
Agreement beyond the verb: -t as an addressee enclitic in Georgian

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In many languages, plural morphology indexes politeness (French *vous*, German *Sie*, Russian *vy*). Georgian aligns with this pattern: the pronoun *tkven* ‘you.PL/POL’ combines with the verbal suffix *-t*: e.g. *ras aketeb-t?* ‘What are you.PL/POL doing?’. What is innovative is that *-t* now appears on non-verbal hosts and a verbal agreement morpheme surfaces on nouns and interjections without any syntactic controller, creating a domain mismatch between morphology and syntax.

Data and Analysis: Early evidence already suggests this usage:

- (1) saghamo mshvidobisa=**t**! (Vazha Pshavela, 1888)
evening peace=*pl/pol*
‘Good evening!’

Shanidze (1953: §223, note 2) comments that *-t* had “moved from verbs to words addressed to many.” Synchronically, *-t* appears only in address-oriented domains. It attaches to stand-alone address phrases, polite vocative heads, and fixed formulas within compound exchanges (*gamarjoba=t*, *ras aketeb-t?* ‘hello-POL, what are you doing-POL?’). Earlier uses of *gamarjobat* and *madlobt* can be explained as analogical extensions from polite imperatives (*mapatie=t*). However, vocatives-like *megobrebo=t* and *khalkho=t* cannot be derived this way: they are not verb ellipses and already carry plural marking. The marker *=t* never appears on ordinary nouns, adjectives, or personal names (*Giorgi-t).

Within a Minimalist Agree framework (Chomsky 2000, 2001), Georgian introduces a high feature [ADDR:HON] in root contexts, which probes the discourse addressee and is realized at PF on the rightmost element of the Address Phrase. When no verb is present, [ADDR:HON] is spelled out on the non-verbal host (*gamarjoba=t*) when a verb appears, the same feature values T (*aketeb-t*). Polite titles can host the feature because they are functional vocative heads, whereas proper names cannot. This analysis explains the narrow but productive distribution of *-t* without reducing it to analogy or pragmatics, showing it to be a genuine case of allocutive agreement realized through Agree.

References: • Chomsky, N. (2000). Minimalist Inquiries: The Framework. In R. Martin, D. Michaels & J. Uriagereka (eds.), *Step by Step: Essays on Minimalist Syntax in Honor of Howard Lasnik*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 89–155. • Chomsky, N. (2001). Derivation by Phase. In M. Kenstowicz (ed.), *Ken Hale: A Life in Language*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1–52. • Shanidze, A. (1953). *Kartuli enis gramatikis sapudzvlebi* [Foundations of Georgian Grammar]. Vol. I. Tbilisi: Mecniereba, §223 n. 2.