows how the impersonal verbs can be formed out of the personal verbs or how can the personal form of the verb become impersonal, or otherwise, neutralized (so-called depersonalization) [12, p. 96-98]. Such are the kinds of constructions, in which impersonal verbs can be formed instead of personal, ones so depersonalization can take place. The phenomenon is described in detail in one of the papers by Rusudan Zekalashvili [15, p. 151-163].

For example, *net'av chit'ad maktsia* – here the verb can turn into an impersonal verb or otherwise, the neutralization of a person can happen. Such examples are the constructions expressing dreams and wishes: the verb *maktsia* is a two-person (bi-personal) verb, but when saying *net'avi chit'ad maktsia*. In the German language such examples are not confirmed, and to express unreal (non-real) wishes, it is necessary to use the conjunctive mood form (Konjunktiv II). For example, *Wenn ich mich in einen Vogel verwandeln würde! Wenn ich ein Vogel wäre! 'I wish to turn to be a bird'/'If only I could be a bird!/' or 'I wish I were a bird!'* In such case, the verb again has a two personal markers, though it implies understanding as only monopersonal. This example testifies also one more interesting example – here we see how it standard bipersonal verb may lose understanding one of them and the object in the dative case turns out to be a function of the perceptive subject.

The forms expressing wishes turn out to be inversive: GS = RO and GO = RS³¹.

Examples: *ts'amiq'vana man me p'arizshi* – 'he took me with him to Paris' → *net'a*

³¹ GS = grammatical subject, GO = grammatical object, RS = real subject, RO=real object.

ts'amiq'vana p'arizshi! – Wenn ich nach Paris fahren würde! 'If I went to Paris!/It would be nice to go to Paris!'; *man me p'rintesad maktsia* – 'he turned me into a princess' → *net'a p'rintesad maktsia!* – Wenn ich eine Prinzessin sein würde! 'If I were a princess!/'It would be great to turn into a princess!'; *man me mankana maq'idvina* 'he helped me buy a car' → *net'a es mankana maq'idvina!* – Wenn ich dieses Auto kaufen würde!/Würde ich dieses Auto kaufen! 'It would be great to buy such a car!

In this case, one person is lost. Namely, it is the third person lost here which may be perceived as a superpower by the help of which the wish can become unreal.

3.3. Some features of translation into German.

The first two groups of the Georgian **subjectless** sentences (denoting the natural phenomena and also the changes that happened during a certain period) show similarity with the equal sentences in German. The difference is shown only in some sentences, namely, the German sentences are two-component units where the subject is denoted by the pronoun 'es' though it is only formal and therefore is unchangeable and the function of it is just showing the impersonality.

Sometimes the Georgian sentences are replaced by a composed predicate: *es ist.../es wird...* or by the personal form of the verb: *ghamdeba* – es wird Nacht 'it is going dark', 'the night is coming'; *tsiva*– es ist kalt 'it is cold', but sometimes the sentences can be of such content: *es tagt –dghe dgeba* 'the day has come'; *es taut –tovli dneba* 'snow is melting'.

Physiological processes take place within the human (or animal) body. Such verbs in Georgian are large in number, as in German, they are often replaced by impersonal constructions, in which direct and indirect objects are also involved and the types of verbs are richer in Georgian: *mts'q'uria* – es düstet mich, *mak'ank'alebs* – es schüttelt mich 'I am shivering', *meshinia*– es graut mir – , I am thirsty', 'I am afraid', *madzagdzagebs* – 'I am shivering very strongly'. In German such sayings are not very frequent, they are replaced by *ich zittere* – 'I am shivering', not something that makes me shiver. It can be said that in Georgian the subject of the sentence is something very important, like a superpower that causes severe; processes and that is why it is not mentioned.

All the Georgian verbs of the given group are inersive and the subject which must be aware, who should understand, is in the dative case. (= morphological indirect object). The real object = morphological subject which is nominative, and is lost in that case. Thus, the sentence is objectless, not subjectless. In Georgian the direct object is not used in the mentioned case, as for the indirect object, it has become a real subject. *Es friert mich* ('I am freesing', 'it is freesing'). *Es schwindelt mir* ('my head is dizzy', 'I feel dizzy'). In the case of the Georgian verbs *makhvelebs da vakhveleb* – the first one is impersonal and the second is personal. In German it is only using the personal forms.

The contents of the sentences with German impersonal verbs are translated into personal verbs and not by impersonal: *Es graut mir vor der Zukunft.* – *momavlis meshinia* 'I am afraid of the Future'.

This is related to the translation of the sentences which express the mood of the subject of the sentence. In German it is necessary to use descriptive constructions: Ich möchte singen (Ich bin in der Stimmung zu singen*) – ‘I want (I am in the mood of) to sing’, ‘I feel I want to sing’ and so on.

The Georgian sentences of wish have no exact equal sentence for German. There is no such equivalent word that can express an unreal wish. The subjunctive (Konjunktiv II) form shows the will, and unreal wishes using the II conjunctive: *wenn* + *Sub.* + *Konjunktiv II* or *Konjunktiv II* + *Sub.* But in any case, the result is not the equal word for the Georgian language (see chapter 3.2).

4. Using the Impersonal verbs as metaphors.

Besides the above mentioned, it is characteristic for the Georgian language to use impersonal verbs in metaphoric meaning when the verb is in the first or the second mainly person form, or when the not-restored third person subject is named, re-personalized, and turned to be real. Such examples mainly are confirmed in poetic lexis: *gavts'vimdi* – ich begann zu regnen* ‘I became like rain’ = ‘I rain (and the like)’, *gavtovdi* – ich schneite* ‘I became like snow’, *tsremlma its'vima* – die Tränen rannen wie der Regen (aus den Augen)* ‘the tears poured like rain’ or ‘the tears began raining’, *q'avavilebi tovda* – die Blumen schneien* ‘the flowers are snowing’ = ‘flowers fall like snow’ and so on. In German no such examples were found in cases with the first and second persons, but only in some poetry the following examples can be met: „Wenn's schneiet rothe Rosen./Wenn's regnet kühlen Wein! [2], where the impersonal pronoun is kept and the direct object is with the verb. Such examples show that the subject was replaced by the real subject.

5. Conclusions

The impersonal verbs in Georgian build constructions which differ from the constructions met in European languages. It is true that they are called **subjectless** sentences (having no subject) but they may have objects that can be perceived as real subjects and the verb in such cases is inersive. In German impersonal verbs use the specific pronoun **es...** This pronoun is the subject but does not imply any person. In Georgian we do not have such a pronoun. Even more, there is no necessity to fulfill such construction. The personal form of the verb is quite enough. It is not necessary to name the **formal subject**. This is necessary for the German language. In Georgian, the conjugative form shows the personal marker and it is enough. As a rule, when in the subjectless sentence the verb is impersonal, it shows the third person and has the corresponding personal markers.

We consider the viewpoint of some linguists unacceptable. It concerns the view that the mentioned construction is of only one constituent. It shows the mechanical transfer of Russian linguist's views about the Russian language and it is not true regarding the cases in Georgian. Such types of sentences can be of bicomponent or even more.

It should be noted also that to consider such sentences only as the types of simple sentences is not correct, because it must be taken into account that the sentences with impersonal verbs can be simple, compound, or can as well enter complex sentences,

as one of the components (also can be met in a compound sentence or as a part of the complex sentence).

From a semantic viewpoint (according to their group or existing content, the similarity as well as the difference between the subjectless sentences are revealed. We discuss now the sentences denoting the meteorological signs. Such sentences are revealed and they differ according to the constructions which show the difference according to the periods, in Georgian, some parts of them represent compound predicates according to their origin. In German, such sentences also imply impersonal pronouns and are accompanied by the auxiliary verb. Thus, there is a similarity by origin but the modern time situation shows a different picture. In Georgian, the vocal part of some auxiliary verbs is perceived as formally the third-person marker.

The sentences which contain the verbal forms denoting the seasons of the year can be considered in Georgian as the specific forms due to the specific names of the seasons existing in the Georgian language. But in German, they are delivered through the descriptive verbal forms.

The verbs denoting the **physiological processes** taking place in the human or animal organism are more frequent in Georgian than in the German language; they are mono-valent and not any more aivalent verbs (such forms are discussed by some of the Georgian linguists as inersive verbs). The German sentences of such content are near in structure to the Georgian verbs but in that case, the person who perceives is formally either an indirect object or a direct one.

In Georgian a verb can turn to be lacking a person and become inersive. This happens when we meet so-called sentences of dream. Such content is expressed using subjunctive mood (Konjunktiv I) in the German language thus the impersonal pronoun is not needed. Besides the above-mentioned, the impersonal verbs are quite more frequently used in poetry due to their metaphoric meaning and the same can be said about their re-personalization.

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