

# Dative Experiencer Verbs in Georgian: A Study of Subjecthood and Agency

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## Abstract

This paper aims to show through a careful analysis of datives of experience, perception, and possession (1) that the dative experiencer construction in Georgian is essentially transitive, even if the second argument is prevented from being made explicit, (2) that the dative subjects of a dative experiencer construction in Georgian lack semantic agency, and (3) that semantics play an important, if underacknowledged, role in licensing and marking verbal arguments in Georgian.

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# 1 Introduction

Georgian, the official language of Georgia, where it is spoken by over three million people, is the most prominent member of the Kartvelian language family, a family which includes, besides Georgian, only three other languages—Laz, Svan, and Mingrelian, all minority languages spoken in Georgia. Repeated attempts have been made to connect the Kartvelian family genetically to other languages (especially Basque and the other languages of the Caucasus), but no convincing and well-established links have been found (Cherchi 1999, iv). As a result, the study of Georgian has an especial attraction because it is more likely to be different radically from languages the student has studied before. The exoticness succeeded in entrancing me at least.

Other than its relatively weak restrictions on consonant clustering—words like გვბრღღვნიტ (gvbrdghvnit, ‘you (pl.) tear us apart’) can have up to eight consonant phonemes just in the syllable onset—Georgian is probably best known for its complex verbal morphology, the result of an agglutinative morphosyntax which allows constructions like double causatives, requires polypersonal agreement marking on verbs (no matter how many arguments they take), and must grapple with a system of split ergativity that applies to only some verbs in some tenses.

On top of all this, Georgian also has dative experiencer verbs which exhibit ‘quirky case’ marking, putting their experiencer arguments (which are usually taken for subjects) in the dative (which usually marks direct objects in Georgian) and their theme arguments (usually taken for objects) in the nominative. Such constructions include verbs of physical and mental experience, verbs of perception, and verbs of possession—it is these verbs which will be the focus of this paper, and I will group all of them together under the generic label of “dative experiencer verb.”

In Chapter 2, I will provide a *very* brief overview of the essential features of Georgian grammar, an understanding of which would be necessary to meaningfully interpret the data provided later in the paper. With regard to verbs, this will include a brief sketch of the way in which verbal morphology is compounded in Georgian, a description of Georgian’s polypersonal verbal agreement morphology, and a quick look at the classification of verbs into classes based on their argument structure, as related primarily to Georgian’s split ergativity. A quick look at nominal and pronominal declension and the basics of Georgian word order will round out the chapter.

Chapter 3 will start with a quick introduction to the phenomenon of the dative experiencer in Georgian, including both intransitive and transitive types and the frequent alternation with nominative constructions built off of the same verb root. Next will be a review of subjecthood properties which dative experiencers in Georgian have been claimed to exhibit, and the chapter will end with a discussion of dative experiencers in Malayalam, with particular regard to their subjecthood and agency properties.

Chapter 4 will present some more detailed data on Georgian dative experiencers. Data will be presented which show that dative experiencers license a freer word order than is available in typical nominative-dative constructions. The alternation between nominative and dative constructions will be examined more closely to show that dative experiencers, unlike their nominative counterparts, do not have grammatical agency. Finally some attention will be given to the subjecthood properties described in chapter 3.

Chapter 5 will examine in greater detail two surprising phenomenon uncovered in the previous chapter. The appearance of an unexpected second argument with one dative experiencer verb will provide evidence that all dative experiencer verbs are underlyingly transitive, and a

genitive reflexive will provide further evidence of the important role that agency plays in the marking of nominative arguments.

The final chapter will pull the results of the previous chapters together and argue for the vital role that semantics plays both in dictating argument structure and in case assignment in Georgian.

## 2 Overview of Georgian Grammar

Georgian is a highly agglutinating language and hence unsurprisingly is morphologically quite complex, although most of the complexity is limited to the verbal system. The nominal system is fairly straightforward: there are seven cases, but no grammatical gender. Plurals are indicated by the addition of a single regular infix, and declension is almost totally regular, with only a few modifications to accommodate different stem shapes. Verbal morphology, however, is overwhelmed with a series of preverbs, agreement markers, tense formants, and other markers and infixes, all of which is additionally complicated by a polypersonal agreement morphology and a split-ergative conjugation pattern.

### 2.1 The Georgian Verb

The fully conjugated Georgian verb is a massive conglomeration of morphemes: some authors describe as many as twenty-one different types of morphemes that may appear in a Georgian verb (Cherchi 1999: 18). However, for our purposes, it will suffice to simplify and focus on only seven 'slots' which may be filled in the verbal paradigm: 1) preverb(s), 2) personal agreement prefix, 3) version (or character) vowel, 4) root, 5) causative or passive marker, 6) tense or aspect formant, and 7) personal agreement suffix. The only one of these elements that must be present overtly is the root, and there are finite verbs in Georgian consisting of just the root (1a). However, there are also verbs with at least one morpheme from each of these categories (1b).

(1) a. წერ

ts'er<sup>1</sup>

write

'You write.'<sup>2</sup>

b. დაგვაწერინებთ

da-gv-a-ts'er-in-eb-t<sup>3</sup>PREV-1PL-VV-write-CAUSE-FUT-PL<sup>4</sup>'You (pl.) will get us to write them.'<sup>5</sup>

In example (1a), the fully conjugated form turns out to be identical to the root because the pronominal agreement markers for a second person singular subject are null, and the simple present of this verb requires no preverbs, version vowels, or tense/aspect formants.<sup>6</sup> In (1b), however, all seven elements are present: the preverb (PREV) და- (*da-*) is necessary as an indication of the future subseries; the personal agreement prefix გვ- (*gv-*) indicates that the direct object is first person plural; the version vowel (VV) ა (*a*) is a required component of the causative formation (Cherchi 1999: 21); the causative and future suffixes are required to indicate causative and future features; and the agreement suffix -თ (*-t*) indicates that the subject is plural.

This example is intended only to give a sense of what is possible; most of the verb forms dealt

<sup>1</sup> Please see Appendix A for details of the transliteration I am using and the phonetic values of the Georgian alphabet.

<sup>2</sup> Unless otherwise indicated, all Georgian data presented in this paper were collected from my informant Mariam Gurashvili Dimatteo (Maia).

<sup>3</sup> I provide the written Georgian for all of my data because it provides the easiest verification of my examples for those familiar with Georgian; however, because I am also providing a transliteration of the Georgian, I am only marking morpheme boundaries in the transliteration.

<sup>4</sup> Although none of the abbreviations or acronyms used in this paper are expected to catch the reader off guard, Appendix B provides a full listing and explanation of them.

<sup>5</sup> This example is adapted from one in Hewitt's *Georgian: a structural reference grammar* (118).

<sup>6</sup> "At an absolute minimum a Georgian verb-form must contain at least one Set A affix [i.e., a 'subject' agreement marker] in addition to the root" (Hewitt 1995: 128).

with in this paper are not this morphologically complex. Preverbs, version vowels, and stem formants are used extensively to change the semantics and argument structure of verb roots.

The forms of the Georgian verb are grouped into screeves and Series.<sup>7</sup> A screeve consists of all forms of a verb in Georgian that differ only in person and number (for example, the present screeve, the aorist screeve, or the optative screeve). The term is thus used in Georgian similarly to the way that 'tense' or 'conjugation' is used to describe European languages. Modern Georgian has ten screeves, organized into three Series (called Series I, Series II, and Series III), although Series I is further divided into the Present and Future Subseries. Each Series groups together screeves with similar morphology and case government patterns, thus each screeve in a given Series will have similar basic morphological components, and stem suppletion, should it occur, will occur in all screeves of a Series (or Subseries).<sup>8</sup> For example, the stem for 'to see' is ხედავ (*xedav*) in the Present Subseries, but is supplanted by the stem ნახ (*nax*) in the Future Subseries and in Series II and III (Hewitt 1995: 474). Case government patterns may also change from Series to Series, but this will be explained in greater detail below in section 2.3.

## 2.2 Agreement Morphology

As mentioned above, Georgian verbs exhibit polypersonal agreement, agreeing with whatever arguments they may happen to take. Georgian verbs thus agree with, in addition to their subjects,

<sup>7</sup> The capitalization of the term 'Series' (but not 'screeve') is taken from the literature (see, for example, Cherchi 1999, 13). Although some writers choose not to capitalize the generic term 'Series' (for example, Aronson 40), I follow the practice of capitalizing the term at all times because it is always capitalized in reference to the particular Series, a practice which distinguishes this term from the term 'screeve' (which no one ever capitalizes).

<sup>8</sup> Georgian actually exhibits two other types of suppletion, one for a distinction between singular and plural (ვინაშენ (v-zh-van, 'I am seated') vs. ვინაშენთ (v-zh-van-t, 'we are seated')) and one for a distinction between animate and inanimate (ღვინაშენ (dev-s, 'is lying' of inanimate objects) vs. წვეს (ts'ev-s, 'is lying,' of people or animals)) (Hewitt 1995: 124-5).

not only their direct objects, but also their indirect objects. As we saw in the previous section, there are only two slots for agreement markers to occupy in the verbal paradigm, and there happen also to be only two sets of agreement markers, so there is some overlap both in the assignment of agreement markers to different arguments and in the location of these markers in the fully conjugated verb form. The two sets of markers each include prefixes and suffixes and are given various designations (subject and object, A and B, etc.), but I will refer to them in this paper as v-class and m-class markers. The two classes are presented here, with ~ standing in for the root and any other formants which may come between the personal agreement prefix and suffix slots:<sup>9</sup>

Person	V-CLASS	M-CLASS
First Singular ( <i>me</i> )	v ~	m ~
Second Singular ( <i>šen</i> )	~	g ~
Third Singular ( <i>is</i> )	~ s/a	~ / s ~ / h ~
First Plural ( <i>tšven</i> )	v ~ t	gv ~
Second Plural ( <i>tkven</i> )	~ t	g ~ t
Third Plural ( <i>isini</i> )	~ en/an/nen/es/a	~ / s ~ / h ~

In the literature, it is generally explained that the v-class markers are used to mark grammatical subjects, while the m-class markers are used to mark agreement with various object arguments (Aronson 169-174; Cherchi 1999: 20; Hewitt 1995: 128), allowing that there are exceptions to this broad description. However, given that there *are* exceptions and that the question of how to talk about 'subjects' in Georgian is not without controversy, it seems better to skip to the point and say that v-class markers are used to mark agreement with nominative and ergative arguments, while m-class markers are used to mark agreement with arguments that appear in other cases (primarily dative).<sup>10</sup>

<sup>9</sup> It is perhaps worth emphasizing that preverbs, if present, will necessarily *precede* any personal agreement prefix.

<sup>10</sup> Since standard analyses of Georgian do not distinguish a separate absolutive case for use in Georgian's ergative construction because the forms would be indistinguishable from the nominative, the objects of ergative constructions

As noted before, and as is evident from the chart of agreement markers given above, there is the possibility for competition between multiple prefixes or suffixes trying to fill the same slot in the final verb form. Georgian does not allow multiple agreement affixes to surface in the same position, and so there are strict rules governing which affix will surface if there are multiple affixes competing for the same slot. Essentially, the first person v-class marker 3- (v-) is dropped in favor of the second person m-class marker 3- (g-), and third person plural v-class suffixes are preserved over the second person plural m-class suffix, which is in turn preserved over third person singular v-class suffixes (Aronson 169-170). In the case of reflexive constructions, the appropriate v-class affixes are used in combination with third person singular m-class marking (Hewitt 1995: 563). It is probably worth mentioning that, as a result of this restriction against having multiple agreement markers appear in the same slot, multivalent<sup>11</sup> verbs in Georgian cannot actually simultaneously indicate agreement with a subject, a direct object, and an indirect object, in which case it is generally the direct object whose agreement markers are not expressed (Cherchi 1999: 32). It should also be noted, in connection with the polypersonal agreement morphology, that Georgian is, not surprisingly, a pro-drop language. Thus, some or all of the arguments of Georgian verbs are frequently omitted from a final utterance because the verb will indicate the character (person and number) of the argument anyway.

are usually analyzed as being in nominative case, which would complicate the generalization made here since nominative arguments in ergative constructions trigger m-class agreement. If it is insisted that these arguments are indeed in the nominative rather than an absolutive case, then the generalization can be reformulated to apply v-class markers to ergative arguments and nominative arguments in non-ergative constructions, with m-class markers being assigned to everything else (primarily datives and nominatives in ergative constructions). This formulation thus lays bare the connection between v-class agreement and semantic agency, something we will return to later in this paper.

<sup>11</sup> Trivalent verbs are quite common in Georgian, and some have claimed that Georgian also exhibits true quadrivalent verbs, as in this example from Hewitt 1995 (119):

მან	მე	კატას	ეჟვანი	ვერ	შემამბმევინა	მარტოსა
man	me	k'at'a-s	ezhvan-i	ver	she-m-a-b-m-evin-a	mart'o-sa
he.ERG	I.DAT	cat-DAT	bell-NOM	not (POT)	PREV-1SG-VV-tie-TS-CAUSE-3SG	alone-DAT
'He couldn't make me all by myself tie a bell to the cat.'						



### 2.3 Verbal Case Government

The basic transitive construction in Georgian involves a nominative argument as subject and a dative argument as direct object.<sup>12</sup> Some verbs maintain this case assignment pattern throughout their conjugation. However, even though most transitive verbs use this standard nominative-dative pattern in Series I, most of them govern different cases in Series II and III. The real complication to Georgian's verbal system thus lies in its complex case government patterns, an issue which is related to the twin phenomena of split ergativity and quirky case marking. In fact, the various forms of case government are used to justify the classification of Georgian verbs into a set of classes, of which there are typically claimed to be four (Aronson; Cherchi 1999: 16; Hewitt 1995).

On the matter of split ergativity, Georgian makes use of an ergative construction just in Series II and only for some classes of verbs.<sup>13</sup> Series II includes the aorist and optative screeves, and for the relevant verbal classes, the grammatical subjects will be marked with the ergative and the direct objects with the nominative (which appears to serve double duty as Georgian's version of the absolutive case). If a verb with an ergative construction in Series II has an indirect object, it will still be marked with the dative case in Series II forms. Series III (used for the perfective screeve) for these verbs inverts the case assignment on subject and direct object, so that the subjects are marked with the dative and the direct objects with the nominative (indirect objects end up being moved to an adjunct *-თვის* (*-tvis*) phrase). Verbs of other classes, however, which do not have an ergative construction in Series II screeves, maintain the same form of case

<sup>12</sup> Georgian has no accusative case as distinguishable from the dative, so direct objects are marked with the dative in the typical case assignment pattern.

<sup>13</sup> Actually, Georgian also uses the ergative case to mark the subject of a few verbs dealing with knowledge in Series I (Cherchi 1999: 6).

government through all three Series: generally, they assign nominative and dative in some arrangement, depending on the valency of the verb.

The other major complication to the case government of Georgian verbs arises from the existence of so-called "quirky case" marking verbs. These verbs, unlike all other verbs in Georgian, do not assign nominative to their apparent subjects (the experiencer arguments), but rather dative, and then assign nominative to their apparent direct objects (the theme arguments). These verbs include the dative experiencer verbs, which are the focus of this paper, and they maintain their quirky case assignment pattern through all three Series.<sup>14</sup> A moment's reflection will reveal that the implication of this case assignment pattern, if we take the experiencer arguments to be subjects here, is that, unlike all other verbs,<sup>15</sup> the subjects (experiencers) of these verbs would trigger m-class agreement, while the objects (themes) would trigger v-class agreement (hence why I prefer the labels m-class and v-class to object class and subject class, respectively). These verbs thus form the basis for much of the controversy over whether subjecthood exists in Georgian the way we expect it to from our experience with European languages. Interestingly, these quirky case marking verbs are not the only verbs that evade the ergative construction in Series II, but rather they have a set of counterparts which govern a typical nominative-dative pattern (rather than the inverted dative-nominative) pattern throughout all three Series.

As a result of the described phenomena with regard to case government properties of different verbs in Georgian, analyses of Georgian verbal morphology generally propose dividing Georgian verbs up into four classes. This is typically accomplished in such a way as to split all of

<sup>14</sup> In this way, they rather resemble the Series III constructions of other verbs, only with that construction applied to all three Series.

<sup>15</sup> Actually, again, this pattern *is* used for other verbs, but only in Series III, a topic which is unfortunately beyond the scope both of this brief overview and of this paper.

the verbs with ergative constructions into Classes 1 and 3 (see, for example, Cherchi 1999: 32-3), with some kind of semantic or morphological distinction determining which verbs belong in which class (see, for example, Harris 1981: 259-60). The quirky case marking verbs with dative 'subjects' throughout all Series are placed in Class 4, and their standard non-ergative-marking counterparts (the ones with nominative-dative marking through all Series) are placed in Class 2 (Cherchi 1999: 32-3). This paper will thus be concerned almost exclusively with verbs from Class 4.

#### 2.4 Nominal Morphology

Compared to its verbal morphology, Georgian's nominal morphology is quite simple. There is no grammatical gender, but there are seven cases: nominative, ergative, dative, genitive, instrumental, adverbial, and vocative. As suggested above, there is no case in Georgian reserved for direct objects (there is neither an accusative nor an absolutive), so direct objects are marked with the dative in "accusative" constructions and with the nominative in ergative ones. Verbal arguments thus commonly appear only in the nominative, ergative, and dative cases, although there are some verbs that can take arguments marked by the genitive or the adverbial cases.

Each case is marked with a simple morpheme used for all nouns in both the singular and plural. The nominative is marked by -ი (-i) on consonant-final stems and in the plural, but is unmarked on vowel-final stems. The ergative is marked by -მა or -მ (-ma or -m), the dative by -ს (-s), the genitive by -ის (-is), the instrumental by -ით (-it), the adverbial by -ად (-ad), and the vocative by -ო or -ვ (-o or -v). There is essentially only a single declension in Georgian,

although there are a few minor variations allowed for differences in stem shape: stems ending in a consonant, generally indicated by a nominative ending in -ი (-i), take the full forms of all the endings, while stems ending in vowels can either be truncating (losing the final vowel in the genitive and instrumental) or non-truncating (retaining the final vowel in all cases) and generally take reduced forms of the case endings in the ergative, genitive, instrumental, and adverbial cases. Plurals are formed completely regularly by the insertion of the infix -ებ- (-eb-) between the stem of the noun and the appropriate case ending. The following chart shows the declension in singular and plural for three nouns: ქალი (*kali*, woman, which has a consonant-final stem), და (*da*, sister, whose stem ends in a truncating vowel), and გოგო (*gogo*, girl, whose stem ends in a non-truncating vowel).

Case	ქალი ( <i>kali</i> ) woman		და ( <i>da</i> ) sister		გოგო ( <i>gogo</i> ) girl	
	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
Nominative	ქალი ( <i>kal-i</i> )	ქალები ( <i>kal-eb-i</i> )	და ( <i>da</i> )	დები ( <i>d-eb-i</i> )	გოგო ( <i>gogo</i> )	გოგოები ( <i>gogo-eb-i</i> )
Ergative	ქალმა ( <i>kal-ma</i> )	ქალებმა ( <i>kal-eb-ma</i> )	დამ ( <i>da-m</i> )	დებმა ( <i>d-eb-ma</i> )	გოგომ ( <i>gogo-m</i> )	გოგოებმა ( <i>gogo-eb-ma</i> )
Dative	ქალს ( <i>kal-s</i> )	ქალებს ( <i>kal-eb-s</i> )	დას ( <i>da-s</i> )	დებს ( <i>d-eb-s</i> )	გოგოს ( <i>gogo-s</i> )	გოგოებს ( <i>gogo-eb-s</i> )
Genitive	ქალის ( <i>kal-is</i> )	ქალების ( <i>kal-eb-is</i> )	დის ( <i>d-is</i> )	დების ( <i>d-eb-is</i> )	გოგოს ( <i>gogo-s</i> )	გოგოების ( <i>gogo-eb-is</i> )
Instrumental	ქალით ( <i>kal-it</i> )	ქალებით ( <i>kal-eb-it</i> )	დით ( <i>d-it</i> )	დებით ( <i>d-eb-it</i> )	გოგოთი ( <i>gogo-ti</i> )	გოგოებით ( <i>gogo-eb-it</i> )
Adverbial	ქალად ( <i>kal-ad</i> )	ქალებად ( <i>kal-eb-ad</i> )	დად ( <i>da-d</i> )	დებად ( <i>d-eb-ad</i> )	გოგოდ ( <i>gogo-d</i> )	გოგოებად ( <i>gogo-eb-ad</i> )
Vocative	ქალო ( <i>kal-o</i> )	ქალებო ( <i>kal-eb-o</i> )	დაო ( <i>da-o</i> )	დებო ( <i>d-eb-o</i> )	გოგოვ ( <i>gogo-v</i> )	გოგოებო ( <i>gogo-eb-o</i> )

Pronominal declension is actually even simpler than nominal declension in Georgian. For the purposes of this paper, it is sufficient to know that the first and second person pronouns are *მე* (*me*, I), *ჩვენ* (*chven*, we), *შენ* (*shen*, you (sg.)), and *თქვენ* (*tkven*, you (pl. or polite)), none of which decline in the nominative, ergative, or dative,<sup>16</sup> and that the third person pronouns are *ის* (*is*, he/she/it<sup>17</sup>) and *ისინი* (*isini*, they) with oblique forms *მან* (*man*, ergative of *is*), *მას* (*mas*, dative of *is*), and *მათ* (*mat*, ergative or dative of *isini*).

## 2.5 Word Order

Because of the rich declensional system and extensive cross-referencing between a verb and its arguments, word order in Georgian is often described as being very free, although there are natural tendencies that are generally followed. For example, verbs tend to come in sentence-final position, and subjects tend to precede their objects (Aronson 47). Although essentially any ordering of subject, object, and verb can be produced (especially in poetry) (Cherchi 1999: 34), the only neutral orderings are SOV and SVO (Hewitt 1995: 528). Some aspects of word order are inflexible, however, such as the requirement that a negative immediately precede the verb (Aronson 47), or the requirement that an interrogative word or phrase immediately precede the verb (or its negative adverb) (Hewitt 1995: 565).

<sup>16</sup> Hewitt (1995) claims that technically none of the first and second person pronouns decline in any case (with the exception of truncated vocatives for the second person pronouns), instead when required in the genitive, instrumental, or adverbial cases, first and second person pronoun are suppleted with the corresponding forms of their possessive pronouns (Hewitt 1995: 76-7).

<sup>17</sup> Because Georgian has no grammatical gender of any kind, the one pronoun serves for all third persons. For the sake of simplicity, I will translate all occurrences of third person singular pronouns which refer to people in this paper as masculine unless there are two instances of the pronoun in the same sentence.

## 3 Dative Experiencer Verbs

Although English may not make much use of the possibilities, it is extremely common cross-linguistically for languages to have constructions involving verbs of experience, perception, or possession with the experiencer argument realized in some oblique (frequently dative) case, even if that argument is functioning as the grammatical subject of the verb. In Georgian, such verbs are grouped together in Class 4, with the intransitives taking just a dative subject and the transitives combining an apparent dative subject with an apparent nominative object. The question of whether these dative experiencers are really subjects or not is taken up by Cole et al. (1980), who argue that they have the behavioral properties of Georgian subjects but only some of the coding properties. Finally, Jayaseelan (2004) argues that the dative possessor-experiencer in Malayalam, a language with dative experiencer constructions similar to Georgian's, is not a subject, but an indirect object which has been misanalyzed on account of pro drop and scrambling.

### 3.1 Introduction to the Georgian Dative Experiencer

As explained in the preceding chapter, all verbs with quirky case marking in Georgian are grouped together in Class 4. What unifies the verbs of Class 4 is that they tend to all describe some act of experience, perception, or possession, and they all take a dative argument which seems to function as their subject. Some of the verbs in Class 4 are analyzed as unaccusatives of experience, as in these examples below in (2) and (3).

- (2) მას სწყურია  
 mas s-ts'q'uria  
 he.DAT 3SG-thirst.PRES  
 'He is thirsty.'

- (3) მას სშია  
 mas s-shia  
 he.DAT 3SG-hunger.PRES  
 'He is hungry.'

Other unaccusatives of experience in Georgian are notable for exhibiting an alternation between quirky case dative and standard nominative constructions, both built off of the same root using different version vowels and stem formants. The example in (4) shows two different forms of the verb ტირილი (*t'irili*, to cry): a dative form with the version vowel ე (*e*) and the stem formant -ებ (*-eb*) and a nominative construction with no version vowel and the stem formant -ი (*-i*).

- (4) a. მას ეტირება  
 mas e-t'ir-eb-a  
 he.DAT VV-cry-PRES-3SG  
 'He cries.'
- b. ის ტირის  
 is t'ir-i-s  
 he.NOM cry-PRES-3SG  
 'He cries.'

As explained above, however, Class 4 verbs are by no means limited to intransitives. There are many transitive Class 4 verbs, which take a dative experiencer subject and an object marked in the nominative. A typical example of this transitive construction, using the verb მოწონება (*mots'oneba*, to like), is shown below in (5). The same construction is illustrated again in (6) using the verb სმენა (*smena*, to hear), but paired with an alternative formation, created using a different version vowel and stem formant, which has a nominative-dative argument structure.

- (5) ნინოს ზვიადი მოსწონს  
 nino-s zviad-i mo-s-ts'on-s  
 Nino-DAT Zviad-NOM PREV-3SG-like-3SG  
 'Nino likes Zviad.'

- (6) a. მას ჭიკჭიკი ესმის  
 mas ch'ik'ch'ik-i e-sm-i-s  
 he.DAT chirping-NOM VV-hear-PRES-3SG  
 'He hears the chirping.'
- b. ის ჭიკჭიკს ისმენს  
 is ch'ik'ch'ik'-s i-sm-en-s  
 he.NOM chirping-DAT VV-hear-PRES-3SG  
 'He listens to the chirping.'

We have seen thus far Class 4 verbs describing experience and perception, but Georgian also uses a dative construction to describe possession. The next example illustrates this and highlights a tension between the word order and the agreement morphology of Class 4 transitives.

- (7) მე მყავს ძაღლი  
 me m-q'av-s dzaghl-i  
 I-DAT 1SG-have.PRES-3SG dog-NOM  
 'I have a dog.'

The above example is considered to be in a neutral word order by native speakers of Georgian, and, given the claim that the only neutral word orders for transitive clauses in Georgian are SOV and SVO, this fact would seem to imply that the dative argument in this construction is actually the subject. On the other hand, however, we can see from the agreement morphology of მყავს (*mq'av-s*, I have him<sup>18</sup>), that the dative first person singular argument is triggering an m-class agreement marker, while the nominative third person singular argument is triggering a v-class agreement marker. This is the same kind of argument cross-referencing that we would expect to find in a standard nominative-dative transitive and contradicts the widely-held notion that v-class agreement markers cross-reference subjects and m-class agreement markers cross-reference objects. Thus, we see that there is an inherent tension in the Class 4 transitive construction, which makes it unclear whether the dative experiencer should be understood as a subject or not.

There is one other aspect of the data we have seen so far which will merit further explanation, and that is the difference in the English translations of (6a) and (6b), which are alternative constructions built off of the same root. The dative construction in (6a) is translated most naturally by the English verb 'to hear,' while the nominative construction in (6b) is translated most naturally by 'to listen.' This distinction suggests there is a meaningful semantic difference between the dative and nominative constructions, one which may be related to agency.

<sup>18</sup> 'To have' is one of the verbs which suppletes for inanimate arguments. The distinction is not relevant for this paper, however, because both roots govern an identical argument structure.

### 3.2 Dative Experiencers and Subjecthood

In "The Acquisition of Subjecthood" (1980), Peter Cole et al. consider the diachronic implications of the fact that subject "properties do not always converge on a single NP" and draw the conclusion that "behavioral properties are consistently acquired prior to coding properties" (719). They compare both synchronic and diachronic data in Germanic, Polynesian, and Georgian to demonstrate that the acquisition of subject properties occurs in three distinct stages: an initial stage in which no subject properties are displayed by the NP; an intermediate stage where the NP exhibits only the behavioral properties of subjects; and a final stage where the NP exhibits both behavioral and coding properties of subjects.

For Georgian, Cole et al. concern themselves with determining what subject properties are exhibited by dative experiencers, and the behavioral properties that they examine involve *tav*-reflexivization and Causative Clause Union. Following Harris 1976, Cole et al. claim that *თავ-* (*tav-*) can only be coreferenced to the subjects of their own clauses.<sup>19</sup> They then present data, also from Harris 1976, which indicates that the dative experiencer in Georgian must be a subject since it can control reflexivization, while the nominative argument in such constructions cannot.

- (8) a. თემურ-ს უყვარს თავისი თავი  
 temur-s u-q'var-s tavis-i  
 Temur-DAT 3SG-love-3SG self's self-NOM  
 'Temur loves himself.' (Cole 736:56; Harris 1976 8:28a; Harris 1981 143:4a)

<sup>19</sup> Harris 1981 is based on her 1976 dissertation, which is difficult to find. The relevant passage on *tav*-reflexivization in Harris 1981 is found on pp. 23-7.

- b. \*თავის ტავს უყვარს თემური  
 tavis tav-s u-q'var-s temur-i  
 self's self-DAT 3SG-love-3SG Temur-NOM  
 ('Himself loves Temur.') (Cole 736:57; Harris 1976 8:28b; Harris 1981 143:4b)

Cole et al. next consider the rule of Causative Clause Union, which maps the biclausal structure of a matrix causal verb and complement verb onto a simplex structure. In so doing, Causative Clause Union must create a new argument structure and map the arguments from the initial complement verb onto arguments for the new compound causative verb. Cole et al. present data<sup>20</sup> which show how the rule of Causative Clause Union transforms the arguments of the initial complement verb into arguments of the final output clause: intransitive subjects and transitive direct objects are mapped onto direct objects in the output of clause union, while transitive subjects and indirect objects of intransitive verbs<sup>21</sup> are mapped onto indirect objects (737-8). So Cole et al. consider the example below in (9), where the dative experiencer of the verb 'to hunger' appears in the output clause of the Causative Clause Rule as a direct object, and conclude that the dative experiencer must be the subject of the intransitive verb.

- (9) a. ტუსაღს შიოდა  
 t'usagh-s shi-oda  
 prisoner-DAT hunger-AOR.3SG  
 'The prisoner was hungry.' (Cole 738:68; Harris 1976 8:38a; Harris 1981 8:29a)

<sup>20</sup> Cole et al. take their data here also from Harris 1976. The parallel section of Harris 1981 is Chapter 5 (66-86).

<sup>21</sup> The idea of an 'indirect object of an intransitive verb' seems paradoxical (especially since, in Georgian, the objects referred to trigger agreement on the verb and thus act as second arguments making the verbs seem transitive), but the term seems to be intended to indicate the object of bivalent Class 2 verbs (i.e., verbs with two arguments, consistently realized as nominative and dative).

- b. ტუსაღი მოაშივეს  
 t'usagh-i mo-a-shi-ves  
 prisoner-NOM<sup>22</sup> PREV-VV-hunger-CAUSE.AOR.3PL  
 'They starved the prisoner.' (Cole 738:69; Harris 1976 8:38b; Harris 1981 8:29b)

Since an indirect object of an intransitive would have appeared as an indirect object in the output clause, but the dative experiencer appears as a direct object, the dative experiencer cannot be interpreted as an indirect object in the initial dative construction. Thus, dative experiencers exhibit both of the behavioral properties of subjects identified in Georgian by Cole et al.

Finally, Cole et al. turn to subject coding properties in Georgian. They identify three such properties: case marking, person agreement, and number agreement.<sup>23</sup> Obviously, the dative experiencers do not exhibit subject case marking since they are datives rather than nominatives, and, as has been pointed out already in this paper, dative experiencers trigger v-class agreement markers, the markers usually used to cross-reference objects. So dative experiencers in Georgian fail completely to embody the first two subject coding properties. Number agreement, however, presents an interesting development. Georgian verbs agree in number with any first or second person argument, but they only agree in number with third person *subjects*. Given this, Cole et al. consider the data presented below and argue that since the verb in (10a) exhibits a plural agreement morpheme to agree with the third person plural dative experiencer მათ (*mat*), while the verb in (10b) exhibits no plural agreement for its third person plural nominative, the dative experiencer is here exhibiting a subject coding property in controlling number agreement.

<sup>22</sup> N.B. The nominative case here is the mark of the direct object because this sentence is in the aorist screeve and has an ergative argument structure.

<sup>23</sup> Interestingly, Cole et al. do not consider initial position to be a coding property of subjects, but "regard it as primarily indicative of topicality rather than subjecthood" (720).

- (10) a. მათ უყვართ ის  
 mat u-q'var-t is  
 they.DAT 3SG-love-PL he.NOM  
 'They love him.' (Cole 740:74c; Tschenkeli 459)
- b. მას უყვარს ისინი  
 mas u-q'var-s isini  
 he.DAT 3PL-love-3SG they.NOM  
 'He loves them.' (Cole 740:74b; Tschenkeli 459)

Cole et al. admit that this ability of third person dative experiencers to control number agreement is limited to environments in which the nominative NP is also third person, so the dative experiencer has only partially acquired this subject coding property (740). According to the classification presented in Cole et al., Georgian dative experiencers represent an intermediate stage in the acquisition of subjecthood, since they exhibit the behavioral properties of subjects and have begun to acquire subject coding properties as well.

### 3.3 The Dative Experiencer in Malayalam

Jayaseelan 2004 argues that the dative argument in constructions denoting possession and mental or physical experience is not actually a subject, as commonly asserted, but an adjunct, which has been mistaken for a subject due primarily to word order (2004: 236). Jayaseelan's analysis of the dative possessor and experiencer constructions in Malayalam seems like it may provide a fruitful

comparison to Georgian because, like Georgian, Malayalam uses dative constructions to describe both possession and mental and physical experience, with an alternation present in many verbs of experience between a dative construction and a nominative construction, both built off of the same root. Examples drawn from Jayaseelan (below) illustrate the dative of possession (11), the dative of physical experience (12), and the alternation with verbs of experience between a dative construction (13a) and a nominative construction (13b).

- (11) John-inə raNDə viiDə uNDə  
 John-DAT two house be.PRES  
 'John has two houses.' (Lit. 'To John, two houses are.') (Jayaseelan 228:1)
- (12) avan-ə vis'akk-unnu  
 he-DAT hunger-PRES  
 'He is hungry.' (Lit. 'To him, (it) hungers.') (Ibid. 229:5)
- (13) a. avan-ə santooSam aayi  
 he-DAT happiness became.PAST  
 'He was happy.' (Lit. 'To him, happiness became.')
- b. avan santooSicc-u  
 he.NOM be.happy-PAST  
 'He was happy.' (Lit. 'He gladdened.') (Ibid. 229:7)

These examples show how the dative possessor-experiencer is used in Malayalam under very similar circumstances to those in which it is used in Georgian, as can be seen by the close parallel in construction between these sentences and the Georgian sentences offered as examples of the dative possessor (7), the dative of physical experience (2-3), and the alternation between a dative and a nominative construction for verbs of experience (4) in section 3.1 above. This should, however, be contrasted with the Malayalam example below, where the transitive dative experiencer construction has an object also in the dative, unlike the similar Georgian sentence given above in (10) where the object is in the nominative.<sup>24</sup>

(14) en-ik'k'ə . avaL-ooDə sneeham uNDə

I-DAT she-2DAT love be.PRES

'I love her.' (Lit. 'To me, there is love towards her.')

(Ibid. 229:11a)

After presenting the contexts in which the dative possessor-experiencer can be used, Jayaseelan focuses on the alternation between dative and nominative constructions, and points out that although the alternation is available for verbs describing mental experience (as in the example at (13) above), the alternation is not available for verbs of physical experience, like 'to be hungry,' as shown here:

(15) a. avan-ə vis'akk-unnu

he-DAT hunger-PRES

'He is hungry.' (Lit. 'To him, (it) hungers.')

(repeated from (12) above)

<sup>24</sup> Despite the difference in the case marking for this construction, it is interesting to note that in Malayalam, as in Georgian, a transitive dative experiencer verb can be constructed with the use of the auxiliary verb 'to be.'

b. \*avan vis'akk-unnu/vis'appə-peT-unnu

he.NOM hunger-PRES/hunger(N)-?-PRES

(Ibid. 230:12)

Having demonstrated that the alternation between a nominative and a dative construction is sensitive in some way to the semantics of the verb at hand, Jayaseelan addresses the question of whether, as is apparently claimed in the literature on Malayalam, the alternation between nominative and dative constructions has no effect on meaning (231). Jayaseelan uses the test of the Imperative Mood to show the difference in agency between the two constructions:

(16) a. (nii) santooSik'k'-uu

(you) be.happy-IMP

'(You) be happy!'

b. \*nin-akkə santooSam aak-uu

you-DAT happiness become-IMP

(Ibid. 231:17)

Jayaseelan then argues that since the nominative construction licenses the imperative mood, while the dative does not, that the nominative construction must have an agentive reading which is absent in the dative construction (231). This claim is supported by the absence of the nominative construction for verbs of physical experience since the experiencer in those cases would presumably not be able to exert influence over those experiences in the agentive way that he might be able to with a mental experience.

Next, Jayaseelan applies traditional tests of subjecthood to the Malayalam experiencer dative to see whether it is, in fact, a subject. The first test (subject-verb agreement) cannot be



applied because Malayalam has no subject-verb agreement (235). The second test (control of PRO) shows that the dative NP in these experiencer constructions can control PRO, but Jayaseelan argues that this is a poor test of subjecthood because other (i.e., non-subject) elements are well-known to be able to control PRO. The third test (antecedenthood of anaphors) shows that the Malayalam anaphor *taan* can be anteceded by the dative NP of a dative experiencer construction:

- (17) John<sub>i</sub>-inə ta<sub>n</sub><sub>i</sub>-je bhaarya-ye iSTam aaNə  
 John-DAT self-GEN wife-ACC liking be.PRES  
 'John<sub>i</sub> loves self's<sub>i</sub> wife.' (Ibid. 236:32a)

Jayaseelan, however, is not happy with the results of this test either, claiming that it has been demonstrated that the anaphor *taan* can be governed by non-subject elements in non-experiencer constructions as well, and that the binding of *taan* is determined by considerations of 'perspective' rather than pure syntactical considerations (236). Jayaseelan concludes from this "that the 'subjecthood' tests which have hitherto been applied to the dative NP are inconclusive" (236).

Finally, Jayaseelan argues that the strongest evidence for treating the dative NP in the dative experiencer construction as a subject is that it must occupy the first position in the clause (a position generally reserved for the subject of the sentence) (236). Jayaseelan compares the sentences shown in (18) below (both of which are ungrammatical if *raNDə peNkuTTi-kaL*, 'two girls,' is moved into the initial position), however, to argue that the dative-NP-first word order in the dative experiencer construction is forced by considerations of definiteness and specificity.

- (18) a. avan-ə raNDə peNkuTTi-kaL uNDə  
 he-DAT two girl-PL.NOM be.PRES  
 'He has two girls.' (Ibid. 236:34a)
- b. ii viiTT-il raNDə peNkuTTi-kaL uNDə  
 this house-in two girl-PL.NOM be.PRES  
 'There are two girls in this house.' (Ibid. 237:35a)

Having thus shown that all of the evidence in favor of calling the dative NP in the Malayalam dative possessor-experiencer construction is at best inconclusive, Jayaseelan suggests that this analysis is "a misanalysis, which was facilitated by pro drop (or rather, pro drop in combination with scrambling)" (237). Jayaseelan claims that if English were a pro drop language that allowed scrambling of a verb's arguments and adjuncts, then (19b) would be a valid alternative to the real English sentence in (19a) which utilizes the pleonastic *it*.

- (19) a. It seems to me [that Mary is clever]. (Ibid. 237:37)
- b. To me pro seems [that Mary is clever]. (Ibid. 238:37''')

If, to take the example one step further, 'to me' were a dative NP rather than a PP, Jayaseelan claims that linguists might be tempted to call the construction an example of 'quirky case' marking with a dative subject (238). Jayaseelan then points out that this exact sentence is, in fact, a grammatical construction in Malayalam:

- (20) en-ik'k'ə toonn-unnu [Mary miDukki aaNə ennə]  
 I-DAT seem-PRES Mary clever person be.PRES COMP

'It seems to me that Mary is clever.'

(Ibid. 238:38)

Jayaseelan thus shows that the hypothetical English scenario where pro drop and scrambling disguise the 'hidden' subject pro, resulting in a claim by linguists that the dative NP is the subject rather than an indirect object, may in fact be what is happening in Malayalam. Jayaseelan also points out that just as the older European tradition did not analyze the impersonal construction of Old English (essentially the same thing we looked at in (19b)) as having a dative subject, but rather as being subjectless, neither did the Indian grammatical tradition treat the dative NPs of dative possessor or experiencer constructions as subjects (227).

## 4 Investigation of the Georgian Dative Experiencer

Based on the initial observations of the dative experiencer in Georgian, and with some guidance from theories of subjecthood properties and similar constructions in Malayalam, I will now proceed to examine the dative experiencer construction in Georgian more thoroughly with particular regard to word order, semantics, and control of subjecthood properties.

### 4.1 Word Order

Although Cole et al. did not think that word order (specifically, initial placement) was a decent test of subjecthood (720), Hewitt 1995 stresses that the only allowable neutral word orders in Georgian are SOV and SVO (528). Hewitt's claim does beg the question somewhat of whether or not Georgian has subjects in the way that we mean, but if it is correct and if the dative experiencers are indeed subjects, there should be a definite preference for the neutral SOV and SVO word orders. We examine first the acceptable word orders for a standard transitive verb.

- (21) a. 

იხ	ჭიკჭიკ	იხმენს
is	ch'ik'ch'ik'-s	i-sm-en-s
he.NOM	chirping-DAT	VV-hear-PRES-3SG

 'He listens to the chirping.'
- b. 

იხ	იხმენს	ჭიკჭიკ
is	ismens	ch'ik'c'ik's

- c. \* ჭიკჭიკის ის ისმენს  
 ch'ik'ch'ik's is ismens
- d. \* ჭიკჭიკის ისმენს ის  
 ch'ik'ch'ik's ismens is
- e. \* ისმენს ის ჭიკჭიკის  
 ismens is ch'ik'ch'ik's
- f. \* ისმენს ჭიკჭიკის ის  
 ismens ch'ik'ch'ik's is

This example seems to bear out Hewitt's claim. According to the intuitions of my informant, the only acceptable word orders in a neutral statement are the expected SOV and SVO. However, she was careful to emphasize that the other word orders were all possible under the right circumstances, especially if one was writing poetry, where apparently anything goes. The example 'He listens to the chirping' was carefully chosen, not only because it is a prototypical Class 1 transitive verb, but also because it will allow for the closest possible comparison with a Class 4 verb derived from the same stem ('He *hears* the chirping'), to which we turn now.

- (22) a. მას ჭიკჭიკი ეხმის  
 mas ch'ik'ch'ik'-i e-sm-i-s  
 he.DAT chirping-NOM VV-hear-PRES-3SG  
 'He hears the chirping.'
- b. მას ეხმის ჭიკჭიკი  
 mas esmis ch'ik'ch'ik'i

- c. ჭიკჭიკი მას ეხმის  
 ch'ik'ch'ik'i mas esmis
- d. ჭიკჭიკი ეხმის მას  
 ch'ik'ch'ik'i esmis mas
- e. \* ეხმის მას ჭიკჭიკი  
 esmis mas ch'ik'ch'ik'i
- f. \* ეხმის ჭიკჭიკი მას  
 esmis ch'ik'ch'ik'i mas

It would appear the dative experiencer construction in this example licenses more word orders in a neutral setting than does the related simple transitive construction, licensing, in addition to SOV and SVO, also OSV and OVS, and, what is more interesting, this generalization (about licensing SOV, SVO, OSV, and OVS) holds no matter whether we call the dative experiencer *or the nominative theme* the subject. Of course, under the right circumstances the 'ungrammatical' VSO and VOS orders are also allowed, particularly, as my informant repeated, in poetry.

#### 4.2 The Semantics of the Dative-Nominative Alternation

At this point, I would like to turn to the dative-nominative alternation mentioned above in section 3.1. The alternation occurs for many unaccusatives of experience, and the formation of the alternate forms varies somewhat wildly from verb to verb. In the examples below, the alternation can be made by just the addition of a version vowel as in 'He shivers' (23), by choosing a

different version vowel as in 'He smiles' (24), by the use of both a different version vowel and stem formant as in 'He laughs' (25), or by no apparent change at all as in 'He sneezes' (26).

(23) a. მას აკანკალებს

mas a-k'ank'ale-eb-s

he.DAT VV-shiver-PRES-3SG

'He shivers.'

b. ის კანკალებს

is k'ank'al-eb-s

he.NOM shiver-PRES-3SG

'He shivers.'

(24) a. მას ეღინება

mas e-ghin-eb-a

he.DAT VV-smile-PRES-3SG

'He smiles.'

b. ის იღინება

is i-ghin-eb-a

he.NOM VV-smile-PRES-3SG

'He smiles.'

(25) a. მას ეცინება

mas e-tsin-eb-a

he.DAT VV-laugh-PRES-3SG

'He laughs.'

b. ის იცინის

is i-tsin-i-s

he.NOM VV-laugh-PRES-3SG

'He laughs.'

(26) a. მას აცემინებს

mas a-tsemin-eb-s

he.DAT VV-sneeze-PRES-3SG

'He sneezes.'

b. ის აცემინებს

is a-tsemin-eb-s

he.NOM VV-sneeze-PRES-3SG

'He sneezes.'

In eliciting the forms given in examples (23)-(26) and discussing them with my informant, she emphasized that the difference between the forms had to do with one's ability to consciously control the action at hand. In a pragmatically neutral situation, to describe a single act of sneezing, for example, either the dative construction in (26a) or the nominative construction in (26b) is fine. But under more nuanced circumstances, the difference between the two forms surfaces. So, since the dative version describes an action beyond one's conscious control, it is to be used when the emphasis is on involuntary acts of sneezing, as, for example, during allergy season. Indeed, if the context is understood to be allergy season and the person in question is sick, then using the dative construction will give a meaning something like 'He has a sneeze' meaning, not necessarily that he is sneezing right at the moment, but rather that he is in a state

that involves sneezing which he cannot control. By contrast, the nominative construction emphasizes the agency of the subject in producing the action, so that an actor in a play, for example, who was sneezing on cue would be best described using the nominative construction.

Next we turn briefly to a somewhat surprising result found during my elicitation involving the verb ‘to frown.’ This verb does not display the desired intransitive alternation between a nominative and a dative construction because the intransitive dative experiencer construction (shown in (27a)) turns out to be ungrammatical. However, there is a *transitive* dative experiencer construction using the object შუბლი (*shubli*, ‘forehead’), shown in (27c) which contrasts with the intransitive nominative construction (27b).

(27) a. \* მას ეჭმუნება

mas e-ch'muxn-eb-a

he.DAT VV-frown-PRES-3SG

‘He frowns.’

b. ის იჭმუნება

is i-ch'muxn-eb-a

he.NOM VV-frown-PRES-3SG

‘He frowns.’

c. მას შუბლი ეჭმუნება

mas shubl-i e-ch'muxn-eb-a

he.DAT forehead-NOM VV-frown-PRES-3SG

‘He frowns (the forehead).’ [Lit. ‘To him the forehead frowns.’]

In the next chapter, I will return to this example of ‘frowning the forehead’ and its implications for the transitivity of the dative experiencer verbs we have been examining.

Given what I learned from my informant about the aspect of agency involved in these nominative-dative alternations, the imperative mood test used by Jayaseelan 2004 (231), seems like a useful test to apply to Georgian. Indeed, applying the imperative mood test to our most recent nominative-dative alternation involving ‘frowning’ we see that the dative construction does not license an imperative (28b).

(28) a. შეიჭმუნე!

she-i-ch'muxn-e

PREV-VV-frown-AOR<sup>25</sup>

‘Frown!’

b. \* შეეჭმუნე (შუბლი)!

she-e-ch'muxn-e (shubl-i)

PREV-VV-frown-AOR (forehead-nom)

‘Frown (the forehead)!’<sup>26</sup>

Similarly, with სმენა (*smena*, to hear), the only imperative licensed is built off of the ‘listening formation,’ as in მისმინე (*mismine*, ‘listen to me!’). Apparently, as in English, one cannot command others to ‘hear!’ in Georgian. Following Jayaseelan, I conclude from these data that the dative experiencer is not an agent.

<sup>25</sup> The simple imperative (as opposed to the hortative or the prohibitive, which nevertheless display the same restriction against the dative construction being turned into a command) is derived from the aorist screeve.

<sup>26</sup> The dative construction here is ungrammatical with or without the additional argument შუბლი (*shubli*, forehead).

4.3 Control of Subjecthood Properties

In the previous section we considered the agency of the dative experiencer and concluded that the dative experiencer was not an agent. In this section, we will turn to the properties of subjecthood delineated by Jayaseelan (2004) and Cole et al. (1980) to examine in closer detail the degree of subjecthood displayed by dative experiencers.

Jayaseelan's first test of subjecthood (subject-verb agreement) failed in Malayalam because that language has no verb agreement, but as noted already and admitted by Cole et al., dative experiencers do participate in agreement with the verb, albeit with the standard object (m-class) markers rather than the standard subject (v-class) markers. Jayaseelan's second test of subjecthood (control of PRO) applied in Malayalam, but it does not apply in Georgian because Georgian has no non-finite verbs for which PRO might serve as a subject (Hewitt 1995: 423 & 542).<sup>27</sup> Jayaseelan's third and final test of subjecthood (antecedence of anaphors) is identical to Cole et al. (1980)'s first behavior property of subjecthood, although Cole et al. considered only two verbs, neither of which was a verb of perception. Considering the examples in (29) below, the generalization made by Cole et al. (1980) that dative experiencers can control a *tav-* reflexive in the nominative argument seem to hold.

- (29) a.  $\text{მე} \quad \text{მომწონს} \quad \text{თავის თავი}$   
 me    mo-m-ts'on-s    tavis tav-i  
 I.DAT    PREV-1SG-like-3SG    self's self-NOM  
 'I like myself.'

<sup>27</sup> Georgian does have verbal nouns or *masdars*; however, the masdar is "not normally referred to as an infinitive because it lacks verbal governance" (Hewitt 1995: 542), and "the formation behaves like a noun rather than a verb, such that . . . one might equally well use the term 'gerund'" (Hewitt 1995: 423).

- b.  $\text{მე} \quad \text{მიყვარს} \quad \text{თავის თავი}$   
 me    m-i-q'var-s    tavis tav-i  
 I.DAT    1SG-VV-love-3SG    self's self-NOM  
 'I love myself.'

However, when we turn to  $\text{სმენა}$  (*smena*, 'to hear'), a verb of *perception*, the nominative argument cannot be reflexivized under the control of the dative experiencer as shown in (30a). It turns out that the only grammatical construction meaning 'I hear myself' requires the reflexive to surface in the genitive as shown in (30b).

- (30) a. \*  $\text{მე} \text{ მესმის} \quad \text{თავის თავი}$   
 me    m-e-sm-i-s    tavis tav-i  
 I.DAT 1SG-VV-hear-PRES-3SG    self's self-NOM  
 ('I hear myself.')
- b.  $\text{მე} \quad \text{მესმის} \quad \text{თავის თავის}$   
 me    m-e-sm-i-s    tavis tav-is  
 I.DAT 1SG-VV-hear-PRES-3SG    self's self-GEN  
 'I hear myself.'

This is a surprising result and one to which more attention will be devoted in the next chapter.

Finally, we consider Cole et al. (1980)'s Causative Clause Union test for subjecthood which they applied only to an *intransitive* dative experiencer construction (the construction where arguably the dative experiencer is more likely to be a subject since there are no other

arguments). In (31), we apply the Causative Clause Union test to a transitive dative experiencer construction. As predicted by Cole et al. (1980), the dative experiencer emerges in the final output as an indirect object (the expected result for the subject of a transitive initial complement verb) and the nominative argument emerges as a direct object (the expected result for an initial direct object).

- (31) a. ნინოს ზვიადი მოხწონს  
 nino-s zviad-i mo-s-ts'on-s  
 Nino-DAT Zviad-NOM PREV-3SG-like-3SG  
 'Nino likes Zviad.'
- b. შენ ნინოს ზვიადი მოაწონე  
 shen nino-s zviad-i mo-a-ts'on-e  
 you.ERG Nino-DAT Zviad-NOM PREV-VV-like-CAUSE.AOR<sup>28</sup>  
 'You made Nino like Zviad.'

<sup>28</sup> Because this sentence, like the example from Cole et al. (1980) in (9b) is in the aorist screeve, the subject is marked by ergative case, the indirect object by dative, and the direct object by nominative.

## 5 A Closer Analysis of Arguments and Agents

In chapter 4, we explored the Georgian dative experiencer construction in some depth, and although we found dative experiencers to lack agency, the subject properties claimed to be exhibited by them in the literature seem to hold up under closer scrutiny. There are, however, two issues raised in the data presented in the last chapter which merit a closer look: the appearance of an additional argument with the supposedly intransitive dative construction of 'to frown' illustrated in (27c) and the restriction that a *tav*-reflexive for the verb სმენა (*smena*, 'to hear') must appear in the genitive rather than the expected (and elsewhere attested) nominative. This chapter will be devoted to trying to explain these specific phenomena.

### 5.1 Frowning and Argument Structure

The appearance of a second NP in the dative construction for 'to frown' was unexpected because the expected alternation was between an intransitive nominative construction and an intransitive dative construction and the NP შუბლი (*shubli*, forehead) appeared in the nominative case making the construction look identical to that of transitive dative experiencer verbs. Unlike those verbs, however, the choice of nominative NPs is highly restricted and seems to be lexically determined. So, as shown in (32) below, the forehead may be frowned (repeated from (27c) above), and the face may be frowned (32b), but the mouth may not be frowned (32c), and neither may one frown one's self (32d).

- (32) a. მას შუბლი ეჭმუნება  
 mas shubl-i e-ch'muxn-eb-a  
 he.DAT forehead-NOM VV-frown-PRES-3SG  
 'He frowns (the forehead).' (repeated from (27c) above)
- b. მას სახე ეჭმუნება  
 mas saxe e-ch'muxn-eb-a  
 he.DAT face-NOM VV-frown-PRES-3SG  
 'He frowns (the face).'<sup>29</sup>
- c. \* მას პირი ეჭმუნება  
 mas p'ir-i e-ch'muxn-eb-a  
 he.DAT mouth-NOM VV-frown-PRES-3SG  
 'He frowns (the mouth).'
- d. \* მას თავის თავი ეჭმუნება  
 mas tavis tav-i e-ch'muxn-eb-a  
 he.DAT self's self-NOM VV-frown-PRES-3SG  
 'He frowns himself.'

Before concluding that the nominative შუბლი (*shubli*) and სახე (*saxe*) are actually arguments in this construction, it is worth considering if their presence cannot be explained in some other way, because reinterpreting this verb as something other than intransitive will have implications for our understanding of the entire dative experiencer construction. There seem to be basically two alternatives to analyzing these NPs as arguments of a transitive dative experiencer

<sup>29</sup> My informant was reluctant to allow სახე (*saxe*, face) as an argument with this verb, but finally decided it was acceptable as long as the 'frowning' here described a state of the entire face.

construction: they could be adjuncts or they could be arguments of some kind of causative construction.<sup>30</sup> We will consider both of these possibilities in turn.<sup>31</sup>

When considering the possibility that შუბლი (*shubli*, forehead) might be an adjunct in this construction, it is important to remember two key facts. First, it appears in the nominative, and secondly, it appears obligatorily. While a construction requiring an obligatory nominative adjunct would be rather unusual, it is not *a priori* out of the question, so we will consider the possibility. The most direct way to test whether 'forehead' is an adjunct or an argument would be to construct a sentence with the plural შუბლები (*shublebi*, foreheads) instead and look for plural agreement marking on the verb. Unfortunately, this test is not available to us because only nominal arguments which are both overtly plural and animate trigger plural agreement (Cherchi 1999: 33), and so substituting our inanimate plural 'foreheads' for our inanimate singular would have no effect on the form of the verb even if it were an argument.<sup>32</sup> There is, however, other evidence, albeit less direct, which indicates that შუბლი (*shubli*) is not an adjunct in this construction. Perhaps most importantly, it cannot be used as a nominative adjunct with the nominative alternation of 'frowning,' but more tellingly it cannot be used as an adjunct no matter what case it appears in with the nominative construction:

<sup>30</sup> In review, the additional possibility of this being a cognate object construction was suggested. Besides the fact that the licensed object here (and in other examples discussed later in the paper) is not cognate to the verb, there are two other key differences between the second arguments that appear with dative experiencers in Georgian and cognate objects: the appearance of a second argument in Georgian is much more limited than in a cognate object construction (for example, a second argument may appear with 'frown' but not the semantically similar 'smile') and some dative experiencers in Georgian, while lexically restricting which nouns may serve as second arguments, nevertheless license a small set of such nouns rather than only a single one.

<sup>31</sup> From here on, I will discuss this construction considering only the NP შუბლი (*shubli*, forehead), mostly because this seems to be the more natural choice, but my argument could be made equally well with სახე (*saxe*, face).

<sup>32</sup> Actually, one can find plural agreement (but in the form of the plural suffix rather than a plural v-class marker) on the verb in the example below; however, this plural marking is to agree with the plural dative experiencer მათ (*mat*, they), rather than with a plural object, in accordance with the discussion in Cole et al. (1980) of the partial acquisition of subject coding properties by dative experiencers in Georgian.

მათ შუბლი ეჭმუნებათ  
 mat shubl-i e-ch'muxn-eb-a-t  
 they.DAT forehead-NOM VV-frown-PRES-3SG-PL  
 'They frown (the forehead).'



- (33) a. \* ის შუბლი / შუბლს / შუბლის ეჭმუნება  
 is shubl-i / shubl-s / shubl-is e-ch'muxn-eb-a  
 he.NOM forehead-NOM / forehead-GEN / forehead-DAT VV-frown-PRES-3SG  
 ('He frowns the forehead.')
- b. \* ის შუბლად / შუბლით ეჭმუნება  
 is shubl-it / shubl-ad e-ch'muxn-eb-a  
 he.NOM forehead-INSTR / forehead-ADV VV-frown-PRES-3SG  
 ('He frowns the forehead.')

These data presented in (33) thus suggests that, rather than serving to modify the meaning of the sentence in an adjunct position, the presence of შუბლი in (32a) actually serves to reveal the difference in the argument structure between the nominative and the dative constructions. We conclude that it is some kind of argument.

If 'forehead' must be an argument then, we can consider whether we must construe this transitive construction as being the same kind of transitive construction we have seen with other experiencer verbs or if we can perhaps read it differently as some kind of causative. The basic problem with trying to read it as a causative is that it does not have normal causative morphology (which would include an ა- (a-) version vowel and the causative formant -ინ (-in) (Aronson 1990: 208-9; Hewitt 1995: 408)), but it also has no causative reading as can be seen by contrasting the dative construction ეჭმუნება (*ech'muxneba*) with the actual causative built off of the same root. The real causative allows a personal agent doing the causing, whereas the dative construction does not.

- (34) a. მე მას შუბლს ვაჭმუნებ  
 me mas shubl-s v-a-ch'muxn-in-eb  
 I.NOM he.DAT forehead-DAT 1SG-VV-frown-CAUSE-PRES  
 'I make him frown (the forehead).'
- b. \* მას მე ვეჭმუნება  
 mas me v-e-ch'muxn-eb-a  
 he.DAT I.NOM 1SG-VV-frown-PRES-3SG  
 ('I make him frown.' or 'I frown him(?)' or 'He frowns me(?)')

So the unexpected second NP in (32a) must be read as an argument of the verb, indicating that the construction is a *transitive* dative experiencer construction, rather than an intransitive one. If this is true, then the verb should exhibit agreement with its second argument, and, indeed, upon closer examination it does. The final -ა (-a) in ეჭმუნება (*ech'muxneba*) is a third person singular agreement marker; however, it is a v-class agreement marker and must therefore cross-reference a nominative argument rather than the dative experiencer, which would be cross-referenced on the verb by an m-class agreement marker, which in this case is a null prefix. So we can see that all the signs point to the alternation of 'frown' being one between an intransitive nominative construction and a transitive dative experience construction.

Interestingly, if we look back at the data on the 'intransitive' nominative-dative alternations presented in (23)-(26), we see that all of them exhibit third person v-class agreement markers, which suggest the presence of some nominative argument. It would be tempting to try to explain these endings away by suggesting that they are part of some kind of double agreement between the verb and the dative experiencer; however, even if this explanation did not violate the

way that v-class agreement markers are actually used (only for nominatives and ergatives), it would not work because the v-class markers remain in place, cross-referencing some absent third person nominative, even when the dative experiencer is first or second person instead of third, and furthermore there is no such extraneous marking on the nominative construction.

(35) a. მე        მაცემინებს  
 me        m-a-tsemin-eb-s  
 I.DAT    1SG-VV-sneeze-PRES-3SG  
 'I sneeze.' (Perhaps, 'It sneezes (to) me?')

b. მე        ვაცემინებ  
 me        v-a-tsemin-eb  
 I.NOM    1SG-VV-sneeze-PRES  
 'I sneeze.'

(36) a. ჩვენ    გვახვალეებს  
 chven    gv-a-xval-eb-s  
 we.DAT  1PL-VV-cough-PRES-3SG  
 'We cough.' (Perhaps, 'It coughs (to) us?')

b. ჩვენ    ვახვალებთ  
 chven    v-a-xval-eb-t  
 we.NOM  1PL-VV-cough-PRES-1PL  
 'We cough.'

In the nominative constructions (35b and 36b) we see the expected v-series agreement markers on the verb forms, and in the dative construction (35a and 36a) we find the m-series agreement markers expected for agreement with a dative argument. However, in the dative constructions, there persists this additional agreement morpheme, in the form of the final suffix -ბ (-s), a marker that should indicate agreement with a third person nominative argument. The implication here is that what we thought was an alternation between an intransitive nominative and an intransitive dative experiencer construction turns out to be, in all cases, actually an alternation between an intransitive nominative and a transitive dative, albeit one in which the second argument for most verbs may never be made explicit. This may seem strange; however, when we consider how strictly lexically determined the appearance of the nominative argument was with ეჭმუნება (*ech'muxneba*, 'he frowns'), it does not seem so unreasonable to imagine that many of these verbs simply lexically preclude the overt appearance of any noun in the second (nominative) argument position.

Additional evidence in favor of this claim comes from the supposed intransitive dative experiencer verbs that *do not* have alternative nominative constructions, for it turns out that these verbs also display 'extraneous' third person v-marker agreement and can take (lexically-determined) second arguments in the nominative:

(37) a. საჭმელი    მე    მშია  
 sach'mel-i    me    m-shi-a  
 food-NOM    I.DAT  1SG-hunger-3SG  
 'I am hungry (for some food).'<sup>33</sup>

<sup>33</sup> According to my informant, one cannot be hungry for particular kinds of food (a meaning that would be akin to a craving), but only for food in general.

- b. მას სწყურია წყალი / ღვინო  
 mas s-ts'q'uri-a ts'q'al-i / ghvino  
 he.DAT 3SG-thirst-3SG water-NOM / wine.NOM  
 'He is thirsty for some water/wine.'

## 5.2 Hearing and Agency

Finally, we return to the problem presented in (30b) by the *tav*-reflexivization of სმენა (*smena*, to hear), where the reflexive had to appear in the genitive, even though the object of the dative experiencer construction of 'to hear' is normally in the nominative. In trying to account for the discrepancy, we consider the data in (38).

- (38) a. \* ნინოს ზვიადი ეხმის  
 nino-s zviad-i e-sm-i-s  
 nino-DAT zviad-NOM VV-hear-PRES-3SG  
 ('Nino hears Zviad.')
- b. ნინოს ზვიადის ხმა ეხმის  
 nino-s zviad-is xma e-sm-i-s  
 Nino-DAT Zviad-GEN voice.NOM VV-hear-PRES-3SG  
 'Nino hears Zviad.' (Lit. 'Nino hears Zviad's voice.')

From these data, it would appear that the *tav*-reflexivization of სმენა (*smena*, to hear) does not represent a failure of the dative experiencer to govern a nominative reflexive, but rather reveals a lexical requirement that people cannot be heard directly, but rather only indirectly through their voice, song, words, etc.

Beyond this, the construction illustrated in (30b) and (38b) is reminiscent of an entire group of verbs, frequently classified as having a unique dative-genitive argument structure, which includes შური (*shuri*, to envy), შიში (*shishi*, to fear), დაჯერება (*dajereba*, to believe), and others (Cherchi 1997: 20); however, it is not true that these verbs have an inherent dative-genitive argument structure. While it is true that the objects of these dative experiencer verbs must appear in the genitive if they are people, they must, on the other hand, appear in the more typical (for dative experiencer constructions) nominative if they are not people, but rather conditions or facts. In (39) below we see that if the envy is directed at a person, the object must be genitive; this requirement holds for reflexivization in (40) in a construction that exactly parallels the reflexivization of სმენა (*smena*, to hear). However, in (41) we see that when the envy is engendered by something abstract or at least impersonal, this object *must* appear in the genitive.

- (39) მას სშურს მისი / \*ის  
 mas s-shur-s misi / \*is  
 he.DAT 3SG-envy-3SG she.GEN / \*she.NOM  
 'He envies her.'

- (40) მას სშურს თავის თავის / \*თავის თავი  
 mas s-shur-s tavis tav-is / \*tavis tav-i  
 he.DAT 3SG-envy-3SG self's self-GEN / \*self's self-DAT  
 'He envies himself.'
- (41) მას სშურს ის / \* მისი  
 mas s-shur-s is / \*misi  
 he.DAT 3SG-envy-3SG it.NOM / it.GEN  
 'He envies it.'<sup>34</sup>

Thus there seems to be no real justification for thinking that there is a separate argument structure for შური (*shuri*, to envy) and other similar dative experiencer verbs because they display the same aversion to personal nominative arguments that სმენა (*smena*, to hear) displays, and the latter verb is clearly a prototypical example of a dative experiencer verb. What is apparent, however, is that Georgian has a semantic restriction of personal arguments being placed in certain kinds of argument structures. From my interactions with my informant, it seems that in Georgian the idea of a person being heard or engendering envy is simply nonsense. Consider her reaction to the ungrammatical sentence in (38a): "How can she hear him? She can hear [his] voice . . . ." In much the same way, she explained to me as I tried to insert the ungrammatical nominative pronoun into sentence (39) that people are not what makes us jealous but facts about those people. Consider (39) in light of the following sentence:

<sup>34</sup> My informant suggests that this sentence makes sense if 'it' refers to, for example, the fact of someone else having bought a car.

- (42) მას სშურს მისი წარმატება  
 mas s-shur-s misi ts'armat'eba  
 he.DAT 3SG-envy-3SG she.GEN success.NOM  
 'He envies her success.'

Given (42), it is by no means clear that the genitive in (39) should even be considered an argument when it probably should be analyzed as the possessor of a non-overt nominative object. The sentence in (39) could thus simply be reconceived as meaning literally 'He envies *hers*,' which would highlight the extent to which really Georgian does not allow personal arguments in certain kinds of argument structures. Similar examples could be produced for the other so-called "dative-genitive" verbs. Thus, while there remains to be explained this restriction against having personal nominative arguments with these verbs, it is clear that the answer is to be found not in syntactic control of case assignment, but in a semantic distinction.

## 6 Conclusion

In this paper, I have examined the syntactic and semantic contexts of the Georgian dative experiencer. It appears in constructions which frequently alternate with nominative constructions using the same arguments and verb stem. I have shown that the difference between these constructions is primarily to be understood in terms of the agency of the experiencer. The experiencer has agency over the action in the nominative construction but not in the dative construction. This distinction based on agency affects not just the semantics of the statement and the contexts in which it might be appropriate, but also whether or not the construction will license an imperative construction. For those dative experiencer verbs for which no alternate nominative form exists, it can be argued that the experiencer is incapable of exercising agency over the action: such forms are limited essentially to statements of possession and descriptions of physical states like hunger or being cold.

Although many dative experiencer verbs appear to be intransitive, there is evidence from their morphology that they actually have a transitive argument structure because they invariably include agreement marking for a third person nominative argument which is not present.<sup>35</sup> However, there are enough examples of similarly-constructed dative experiencer verbs which license particular overt nominative arguments to indicate that the choice of what nouns may surface in this argument position is determined lexically for such verbs.

Many have argued forcefully that the dative experiencer in Georgian really is the subject in the constructions in which it appears, and the data presented and analyzed here support that

<sup>35</sup> The claim that all dative experiencer verbs in Georgian are actually underlying transitive is bolstered by Hewitt's discussion of non-experiencer (Class 1 and 3) verbs like მობანდვა (*moshardva*, to urinate), which he claims are transitive despite having lost their "original direct objects" (1995: 549-50).

claim. Dative experiencers are treated like subjects by the rules of Causative Clause Union and govern the phenomenon of *tav*-reflexivization in the way that only clausal subjects can. However, it is worth considering in what ways dative experiencers are different from other subjects in Georgian. Most notably, dative experiencers never exhibit semantic agency, which is reflected not only in the semantics of their constructions, but also in the basic morphosyntactic fact that they can never be cross-referenced in the verbal morphology by v-class agreement markers, which are reserved in Georgian for cross-referencing agentive arguments marked by either the nominative or ergative cases.

It might be argued that the fact that the objects of dative experiencer verbs are cross-referenced by v-class markers undercuts this argument. However, the objects of dative experiencer verbs are arguably always more agentive than the dative experiencers themselves. The existence of a restriction requiring objects which cannot be interpreted as agentive appearing in the genitive instead of the nominative (it is not the person who compels you to hear, but the sound waves which actually strike your ear) corroborates this theory and further demonstrates the vital role that semantics play in selecting, organizing, and marking arguments in the Georgian verbal system.

The Series III verb forms have been described as "evidential" (Harris 1981: 247) because of the way in which they describe only what seems apparently true to the speaker. It is worth noting that Series III verbs naturally take the same dative-nominative argument structure that is so familiar from the dative experiencer construction. In a Series III sentence, "where a speaker reports an event which he did not directly witness, but of which he saw the results, or some evidence that it occurred" (Cole 1980: 735) the subject cannot properly be described as agentive since the whole fact of his having carried the action out is inherently at question by the very

nature of the Series III construction. Indeed, the speaker is relieved of “direct responsibility for the accuracy of the statement” in a Series III construction (Ibid. 735). If this lack of structural agency on the part of the subject of a Series III construction is properly understood, it will come as no surprise that Series III verbs display the same argument structure as dative experiencer constructions. The key here is a semantic distinction drawn according to who is in control of the action.

This semantic distinction was also relevant in the distinction between which word orders are licensed by the nominative and dative variants of *სმენა* (*smena*, ‘to hear’), which were considered in (21) and (22). In both cases, the SOV and SOV word orders are allowed, and if we can imagine that the notion of ‘subject’ is poorly defined in Georgian due to each argument in a dative experiencer construction having some subject properties, then the licensed word orders are entirely a function of which argument is construed by the speaker in the particular instance to be more subject-like. In the nominative construction, the speaker has no choice and must choose the nominative agent. However, in the dative construction, the speaker can either treat the experiencer (marked with dative) as the subject, or the nominative theme as the subject, since the former has the behavioral properties of a subject and the latter the coding properties.

One final example should drive the point home. When I was trying to get my informant to explain to me the difference between the dative and nominative constructions of (*t’irili*, to cry) illustrated above in (4), she offered me the following example:

(43) ჰილარის ეტირებოდა

hilari-s e-t’ir-eb-oda

Hillary-DAT VV-cry-PRES-IMP.3SG

‘Hillary was about to cry.’

The context for this sentence was Hillary Clinton’s then-recent ‘moment’ in New Hampshire where she nearly cried in front of a big crowd. My informant had seen a clip of this on television, and described the moment using this imperfect form of the dative experiencer construction of ‘to cry.’ She explained that the sentence did not have to mean, as I had expected, that Hillary did in fact cry, only that she seemed about to for reasons beyond her control. In this sentence, as she would have been in a proper Series III construction, my informant was “relieved” of “responsibility for the accuracy of the statement.” It does not matter whether Hillary ended up crying or not: my informant has communicated successfully that something beyond Hillary’s control has put her in a state of ‘having a cry,’ in much the same way that, as described above in connection with the example in (26), allergy season might put someone in a state of ‘having a sneeze’ or being sick might put someone in a state of ‘having a cough.’ It is precisely in conveying these kinds of meanings, where the action is beyond the control of the experiencer argument, that the dative experiencer construction really reveals the extent to which its purpose is to encode the non-volitionality of the experiencer.

This example, more than any other single piece of data I collected, underscores just how central semantic considerations are to case assignment and argument structure in Georgian. Perhaps the biggest problem with the traditional notion of subjecthood as applied in Georgian is that the Western-developed notion of subjecthood is too structural for a language, like Georgian, which indicates through morphosyntax the speaker’s impressions of and judgments about the situation she is describing.

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## Appendix A

## The Georgian Alphabet: Transliteration and Pronunciation

Georgian Letter	My Transliteration	Phonetic Value
ა	a	a
ბ	b	b
გ	g	g
დ	d	d
ე	e	e
ვ	v	v
ზ	z	z
თ	t	t <sup>h</sup>
ი	i	i
კ	k'	k'
ლ	l	l
მ	m	m
ნ	n	n
ო	o	o
პ	p'	p'
ჟ	zh	ž
რ	r	r
ს	s	s
ტ	t'	t'
უ	u	u
ფ	p	p <sup>h</sup>
კ	k	k <sup>h</sup>
გ	gh	ğ
ყ	q'	q'
შ	sh	š
ჩ	ch	tš
ც	ts	ts
ძ	dz	dz
წ	ts'	ts'
ჭ	ch'	tš'
ხ	x	x
ჯ	j	dž
ჰ	h	h

## Appendix B

## Abbreviations and Acronyms

ADV	adverbial case
AOR	aorist screeve
CAUSE	causative morpheme
COMP	complementizer
DAT	dative case
ERG	ergative case
FUT	future screeve
GEN	genitive case
IMP	imperative mood
INTSR	instrumental case
NOM	nominative case
NP	noun phrase
OSV	object-subject-verb
OVS	object-verb-subject
PAST	past tense
PL	plural
POT	potential <sup>36</sup>
PP	prepositional phrase
PRES	present screeve
PREV	preverb
SG	singular
SOV	subject-object-verb
SVO	subject-verb-object
TS	transitive
VOS	verb-object-subject
VSO	verb-subject-object
VV	version vowel
1PL	first person plural
1SG	first person singular
2DAT	second dative
2SG	second person singular
3PL	third person plural
3SG	third person singular

<sup>36</sup> Used to describe the negative 3᠑᠙ (*ver*) which connotes a lack of ability.