

## Georgian preverbs: Reduplicative semantics without reduplication

The South Caucasian Chalk Circle — Terminological Panel

Daniel Harbour — Thursday, September 22

- (1) Panel aims: Universalism meets localism
- Philology, grammaticalisation theory, theoretical linguistics, and typology all aim, in different and overlapping ways, to be empirically answerable to a worldwide range of grammatical phenomena. Hence, an effort to devise the most generally applicable inventory of descriptive terminology.
  - The study of individual languages is a focused activity, often with centuries of tradition pre-dating the work in (a). Hence, an effort to devise terms that suit local perceptions of needs.
  - Universalists' challenge. Language-specific terminology impedes clarity and slows progress.
  - Localists' challenge. Terminological differences make it hard for, e.g., Algonquianists and Kartvelianists to see when they are trying to come to grips with the same concept and build on each other's insights.
- (2) Example: Screeves, impedimentary terminology?
- თქვენ თაგვები ჩვენ ბუებს გვატყუებთ  
*tkven tagveb-i čven bueb-s gv- a- t'q'u-eb- t*  
2PL mice- NOM 1PL owls-DAT 1PL.O-LOC-trick-THM-(2)PL  
'You mice trick us owls'
  - თქვენ თაგვებმა ჩვენ ბუები მოგვატყუეთ  
*tkven tagveb-ma čven bueb-i mo-gv- a- t'q'u-e- t*  
2PL mice- ERG 1PL owls-NOM PVB-1PL.O-LOC-trick-1/2AOR-(2)PL  
'You mice tricked us owls'
  - თქვენ თაგვებს ჩვენ ბუები მოგიტყუებინათ  
*tkven tagveb-s čven bueb-i mo-g- i- t'q'u-eb- v- ar-t*  
2PL mice- DAT 1PL owls-NOM PVB-2PL.O-LOC-trick-THM-1AOR-be-(1/2)PL  
'You mice have tricked us owls'
  - მწკრივი *mc'k'rivi* 'screeve (ling.), series (math.)'
  - In (a–b), the agent and patient control the same agreement (agent  $-\text{თ } -t$ ; patient  $\text{გვ- } gv-$ ), but case marking changes, (a) agent.NOM patient.DAT, (b) agent.ERG patient.NOM. — This is common crosslinguistically, no need for special terminology.
  - In (c), agent and patient more or less swap agreement roles: the agent agrees as it would have as the patient in (a–b) (agent  $\text{გ-...-თ } g-...-t$ ; patient  $\text{ვ-...-თ } v-...-t$ ). Concomitantly, the case pattern is the opposite of (a): not agent.NOM patient.DAT, but agent.DAT patient.NOM. (Cf, the nomenclature “indirect” in some Kartvelian literature.) — But again, this isn't surprising. The meaning of (c) is the perfect ‘have tricked’. Languages without transitive *have* frequently use *be* and place the holders of the possessee in an oblique case, which leaves nominative case for the possessee. The Georgian perfect does all this for want of an auxiliary *have*. There is a verb  $\text{არ } ar$  ‘be’, the holders of the state (those having tricked) are dative marked (თაგვებს *tagvebs* ‘mice.DAT’), and the patients (those in the state) are nominative marked (ბუები *buebi* ‘owls.NOM’). The agreement transparently reflects this case alignment: ‘mice’ governs dative agreement ( $\text{გ-...-თ } g-...-t$ ), ‘owls’ governs agent patient  $\text{ვ-...-თ } v-...-t$ ).

- (3) Panel's plan for today: Three labels for productive reinterpretation
- a. Preverbs (Harbour)
  - b. Versions(iser)s (Nash)
  - c. Thematic suffixes (McGinnis)
- (4) Preverbs: Two basic facts — transparent versus opaque
- a. Directional semantics when combined with verbs of motion:
 

ა-ფრინდა	<i>a-prinda</i>	‘flew up’
და-ფრინდა	<i>da-prinda</i>	‘flew down onto’
ჩა-ფრინდა	<i>ča-prinda</i>	‘flew down into’
შე-ფრინდა	<i>še-prinda</i>	‘flew in’
გა-ფრინდა	<i>ga-prinda</i>	‘flew out’
მო-ფრინდა	<i>mo-prinda</i>	‘flew hither’
მი-ფრინდა	<i>mi-prinda</i>	‘flew thither’
გადა-ფრინდა	<i>gada-prinda</i>	‘flew across’
წა-ფრინდა	<i>c'a-prinda</i>	‘flew away’
  - b. Aspectual semantics when combined with nondirectional verbs: e.g., (2b) მო-გვატყუეთ *mo-gvat'q'uet* ‘you tricked us’, (2c) მო-გიტყუებოვართ *mo-git'q'uebivart* ‘you have tricked us’, as well as future მო-გვატყუებთ *mo-gvat'q'uebt* ‘you will trick us’.
- (5) Challenges
- a. Philology – What are the lexical sources of these prefixes and what are their correlates in other Kartvelian languages?
  - b. Grammaticalisation – Did Georgian reach its current state of affairs by exploiting common pathways of grammatical cooption?
  - c. Theoretical linguistics – What conceptual atoms (features) and structures do the various stages of Georgian exploit?
  - d. Typology – Is the Georgian preverb a special typological category, or an amalgam of more typical ones (and, if the latter, how unusual an amalgam is it)?
- (6) Georgian preverbs: familiar semantics, unfamiliar packaging
- a. There is a natural link between locatives and aspect: events that are tied to particular paths end when the path ends. Hence, locative elements can have perfectivising roles; e.g., *write* vs *write up*; писать *pisát* ‘WRITE.IMPF’ vs на-писать *na-pisát* ‘write.PF’ (where на *na* also has prepositional uses, as in на стене *na stené* ‘on the wall’).
  - b. Between the transparent and opaque uses of Georgian preverbs, there are numerous pockets of regular meanings:
    - clusters of roots pairing with the same preverb, revealing a conceptual core (cf, *inhale, ingest, imbibe*)
    - clusters of preverbs pairing with same root for quite different (“idiomatic”) meanings (cf, *compel, expel, repel; apprehend, comprehend, reprehend*)
    - clusters of preverbs pairing with same root for nuances in meaning (cf, *cook* and *outcook, overcook, recook*)
  - c. Concentrating on the last of these, I draw attention to the conceptual network of ways in which preverbs can nuance the meaning of their verbs, following work by Regier: the meanings typically associated with reduplication form natural clusters of association and languages tend to pick coherent subnetworks of the overall range of possibilities (rather than randomly selecting them).

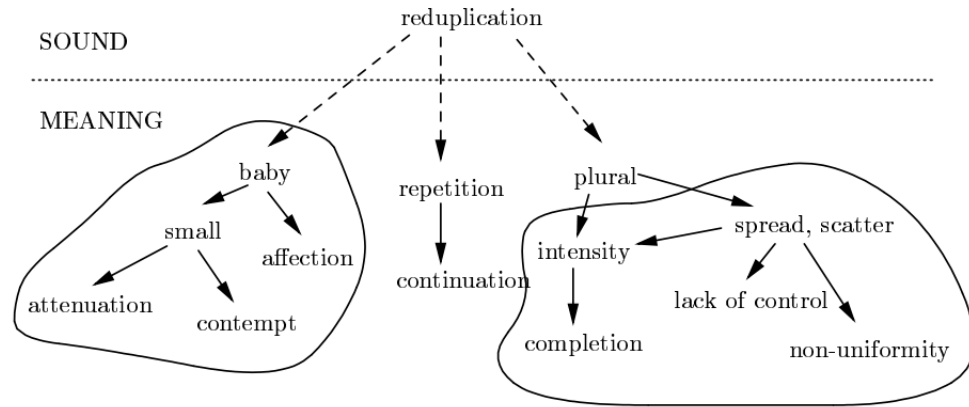


Figure 1: The interaction of iconicity and semantic extension

(7) Modification of middles

- a. მი- *mi-*: andative (applies only to middles in present and like tenses; related to directional meaning; see also მო- *mo-*)

მი-ტირის *mi-t'iris* 'goes crying' (ტირის *t'iris* 'cries')  
 მი-ყვირის *mi-q'viris* 'goes shouting' (ყვირის *q'viris* 'shouts')  
 მი-ილტვის *mi-ilt'vis* 'goes seeking refuge' (ილტვის *ilt'vis* 'seeks refuge')

- b. მო- *mo-*: ventive (applies only to middles in present and like tenses; related to directional meaning; see also მი- *mi-*)

მო-ტირის *mo-t'iris* 'comes crying' (ტირის *t'iris* 'cries')  
 მო-ყვირის *mo-q'viris* 'comes shouting' (ყვირის *q'viris* 'shouts')  
 მო-ილტვის *mo-ilt'vis* 'comes seeking refuge' (ილტვის *ilt'vis* 'seeks refuge')

- c. და- *da-*: distributive (pluractional) (applies to middles and other verbs in present and like tenses)

და-თამაშობს *da-tamašobs* 'plays here and there' (თამაშობს *tamašobs* 'plays')  
 და-ლაქლაქობს *da-laklakobs* 'prattles here and there' (ლაქლაქობს *laklakobs* 'prattles')  
 და-სეირნობს *da-seirnobs* 'walks here there' (სეირნობს *seirnobs* 'walks')

(8) More pluractionals და- *da-*

- a. Plural object readings (no restriction to middles or present-like tenses)

და-ბტყვნი *ga-bt'q'vni* 'you will pluck [them]' (გა-ბტყვნი *da-bt'q'vni* 'you will pluck')  
 და-გზავნი *ga-gzavni* 'you will send [them]' (გა-გზავნი *da-gzavni* 'you will send')  
 და-ხოცავ *ga-xocav* 'you will kill.PL [them]' (გა-კლავ *da-k'lav* 'you will kill.SG')

- b. Event and result plurality (no restriction to middles or present-like tenses)

და-ხეთქ *da-xetk* 'you will split [them], you will split it many times'  
 და-ტეხ *da-t'ex* 'you will break [them], you will break it many times'  
 (გა-ხეთქ *ga-xetk* 'you will split')  
 (გა-ტეხ *ga-t'ex* 'you will break')

(9) More pluractionality (გადა- *gada-*) — and its opposite?

- a. Reiterative

გადა-ხნავ *gada-xnav* 'you will replough'  
 გადა-იანგარიშებ *gada-iangarišeb* 'you will redo a sum'  
 გადა-არკმევ *gada-arkmev* 'you will rename'

(მო-ხნავ *mo-xnav* ‘you will plough’)  
 (იანგარიშებ *iangarišeb* ‘you will do a sum’)  
 (და-არკმევ *da-arkmev* ‘you will name’)

b. Augmentative

გადა-ხნავ *gada-xnav* ‘you will plough thoroughly’  
 გადა-ლლი *gada-gli* ‘you will overtire’  
 გადა-ამლაშებ *gada-amlašeb* ‘you will oversalt’  
 (გადა-ხნავ *mo-xnav* ‘you will plough’)  
 (და-ლლი *da-gli* ‘you will tire’)  
 (და-ამლაშებ *da-amlašeb* ‘you will salt’)

c. Cursoriness, superficiality

გადა-იბანა *gada-ibana* ‘give a cat lick’  
 გადა-ათვალიერება *gada-atvaliereba* ‘give a cursory inspection’  
 გადა-ვლება *gada-vleba* ‘take in at a glance’  
 (და-იბანა *da-ibana* ‘wash’)  
 (და-ათვალიერება *da-atvaliereba* ‘inspect’)  
 (და-ვლება *da-vleba* ‘seize’)

(10) Diminutive

a. მო- *mo-*

მო-რბილდა *mo-rbilda* ‘softened a bit’ (და-რბილდა *da-rbilda* ‘softened’)  
 მო-მწარდა *mo-mc’arda* ‘turned a bit bitter’ (და-მწარდა *da-mc’arda* ‘turned bitter’)  
 მო-მჟავდა *mo-mžavda* ‘sourred a bit’ (და-მჟავდა *da-mžavda* ‘sourred’)

b. შე- *še-*

შე-რბილდა *še-rbilda* ‘softened a bit’ (და-რბილდა *da-rbilda* ‘softened’)  
 შე-შრა *še-šra* ‘dried a bit’ (და-შრა *da-šra* ‘dried’)  
 შე-წითლდა *še-c’itlda* ‘reddened a bit’ (და-წითლდა *da-c’itlda* ‘reddened’)

c. ჩა- *ča-*

ჩა-იცინებ *ča-icineb* ‘you will laugh quietly’  
 ჩა-ილაპარაკებ *ča-ilap’arak’eb* ‘you will speak softly’

d. წა- *c’a-*

წა-იტირებ *c’a-it’ireb* ‘you will have a little cry’ (იტირებ *it’ireb* ‘you will cry’)  
 წა-ივანხმებ *c’a-ivaxšmeb* ‘you will dine lightly’ (ივანხმებ *ivaxšmeb* ‘you will dine’)  
 წა-იმღერებ *c’a-imgereb* ‘you will sing for a bit’ (იმღერებ *imgereb* ‘you will sing’)

(11) Endpoints as bits: more წა- *c’a-*

a. Activities affecting ends and edges: წა- *c’a-*

წა-სჭამ *c’a-sč’am* ‘you will eat the bottom/top off from’  
 წა-სჭრი *c’a-sč’ri* ‘you will cut a small piece off from’  
 წა-აწებებ *c’a-ac’ebeb* ‘you will glue onto the end of’  
 (შე-სჭამ *še-sč’am* ‘you will eat from’)  
 (და-სჭრი *da-sč’ri* ‘you will cut from’)  
 (და-აწებებ *da-ac’ebeb* ‘you will glue onto’)

b. Sudden onset, i.e., the edge of the event: წა-მო- *c’a-mo-* (mostly middles – pertaining to emission of sound?)

წა-მო-იტიკტიკვებ *c'a-mo-it'ik't'ik'eb* 'you will suddenly blurt out'  
 წა-მო-იყებ *c'a-mo-iq'eb* 'you will suddenly bark'  
 წა-მო-იწყებ *c'a-mo-ic'q'eb* 'you will suddenly begin'  
 (იტიკტიკვებ *it'ik't'ik'eb* 'you will blurt out')  
 (და-იყებ *da-iq'eb* 'you will bark')  
 (და-იწყებ *da-ic'q'eb* 'you will begin')

(12) Conclusion and new questions

- a. The range of meanings that lie between purely directional and purely aspectual readings of preverbs forms a coherent whole, paralleling those commonly associated with reduplication crosslinguistically. At one end, these link up naturally with directional readings (andative, ventive, distributive; მი-, მო-, და-; *mi-*, *mo-*, *da-*). At the other, the meanings verge into the aspectual (picking up on the edges of events წა- *c'a-*, or their wholesale repetition გადა- *gada-*). So, these “intermediary” readings of preverbs are not only internally coherent, but provide a connection between the directional and aspectual uses.
- b. Philology – When did each of these readings emerge for each prefix? What other readings have been gained and lost?
- c. Grammaticalisation – Is there a systematic pattern of gradual extensions to meanings, or did the system become established in other ways?
- d. Theoretical linguistics – How is the current state of Georgian speakers’ knowledge to be represented? Does the label PVB (preverb) really subsume (at least) three independent uses — DIR (directionals), ASP (aspect), and QUAL? (“qualitative”) or MULT? (“multiplicative”)—and what is the featural interpretation of these labels?
- e. Typology – How similar are genetic and areal neighbours of Georgian? Is the packaging we find in Georgian (DIR + ASP + QUAL/MULT + ...) found elsewhere. In what other grammatical guises does the conceptual network often encoded by reduplication present itself?

(13) And how does this integrate with other data pertinent to preverb semantics?

- a. Semantic clusters around particular preverbs; e.g., შე- *še-* (cf, -ში *-ši* ‘in’; cf, Latinate *ingest*, *inhale*, *imbibe*)
  - შე-ჭმა *še-č'ma* ‘eat’
  - შე-სვენება *še-sveneba* ‘breathe’
  - შე-სუნთქვა *še-suntkva* ‘inhale’
  - შე-სრუტვა *še-srut'va* ‘absorb’
  - შე-წოვა *še-c'ova* ‘absorb’
  - შე-თვისება *še-tviseba* ‘assimilate’
- b. Semantic clusters around particular roots; e.g., კვლა *k'vla* ‘kill’
  - მო-კვლა *mo-k'la* ‘killed’
  - და-კვლა *da-k'la* ‘killed [for food, ritual]’
  - ჩა-კვლა *ča-k'la* ‘suppressed [a feeling]’
  - შე-აკვლა *še-ak'la* ‘sacrificed [oneself]’
- c. Argument structural effects; e.g., შე-მო- *še-mo-* for the adversity in adversity passives
  - შე-მო-მაკვდება *še-mo-mak'vdeba* ‘I will unwittingly kill’
  - შე-მო-გემსხვრევა *še-mo-gemsxvrevva* ‘you will unwittingly shatter’
  - შე-(მო)-გატყდება *še-(mo)-gat'q'deba* ‘you will unwittingly break’

Brief references — Hewitt, B.G. 1995. *A Structural Reference of Georgian* — Regier, T. 1998. Reduplication and the arbitrariness of the sign. *Proceedings of the Twentieth Annual Conference of the Cognitive Science Society*.