

**SCTMG 2020****International Scientific Conference «Social and Cultural Transformations in the  
Context of Modern Globalism»****WAYS OF EXPRESSION OF RELATIVITY IN THE GERMAN  
AND CHECHEN LANGUAGES**

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***Abstract***

The article describes ways of expression of relativity in such unrelated languages as Chechen and German. The authors pay attention to comparative and typological studies of the native (Chechen) and German languages. It is known that the Vainakh and Romance-Germanic languages belong to different structural languages; however, a comparative analysis of these languages has recently been of particular relevance. The article emphasizes that there is the growing interest of linguists in comparative studies of their native and foreign languages. There are few studies about the Chechen language and its difference from other languages. It can be explained by the fact that the Chechen language has to be examined in a more detailed way. Several distinguishing features of two languages are concluded. In particular, in the Chechen language, as we see, in contrast to the German language, relative time is not superstructured over the absolute one. On the Chechen verb, in contrast to the German verb, one can ask how simultaneity, precedence, and consecutiveness are expressed in general.

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## 1. Introduction

Any research is carried out using certain methods. The main method of comparative typology is comparison. The comparison method identifies the properties of languages that are inherent in them equally, determines the properties of languages that distinguish them from each other completely or partly. The description of one or several languages is performed by the comparative analysis technique. A feature of typological comparison is that not only facts are taken as material for comparison, but also a description, an interpretation of these facts by other researchers. In a typological comparison, it is important that the description of one language is not distorted by imposing facts of another language on it.

## 2. Problem Statement

The subject of the research is a comparison of genetically unrelated languages. In such cases, the linguist is faced with the problem of comparability of phenomena. Categories of general grammar serve as a sufficient conceptual basis for determining the phenomena being compared, but they are reliable only at a general level. The concept of “verb tense” is equally applicable to the German and Chechen languages. The decomposition of it into more detailed concepts causes difficulties for researchers. For example, is the concept of “relative tense” equally applicable to both languages?

## 3. Research Questions

The subjects of the study are the grammatical categories *relativity* and *taxis*. If the German category of tense is described in detail by many researchers, the Chechen category of tense is described insufficiently. Of course, it is important not to transfer the properties of the well-studied German language into the Chechen language. Fortunately, typological studies make possible to see in a little-studied mother tongue (in the study, the Chechen language) such phenomena that could be unnoticed in its monolingual studies.

## 4. Purpose of the Study

The study aims to describe the functionality of temporary forms in the German and Chechen languages. Ways of expression of relativity are analyzed.

## 5. Research Methods

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## 6. Findings

A review of the literature on comparative studies of the Chechen and German languages shows that such studies have begun recently. Some works on the contrastive study of the Chechen and German languages can be distinguished. This is Desherieva (1979), Dagiurov (2005), Umadkereeveva (1993), Khalidov (2003), Nichols (2001), Arsakhanova (2011) and Molochieva (2010).

The problem was highlighted by Litvinov in *Relative Tense in Grammar* (as cited in Litvinov & Radčenko, 1998). In fact, the conditions of meaningful grammatical terms *taxis* and *relative tense* were discussed.

The paradigm of the German verb is complicated by the meanings of absolute and relative tenses. Along with the speech point, *the point of reference* (Reichenbach, 1966, pp. 287-298) is also taken into account. This theory of the physicist and philosopher became popular among linguists who study tenses. Thus, three points on the tense axis are distinguished in the Reichenbach concept:

- 1) point of speech (S);
- 2) point of event (E);
- 3) point of reference (R).

Absolute tense is the correlation of the indicated action to the moment of speech (present, past, future). Relative tense means its relevance to any other point (simultaneity, precedence, consecutiveness).

According to most German grammars, there are six temporary forms in the German language; it is not indicated that this is the indicative mood. There are two temporary forms of *werden* in the conjunctiva, although there are no such forms in the indicative. Given the conjunctiva, only eight temporary forms are obtained. However, it must be kept in mind that there are still double perfect formations – *Doppelte Perfektbildungen* (Litvinov & Radčenko, 1998).

Absolute and relative tense is not a difference in the forms of tense, but different ways of talking about tense. Absolute tense is a tense form used to indicate the time plan. Relative tense is a tense form used to indicate a tense relationship. It is wrong that there are “three forms of relative tense” in German. It is true that, as W. Schmidt stated (Schmidt, 1967), all forms, except for the pluperfect and the future tense (Futurum II), can be used absolutely and relatively. However, it is true that in German there are three specialized forms of precedence, and there are no specialized forms of simultaneity and consecutiveness (Litvinov & Radčenko, 1998).

So, according to Reichenbach (1966), as well as according to Weinrich (1985) and many other authors in the Germanic languages, there are three special forms of precedence, three perfect forms, except for double perfect formations, but otherwise all temporary forms of an indicator can be used relatively.

It is wrong that relative tenses are determined for subordinate clauses, and the choice of the form of relative tense is determined by the form of absolute tense in the principal sentence. For example:

*Ich hatte alles erledigt, als... (“she came”).*

The (... *als sie kam*) means simultaneity with the moment of perfectiveness in the principal sentence. And simultaneity is expressed by preterit. In other words, the choice of forms of simultaneity bases not on another verb form, but on the time plan in which we continue this tense. So, in the principal sentence there can be preterit, perfect, pluperfect, but if in the subordinate sentence the precedence is

meant, the pluperfect will be used in it anyway. If simultaneity is expressed in the past, then the relative tense will be expressed anyway by preterit. But the main point is the fact that it is not necessarily a complex sentence, because tenses can be used relatively in independent sentences in the context. In complex sentences they are not necessarily interconnected according to the norm of relative tense.

It must be pointed out that German grammarians have already spoken about the rule of simultaneity in the past (Hauser-Suida & Hoppe-Beugel, 1972).

And the precedence in the present, past and future? Here is a number of examples:

*Ich weiss nicht, ob er zu Hause gewesen ist.*

(precedence in the present)

*Nachdem wir die Arbeit beendet hatten, fuhren wir nach Hause.*

(precedence in the past)

*Nachdem er die Prüfung bestanden hat (haben wird), wird er  
Medizin studieren.*

(precedence in the future)

The precedence in the present is expressed by the perfect tense. The precedence in the past is expressed by the pluperfect. The precedence in the future can be expressed by Futur II, but more often by the perfect tense. Are other forms appropriate here? Replace the present tense in the first example with the perfect tense:

*Ich habe nicht gewusst, ob er zu Hause gewesen ist.*

We could use the perfect tense in the subordinate clause, but in fact in this case we take the moment of speech as a reference point in both parts, that is, the tense is absolute.

Further it is shown how consecutiveness is interpreted (Nachzeitigkeit).

*Die Bauern haben die Arbeit beendet, ehe die Sonne untergeht.*

*Die Bauern hatten die Arbeit beendet, ehe die Sonne unterging.*

“The present tense (in the subordinate clause) is relative tense in relation to the perfect tense (in the principle sentence). The preterit in the subordinate clause is relative tense in relation to the pluperfect (in the principle sentence)” (Helbig & Buscha, 1972, p. 480).

But the verbs *wollen* and *sollen* in the preterite can also express the consecutiveness. For example:

*Ich sah, dass sie gleich losweinen würde (wollte).*

*Ich sah, dass etwas geschehen würde (sollte).*

So, if the reference point coincides with the moment of speech, the fact means absolute time. If it is another point, then it is saying about relative time. When we mean relative tense in the indicative mood, we cannot think about “simultaneity”, “precedence”, “consecutiveness”. It is necessary to ask about “simultaneity in the present, past or future”, “precedence in the present, past or future”, “consecutiveness in the present, past or future”.

In the German indicative mood, relative time is superstructured over absolute tense, in the conjunctive we have either relative or absolute in their pure form.

The present, for example, with an unrealistic desire, is expressed by the preterite:

*Ich wüsste gern ...*

or Conditional I:

*Ich würde gern wissen ...*

The past tense is expressed the pluperfect:

*Ich hätte gern gewusst ...*

or less frequently by Conditional II:

*Ich würde gern gewusst haben...*

But the future tense is like the present one:

*Ich wüsste gern schon morgen ...*

That is, there is one rule for the present and future tenses and the another one for the past tense.

Pure simultaneity is represented, for example, in the modality of indirect speech. Such simultaneity is expressed either by the present tense or the preterite. Pure precedence is expressed by the perfect tense or the pluperfect. Pure consecutiveness is expressed by the future tense (Futurum) or the conditional mood.

Unlike the German language, in the Chechen language, relative tenses have no relation to the moment of speech. In any timeplan, precedence is expressed in the same way. In this case, we will talk about *taxis*.

The concept of *taxis* was introduced by Jacobson (1972). He distinguished it from the concept of time and gave it the following definition: “A taxis characterizes a reported fact in relation to another reported fact, regardless of the fact of the message (as opposed to time characterizing the reported fact in relation to the fact of the message)” (Jacobson, 1972, p.102). Taxis (from the Greek taxis “construction, order, location”) is a language category that characterizes the temporal relationship between actions (in the broad sense, including any kind of predicate): simultaneity / non-simultaneity, interruption, correlation of the main and related actions.

But when comparing different languages, two cases should be distinguished:

1. taxis combined with the paradigm of time;
2. Taxis as a separate paradigm of forms (as Russian transgressives in the example of Jacobson).

So, is it appropriate to talk about taxis in German? In our case, it is not, but the tradition of German grammars did without the concept of “taxis”. If the relative time can be expressed by transgressive and participle forms and cannot be expressed by any in finite forms, then it is legitimate to name of pure “taxis” as a category separate from the category of *temporary localization* (Litvinov & Radčenko, 1998).

There is a reason to talk about pure taxis in the Chechen language, since the relative time here is expressed by transgressive and participle forms in positions where the German verb would be a finite one. However, Desherieva (1979) argues that there is a relative time in the Chechen language. After determining absolute tenses of the present, past and future tenses, it distinguishes the following values of relative and absolute tenses: absolute and relative past that has been done recently; absolute and relative past that has been done a longtime ago; absolute and relative tense that was before the main action; absolute and relative past that was simultaneous; absolute and relative close present tense; absolute and relative distant present tense; absolute and relative pre-present; absolute and relative present that is simultaneous; absolute and relative distant future; absolute and relative pre-future; absolute and relative after-future; absolute and relative future that is simultaneously.

There are examples with relative tenses:

- simultaneity (present tense):

*Мела мох хьокху говран кхес ловзуш.*

A breeze blows caressing the horse's mane.

- simultaneity (past tense):

*Тхо цIа догIуш, догIа догIура.*

When we drove home it was raining

- simultaneity (future tense):

*Мела мох хьокхур, говран кхес ловзуш.*

A breeze will blow caressing the horse's mane».

- precedence (present tense):

*Оха, болх а бой, садоIу.*

After working, we rest.

- precedence (past tense):

*Оха, болх бинчул тIаьхьа, садаьIна.*

After working, we rested.

- precedence (future tense):

*Оха, болх бинчул тIаьхьа, садоIур ду.*

«After working, we will work».

- consecutiveness (present tense):

*Со цIа ваххали, доьшу ас.*

Before I go home, I read.

- consecutiveness (past tense):

*Совет Iедал хIоттали, хала дехура вай.*

Before Soviet power was established, it was difficult for us to live.

- consecutiveness (future tense):

*Бер самадаллал, доьшу ас.*

Until the boy wakes up, I will read.

As we see, simultaneity in the present, past and future tenses is expressed by one form; precedence in the present, past and future – by second form; consecutiveness – by third form.

Desherieva (1979) wrote about relative forms. She notes that transgressive and participle forms of the past and future tenses participate in the formation of relative forms of time. The transgressive and participle form is the form s – на (*аьхна латта* “plowed land”), the transgressive of the future tense is the form of the future tense plus the participle of the auxiliary verb *ду* – “is” (*доьшу ас* – “intending to read”). But she did not mention of simultaneity, precedence, consecutiveness.

So, in the Chechen language, we prefer not to talk about relative time, here it is more appropriate to talk about taxis. Taxis grams express simultaneity, precedence, and consecutiveness not in relation to the moment of speech, but in relation to any situation explicitly or implicitly given by the context (such a situation, following Reichenbach (1966), is commonly called the *point of reference*).

Chechen taxis are expressed in three different ways:

• Precedence is expressed in a form with an affix – *на*: it is a transgressive when it is in a circumstantial position; it is a participle when it is in an attribute position; it is a verb form of perfect tense when it is in a predicative position is perfect:

*Цо, книжка ешначул тлаьхьа, дена зIо до.*

He, having read the book (after reading the book), helps his father.

• Simultaneity is expressed by the transgressive – *и*, which in combination with the predictor becomes the predicate form:

*Кхиссалуи возIура клант.*

The boy walked jumping.

• Consecutiveness is expressed by the local case (seventh series) of the verb root, which is thus used as a name; this form – *лц/лца* never acts in the position of a finite verb:

*Суйре тIекхаччали, телевизоре хьожу со.*

Until evening, I watch TV.

In the Chechen language, as we see, in contrast to the German language, relative time is not superstructured over the absolute one. On the Chechen verb, in contrast to the German verb, one can ask how simultaneity, precedence, and consecutiveness are expressed in general. And as we saw in the examples, simultaneity, precedence, and consecutiveness are expressed in the Chechen language in transgressive and participle forms, therefore it is advisable to talk about taxis here.

## 7. Conclusion

1. The most common difference between German and Chechen grammar tense is that in the German system, different categories are combined in one paradigm (taxis and tense, tense and mood).

2. The Chechen language has a taxis system in non-finite verb forms compared with any time plan. It is advisable to name the German taxis as simply relative time, since it is expressed by finite forms of the time paradigm.

3. In German it can be said about absolute and relative temporal meanings. Here relative time is superstructured over absolute time. In this case, they speak not just about simultaneity, precedence and consecutiveness, but about simultaneity, precedence, and consecutiveness in the present, past, future. Unlike the German language, one can ask about the Chechen verb, which expresses simultaneity, precedence and consecutiveness in general. In the Chechen language, we are talking about pure taxis, the relative time is expressed here in the transgressive and participle forms – *на*, – *и*, – *лц*. The precedence is expressed by the affix – *на*, the simultaneity – by the transgressive – *и*, consecutiveness – by the local case of the verb root – *лц*.

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