

## Meaning Resides in Fully Inflected Forms: The Georgian “Unwillingness” Construction

Subject and object agreement on the verb are generally highly regular in Georgian, if a bit complex. But in an obscure corner of the grammar, there are forms traditionally referred to as *uneblieroba* ‘unwillingness’. These can be used only with certain verbs of dark meaning, including ‘kill’, ‘beat’, ‘curse’, or ‘insult’, and the forms include the meaning that the agent acted ‘unwillingly’. The construction is illustrated by the sentence in (1).

- (1)    še-mo-g-e-lan<sup>3</sup>γ-eb-i  
        PV-PV-2O-E-insult-SM-SCM  
        ‘I will unwillingly make you insult me.’

(The form in (1) is a complete, grammatical sentence.) As indicated by the translation line, the meaning involves three arguments, here ‘I’, ‘you’, and ‘me’. As shown here, the prefix *g-* in (1) indicates agreement with the “causee”, the argument that carries out the forced action, here ‘you’. As an indirect object, the causee conditions object agreement, *g-*. Because of slot competition, the matrix agent, here ‘I’, cannot be marked overtly; nevertheless, it can be unambiguously discerned in this form, just as in other regular forms in Georgian. That is, if the matrix subject were third person, it would require the suffix *-a*, which is not present. If the matrix subject were second person, a reflexive would be used. By process of elimination the subject can only be first person. But what of the direct object ‘me’? It cannot be represented as an independent pronoun as most arguments can, and it does not condition agreement in the verb form as other arguments in Georgian do. We may assume that the first person direct object cannot be marked on the verb because of slot competition. But the person of this object is not discernable in the sense that the first person subject is in this same form. Georgian has a special way of marking first person direct object when the indirect object is second person, Object Camouflage, a manifestation of the person case constraint. Object Camouflage cannot be used in (1). This is in stark contrast to ordinary simple sentences and to ordinary causatives formed with these and other verb roots and lacking the meaning ‘unwillingly’.

In the paper, I discuss the meaning of each morpheme in other contexts and show that there is no morpheme here that means ‘me’ and no morpheme that means ‘unwillingly’. Rather, these meanings are a product of the construction as a whole. As regards these two meanings, we do not have one meaning to one morpheme. It is not even possible to say here that the meanings are borne by zero morphemes, in the usual sense of that notion, since there is no minimal contrast with another form, and no appropriate place for such a morpheme to occur.

I argue, instead, for a schema which bears certain morphology and occurs only with certain verb roots. It contains the meanings of a direct object coreferential with the subject and ‘unwillingly’, even though they are not expressed in any specific morpheme.