

1. Object language

- Georgian and its related languages (Laz, Magrelian, and Svan) are known as the South Caucasian or the Kartvelian languages. The Georgians call themselves “Kartv-eli” (sing.) and they call their country “Sa-kartvel-o”.
- The ‘Georgian’ population from the last Soviet census of 1989 was 3.787.393. Georgians are mostly Orthodox.
- In modern Georgian 17 dialectal units are identified, traditionally classified into Eastern, Western and Southern groups, on the basis of ethno-geographic and linguistic criteria.



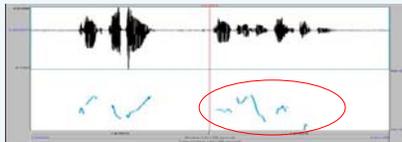
The field sessions were conducted in Tbilisi, in the house of the researcher, with ten students of Tbilisi State University aged 15-25.

3. Empirical observations

3.1 Georgian prosody

Stress in Georgian falls on the second or the third syllable from the end of a word and is dynamic, with secondary stress in multisyllabic words.

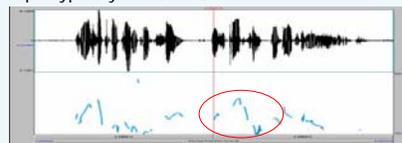
The neutral intonation of an affirmative sentence is falling.



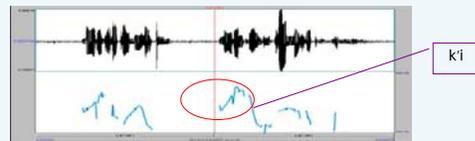
Focus intonation is rising (on the focussed word).



Topic typically has L*H*L intonation.



For selection or contrast the selected item has the focus (rising) intonation with the contrast in pitch accent made by the conjunction *ki*. This conjunction has the function of both ‘and’ and ‘but’: it joins two entities with a small degree of contrast (not as strong as ‘but’).



4. Summary/Future Work

The data gathered during the field sessions give us great possibilities for different kinds of investigations. The elicitation tasks are creative and simple, and use excellent examples which facilitate the task of fieldwork data collection. Full annotation of the collected data will permit the development of detailed research.

2. Information Structure

Georgian shows split ergativity. The Present Tense forms build the Nominative constructions in which the Conceptual-Topic is Agent. The Aorist and Perfect Tense forms build the Ergative construction in which the Conceptual-Topic is Patient:

Present: **monadire-O** **k'l-av-s** **irem-s**
hunter-Nom *kill-Prs.-S.3* *deer-Dat*
 ‘The hunter kills the deer’

Aorist: **monadire-m** **mo-k'l-a** **irem-i**
hunter-Erg *Prev-kill-Aor.S.3* *deer-Nom*

Perfect: **monadire-s** **mo-u-k'l-av-s** **irem-i**
hunter-Dat *Prev-Perf. Vers.-kill-Perf.-S.3* *deer-Nom*

The following appear to be used to express focus and topicalisation:

1. Marked Intonation
2. Reordering (Fronting) (+ Intonation)
3. Syntactic Constructions (+ Intonation)
4. Particles (+ Syntax+ Intonation)

- There are no morphological information structure markers.

3.2 Georgian syntax

In Georgian (as in Japanese, Shibatani 1985), the active-passive opposition forms a continuum in which prototypical passive differs from, so called, middle forms. Sometimes ‘passive constructions’ in fact represent active semantics. If the verb semantics allow for different directions (or locations) of an action (or state) (that is, it can be directionally oriented), a verb has a passive form; if not, then a verb has active form.

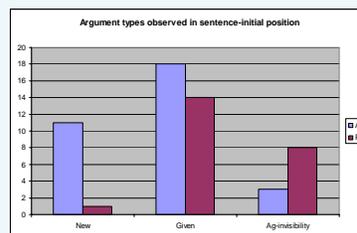
These peculiarities of the Georgian passive define the restrictions of their usage in the process of the structuring of information. In our data, when an invisible Agent is presented and the passive constructions are logically the most appropriate, Georgian informants prefer to produce sentences with uncertain subject, which is represented in verb form by S.3.PL suffixes:

4-42-20	D.	am	k'als	tavji	tʃakutʃs	urt'q'amen	.
word1		am	k'als	tavji	tʃakutʃs	urt'q'amen	.
morph		a-m	k'als-s	tav-ji	tʃakutʃ-s	u-rt'q'-am-en	
gloss		PROX>this[DAT]	man-DAT	head[DAT]-in	hammer-DAT	[IO.3]OV-HIT-HAB-ACT.PRS.SUBJ.3.PL	
translation		(They, somebody) is hitting this man with a hammer.					
orthography		ამ კაცს თავში ჩაკუნის ურტყავს.					
sound		am	k'als	t'avji	tʃak'uts	urt'q'aven	

Constructions with an indefinite subject (somebody, something) are also possible and in our data are frequent:

3-42-28	D.	gogonas	viyatsajm	xeli	hk'ra	.
word1		gogonas	viyatsajm	xeli	hk'ra	.
morph		bottl-s	vi-yats-a-m	xel-i	hk't-a	
gloss		bottle-DAT	who-PTC-O-ERG	hand-NOM	[IO.3]push-AOR.SUBJ.3.SG	
translation		A boy pushed the grille by the hand.				
orthography		გოგონას ვიყავს ხელი ჰკრა.				
sound		gogonas	viyatsam	xel	k'ra	
phonemic		gogonas	viyatsam	xel	hk'ra	

It seems that the choice between the constructions either with ‘somebody’ or with S.3.PL is regulated by New-Old information and relates to the S-O (that is, Ag-P) properties of arguments.



The beginning of a sentence is the most important position for emphasizing the definite parts of information flow. The ‘Visibility’ task data shows which argument tries to occupy the sentence-initial position.

There is a hierarchy in the tendency of taking the first position: Ag>O and Given>New.

These two hierarchies (Ag>O and Given>New) sometimes conflict and the ‘winner’ is Given>New (although the Ag>O hierarchy makes enables a new-Ag to take the first position in a sentence).

A more detailed hierarchy is thus: Ag-given>O-given>Ag-new>O-new

References

Shibatani, M. 1985. Passive and related constructions: A prototype analysis. Language 61.4: 821-848.