

THE PREVERBS IN MEGRELIAN

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1. Introduction

Megrelian is one of the Kartvelian, so-called South Caucasian, language family, the other members of which are: Georgian, Svan, and Laz. Morphological system of Kartvelian languages, in particular a subsystem of verb morphology, is luxuriant and interesting from the typological point of view. A preverb as a part of the verb morphology is the issue of the presented paper. According to A. Shanidze, an author of *Foundations of the Georgian Language Grammar*, a preverb is defined ‘as a preradical part of a verb, being mono- or disyllabic, which might precede prefixes of person markers’ (Shanidze 1973). The author noted about Georgian preverbs: “There is such a variety of nuances in using preverbs that it is hardly possible to draw up main lines of the issue”. Megrelian preverbs are more complicated due to the phonetic processes. It has a very rich system of preverbs, their number is over eighty. The article is descriptive and it only aims at systemizing this variety of preverbs according to their morphological structure. As for the semantics of preverbs, this time attention is only focused on the semantics of those occurring with verbs of motion or movement. Preverbs in Megrelian like other Kartvelian languages, could be presented in verb forms including finite forms and deverbative nouns (infinitives (by Georgian traditional grammatical terminology *masdars*) and participles). The longest rank of prefixes in terms of preradical slots is the following (see Harris 1991):

ST-PRV-IMP-PRS-CV-R,

where R stands for a verb root and prefixes are:

- ST – slot of Status, affirmative (*ka-*, *ga-*) or negative (*wa-*) particles can occur in the position;
- PRV – preverb: either simple or complex;
- IMP – imperfectivizing prefix (*ɾ t m + vowel*);
- PRS – prefixes of person markers;
- CV – character vowel (*a-*, *i-*, *u-*), including markers of version category, causative markers, passive voice markers, and vowels with uncertain function.

So, preverbs take position number 4 in the preradical slots.

2. Simple preverbs in Megrelian

Simple preverbs are monosyllabic and mostly are either the Georgian borrowings, or phonological correspondings to the Georgian ones.

2.1. Phonological structure of simple preverbs

According to their phonological structure simple preverbs are of the following types:

- a) V-type:

(1) **a-** (Georgian borrowing)

a - *xval* - *am* - *a* 'to meet'

PRV-meet-TH.M-INF.M

a - *rd* - *eb* - *a* 'to throw upwards'

PRV-throw-TH.M-INF.M

a - *rid* - *eb* - *a* 'to avoid'

PRV-avoid-TH.M-INF.M

(2) **o-** (phonologically corresponding to Georgian **a-**)

o - *č'op* - *u* '(she/he) cought'

PRV-cought-S3.SG

o - *č'k'-om* - *u* '(she/he) ate'

PRV- eat -TH.M- S3.SG

(3) **e-** **e** - *sxap'* - *u* - *a* 'to jump up'

PRV-jump- S3.SG - INF.M

e - *žin* - *a* 'to look upwards '

PRV- look - INF.M

e - *dirt* - *u* '(she/he) stood up'

PRV-stand - S3.SG

b) CV-type:

(4) **ga-** (Georgian borrowing)

ga - *t* - *eb* - *a* 'to finish'

PRV- finish-TH.M- INF.M

ga - *k'et-eb* - *a* 'to do'(The whole form is a Georgian borrowing.)

PRV- do-TH.M- INF.M

ga - *č'q'or-d* - *u* '(she/he) forgot'

PRV-forget- PRT - S3.SG

(5) **go-** (phonologically corresponding to Georgian **ga-**)

go - *č'q'vid* - *u* - *a* 'to break,to slauter'

PRV -break -S3.SG- INF.M

go - *sop* - *u* - *a* 'to tear up'

PRV -tear -S3.SG- INF.M

go - *k'vat* - *u* '(she/he) slashed'

PRV -slash-S3.SG

(6) **ge-** **ge** - *sxap'* - *u* - *a* 'to jump down'

PRV -jump -S3.SG- INF.M

ge - *zim* - *ap* - *a* 'to aim'

PRV -aim -TH.M- INF.M

ge - *č'op* - *u* '(she/he) picked up'

PRV -pick -S3.SG

(7) **da-** (Georgian borrowing)

da - *rk'* - *eb* - *a* 'to lose'


- PRV -lose -TH.M - INF.M
da- *k'in - eb- a* 'to hold'
 PRV - hold -TH.M- INF.M
da - gvian - eb - a 'to be late' (The whole form is a Georgian borrowing.)
 PRV - late -TH.M- INF.M
- (8) **do-** (phonologically corresponding to Georgian **da-**)
do - 'vil - u - a 'to kill'
 PRV - kill -S3.SG- INF.M
do- *č'ar - u - a* 'to write'
 PRV - write -S3.SG - INF.M
do - tas - u '(she/he) sowed'
 PRV - sow - S3.SG
- (9) **c'a-** (Georgian borrowing)
c'a- *ul - a* 'to go away'
 PRV - go - INF.M
c'a- *'on - eb - a* 'to spoil'
 PRV -spoil-TH.M- INF.M
c'a- *ag - u* '(she/he) lost'
 PRV -lose -S3.SG
- (10) **me- me- ul -a** 'to go'
 PRV-go- INF.M
me - uγ - u '(she/he) carries sth away'
 PRV - carry -S3.SG
me- *č'ar - u* '(she/he) wrote sth to sb'
 PRV - write -S3.SG
- (11) **mo- mo- ul - a** 'to come'
 PRV -come- INF.M
mo- *uγ - u* '(she/he) fetches sth'
 PRV - fetch -S3.SG
mo- *č'ar - u* '(she/he) wrote sth to sb (here)'
 PRV - write -S3.SG
- (12) **še-** (Georgian borrowing)
še - xval - am - a 'to meet'(cf. synonym meaning of example (1))
 PRV - meet -TH.M- INF.M
še- *c'q'or - u - a* 'to merge '
 PRV - merge -S3.SG- INF.M
še- *ex - eb - u* '(she/he) touched sth'
 PRV - touch -TH.M- S3.SG

2.2. General semantics of simple preverbs


Among simple preverbs **me-** and **mo-** are functionally more prominent as they indicate orientation along with verbs of motion or movement:

- (13) **me-** used when the motion is oriented off the interlocutors, e.g.:
me- rt - u '(she/he) went away (from here)'
 PRV - go - S3.SG
me - v - čur - u - n - k '(I) am swimming away (from here)'
 PRV-S1.SG-swim-S3.SG-PRT-PRT
- (14) **mo-** used when the motion is oriented towards the interlocutors, e.g.:
mo - rt - u '(she/he) came (here)'
 PRV -come -S3.SG
mo- v - čur - u -n - k '(I) am swimming (towards here)'
 PRV-S1.SG-swim-S3.SG-PRT-PRT


Semantics of all the other simple preverbs, which seems elusive at first glance, is going to be established at the next stage of our research. Only some of them indicate direction of movement:

e-  motion is directed upwards from a surface:

- (15) **e - č'op - u** '(she/he) picked up sth'
 PRV -pick -S3.SG
e - sxap' - u - a 'to leap upwards'
 PRV- leap - S3.SG-INF.M

ge-/do-  motion is directed down towards a surface:

- (16) **ge- x - un - a** 'to sit down'; **ge- žin - a** 'to look down'
 PRV-sit -TH.M-INF.M PRV -look-INF.M
do- ntxap - a 'to fall down'; **do- xun - ap - a** 'to set down'
 PRV -fall - INF.M PRV -set -TH.M-INF.M

go-  motion on the surface is directed from inside out:

- (17) **go-sxap' - u - a** 'to leap out '
 PRV -leap- S3.SG-INF.M
go - t' - eb - a 'to let go'
 PRV- go -TH.M- INF.M

As a rule loan preverbs are relatively rare and they are hardly ever used with verbs of motion or movement.

3. Complex preverbs

Complex preverbs are disyllabic. Here are some examples:

- e+ko-nčuruns** – 'she/he is swimming hither (to shore)'
e+la-gans – 'she/he is driving sth into sth'
go+mo-ragvapa – 'falling out'
mi+da-tq'obuns – 'she/he is sneaking off'

Complex preverbs in Megrelian are more numerous than in Georgian. They are derived from simple ones, and their structural formula is:

- a) simple preverb + location particle (*e+ko-nčuruns*, *e+la-gans*, etc.)
 b) simple preverb + simple preverb (*go+mo-ragvapa*, *mi+da-tq'obuns*, etc.)

Location particles *k'o-*, *c'o-*, *to-*, *no-*, *la-*, *ša-*, that always occur together with simple preverb, have following meanings:

- k'o-* 'at the edge of something'
c'o- 'in front of something'
to- 'under something'
no- 'at the top of something'
la- 'inside something'
ša- 'between something'

Combinational capacity of simple preverbs differs while forming the complex ones of (a) type (see table 1 below):

Simple preverbs	Location particles					
	<i>k'o-</i>	<i>c'o-</i>	<i>to-</i>	<i>no-</i>	<i>la-</i>	<i>ša-</i>
<i>a-</i>	+	+	+	+	+	+
<i>o-</i>	+	+	+	+	+	+
<i>e-</i>	+	+	+	+	+	+
<i>da-</i>	–	–	–	–	–	–
<i>do-</i>	+	–	+	+	+	+
<i>ga-</i>	+	*	+	*	*	+
<i>go-</i>	+	+	+	+	+	+
<i>ge-</i>	+	+	+	+	+	+
<i>c'a-</i>	–	–	–	–	–	–
<i>še-</i>	–	–	–	–	–	–
<i>me-</i>	+	+	+	+	+	+
<i>mo-</i>	+	+	+	+	+	+

Table 1

In the table “+” stands for realized combinations of the first right column preverbs and those from the other columns, “–” stands for unrealized combinations, and “*” stands for the realized, though very rare ones.

The table makes it obvious that combinational capacity of loan simple preverbs is restricted: *da-*, *c'a-*, *še-* do not form any complex preverb of (a) type; some particles are added to *ga-* in order to form complex preverbs, while other combinations are very rare; among the loan preverbs only *a-*

has the highest combinational capacity, having had realized all the combinations. Some of the combinations from table 1 are presented below:

eko-xuna ('sitting near sth'), *dino-xuna* < *dono-xuna* ('sitting inside sth'), *miko-xuna* < *meko-xuna* ('sitting down by sb/sth'), *ala-xuna* ('sitting next to sth') – compare with *xuna* ('sitting');

gino-lapa < *geno-lapa* ('falling off/over'), *geša-lapa* ('coming rushing up'), *mic'o-lapa* < *mec'o-lapa* ('leaping up') – compare with *lapa* ('falling').

The other (b) type of complex preverbs is relatively poor in number. The second component here is mainly *mo-* (*amo-*, *gamo-*, *gomo-*, *gemo-*, *c'omo-*, the latter is very rare). The second component of the same (b) type could be simple preverb *da-* as well, but they are very few: only preverbs *me-* and *mo-* combine with *do-* (*medo-*, *modo-*).

Preverbs, complex and simple preverbs as well, undergo certain changes due to the phonetic processes:

1. In preverbs of CV type vowels may be optionally deleted, if only they are not the first and the last prefixes before the root, these are excluded from deletion (Harris 1991).
2. Vowels in simple preverbs *me-*, *go-*, *do-* change into *i-*, which may be deleted according to (1): *meko-* > *miko-*, *goko-* > *giko-*, *doko-* > *diko-*.
3. When a preverb, having a vowel ending is followed by a vowel, the resulting vowel cluster changes according to the following rules (Gamkrelidze, Gudava 1981):

$a+a > a$	$e+a > ia$	$o+a > a$
$a+i > e$	$e+i > I$	$o+i > i$
$a+u > (a)u$	$e+u > (e)u$	$o+u > u$
$a+o > a$	$e+o > io$	$o+o > a$
$a+e > e$		

Illustrations for phonetic changes are the following examples:

mic'o-xe – 'she/he is sitting in front (of sth)'

mic'o-xe < *mec'o-xe* (rule 2)

ve-mc'o-xe – 'she/he is not sitting in front (of sth)' (*ve-* is negative particle)

ve-mc'o-xe < *vemic'o-xe* (rule 1) < *vemec'o-xe* (rule 2)

mik'uxak'u – 'she/he knocked (at/on sth)'

mik'uxak'u < *mik'o-uxak'u* (rule 3)

ke-mk'uxak'u – 'she/he did knock (at/on sth)' (*ke-* is affirmative particle)

ke-mk'uxak'u < *ke-mk'o-uxak'u* (rule 3) < *ke-mik'o-uxak'u* (rule 1) < *ke-mek'o-uxak'u* (rule 2)

Taking into account phonetic changes, the table of possible complex preverbs could be given:

Complex preverbs

ako- *ac'o-* *ato-* *ano-* *ala-* *aša-* *amo-*

<i>eko-</i>	<i>ec'o-</i>	<i>eto-</i>	<i>eno-</i>	<i>ela-</i>	<i>eša-</i>	
<i>oko-</i>	<i>oc'o-</i>	<i>oto-</i>	<i>ono-</i>	<i>ola-</i>	<i>oša-</i>	
<i>doko-</i>		<i>doto-</i>	<i>dono-</i>	<i>dola-</i>	<i>doša-</i>	
<i>diko-</i>		<i>dito-</i>	<i>dino-</i>	<i>dila-</i>	<i>diša-</i>	
<i>gako-</i>	<i>gac'o-*</i>	<i>gato-</i>	<i>gano-*</i>	<i>gala-*</i>	<i>gaša-</i>	<i>gamo-</i>
<i>goko-</i>	<i>goc'o-</i>	<i>goto-</i>	<i>gono-</i>	<i>gola-</i>	<i>goša-</i>	<i>gomo-</i>
<i>giko-</i>	<i>gic'o-</i>	<i>gito-</i>	<i>gino-</i>	<i>gila-</i>	<i>giša-</i>	<i>gimo-</i>
<i>geko-</i>	<i>gec'o-</i>	<i>geto-</i>	<i>geno-</i>	<i>gela-</i>	<i>geša-</i>	<i>gemo-</i>
						<i>c'amo-</i>
<i>meko-</i>	<i>mec'o-</i>	<i>meto-</i>	<i>meno-</i>	<i>mela-</i>	<i>meša-</i>	<i>meda-</i>
<i>miko-</i>	<i>mic'o-</i>	<i>mito-</i>	<i>mino-</i>	<i>mila-</i>	<i>miša-</i>	<i>mida-</i>
<i>moko-</i>	<i>moc'o-</i>	<i>moto-</i>	<i>mono-</i>	<i>mola-</i>	<i>moša-</i>	<i>moda-</i>

Table 2
Preverbs with “*” are very rare.

The compositional meaning of the complex preverbs (e.g. a-ko, do-ko etc.) is a very complicated and it changes even with each verbal roots so, it needs special analysis. Although, complex preverbs pointing out the direction of motion or movement, can give more exact location of initial or final point of a corresponding action. Thus, all abovementioned has enabled us to conclude that semantics of complex preverb with verbs of motion and movement nearly equals to the sum of the semantics of its components, but of course, there are some exceptions.

A rich system of preverbs is ‘balanced’ by a poor set of postpositions in Megrelian noun system. Location is hardly ever indicated by postpositional phrase in Megrelian, while in Georgian postpositional phrases are very common, e.g.:

- (18) *magidastan* – ‘at the table’ or *k’edelze* – ‘on the wall’ (< *k’edelsze*)
magida-s - tan *k’edel- s - ze*
table- DAT- at wall- DAT-on

Preverbs, and especially complex preverbs, due to the location particles are functional counterparts of Georgian postpositions (Chikobava 1936). In Megrelian verbal constructions the noun, in relation to which the location is indicated, is in dative case, e.g.:

- c’uk’i xulas škirenit vemplaŪuruni* – ‘A mouse never dies of hunger in the barn.’
c’uk’-i xula-s škiren-it ve-mla-[Ūur-un-i]
mouse-NOM barn-DAT hunger-INST not-PRV-[dies]

didi kua kimlarginuu otaxus – ‘She/He rolled a big rock into the room.’

did-i kua-Ø ki-mlar-[ginu-u] otaxu-s
big-NOM rock-NOM AFF-PRV-rolled room-DAT

Further study of the Megrelian data will reveal more details of the preverb semantics.

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