

Two flavors of control in Georgian: *decide* and *try*

INTRODUCTION: Although Georgian has been more actively researched in recent years due to its complex verbal morphology and agreement systems, e.g. case (Foley, 2020; 2023) and number (Bondarenko & Zompì, 2021), little has been said about the properties of verbs within the domain of clausal complementation. In this abstract, I present a puzzle with two control predicates in Georgian: *gada-c'qv-et'-s* 'he/she will decide' and *cdil-ob-s* 'he/she tries,' which does not assume any particular theory of control, positing only a null category PRO in the subject of the complement clause. Consistent with the obligatory control (OC) signature (Landau, 2024), both verbs license OC when they embed nominalized predicates, or *masdars*:

(1) *Obligatory sloppy readings of PRO*

- a. šota-m gada-c'qv-it'-a PRO c'ign-is c'a-k'itx-va, maia-ma-c
 Shota-ERG PVB-decide-AOR.3SG book-GEN PVB-read-NMN.NOM, Maia-ERG-also
 'Shota_i decided [PRO_i to read a book], and so did Maia_j decide [PRO_{*i/j} to read a book].'
- b. mariam-i cdil-ob-d-a PRO k'ar-is ga-ğ-eb-a-s, otar-i-c
 Mariam-NOM try-TS-IMPF-3SG door-GEN PVB-open-TS-NMN-DAT, Otar-NOM-also
 'Mariam_i was trying [PRO_i to open the door], and so was Otar_j trying [PRO_{*i/j} to open the door].'

(2) *Non-c-commanding control disallowed*

- a. šota-s deda-m gada-c'qv-it'-a PRO c'ign-is c'a-k'itx-va
 Shota-GEN mother-ERG PVB-decide-AOR.3SG book-GEN PVB-read-NMN.NOM
 '[Shota_i's mother]_j decided [PRO_{*i/j} to read a book].'
- b. mariam-s megobar-i cdil-ob-d-a PRO k'ar-is ga-ğ-eb-a-s
 Mariam-GEN friend-NOM try-TS-IMPF-3SG door-GEN PVB-open-TS-NMN-DAT
 '[Mariam_i's friend]_j was trying [PRO_{*i/j} to open the door].'

Perhaps more interesting is the fact that both verbs also license obligatory control with *finite subordinate clauses*, given that the embedded predicate has subjunctive morphology (e.g., pluperfect) and its subject is null PRO. When the embedded subject becomes an overt pronominal in (3), e.g. 3SG.DAT *mas*, it can be co-indexed with Shota's mother, Shota, or some other contextually salient individual, similarly for (4).

- (3) [šota-s_i deda-m]_j gada-c'qv-it'-a, rom {PRO_{*i/j/*}/mas_{i/j/k}} c'ign-i c'a-e-k'itx-a
 [Shota-GEN mother-ERG] PVB-decide-AOR.3SG, that {PRO/3SG.DAT} book-NOM PVB-PV-read-PLUPERF.3SG
 '[Shota_i's mother]_j decided {PRO_j to read a book/that someone_{i/j/k} should read a book}.'
- (4) [maia-s_i megobar-i]_j cdil-ob-d-a, rom {PRO_{*i/j/*}/mas_{i/j/k}} šejibr-i mo-e-g-o
 [Maia-GEN friend-NOM] try-TS-IMPF-3SG, that {PRO/3SG.DAT} competition-NOM PVB-PV-win-PLUPERF.3SG
 '[Maia_i's friend]_j was trying {PRO_j/for someone_{i/j/k}} to win the competition.'

THE PUZZLE: Despite both verbs establishing OC in *masdars* and finite subjunctive embedded clauses (with null subjects), only *cdil-ob-s* 'he/she tries' imposes exhaustive control (EC) with *masdar* complements (5a), whereas *gada-c'qv-et'-s* 'he/she will decide' permits partial control (PC) with *masdars* (6a). On the other hand, both verbs permit PC when the complement clause is finite (5b, 6b).

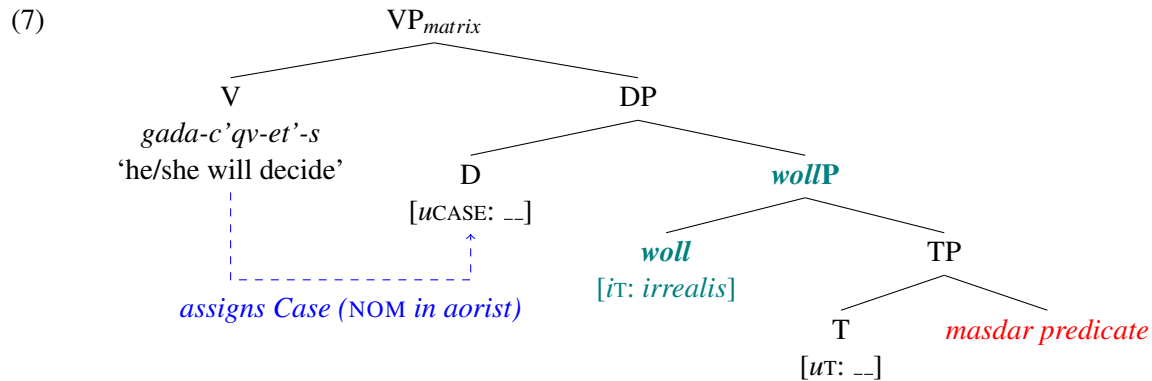
- (5) a. šota cdil-ob-d-a PRO (*ertad) saseirno-d c'a-svl-a-s
 Shota try-TS-IMPF-3SG (together) walking-ADV PVB-go-NMN-DAT
 'Shota tried to go for a walk (*together).'
- b. šota cdil-ob-d-a, rom PRO saseirno-d ertad c'a-v-sul-iq-av-i-t
 Shota try-TS-IMPF-3SG that walking-ADV together PVB-1-go-TS-be.PLUPERF-NOM-PL
 'Shota tried for us to go walking together.'
- (6) a. šota-m gada-c'qv-it'-a PRO ertad saseirno-d c'a-svl-a
 Shota-ERG decided.3SG together walking-ADV PVB-go-NMN.NOM
 'Shota decided to go walking together.'

- b. *šota-m gada-c'qv-it'-a, rom PRO saseirno-d ertad c'a-v-sul-i-qav-i-t*
 Shota-ERG decided.3SG that walking-ADV **together** PVB-1-go-TS-be.PLUPERF-NOM-PL
 ‘Shota decided for us to go walking together.’

In PC, the controllee PRO is semantically plural, referring to some set of entities that includes the controller (Landau, 1999, 2000; Barrie & Pittman, 2004; a.o.). One diagnostic for whether Georgian OC constructions permit PC is if the embedded predicate can be modified by the adverbial *ertad* ‘together’; this does not hold in (5a), as *cdil-ob-s* ‘he/she tries’ requires EC for interpreting PRO in masdar (nominalized) complements.

THE PROPOSAL: The difference between masdars and finite clauses in Georgian is whether they possess **semantic tense**; masdars lack tense, while finite clauses are tensed. Additionally, the desiderative verb *gada-c'qv-et'-s* ‘he/she will decide’ differs from implicative *cdil-ob-s* ‘he/she tries’ in that only the former strictly requires its complement clause to bear future/irrealis TMA — this is similar to the attitude/non-attitude complement distinction made in Landau (2015). While this would predict that *gada-c'qv-et'-s* ‘he/she will decide’ should not combine with tenseless masdar complements, contra (6a), I argue that this can be reconciled by the **synthesis approach** to clausal complementation (Wurmbrand & Lohninger, 2023); the matrix and embedded predicates interact *dynamically* with each other in the derivation, and syntax builds up structure freely so long as the result satisfies the semantic requirements of the clausal-embedding verb.

Since the attitude predicate *gada-c'qv-et'-s* ‘he/she will decide’ needs to have future/irrealis TMA on its complement, Georgian syntax projects a covert modal *woll* into the TMA domain above the TP nucleus of the masdar, prior to nominalization, to fulfill this requirement (cf. Condoravdi, 2001; Wurmbrand, 2014a):



On the other hand, non-attitude predicate *cdil-ob-s* ‘he/she tries’ does not project this modal into its masdar complement, as it can embed clauses which lack tense. This semantic tense distinction between the masdars embedded by *gada-c'qv-et'-s* ‘he/she will decide’ and *cdil-ob-s* ‘he/she tries’ is precisely what gives rise to the PC and EC dichotomy observed in (5a) vs. (6a), respectively (cf. Landau, 2015; Pearson, 2016).

One must also consider the reason why *cdil-ob-s* ‘he/she tries,’ a non-attitude predicate expected to combine with tenseless complement clauses and require EC, can establish PC with finite subjunctive embedded clauses, which are tensed in Georgian. Wurmbrand & Lohninger (2023) note that cross-linguistically, complements of the verb *try* tend to carry both **irrealis** and **tenseless** semantic features. For economy reasons, masdar complements of *cdil-ob-s* ‘he/she tries’ remain tenseless and do not project *woll*; however, there is no semantic restriction that prohibits the verb from embedding a subjunctive finite clause with irrealis TMA. Therefore, if the kind of OC is dependent on temporal/mood features of the complement, my proposal would straightforwardly account for EC with masdars (5a) vs. PC with finite clauses (5b).

KEY TAKEAWAYS: Georgian control predicates *gada-c'qv-et'-s* ‘he/she will decide’ and *cdil-ob-s* ‘he/she tries’ license OC with both masdars and finite subjunctive embedded clauses, yet their semantic requirements differ as the former is an attitude predicate and requires its complement to carry future/irrealis TMA. Despite being a non-attitude predicate, the latter also embeds tensed finite clauses; this supports *synthesis* in showing that certain clausal embedding properties, e.g. obligatory control (PC vs. EC), are not solely determined by the embedding predicate, but may also depend on the syntactic nature of the complement.