What did " give " mean, before it came to mean " to give " ?

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Abstract   In the 70s of the 20th century there appeared so-called contensive typology as the result of almost over three centuries of research of the Russian and Soviet linguists. The core of this theory consists in that almost all languages of the world can be classified into different types according to their mode of expression of subject-predicate-object relation. On the one hand, languages of the Indo-European family belong to the accusative type based on their distinction between transitive and intransitive verbs. On the other hand, Indo-European languages are believed to have developed directly from the active language type. If the latter supposition be true, there arises a question, what was original meaning of the verb of *giving*, which has its origin in the Proto-Indo-European period. The aim of this article is to discuss this point.

1. It seems to have been generally accepted among specialists that almost all human languages can be classified, no matter to what language groups they may belong, into types according to the nature of their subject-predicate-object relationship. Hitherto at least three types have been recognized, not excluding possibility of the existence of still other language types. These three are: active, ergative and accusative language types. The active language type is found in the most American indigenous languages, and to the ergative type belong most of languages in the territory of Caucasian Mountains.

The traits Indo-European languages show reveal themselves typical of those of accusative language type. The main kernel of their structural principles consists in the opposition of the nominative case to the accusative in the nominal declension and the lexical distinction between transitive and intransitive verbs.

It is believed, that these types form a successive temporal series according which the accusative type developed either from the ergative type or directly from the active type (as may be the case of Indo-European according to the opinion of the many specialists), and the ergative type from the active languages during an extremely long range of time. Though G.A.Klimov maintains that this process is irreversible, the author is personally of the opinion that this question is still open.

2. From the above argument it follows, that one of the most characteristic traits of the accusative language stage is that it distinguishes transitive verbs from intransitive. The other stages, especially that of active language does not show this distinction and therefore, for example, actions quite distinct from our eyes such as "to die" and "to kill", "to catch fire" and "to set something on fire", "to run" and "to chase" , "to go" and "to carry" *etc*. are perceived by the participants of communication by the non-accusative languages as the same extralinguistic reality.

On the other hand, it is reported that American indigenous languages often have a special grammatical category, which consists of two terms — *centrifugal version* and *centripetal version*, of which the second is usually a marked member of a privative opposition and the former unmarked. For example, in the case of "to die/kill", "to die" or "to commit suicide" belongs to the centripetal version and "to kill" to the centrifugal. At a first glance, this category may seem to be comparable to that of voice of the accusative languages. It is not the case, however, because the opposition of active and passive voice cannot exist without presupposed opposition of transitivity and intransitivity.

Then, here arises the question whether this category of version should not be recognized as a kind of *voice* in the wider sense? If we take it for granted that the opposition of active and passive voice in accusative languages is in essence a different linguistic expression of *one* and *the same* extralinguistic reality, then it may be quite natural to acknowledge the opposition of *version* to be the category belonging to the voice in the wider sense. This is because, for a speaker of an active language, "to die" and "to kill" refer to the *same* extralinguistic reality, and the difference in the *version* is a difference of expressioning this reality. Hence, Russian typologists introduced a new terminology to include the concept of *version* and *voice* and called it *diathesis* borrowed from Alexandrian Grammarians. Thus the category of *voice* has acquired its own proper place together with the category of *version* within the category of *diathesis*.

3. What is said above is but an introduction of our main theme. It seems quite clear from the above, why transitive and intransitive verbs do not exist in opposition in active languages, and that the reality that we are accustomed to marking as different by expressing with transitive or intransitive verb forms, is conceived as the same reality by the speakers of active or ergative languages.

Nevertheless, close observation will reveal that there are still many problems to be solved. The author would like to discuss here one of these problems. As concerns the actual meaning of verbs, there are those, which can not be explained from the point of view of grammatical *version*. For example, though we often use the verb "to give" in our daily life. However, because of the lack of transitivity this meaning can not in principle exist in an active language. In addition, it is evident that this meaning would not be derived by the operation of version either, because even if it would be converted into *centripetal version*, the result would be merely something like "to take away" or "snatch", never losing its original transitive nature.

As to this point it would be worthwhile to refer to Klimov's remark, that "in the case of the above mentioned languages (i.e. Tupi-Guarani, Kamayura; languages belonging to Sioux, Assiniboine *etc*.) such verbs, like "to take off", "to deprive of" do not exist either. On the other hand, even verbs which can be translated "to give" are often treated in these languages as *verba movendi*. No doubt it is the case with the language of Navajo" (Klimov 1977, p.102, translation by the author).

This assertion seems to touch the very heart of this question. If it be true, the whole situation of "A's giving x to B" may be rendered by these languages something like "A's x goes to B" or " x goes-to B (absolute case) by the action or will of A(active case)" or again, "A's x goes to-B(dative case)" in the case of unmarked centrifugal version. However, if the language has the marked centripetal version of the privative opposition, it would be take the form of something like "to A comes B's x" *etc*. thus acquiring our notion of "taking" or "depriving of".

4. This view may be supported by the material derived from Indo-European comparative linguistics. It is widely known that the most common radix that means the notion of giving in this language family is *$do\partial$-* or, precisely, *$do\partial_3$-* which has been inherited by many of the historically attested languages, e.g. Latin *$d\tilde{o}$* "give", Sanskrit *dá-dā-mi* "I give", Greek $\delta\acute{\iota}$-$\delta\omega$-$\mu\iota$ "give", Russian *$\partial amь$ dat'* "give/lend", *etc*. In the Anatorian language group owing to the existence of some archaic traits not shared with other Indo-European language family, and believed to have separated from it in the early stage of its development, we can observe following materials, favourable for our argument: Hieroglyfic Luwian *tá-ha* "I take", Hittite medial form *dáttari* "I take", derived from *$do\partial_3a$-* "I give", Lycian *ta* "to take" (but Lydian *da-* "to give") *etc*. (Ivanov 1981, pp.135-136) The existence of medial form in Hittite

suggests that its active counterpart *doəз- must mean "to take", because the opposition active/middle is considered to be the later development of centrifugal/centripetal opposition of the former category of *version*. We have read a very interesting report on this issue, that in the "archaic" layer of Hittite materials there exists a pair of compound verbs as *pe-da-* "to gain, to take away" with centrifugal prefix *pe-* and *u-da-* "to bring", with centripetal *u-*. Although this example semantically belongs to the class of transitive verbs according to the traditional interpretation, it seems to reflect the former existence of versional distinction.

5. If we suppose that the original meaning of *verbum dandi* is, as above assumed, something like that of go/come in the construction as "A's x goes/comes to B" or "x goes-to/comes-to B(absolute case) by the action or will of A(active case)", then, this hypothesis would satisfy at least following three basic requirements of the active language.

1. The active languages do not mark the opposition of intransitivity and transitivity of verbs.
2. They have centripetal and centrifugal versions as a grammatical category of *diathesis*.
3. The active languages usually have a highly developed system of possessive affixes.

To add in this connection an interesting example from the Russian language, *verba dandi* of Russian *дать dat'* not always presuppose the change of possenssion of the thing delivered.

Hence, for example, a sentence like *Он дал ей книгу* is translated either as "He gave her a-book" or "He lent her a-book", just as its "centripetal" counterpart, *взять*, which means at the same time "to take" and "to borrow".

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The aim of the author is to point out, that even such outstanding figures as T.V. Gamkrelidze and his co-author V.V. Ivanov, who have totally reorganized whole of the traditional Indo-European comparative linguistics on the basis of newly introduced theory of contensive typology and who first brought forth the hypothesis that Indo-European language family is directly developed from active language stage, have left untouched the transitive meaning of reconstructed Proto-Indo-European radices. Henceforward it should be required to reconsider the original meanings of these radices from the point of view of contensive typology so as to meet the above-mentioned requirements. This is the so-called *Tragweite* of this little article, so humble as it is.

Thanks :

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