

## Template Morphology: Megrelian Verbal Inflection

The Kartvelian languages display a rather complicated picture of verbal inflection, which no doubt is an interesting challenge to morphological theory in general [Boeder 2005: 22]. The verbal systems of all the Kartvelian languages are mutually transparent (being agglutinative in general and showing different degrees of fusion), but at the same time each of the languages provides a number of particular features not attested elsewhere in Kartvelian.

With the exception of the fundamental pilot work [Deeters 1930] that should have been reevaluated long ago, the Kartvelian material has not been analyzed in terms of positional grammar so far, and Megrelian data seem to be the best test case for three reasons: 1) the language has not been as thoroughly studied as its sisters Svan, Laz and of course Georgian, so that the investigation would not be under pressure from the previous works; 2) Megrelian verbal inflection is the most complex among the languages and provides the biggest number of morphological slots, which is very important for elaborating general conclusions; and 3) as observed previously [Klimov 1986: 61], the verbal system of Megrelian, though being the most complex, has retained the fewest suppletive forms and appears to be the most regular among the languages, which would reduce arguments concerning secondary details.

The actual sketch presents the system of Megrelian finite verbal inflection from both formal and conceptual points of view. Each verbal category is expressed in a certain place, or slot, within an allolog presented as a sequence of morphs. Consequently, each slot is assigned to a certain category. A number of categories (such as PERSON, CAUSATIVE etc.) are assigned to two or even three slots. We will call these categories complex.

The formal approach outlines the structure of any possible Megrelian verbal form. The slot-and-filler-model may be presented in FIGURE 1. One may find this system quite similar to the models present in such languages as Southeastern Tepehuan [Stump 2001], even with regard to some contentive aspects (i.e. not only the order of affixes, but also the order of categories expressed).

FIGURE 1

Slot	-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5	+6	+7	+8	+9
Formant	AFF/NEG	PRV	IPFV.PRIV	S/O	VER	R	R.EXT	INCH.PASS	TH	IPFV	CONJ	S	PL	COND	AUX

A word that would have all the slots filled is basically impossible, because some slots are mutually exclusive. For instance, slots +8 (*-k'oni*) and +5 (*-a /-e*) both designate MOOD and a verbal form cannot express CONDITIONAL and CONJUNCTIVE together, so we only have (1) *ibdi-koni* 'if I went' and (2) *ibd-a* 'so that I go', but not (3) *\*ibd-akoni*. The only verbal category that must be obligatorily expressed explicitly is PERSON, so in the minimal model the slots -2, 0 and +6 are filled: (4) *ø-tku* 'X said Y'. Concerning the maximal model, Klimov argued that within a word form 4 prefixes and 4 suffixes were possible [Klimov 2001: 55]; but there is strong evidence against the latter statement: one can find even 5 suffixes in forms like (5) *ku-d-g-o-gur-u-an-di-t* 'I would have taught you Y' (-5, -4, -2, -1, 0, +1, +3, +4, +6 and +7).

From a formal point of view, verbal categories can be divided into two groups: simple and complex categories. The former are AFFIRMATIVE, VERSION, and MOOD, each expressed in one slot. The latter are PERSON, NUMBER, PASSIVE, POTENTIAL, CAUSATIVE, ASPECT, TENSE, and EVIDENTIAL, which either may be expressed in two slots (as PERSON and NUMBER) or

three slots at once (as PASSIVE, POTENTIAL, CAUSATIVE, EVIDENTIAL, and ASPECT); TENSE is the most complex category and may use up to six slots.

Megrelian verbal inflection provides crucial evidence for the typology of affixation. Here we shall turn to the three kinds of circumfixes that are present in Megrelian.

a) We shall use the term circumfix for a complex morpheme that consists of (at least) two elements that fulfill a joint function and cannot be used separately. This is how PERSON is expressed. As mentioned above, the minimal model contains person markers: a pre-radical (subject or object) and a post-radical (subject) marker. (6) *b-zirun-k* 'I see Y' contains the 1st person subject marker *b-* (-2) and the 1st/2nd person subject marker *-k* (+6); together they form the 1st person of the verb. In (7) *r-zirunk* 'I see you' we have *r-* which is 2nd person object marker, and the 1st/2nd person subject marker *-k*. Even if the pre-radical person slot is empty (e.g. (8) *ø-zirunk* 'you see Y', (9) *ø-ziruns* 'X sees Y'), the zero designates the 3rd person object marker, and it functions in combination with the post-radical person marker.

b) We shall use the term coaffix for a complex morpheme that consists of (at least) two elements that fulfill a joint function and can be used separately. This is how PASSIVE is expressed. In (10) *i-č'ar-u[n]* 'Y is written' the coaffix for passive voice is *i- u[n]*; it consists of the subject versionizer *i-* (-1) (e.g. (11) *i-č'a-un-k* 'you write Y for yourself') and a theme marker *-un* (+3) (e.g. (12) *do-č'ar-un-s* 'X will write Y') which denotes present/future series of tense-mood-aspect paradigms. The morphemes can be used apart from each other, but they form a special complex morpheme with a special meaning when used together.

c) We shall use the term X-affix for a complex morpheme that consists of (at least) two elements that fulfill a joint function and one of which can be used separately, while another cannot. This is how CAUSATIVE is expressed. In (13) *mik'o-o-č'aapu-ans* (> *mik'a-č'ar-apu-ans*) 'X makes Z write Y on P (e.g. a wall)' the X-affix for causative is *o- -apu*; this is a combination of the locative versionizer *o-* (-1) and the root extension *-apu* (+1). The former is found within forms like (14) *mik'o-o-č'aruns* (> *mik'a-č'ar-uns*) 'X writes Y on P (e.g. a wall)', while the latter is only used when combined with the locative versionizer in the function mentioned. This example falls under general rules of Megrelian morphotactics: similar cases may occur within a pre-radical complex, e.g. the imperfectivizing preverb *-tmV-* / *-timV-* (-3) is only used to turn off the perfectivizing function of the pre-verb (-4), so that it would only retain its lexical meaning: (15) *ši-ø-inaxu* 'X will preserve Y (perfective future)' vs. (16) *ši-tmi-inaxu* 'X saves Y (present)' [Chumburidze 1986: 31–32; Harris 1991: 346].

The issues raised within the scope of this paper reflect a small part of the vast variety of morphological means in Megrelian. The exploration of Megrelian morphotactics and the complicated interaction between different morphemes within the models of verbal inflection, in particular, provide new evidence for the theory of template morphology.

## References

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#### List of abbreviations

AFF	affirmative
IPFV.PRV	imperfectivizing preverb
R	root
AUX	auxiliary verb
NEG	negation
R.EXT	root extension
COND	conditional
O	object person marker
S	subject person marker
CONJ	conjunctive
PASS	passive
TH	theme suffix
INCH.PASS	inchoative passive
PL	plural
VER	version
IPFV	imperfect
PRV	preverb