

Evidentiality in Georgian

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My talk focuses on the semantics and pragmatics of the so-called evidential perfect in Georgian (Boeder 2000; Giacalone Ramat and Topadze 2007; Topadze 2011), exemplified below:

- (1) urtʃxul-s ganɔ-i daumalia
dragon-DAT treasure-NOM hide.3SG.S.3SG.O.PERF
'I was told that / I infer that the dragon hid the treasure.' (Data come from my fieldwork.)

This form always encodes indirect evidence as opposed to other tenses that are evidentially-neutral.

I look at Georgian through the prism of the current approaches to evidentiality and argue that they cannot account for the novel data I present.

I show that the form in question lacks properties typically associated with the present perfect. I argue that use of this form (1) relies on temporal relations between situations and (2) triggers effects similar to modal subordination.

I investigate two families of approaches that were suggested for evidential perfects and the like: 1) epistemic modals *à la* Izvorski (1997) and 2) temporal-spatial operators *à la* Faller (2004) and Koev (2011). I show that neither of the theories predicts the entire range of properties I discuss. Izvorski's analysis does not fit Georgian because the evidential does not pattern with epistemic modals. Temporal approaches are more suited for Georgian but they cannot account for the modal subordination effects.

I develop an analysis that maintains the spirit of Faller (2004) and Koev (2011) but enriches these approaches with intensional semantics.

References

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