

Have and Be in Armenian

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էշը չըգերած խոնոր ուղւն, կըլիսը ցավի գու:
efə tʃəgeradz χödnor udæ, kəlöχə tʃavi gu.

The ass who eats inedible grass gets a headache.

Այշոնը բարմը խաղա գասի նա, կեղա դունը քաղւն գու:
ajtʃonə barmə χaχa gasi na, kella dunə kʰagæ gu.

They say nice things to the bear, and when they go home he's destroyed their house.

ըմըն միրուկ ծնողն ւն չւն:
əmən miruk onnoχ ædz tʃæ.

Not all bearded creatures are goats.

1. Introduction

Benveniste 1952:	“transitive perfect”	:	possession
	<i>nora e: gortseal</i>		<i>nora e: handerdz</i>
	3sg.GEN be.3sg do-ppl.		3sg.GEN be.3sg garment
	‘(s)he has done/accomplished’		‘(s)he has a garment’

TODAY’S POINTS:

- The possession analysis of the transitive perfect was already known by the Armenian monks in Vienna by 1866.
- More concrete evidence for the possession analysis occurs in Koriwn, Middle Armenian, and at least two modern dialects, which use lexical ‘have’ to form the perfect with “transitive” verbs.
- These perfect constructions actually distinguish unaccusatives and passives (which select ‘be’) from transitives and unergatives (which select ‘have’).
- The distinction between two classes of intransitive verbs—unaccusative and unergative—shows up in several other situations in Armenian.



2. Indo-European Background

unim ‘have’

- Has an Indo-European history (**h₃ōp-ne-* ‘obtain’; cf. Skt. *ápnōti* ‘obtains’ (Meillet 1929), Latin *opes* ‘wealth, possessions’, Hittite *happinant-* ‘rich’)
- Odd infinitive—*unenal* (first appears in Middle Armenian, apparently)
- Takes accusative object, yet belongs to *-i-* conjugation (normally associated with intransitives)

- Suppletive: the aorist stem is *kal-* (cf. *kal-uats* ‘possession, property’; cf. also Karabagh (Vank^h) *ink^h-k^hal-* ‘own’, literally ‘self-have’; cf. English *my own book...*)
- Has a related derivative *ənd-unim* ‘receive’ (*ənd-* ‘to’)
- Its descendant in one of the modern Karabagh dialects selects a dative subject and first-person verb agreement: *indz onem* ‘I have’ (literally 1sg.DAT have-1sg), etc. (Grigorjan 1957:262)

3. The “Transitive Perfect”

3.1. Classical Armenian

(1) Some examples of Classical Armenian perfects

a. transitive with auxiliary ‘be’

ot^hf it^hse: ənt^hert^hseal dzer zor arar dawit^h
 neg be.sj read.ppl 2pl.gen acc.rel did David
 ‘have you not read what David did?’ (Matthew 12:3)

b. transitive without auxiliary

ew not^hsa t^hoveal vaḅvaḅaki zgortsisn gnat^hsin zhet nora
 and 3pl.gen leave.ppl immediately acc.net.accpl.def went after 3sg.gen
 ‘and they immediately left their nets and went after him’ (Matthew 4:20)

c. intransitive with auxiliary

zi ot^hf et^he: mereal e: aḅdzikd ajl nndze:
 for neg that die.ppl be.3sg girl.2 but sleep.3sg
 ‘for the girl is not dead, but is sleeping’ (Matthew 9:24)

d. intransitive without auxiliary

ew matut^hseal dpir mi ase: t^hyna
 and approach.ppl scribe one say.3sg to.3sg.acc
 ‘and a scribe came up and said to him...’ (Matthew 8:19)

- N.B. the auxiliary verb does not agree with the subject in person or number in transitive constructions of types (1a-b); in these cases, the verb is 3d singular.
- Benveniste’s analysis was influential, being adopted by Kayne 1993, for example.
- However, the same analysis was already made by Ajtənean 1866 and T^hJaləḅean 1886.

(2) T^hJaləḅean 1886:159

“We saw above that compound tenses are formed with the forms of ‘be’ *e:* ‘is’, *e:r* ‘was’, *it^hse:* ‘will be’ and a genitive [subject]: *gortseal e: im*, *it^hse: k^ho tesimal*, *aḅreal it^hse: nora*, etc... The correct translation of these is *gortsats t^hfunim* / iḅlediyim yoq ‘I haven’t done’, *tesats unis* / gördüyün var m¥ ‘have you seen?’, because *e: im*, *e: k^ho* mean *unim* ‘I have’, *unis* ‘you have’ [respectively].”

3.2. Support for the Possessive Theory

There are at least two bits of evidence that possibly support the possessive theory of the transitive perfect.

1. Consider the formation of the present progressive in the Christian Hamshen dialect (Atfarjan 1947:140-1):
 1. with ‘have’: *b^herim guni* ‘I am carrying’, etc. (carry-1sg imperfv-have-3sg)
 2. (old Janiktsis) Nom. subject. and 3sg verb: *jes eguf æ*, etc.
 3. (young Janiktsis) possessive pronoun + 3sg verb: *ims eguf æ*, etc.
2. Perfect forms which use a nominative subject + the perfect participle + forms of *unim* ‘have’ occur in Classical, Middle, and Modern Armenian.

(3) *sojn orinak ew amenajn gir^hk hogepatumk^h nfanakeal unim zk^hadzut^hiwns amenajn zorat^hs*

‘this exemplar and all divinely-narrated books **have noted** the brave deeds of all the soldiers’ (Koriwn, page 9 of Venice 1894 edition)

(4) Aytənean 1866.2:96-97:

“[In some varieties of Modern Armenian] the verb *unim* [‘have’] also builds witnessed and non-witnessed perfects with the *-ats* participle: *tesats t^hfunim* [‘I haven’t seen’], *ditats unis* [‘have you noticed?’], *ajnt^hfap^h t^hfnameat^hs de:mn elats t^hfunē:in* [‘they hadn’t faced such enemies’]. These perfects indicate that it never happened/was, and generally are used interrogatively or negatively.”

“[Middle Armenian also formed perfects with the *-adz* participle + *unim*.:] *zk^havak^hn arats unē:in* ‘they had taken the city’, *i nerk^hse pahats uni* ‘he has kept [it] inside’.”

“This also existed in the Classical language: *areal unim* [‘I have taken’], and especially in the very frequent forms *e: im tesimal* [‘I have seen’], *t^hfik^h im tesimal* [‘I haven’t seen’], *it^hse: k^ho tesimal* [‘you will have seen’], which is the same as in Modern Armenian and Turkish. The modern European languages seem to parallel our 12th-century language, using have with transitive verbs and be with intransitives and middles.”

Karst 1901:373—the *-adz* participle also appears with *unim*, e.g. Smpad’s Chronik *zk^havak^hn arac unē:in* ‘they had taken the city’ (Dulaurier 650). Aytənean (II 97) linked this to the western European possessive + preterite participle construction. This must not have been a normal tense in Middle Armenian, because it is foreign in Modern Armenian.

(5) In Xotorjur, all transitive verbs take *unim* ‘have’ instead of *em* ‘be’ to form periphrastic tenses (Hulunean and Hatjean 1964:408; they add (p. 409) that many dialects use *unim* in this way):

a.	PERFECT	<i>kerats unim</i>	‘I have eaten’
	PLUPERFECT	<i>kerats unē:i</i>	‘I would have eaten’
		<i>kerats piti unenam</i>	

kerats piti unenaji
kerats unenam
kerats unenaji

- b. *majs tʰaj berats uni*
‘my mother has born (lit. ‘carried’) a boy’
govejn erku mard spanats une:in
‘the thieves had killed two men’
duk^h otʰfintʰf imatʰsats tʰfunik^h
‘you haven’t learned anything’
menk^h lsats unenank^h piti
‘we should have listened’
- c. All “intransitive” and “middle” verbs select ‘be’ instead (acc. to H and H 1964):
tʰe:n k^hun e:rats a
‘the boy was sleeping/asleep’ (unergative!!)
kovn korats e:r
‘the cow was lost’
otʰfɣajn gtnuats e:r
‘the sheep was found’ (passive)

(5) Atfaijan 1947:144-45—[Christian] Hamshen normally forms the perfect, etc. with *unim* ‘have’: *tʰsonadz unim* ‘I have strewn’ etc. However, all of his examples are transitive verbs.

(6) Karibjan 1953:402, Grigorjan 1957:422—In Hamshen the perfect tenses are formed with the perfect participle and [*im* or] *unim* (they state that both auxiliaries are possible for each verb)

(7) Dumezil 1963:15—Muslim Hamshen also uses the perfect tense (*passé composé*) with ‘have’, *but only with transitive verbs*:
kiadz unim ‘I’ve written’, etc.

3.3. Transitive/Intransitive, or Unaccusative/Everything Else?

Two kinds of intransitive verbs:

Unergative (SV): *often have agentive argument, shows protagonist control, internal causation; take ‘have’ in perfect in Basque, Italian, French, Dutch, etc.*

dine, golf, work, telephone, sleep, shine, laugh, bleed, smile, quarrel, travel, joke, chat, bark, dance, sing, emission verbs (ring, flare, groan, creak, gurgle, shine, sparkle, stink, boil, bubble), cough, shiver, snore, tremble, yawn, lie (down), sit, kneel, stand, shout, yell...

Unaccusative (VO): *movement, the argument undergoes a change of state, temporally bounded eventualities, telic, argument is a patient; take ‘be’ in perfect in Basque, Italian, French, Dutch, etc.*

passives, raising verbs (believe, seem, etc.), arrive, come, go, return, leave, die, fall, enter, grow, arise, emerge, ensure, begin, exist, occur, follow; (sink, open, close, increase, break, drop)...

(7) Homshetsma (Muslim Hamshen, spoken in Köprücü)

- a. *dzidzak-adz-a* he laughed (unergative) (-a = ‘is’)
mer-adz-a he died (unaccusative)
eg-adz-a he came (unaccusative)
- b. *dzidzak-adz-ui* I (have) laughed
 **mer-adz-ui* I (have) died
 **eg-adz-ui* I (have) come

‘do’: *aadzui, aadzues, aadzua...*



What is the *-ui, -ues, -ua, etc.*?



< *unim* ‘have’ !

(8) All of the “intransitive” perfects I have been able to find in Classical Armenian have been unaccusative (arrive, come, go, survive, approach, die, etc.); the jury is still out on unaccusatives. One possibility:

im et^he: t^hfe:r ekeal ew xaset^hseal ənd nosa
 1sg gen if neg.be.3sg past come.ppl and speak.ppl to 3pl.acc
 ‘if I hadn’t come and spoken to them’ (John 15:22)

4. Other Manifestations of the Unaccusative/Unergative Distinction

4.1. Personal Relative Clauses in Western Armenian (Sigler 1996)

- (9) (*jes*) (*maro-i-n*) *(*namag-mə*) *kərg-e-t^hs-i*
 1sg.NOM Maro-DAT-def letter-a send-aor-1sg
 ‘I sent a letter (to Maro)’
- (10) a. (*im*) (*maro-i-n*) *kərg-adz namag-əs*
 1sg.GEN Maro-DAT-def send-ppl letter-1sg
 ‘the letter that I sent (to Maro)’

- b. (im) *(*namag*) *vərg-adz* *zarmig-əs*
 1sg.GEN letter send-ppl cousin-1sg
 ‘the cousin that I sent a letter to’
- (11) *ing-adz* *fi-f-ə* (internal argument of unaccusative)
 fall-ppl bottle-def
 ‘the fallen bottle’
- (12) *kant^h-əv-adz* *gamurt^h-ə* (internal argument of passive)
 destroy-pass-def bridge-def
 ‘the destroyed bridge’

If the verb has an external argument, that argument cannot head the PRC; it can only be the possessor:

- (13) *k^hirk^h-i-n* *k^hən-adz* *gin-ə* (subject of transitive)
 book-GEN-def buy-ppl woman-def
 cannot mean: ‘the book that the woman bought’
 must mean: ‘the woman that the book bought’
- (14) **bora-ts-adz* *təratsi-n* (subject of unergative)
 shout-aor-ppl neighbor-def
 ‘the neighbor that shouted’

4.2. Compound verbs with *do/be*

- Levin and Rappaport Hovav 1995:140: Basque expresses agentive unergatives with light verb construction headed by ‘do, make’ + noun
- In Turkish, unaccusatives take *olmak* ‘be’, unergatives take *etmek* ‘do’ (Özkaragöz 1986)

(15) Verbs formed from Turkish and Persian roots in the Armenian dialect of Van (Atfaijan 1952:189):

- a. active/transitive → *aniel* ‘do’
- | | |
|------------------------------------|------------------|
| <i>t^həmax aniel</i> | be greedy, hoard |
| <i>χəbær aniel</i> | inform |
| <i>sus aniel</i> | be quiet (??) |
| <i>p^haralamif aniel</i> | tear, devour |
| <i>p^hözmiif aniel</i> | annihilate |
| <i>k^hyfyf aniel</i> | curse |
- b. neutral or passive/intransitive → *elniei* ‘be’
- | | |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <i>χavaslamif elniei</i> | desire |
| <i>majil elniei</i> | marvel, wonder, be amazed |
| <i>p^harlamif elniei</i> | shine (should be unergative!) |

(16) some representative examples from other dialects

- a. unergative
bas eniel speak (Mush)
t^helefon enuf telephone (Homshetsma)
katak anel joke (Standard Eastern)
ædzælae enil hurry (Tigranakert)
ængædz enil listen (Tigranakert)
- b. unaccusative
amelijat^h elluf undergo surgery (Homshetsma; cf. Tk *amelijat olmak*)
t^hafinmif elluf move (around) (Homshetsma)

A Homshetsma Riddle

Q: *galat me kak bade tevi* 'I threw a basket of shit against the wall'

A: *onguč*

NPs that are logically plural but morphologically singular take plural agreement with transitive verbs, but singular agreement (normally) with intransitive and passive verbs (Bardakjian and Thomson 1977:30, 38)

yergu hokhi ayth axchig⁹ g⁹ siren
two person that girl-definite imperfective love.3pl
'two people love that girl'

yergu darin shud ganthsni
two year.definite quickly imperfective.pass.3sg
'the two years will pass quickly'

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