

Repetitive prefix in Agul and its areal/genetic background

Among the Lezgian languages of the East Caucasian family, Agul possesses one of the richest systems of verbal locative prefixes, most of which have the same form and meaning (and the same historical origin) as locative case markers. For example, in the Huppuq' dialect of Agul there are two slots for locative prefixes: one for localization marker (IN, INTER, ANTE, POST, APUD, SUPER and SUB/CONT) and another one for direction marker (LATIVE, ELATIVE, UP and DOWN); the direction marker can be absent. In other dialects the system is similar, although some variation exists in the form/meaning of affixes and the number of slots. The locative prefixes are not fully productive, the combinability of prefixes with verbal roots is rather restricted, and many derived prefixed verbs have quite idiomatic meaning. Verbal prefixal markers in Agul also include the Prohibitive marker *ma-* and the negation marker *d-* || *dV-*. Apart from that, a **repetitive (or “refactive”) prefix** is attested in two dialects of Agul – the Huppuq' dialect (spoken in 1 village) and the Keren dialect (spoken in 6 villages).

Unlike locative prefixes, the RE marker *q-* || *qV-* (the variants are *qa-*, *qu-*, *qi-*) is unrestrictedly productive and can co-occur with any verbal stems, including those that already have locative prefixes¹. As a rule, the RE marker precedes locative prefixes (and follows negation/prohibitive markers).

RE-prefixed verbs are very frequent, and in most cases the prefix adds repetitive meaning proper ‘do again’, cf. (a). With motion verbs and ‘give’ the additional meaning is ‘backwards’, cf. (b), and with some verbs it is slightly idiomatic, cf. (c). The prefix can also provide other semantic nuances like the continuation ‘still do’ or the completion.

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| a. | <i>ag_oas</i> ‘see’ | > <i>q-ag_oas</i> ‘see again’ |
| | <i>ʃut'as</i> ‘eat’ | > <i>qa-ʃut'as</i> ‘eat again’ |
| b. | <i>ʃ_oas</i> ‘go/come’ | > <i>qu-ʃ_oas</i> ‘go/come back’ |
| | <i>h_oas</i> ‘send’ | > <i>qu-h_oas</i> ‘send back’ |
| | <i>ic'as</i> ‘give’ | > <i>qa-jc'as</i> ‘give back’ |
| c. | <i>aq'as</i> ‘do, make’ | > <i>q-aq'as</i> ‘do again’, ‘repair’ |
| | <i>xas</i> ‘become’ | > <i>qa-xas</i> ‘get better, recover’ (lit. ‘become again’) |

Among locative prefixes, the RE morpheme is phonetically close to the POST marker *q-* || *qV-*, but they are formally and paradigmatically distinct: RE- and POST-derivatives from one and the same stem are not identical (cf. *q-uq'as* ‘sit behind or near’ vs. *qa-uq'as* ‘sit down again’) and can co-occur in one verb (cf. *q-arxas* ‘fall behind’ > *qa-q-arxas* ‘fall behind again’).

¹ The exception is stative verbs, which do not co-occur with the RE prefix.

Both dialects having the RE prefix are spoken in the south of the Agul-speaking area and are in a tight contact with neighboring Lezgian-speaking villages; most speakers of these dialects have a good command of Lezgian, which is a dominant language of the Kurah district of Daghestan. (In the central and northern Agul area the RE prefix is absent, as well as in the closely related Tabassaran.) Interestingly, it is exactly in Lezgian where there also exist morphemes with similar form and function: these are repetitive prefix *q-* || *qi-* and prefix/infix *χ-*, cf. *q-uwun* ‘do again’, *q-lahun* ‘say again’, *qi-wehun* ‘throw again’, *q-fin* ‘go away’, *χ-gun* ‘give again’, *a-χ-kun* ‘see again’, etc. (Haspelmath 1993: 174-175)². Among other Lezgian languages, the repetitive prefix *q-* is attested in Rutul (Makhmudova 2001: 107-108), where it is also similar to the POST localization, cf. *q-ešes* ‘cry, weep again’, *q-aχas* ‘run again’, *ha-qa-gus* ‘find again’ and *q-aʔas* ‘pour behind’, *q-ijes* ‘throw behind’, *qu-udqʔas* ‘cut, tear from behind’.

Though the very connection between the original locative meaning ‘behind’ and the (derived) meanings ‘backwards’ and ‘again’ seems quite plausible, the history of the RE prefix in Southern Agul is not very clear. In principle, it might have an independent origin, following the POST > RE grammaticalization path irrespective of parallel developments in Lezgian and Rutul. However, an areal influence from Lezgian can be strongly suspected, given the distribution of the marker in Agul dialects. As for the possibility of tracing the origin of *q*-like repetitive to the proto-Lezic stage, it seems rather dubious, as there seems to be no trace of such marker in some languages of the group, neither as a productive morpheme, nor even as part of lexicalized verbal stems with repetitive or reversive meaning.

In the presentation, the following issues will be discussed in details: a) morphological properties of the RE prefix; b) possible meanings of RE-prefixed verbs (based on the corpus study); c) form/meaning of the RE prefix in other Lezgian languages; d) areal and genetic factors relevant for the history of the RE prefix (esp. the problem of its inherited vs. contact-induced vs. independent origin).

HASPELMATH, MARTIN (1993): *A grammar of Lezgian*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.

MAKHMUDOVA, S. M. (2001): *Morfologija rutul'skogo jazyka*. Moskva.

² Note that the POST marker in Lezgian occurs only as a case suffix (cf. *rakʔari-q* ‘behind the doors’), but not as a locative prefix on verbs.

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