

# **Finiteness and Non-finiteness in Oral Armenian Discourse in Comparison with Written Discourse**

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Any language has a number of differences between its oral and written modes. The differences are mainly accounted for by ‘various conditions’ of generating, producing and receiving the discourse. The present research focuses on the peculiar behavioral aspects of non-finite and finite forms in oral discourse in comparison with the written discourse in Modern Eastern Armenian.

The analysis of the data shows that in modern Eastern Armenian oral discourse a number of finite and non-finite forms have their particular usages which are different from that in written discourse. The differences are mainly accounted for by an extra prerogative arsenal of oral discourse means, such as intonation, discourse markers, specific syntactic construction etc.

Armenian verbal system is composed of non-finite and finite forms. Non-finite verbal system includes forms that 1) have syntactically-autonomous usage (infinitive – *գրել* *gr-el* ‘to write’, resultative participle – *գրած* *gr-ac* ‘written’, subjective participle – *գրող* *gr-ol* ‘(the one who’s) writing’, (simultaneous) converb – *գրելիս* *gr-elis* ‘writing’), destinative II - *գրելիք* *gr-elik*<sup>h</sup> ‘[that is] to be written’, and; 2) are used only as a component of analytical verb forms together with auxiliary verb forms (imperfective – *գրում* *gr-um* ‘write’, perfective – *գրել* *gr-el* ‘to have written’, destinative I – *գրելու* *gr-elu* ‘[will/shall] write’, connegative – *գրի* *gr-i* ‘[don’t] write’). Further, infinitive, resultative, subjective participle and destinative II can be substantivized in Armenian and have all the forms typical of a nominal paradigm. We tackle the forms of the first group, mainly focusing on their usage peculiarities in oral Armenian discourse. The finite forms differ in TAM properties and include (a) analytic forms composed by second group of non-finite forms and auxiliary forms (that can convey either absolute or relative tense) and (b) synthetic forms (always convey absolute tense).

Various usage types are typical of oral discourse only, e.g.

- using finite form of subjunctive mood (cf. 1) or non-finite form of resultative (cf. 2) after prepositional predicates (instead of infinitive which is common for written standard discourse);

- frequent use of serial constructions, destinative II (both autonomously and with desemantized particles), relative tense forms instead of absolute tense forms
- wide use of declined infinitive forms, etc.

(1) *Ես ուզում եմ գնալ/գնալ:*

es	uz-um	em	gn-am	/gn-al
I	want-IPFV	AUX:PRS:1SG	go-SBJV:PRS:1SG	/go-INF

‘I want to go.’

(2) *Կարելի է քնած/քնել:*

Kareli	a	k <sup>h</sup> n-ac	/k <sup>h</sup> n-el
can	COP:PRS:3SG	sleep-RES	/sleep-INF

‘We can sleep.’

Ellipsis and omission of copula (3) and verb forms are more typical of oral discourse, and lack of material is usually ‘made up for’ by intonation, discourse markers, etc.

(3) *Բա դուք հաց չե՞ք ուզում ունեք: Սոված-սոված ծ [չեք]:*

ba	duk <sup>h</sup>	hac <sup>h</sup>	č <sup>h</sup> -ek <sup>h</sup>	uz-um	ut-ek <sup>h</sup>
DM	you.pl	bread	NEG-AUX:PRS:2PL	want-IPFV	eat-SBJV:PRS:2PL
sovac-movac		[č <sup>h</sup> -ek <sup>h</sup> ]			
hunger-RES.RDP		[NEG-be:AUX:PRS:2PL]			

‘And don’t you want to eat? [aren’t you] hungry?’

Oral discourse tends to be more ‘colorful’ in terms of modality, and in oral discourse speakers tend to use more forms that express non-neutral and irreal modality.

The research is based on written and oral corpora data. The written discourse data is received from Eastern Armenian National Corpus (EANC) which was launched only in the beginning of 2006 by Dr. Plungian (the project in which the author also takes part), and is still under construction. Currently EANC includes over 10.000.000 words of different genres in Modern Eastern Armenian (starting from 19<sup>th</sup> century up to present).

The oral discourse data comes from two corpora: (1) 40 task-oriented oral narratives on the basis of two stories in comics format (about 20.000 words), and (2) spontaneous dialogues (about 20.000 words), compiled by the author. Both corpora were transcribed; the target issues were hand-annotated and analyzed.