

ON A TYPE OF SUBJUNCTIVE CONDITIONAL IN GEORGIAN

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Abstract: In Modern Georgian, the conditional conjunction *tu* is occasionally accompanied by a subjunctive verb, instead of an indicative one. The use of the construction is semantically and pragmatically conditioned and is possible in two cases: (i) when the speaker asserts that the protasis content is not true, and (ii) when the apodosis implies a command to the hearer.

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1. Georgian has two conjunctions, *rom* and *tu*, which introduce a conditional clause. The predicate verb in *rom* conditional clauses is in the subjunctive mood. When an adverbial clause led by *rom* has an indicative predicate, it expresses time rather than condition, as in (1).

[rom + indicative]

- (1) č'išk'ar-tan *rom* *mivida*, *isev* šemobrunda. (Dumbadze)
 gate.dat-at if went.aor again turned.aor
 'When he went up to the gate, he turned again.'

[rom + subjunctive]

- (2) es *rom* čemi saxl-i *iq'os*, aravi-s šemovušvebdi. (Chiladze)
 this.nom if my house-nom is.aorsbj nobody-dat I.would.let.in.cond
 'If this were my house, I would not let anybody in.'

The conjunction *tu*, on the other hand, may be accompanied by a verb of either mood to form a conditional clause.

[tu + indicative]

- (3) *tu* *ar* *gamoxval*, *milicia-s* *moviq'van*. (Chokheli)
 if NEG you.will.come.out.FUT policeman-DAT I.will.bring.FUT
 'If you don't come out, I will bring a policeman here.'

[tu + subjunctive]

- (4) *ğvino* *tu* *dagč'irdes*, *ar momerido!* (Dumbadze)
 wine.NOM if you.need.AORSBJ NEG you.are.shy.with.me.SBJ
 'If you need some wine, don't hesitate!'

Table 1 illustrates the combination of a conjunction and the mood of the subordinate verb and the function of the clause.

Table 1. Conjunction, mood of the subordinate verb and function

| | | conjunction | |
|------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-----------|
| | | <i>rom</i> | <i>tu</i> |
| mood of the subordinate verb | indicative | time | condition |
| | subjunctive | condition | condition |

2. The question then is what the difference is among the three types of conditional constructions in terms of their function. According to Vogt (4, pp. 209-10), *rom* introduces a hypothetical proposition, while *tu*, when combined with an indicative verb, presents a condition necessary for the apodosis situation. When *tu* co-occurs with a subjunctive verb, however, the meaning approaches that of *rom* protases.

Hewitt [7, pp. 73] drawing on “a general division between ‘vivid’ (otherwise known as ‘real’, ‘immediate’ or ‘open’) and ‘vague’ (otherwise known as ‘unreal’, ‘remote’ or ‘closed’) conditionals”, considers that *tu* generally forms vivid conditionals, while *rom* vague ones. Although the subjunctive mood is characteristic of vague conditions, the combination of *tu* and a subjunctive verb is semantically close to vivid conditionals [7, pp. 79]. He notes that when the conjunction is *tu*, “the appropriate indicative may be substituted for the subjunctive with almost no change of meaning, whereas *rom* cannot substitute for *tu* without a definite change being introduced”

What is problematic is thus the analysis of the combination of *tu* and a subjunctive verb. It seems indeed the case that every subjunctive verb in *tu* protases can be replaced by the appropriate indicative form without any significant change in the meaning, but not vice versa. That is, every indicative verb in *tu* protases cannot be freely replaced by the corresponding subjunctive form. The substitution often results in ill-formed sentences. The use of subjunctive verbs is actually highly restricted in *tu* protases. Given this, the purpose of the present paper is to make clear when *tu* protases can be used with a subjunctive verb.

3. In terms of frequency, it is far more usual for a verb in *tu* conditional clauses to be in the indicative mood, rather than in the

subjunctive mood. Dzidziguri [5, pp. 372; 6, pp. 372] even goes so far as to say that the combination of *tu* and a subjunctive verb deviates from the norm of the modern standard language. However, such instances are, though occasionally, certainly encountered in the colloquial language as well as in literary works. The following are examples taken from modern literary works.

- (5) *agi ulvaš-i gamp'arse, ase tu ar knas!* (Dumbadze)
 this moustache-NOM shave.me.IMP like.this if NEG does.AORSBJ
 'Shave this moustache of mine, if he does not do this!'
- (6) *es tu k'ameč-is k'vercx-i ar iq'os, tav-s movič'ri.* (Chokheli)
 this.NOM if buffalo-GEN egg-NOM NEG is.AORSBJself-DAT I.cut.myself.FUT
 'If this should not be a buffalo's egg, I will cut my throat.'
- (7) *mok'vdes pxora, tu mt'r-is xel-ši čagagdos!* (Važa)
 dies.AORSBJ Pkhora.NOM if enemy-GEN hand.DAT-in drops.you.AORSBJ
 'May Pkhora die, if he hands over you to enemies.'
- (8) *svet'ixovel-is damkcev-i viq'o, tu giğalat'o.* (Leonidze)
 S.-GEN ruiner-NOM I.am.AORSBJ if I.betray.you.AORSBJ
 'May I be the ruiner of the Svetitskhoveli cathedral, if I ever betray you.'
- (9) *tu valent'ina ivanovna-m gamomxedos, manišne.* (Rcheulishvili)
 if Valentina Ivanovna-ERG looked.at.me.AORSBJ signalize.me.IMP
 'If Valentina Ivanovna looks at me, give me a signal.'
- (10) *tu daleva mogindes, svvagan nuğar c'axval, isev ak dalie-o.*
 (Inanishvili)
 if drinking.NOM you.want.AORSBJ elsewhere no.more you.go.FUT again drink.IMP-QUOT
 'If you want to drink, don't go anywhere else anymore, drink here again.'
- (11) *tu šegxvdes sadme, gahq'evi da misi vinaoba*
 if meets.you.AORSBJ somewhere follow.her.IMP and her identity-NOM
šemat'q'obine. (Javakhishvili)
 let.me.know.IMP
 'If you come across her somewhere, follow her and let me know who she is.'
- (12) *tu mogenat'rot, c'eril-i gamomigzavnet samt'redia-ši.*
 (Dumbadze)
 if you.miss.me.AORSBJ letter-NOM send.me.IMP Samtredia.DAT-in
 'If you miss me, send me a letter to Samtredia.'

4. Among subjunctive forms, those can be used with *tu* are Aorist Subjunctive, Present Subjunctive, and Perfect Subjunctive. Hewitt [7, pp. 89] distinguishes the function of *tu* plus Aorist subjunctive and that of *tu* plus Present Subjunctive or Perfect Subjunctive. As for the former, he notes that it does not differ any

semantic difference from the corresponding indicative construction (i.e. *tu* plus Aorist), drawing the following example, in which *tu* is combined with Aorist Subjunctive as well as with Aorist in the same context.

- (13) *tu erts čvengans bič'i eq'olos* [AORSBJ] *da meores — kali, mašin kali važs ševrtot: xolo tu kalebi gveq'olos* [AORSBJ] *orives, oriveni debsavit unda gavzardot da Zmebs ševrtot; tu orives važebi gveq'ola* [AOR], *Zmebi unda iq'vnen ertgulebi...*
 'If one of us should father a boy and the other a girl, then let us marry them to each other; and if we both should father girls, we must rear them both like sisters and marry them to a pair of brothers; if we both father lads, they must be faithful brothers...' ([7, pp. 80; 2, pp. 113] boldface by me)

According to native speakers I consulted, the use of the Aorist Subjunctive forms *eq'olos* and *gveq'olos* with *tu* in (13) sounds rather archaic. Hewitt (1987: 80) remarks that such use of Aorist Subjunctive to express “a pure, future condition may be a relic from Old Georgian”. However, it is not the case that every expression of a future conditional situation by *tu* and a subjunctive verb should be treated alike. Other examples given in the present paper, at least, do not leave an archaic impression on native speakers as (13). In this light, (13) is exceptional and hence is left out of consideration as an archaism.

5. The combination of *tu* and Present Subjunctive or Perfect Subjunctive, on the other hand, is considered to be used when “the speaker wishes to asseverate his absolute conviction that the predicate of the protasis is contrary to fact” [7, pp. 82]), as in the examples (14) and (15). The apodosis then “seems usually to contain either an imperative or an Aorist subjunctive functioning as an optative” [7, 83. 82].

- (14) *ğmert-i gamic'q'res, tu gexumrebode.*
 god-NOM gets.angry.with.me.AORSBJ if I.am.joking.with.you.PRSSBJ
 “May God bring his wrath upon me, if I am joking with you.”
 (Hewitt 1987: 81, quoted from Kldiashvili; boldface by me)
- (15) *šečvenebul-i viq've, tu vt'q'uode, tu rodisme hq'olodes!*
 damned-NOM I.am.AORSBJ if I.am.lying.PRSSBJ if anytime she.has.had.PFSSBJ
 ‘May I be damned, if (it transpires that) I am lying (and) she has ever had (sc. a child)!’ (Hewitt 1987: 82, quoted from Kldiashvili; boldface by me)

It is certainly one of the functions of *tu* protases having a subjunctive verb to make an assertion that the protasis content is not

true. The function is, however, not restricted to Present Subjunctive and Perfect Subjunctive, but is common to all the three subjunctive forms that may co-occur with *tu*. The examples (5)-(8) presented above illustrate *tu* plus Aorist Subjunctive of the same function. The *tu* protasis having a subjunctive verb can be treated as a special construction expressing negative conviction of the speaker toward the protasis content.

6. Separately from this function, *tu* protases may also contain a subjunctive verb when the apodosis expresses a command to the hearer, as in the examples (4) and (9)-(12). The protasis then describes a conditional non-past situation and accordingly the verb may be in Aorist Subjunctive or Present Subjunctive as in (16) and (17). Perfect Subjunctive is unavailable.

(16) *xurda tu gkondes momeci.*
 change.NOM if you.have.PRSSBJ give.me.IMP
 'If you have some change, give me.'

(17) *tu vinme st'udent'-s icnobde gamacani.*
 if someone student-DAT you.know.PRSSBJ introduce.to.me.IMP
 'If you know any student, introduce him to me.'

What has to be noticed is that these examples, (4), (9)-(12), (16) and (17), do not convey any negative conviction of the speaker. The speaker appears neutral to the probability of the situation described in the protasis. In this point, these examples are distinguished from those discussed above, (5)-(8), (14), and (15).

Note also that the apodosis does not necessarily contain an imperative expression. In the following examples¹, the apodosis is formally declarative, but implies a command to the hearer (i.e. 'Have the bread' in (18), 'Call me there' or 'Tell the caller so' in (19)).

(18) *tu mogšivdes magida-ze p'uri devs.*
 IF you.get.hungry. AORSBJ table.DAT-on bread.NOM lies.PRS
 'If you get hungry, there is some bread on the table.'

(19) *tu vinme-m darek'os otax-ši var.*
 IF someone-ERG calls.AORSBJ room.DAT-in I.am.PRS
 'If anyone calls, I am in the room.'

¹ These examples represent so-called "speech-act conditionals" [3, 1] , in which the protasis conditions speech act, rather than the realization of the apodosis situation.

7. The combination of *tu* and a subjunctive verb is, in principle, not available outside the two uses discussed above. Take (20) for a simple example. When the *tu* protasis has a subjunctive verb, the apodosis may represent a command, whether affirmative (a) or negative (b), but it cannot be hortative (c), jussive expression in the third person (d), nor can be declarative without any imperative implication (e). (If the indicative form *ic'vimebs* [FUT] or *ic'vimos* [AOR] is substituted for the subjunctive *ic'vimos*, (a)-(e) all become well acceptable.)

| | | |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| (20) <i>tu ic'vimos</i> , ... | | 'If it rains, ...' |
| (a) | <i>c'adi</i> [FUT]. | '... go.' |
| (b) | <i>ar c'axvide</i> [AORSBJ]. | '... don't go' |
| (c) ?? | <i>(ar) c'avidet</i> [AORSBJ]. | '... let's (not) go' |
| (d) ?? | <i>(ar) c'avides</i> [AORSBJ]. | '... s/he should (not) go.' |
| (e) ?? | <i>dasveldebi</i> [FUT]. | '... you will get wet.' |

8. To conclude, *tu* protases can have a subjunctive predicate verb in two cases:

- (i) when the speaker asserts that the protasis content is not true;
- (ii) when the apodosis expresses a command to the hearer.

Such semantic and pragmatic conditions are proper to this type of conditional construction and do not apply to *rom* protases or *tu* protases having an indicative predicate verb. How do these particular conditions arise through the interaction between the choice of the conjunction, on the one hand, and the choice of the predicate mood, on the other, is to be elucidated in future by a comprehensive analysis of conditional constructions of Georgian.

Abbreviations

| | |
|-------|---------------------|
| AOR | Aorist |
| DAT | Dative case |
| ERG | Ergative case |
| FUT | Future |
| GEN | Genitive case |
| IMP | Imperative |
| NEG | Negation |
| NOM | Nominative |
| PFSBJ | Perfect Subjunctive |

| | |
|--------|---------------------|
| AORSBJ | Aorist Subjunctive |
| PRS | Present |
| COND | Conditional |
| QUOTE | Quotation |
| PRSSBJ | Present Subjunctive |

Sources

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