

## SOME FEATURES FROM SYNTAX OF MEGRELIAN LANGUAGE

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### ABSTRACT

One type of compound sentences in Megrelian with the conjunction *-n(i)* ‘what, which’ and correlate *per(i)* ‘like’ is analyzed in the article from the point of view of focus and topic. In the sentences with *-n(i) per(i)* the main clauses are split through the subordinate clauses and the boundaries between the parts of sentences disappear. The both (or more) components of compound sentences form a whole intonational-articulatory unity. The construction is peculiar for Megrelian. Such sentences are not attested either in Georgian or in Svan.

The unwritten languages are characterized by redundancy of filler words of nominal and verbal origins. In the Megrelian, often free from the standard language rules, there are such units. This research refers to: filler words – *vareno* and *varduo*, which are frequently functioned in hypotaxis, are called as *little sentences inside sentences*, and one type indefinite pronouns + *n(i)* conjunction. The structure of indefinite pronouns is transparent in Megrelian nowadays: the interrogative word + the particle + the verb “to be” in present tense (the forms of the present tense may be substituted by the future and past tense forms) *midgaren(i)*, *midgardun(i)*, *mudgaren(i)*, *mudgardun(i)*, etc.

This type of indefinite pronouns may be the modifier of any name in the sentence or as the subordinate clause in the hypotactic construction. In both cases the verbal segment and *-n(i)* conjunction is non-semantic.

**Key Words:** Megrelian hypotaxes, sentences with *-n(i)* ‘what, which’ + *per(i)* ‘like’, filler words.

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In the Kartvelian language family (Georgian, Svan, Megrelian, Laz) only Georgian is the oldest written Language. During many centuries literary Georgian has been the language of state administration, religion, education for Megrelians who have been using Megrelian as home language.

It is interesting to make research of the subordination, evidenced in Georgian, Megrelian-Laz and Svan live speech from the point of view **(a)** of literary language and live speech interrelationship, **(b)** of comparison with the subordination systems and revealing similarities and differences between them,

(c) that of using conjunction or correlate, (d) of the member, given in the main clause to be explained or (e) of classification of subordinate clauses.

The compound sentences in Megrelian are well studied (M. Lomia. Issues of Hypotaxes in Megrelian. Tbilisi 2005). One type of compound sentences with the conjunction *-n(i)* ‘what, which’ and correlate *per(i)* ‘like’ is analyzed in the article from the point of view of focus and topic. In the sentences with *-n(i) peri* the main clauses are split through the subordinate clauses and the boundaries between the parts of sentences disappear. The both (or more) components of compound sentences form a whole intonational-articulatory unity. The construction is peculiar for Megrelian. Such sentences are not attested either in Georgian or in Svan.

As the object of our observation is one sort of Megrelian complex sentence, we saw proper to tell shortly the main of statements (or postulates) of hypotaxes in Megrelian.

In hypotactic constructions of Megrelian member-conjunctions are relative pronouns – *namut* ‘[that,] which’, *mit* ‘[that,] who’, *mut* ‘what’, *muzmat* ‘as far as’, *muperi(t)* ‘which kind’, *mudaneri* ‘how many kind’, ‘as well as’; relative adverbs: *soti* ‘there, where’, *sodet* ‘there, where’, *sovre* ‘in the direction which’, *soišax* ‘till’, *mužansut* ‘when’, *mučot* ‘how’, *mu dros* ‘when’, *namuganiše* ‘from the side that’, *muš mamalas* ‘as fast as’ (we have not this latter in Georgian).

In the compound sentences with relative pronouns there is established one peculiar order of principal and subordinate clauses: principal + subordinate + correlate, evidenced also in the language of Georgian fairy tales and dialects.

In the complex sentences with subordinate conjunctions we meet special Megrelian conjunctions *-ni* ‘that’, *namuda* ‘because’, *-da* ‘if’ – and several subordinate conjunctions, borrowed from Georgian. From these *-n(i)* is different from similar conjunctions, evidenced in other Kartvelian languages from the point of view of position: it adjuncts as enclitic to the predicate of the subordinate clause. In case of *namuda* the subordinate follows the principal clause. With the conjunction *-da* the conditional subordinate clause is connected with the principal one.

The characteristic Megrelian complex constructions are:

Interrogative hypotactic construction. Its subordinate clause is connected to the principal one with conjunction *-n(i)* ‘that’.

mu ore, sak’it megijuni?

‘What is that, you are carrying in sack?’

In this construction the subject of the principal clause (mu ‘what’) is directed by the predicate of the subordinate clause (megijyu ‘you are carrying’).

In Megrelian a simple sentence with indefinite pronoun and hypotactic construction, in which indefinite pronoun is represented in the form of subordinate clause, exist side by side; sometimes this pronoun is in case, demanded by the predicate of the principal clause, or the case-ending is added to itself: **midgakreni** ‘somebody, who is’.

We meet also special constructions, containing verbs, which express saying-order and mood (of a person).

By the methodology, specially processed for this purpose, were determined the main concepts of the informational structures: focus and topic. In the existing Megrelian texts and during the work with the experimental subjects we observed the complex structures, containing conjunction **-ni** ‘that’ and correlate **per(i)** ‘that kind, such kind’. We tried to examine this one particular sort of Megrelian hypotaxis from the point of view of information structurization parameters on the examples, given below:

**osuri ’vilun(s) k’ars mik’oxen(i) per borbolias.**

‘A woman kills that spider, which is sitting on the door’ [‘which is sitting on the door’ is after ‘a woman kills’].

The main component of the hypotactic construction – **osuri ’vilun(s) ... per borbolias** – is pulled apart by subordinate component – **k’ars mik’oxen(i)**; but this is not a simple split, as it turned out that the sequence **k’ars mik’oxen(i) per borbolias** has the properties of a stable word-combination and it was conceived as a phrasem. The particularity of this manifestly hypotactic construction is the thing that the ellipsis of the subject of the subordinate clause cannot be identified because of its coincidence with the direct object of the principal clause. Different case in frames of sequence of the principal clause members does not make any problem.

From the point of view of informative structurization the focus indicates that there are those alternatives, which are relevant for interpretation of linguistic figures. In our case the focus is on the subordinate segment of the complex sentence – *the spider, which is sitting on the door*, and for the main part of the syntactic construction will be well appropriate the most convenient question for determining the topic:

What can you say about the woman?

The woman creeps up on the spider, the woman kills the spider.

The topic and focus are marked on different levels.

In our case it is possible that the correlate **per(i)** ‘that kind, that sort’ can become equal to the morphological marker.

This sentence is the result of description of the picture, proposed to an experimental subject. In Megrelian use of punctuation marks is very difficult.

Another experimental subject described the same picture in the following manner: **k'ar-s mi-k'oxe-n per borbolia-s 'vilu-n-s osur-i.**

‘The spider which is sitting on the door, the woman kills it’.

In Megrelian in this case also use of punctuation marks is very difficult, because in the segment – *per borbolias 'viluns osuri* – the members of the principal clause were not split, but they appeared close by to each other.

Third experimental subject described the same picture as follows:

**Osur-i k'ar-s mi-k'ox-e-n per borbolia-s mi-o-tq'ob-an-s.**

‘The woman creeps up on the spider sitting on the door’.

The principal clause – **osur-i per borbolias miotq'obans** – is split by the subordinate one – **k'ar-s mi-k'ox-e-n.**

We have the same in the following sentences too.

**bayana-s u-pid-es ži vardišperi gi-no%u-n peri marožn-i.**

‘They bought for the child, which has rose [thing] on the top, that kind of ice-cream’.

**Boši-k mi-iy-u mar%gvan k'učx-i va uyu-n per mc'vane babta-m tunt-i.**

‘The boy brought, *having not the right leg*, such kind a bear with a green bow’.

**art-i k'oč-i, cali k'učx-i va uyu-n peri, taki ki-gere.**

‘A man, *such one*, who has not one leg, is standing here’.

The marker of another level is change of the words’ order, in particular, disposition of the members of the split principal clause and correlates.

As in the example of the examined sentences, there are several formal linguistic possibilities of representing topic and focus:

Morphological marker, change of the words’ order and split of the sentence belong to morphology and syntax.

From the events of phonetics and phonology level it is worthy to note the intonation. The sentence is said on one breathe out, without pause.

As correlate is a part of the principal sentence, in the sequence of the members of the complex sentence, we are interested in – principal + subordinate + correlate – the principal is split by subordinate with conjunction **-ni**, and it is always followed by correlate **per(i)**.

*By putting the correlate, i.e. a constituent of the principal sentence at the end, the limit between the principal and subordinate clauses disappear and the both components of the principal clause turn into one complete intonational-articulatory piece (Danelia - Tsanova 1991,9).*

For the complex sentence with the conjunction **-n(i)** it is specific that the correlate is on the mere of the clauses. In this case the subordinate clause precedes the principal one (Lomia 2005, 95). A member with the conjunction **-n(i)** is at the end of the subordinate clause and is always followed by the correlate.

***k'ibe-s mo-ur-si-n per boši-s mo-xvad-u burt-i ukaxale.***

‘The boy, *which descends the stairs*, was hit a ball from the back’.

The subordinate is ***k'ibe-s mo-ur-si-(n)***;

**per** is equaled with the correlate;

The principal is ***boši-s mo-xvad-u burt-i ukaxale.***

The similar one is:

***me-ur-su- n per osur-s dud-s ki-gnal-u tok'ik.***

‘*Which is going*, on the head of (that) kind woman, a cord fell dows’.

In this and similar cases the limit between the components of the hypotactic construction pales.

Sometimes the principal clause without indicating word is manifested only by the correlate:

***Ku-da-agur-u dya-s ko-s va ma-(a)-gi-n-e-n peri.***

‘He taught her, *that no one never can beat her*, that kind [means]’.

In this case the member to be explained (indicating word) is omitted and is meant by the preceding context.

Sometimes the subordinate with the conjunction **-ni** is deciphered by means of the contents of the attribute or adverbial, standing before it:

***šara-s tol-e-layal-ir-i irem-i ko-%ir-u, tol-i va u-γu-du-n per-i.***

‘On the road he saw a deer with pulled out eye, such one, *who had not an eye*’.

In this kind sentences the information is given in such a way, that the teller underline an important event by intonation, and the listener easily memorize it.

Sometimes at the end of the sentence there are correlate and the indicating word:

***te-s ži ku-mn-a- č'k'ad-es, sum-i uγu kâmbëš-is va ma-γer-du-ni, per-i rkina.***

They nailed on it, *that three yoke of oxen could not bring*, such heavy iron.

**ko-%ir-es, koč-i –ši tol-i u-&g-u-šis va %ir-un-du –ni, per-i cira.**

‘They saw, *that an eye of a man could not see*, such a good girl’.

In complex syntactic construction, containing two subordinates, the correlate *per-i* and indicating word sometimes are split:

**ma gi-c’-u-e, ‘he’-ma-ki, ti-n-c’kuma raš-is martax-i ki-gi-aškvi, u-nwara- ši ve e- ‘id-a-su -ni, per-i.**

‘(If) I tell you «he», give a flog to the horse, that sharper could not exist, that kind’.

**me-ul-a šara-si -ni, art-i koč-k ke-še-xvad-es, lak’v-i me-’uns-u-ni per-k-i.**

‘When they were passing the highway, they met a man, who was carrying a puppy, that kind’.

And sometimes – are not:

**zažigalka do sigaret’-i u-k’-eb-u-n per koč-i ge-re p’ep’elnica gi-a-%u-n per st’ol-iš c’oxole.**

‘Holding a lighter and a cigarette, that man, in front of that table, that the ashtray is on, is standing’.

Putting the correlate on the mere of the clauses is specific to the complex sentence with the conjunction **-n(i)**. This time the subordinate precedes the principal one (Lomia 2005, 95). The member with the conjunction **-n(i)** is standing at the end of the subordinate clause and the correlate always follows it. We can make a conclusion that in the complex sentences the sequence – principal + subordinate + correlate (indicating word) from the possible disposition of the principal and subordinate components is not prevalent in Megrelian.

A fact attracted our attention:

In Megrelian, from the standard language rules free language, there are some filler words which are frequently functioned in hypotaxis, are called as ‘little sentences inside sentences’ (Kipshidze 1914, 044-045; 301).

These words are:

**Va-ren-o**

NEG {va(r)} AUX-PRS {re(n)} INTERROG {o}

‘Is not (s)he, it?’

**dia-muš-k, va-ren-o, meu-va ku-c’u-asi-n, oč’k’omai-š para xolo va a-γ-venu-u.**

‘Her mother, **Is not (s)he, it?**, go away –*if tells him*, he will not have money even for food’.

**Xelmc’ipe-k, vareno, varia ku-c’u-asi-ni, teli kalaki-s mo-spen-s gvershap-i.**

‘If the king *is not (s)he, it* will refuse the dragon will destroy the whole of town’.

*va-rd-u-o*

NEG {va(r)} AUX-PAST {(o)rdu} INTERROG {o}

‘Was not (s)he, it?’

**ma-sum-a k’ar-iša, varduo, ki-me-rpti-ni, xuma-k ku-m-masim-u angilozepe-ši bira-&gura-k.**

‘When I went to third door, *was not (s)he, it?*, I heard voices like cherubs singing’.

si mut, va-rd-u-o, mo-m -č’ari-ni, irpeli t’q’ura ’ope.

‘You, [about] what, **was not (s)he, it?**, wrote me, everything was lie’.

We pay attention that both verbal fillers are with negative particle *va-*, but the sentences stay positive. More ever, the fillers seem unnecessary and there is no need to translate them.

Such sentences without filler words keep the same information.

These *varduo* and *vareno* are desemantized segments, which turned into morphosyntaxemes and as material are close to those linguistic sayings, which, in reality, are completely without function.

In Megrelian indefinite pronouns have hypotactic structure and derive from the independent sentence. The structure of the pronouns – *midgareni* ‘somebody, who is’, *mudgareni* ‘something that is’, *namudgareni* ‘one, which is’, *midgarduni* ‘somebody, who was’, *mudgarduni* ‘something, that was’, is clear: interrogative word: *mi(n)* ‘who?’, *mu* ‘what?’, *namu* ‘which?’, *-d(a)-/-ga* particles with meaning ‘also, too, as well’, the verb “to be” in a present tense and the conjunction *-n(i)*. During providing the information from the speaker to the listener components of indefinite pronouns relate to each other according to the rules of structurization.

This type of indefinite pronoun may be the modifier of any name in the sentence or as the subordinate clause in the hypotactic construction. The verbal segment and *-n(i)* conjunction is non-semantic.

The case indicator added to the pronoun points to the verbal and conjunction-enclitic loss of meaning. However, it has not been turned into one unit up to the end. Positive, freely changeable variants of case indicator are usual:

Indefinite pronoun, represented as an independent sentence, ‘somebody that is’ kind belongs to the variety of the constructions, specified as cleft (split, torn) in theoretic linguistics, the agent of which, though is unknown, but is fixed and underlined. In the *mudgareni* type form at the clitic nature of the segments *-reni*, *-rduni* indicates that fact too, that the components of the indefinite articles still have not become one unit finally.

**midga-re-n(i)/ø||midga-ø-re-n(i)**

NOM. somebody be.PRS.S.3.SG.CONJ. NOM.||somebody-NOM. be.PRS.S.3.SG.CONJ.

**midgaren-k || midga-k-reni ERG.**

somebody be.PRS.S.3.SG.CONJ.ERG.||somebody-ERG.-be.PRS.S.3.SG. CONJ.

**midgaren-s || midga-si-reni DAT.**

somebody be.PRS.S.3.SG.CONJ.DAT.|| somebody- DAT. -be.PRS.S.3.SG.CONJ.

**midgaren-i-š|| (GEN) midga-š-i-reni**

somebody be-PRS.S.3.SG.CONJ.GEN.||somebody-GEN. -be.PRS.S.3.SG. CONJ.  
(Kipshidze 1914,049; Lomia2005,158-160).

‘[They say], somebody that is, celebrates a great nuptials’.

**mu-d-ga-re-n(i)**

INTERROG. PRON.ERG. {mi(n)} PTC {-d(a)-ga} AUX-PRS.S.3.SG {re}  
CONJ {-n(i)}

‘somebody that is’

**midgareni did kampania-s gin-mi-gan-s-ia.**

‘[They say], somebody that is, celebrates a great nuptials’.

**mu-d-ga-re-n(i)**

INTERROG. PRON.ERG. {mu} PTC{-d(a)-ga} AUX-PRS.S.3.SG {re}  
CONJ {-n(i)}

‘something that is’

**mudgareni ko-pil-un-s.**

‘something that is, kills me’

***mi-d-ga-rd-u-ni***

INTERROG. PRON.ERG {mi} PTC {-d(a)-ga} AUX-  
AOR.S.3.SG{re} CONJ {-n(i)}

‘somebody that was’.

***mu-d-ga-rd-u-ni šuro va m-ič'in-en-d-u.***

‘somebody that was, he did not know me at all’.

***mu-d-ga-rd-u-ni***

INTERROG. PRON.ERG. {mu} PTC {-d(a)-ga} AUX-AOR.S.3.SG{re}  
CONJ {(n(i))}

‘something that was’.

***sizmar-i mi-γu-du mudgarduni ve-rgu-du-n peri do ki-mexvar-it.***

‘I had a dream, *something that was, that wasnot good*, that kind, and help me’.

***nam-d-ga-re-ni***

INTERROG. PRON.ERG. {namu} PTC {d-ga} AUX-PRS.S.3.SG{re}  
CONJ {(n(i))}

‘one of which is’

***nam-d-ga-re-n i am-dya-r ma-lu-re.***

‘One of which is, [he] has to go today’.

The fact is that these hypotactic constructions contain “extra” words. In the cases, examined here, these are two segments: *re-n(i)* ‘that is’ and *-rd-u-ni* ‘that was’.

Research of various types of fillers, their pragmatics and/or diachronic development in a particular language will be useful for investigate discourse theory too.

Thus, the constructions, containing conjunction *-n(i)*, as one, containing the correlate *per(i)*, also the constructions with indefinite pronouns, are one common linguistic context, which gives us an interesting picture from the point of view of informative structurization by Megrelian oral speakers.

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