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## Word Stress in Megrelian<sup>1</sup>

### ABSTRACT

The paper deals with the issues of word stress in Megrelian. In the scientific literature there is no common view regarding the position and nature of stress in Megrelian. Our study is based on experimental analysis. The experiment has revealed that in Megrelian, in two-syllable and three-syllable words the stress is on the initial syllable. However, in some case the stress falls on the penultimate syllable in three-syllable words. As for four-syllable words, the stress is on the antepenult though our experiment did not confirm the presence of the secondary stress. In five-syllable words the primary stress falls on the second syllable and the secondary stress is on the penultima. In six-syllable and seven-syllable words the primary stress is on the second syllable but in six-syllable words the secondary stress is on the antepenult while in seven-syllable words the secondary stress falls on the fourth syllable. The results of our research are also important in terms of teaching Megrelian.

**Key words:** *word stress, pitch, intensity, Megrelian*

A number of scholars have studied the issues of stress in Megrelian. The first was T. Kluge who concluded that in two-syllable words the stress falls on the first syllable while in multi-syllable

words it falls on the penultimate syllable (Kluge, 1916: p. 3). The latter opinion was not shared.

The first thorough analysis of word stress in Megrelian was conducted by I.

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Kipshidze. According to his observation, in Megrelian two-syllable words, like Georgian, the stress falls on the penultimate syllable. As for three-syllable and multi-syllable words, it falls on the antepenult. There are two types of stress – primary and secondary. The primary stress falls on the initial syllable, the secondary stress falls on the penultima in four-syllable words and on the antepenult in five-syllable words. Stress is more changeable in Megrelian than in Georgian. Prefixes always have the primary stress, e.g. ჭარი č'ári “Keep writing!”, დოქარი dóč'ari “Write!”, ვა-ქარა vá-č'ara “Do not write!”. In words having a particle as the final element the stress moves to the end of the word, e.g. უღუდას úγudas “would have” – უღუდასე-ნი uγudásə-ni “If he would have”. The stress moves to the exclamatory particle as well, e.g. ბაბა “father” – ო ბაბა ó baba “Wo, father!”. In this case, the final word is almost separated from the particle. In compounds the primary stress is on the first word, e.g. ზღვა-პირი zγvá-p'iži “seashore”. If it is a multi-syllable word,

it may also have the secondary stress (Kipshidze, 1914: p. 13). Ch. Kiria has also discussed the issue of stress in Megrelian and stated that Megrelian words may have two types of stress at the same time (primary and secondary) (Kiria, 1991).

According to G. Rogava, in Georgian and Megrelian three and more syllable words have two types of stress – the dynamic stress on the antepenult (ქათამი, ქოთამი “hen”) and the tonal stress on the penultima (ქათამი katámi, ქოთამი katómi “hen”). Both types of stress are weak. He thinks that the tonal stress is primary. It is clearly distinguished when syllabifying. It is the stress that is perceived by non-Georgians (Rogava, 1956).

In his opinion, the dominance of the tonal stress in Megrelian is more evident when vowels with the tonal stress and stressless vowels combine at the end of a word, e.g. in surnames – ცანა < ცანაა < ცანავა caná < canáa < canáva. It has an unusual position (the final syllable) (Rogava, 1956). Our experiment has revealed that the stress

is on the initial syllable and the pitch rises at the end (i.e. on the last *ა*).

According to T. Gudava's observations, in Megrelian, in words that end in a consonant the penultimate syllable is stressed (დოჭარუნს *doč'aruns* "He/She will write", ჯიმალენქ *žimálenk* "brothers"). In words that end in a consonant the stress will always be on the third syllable if we consider the fact that such words may be added by a vowel, e.g. დოჭარუნს // დოჭარუნსი *doč'aruns // doč'arunsi* "He/She will write", ჯიმალენქ // ჯიმალენქი *žimálenk // žimálenki* "brothers". As it seems, the word is stressed like the variant with a final vowel. In words that end in a vowel the stress falls on the antepenult (ჯიმალეფი *žimálepi* "brothers") but if a vowel is long or double, the stress is on the penultimate syllable, e.g. დოდურუუ > დოდურუ > დოდურუ *dojúruu > dojúru > dojúru*. He concludes that when a long vowel is pronounced as a short vowel in Senakian speech (that is common in

dialects), the stress acquires a phonological function, e.g. ქემეჩი *kémeči* "Give it to them" - ქემეჩი *keméči* "Tell me", დოდურუ *dóyuru* "He/She/It died" - დოდურუ *dojúru* "He/She/It will die" (Gudava, 1969: p. 111).

In the monograph "Laz-Megrelian Grammar. I. Morphology", it is stated that this rule does not work and that according to the rule the stress is fixed in Megrelian (like in Georgian), however, it is impossible that this "fixed" stress can be "irrepressible" (Kiria, Ezugbaia, Memishishi, Chukhua, 2015: p. 463).

### **Experimental investigation**

We studied the issue of word stress experimentally within the project "Megrelian-Laz Intonation". The data for the current study was obtained from 18 native speakers of Megrelian of different age, sex and social status during the field expeditions: 8 males and 10 females (10-80 years old). We interviewed 2 respondents in each municipality of Samegrelo (Gali,

Zugdidi, Tsalenjikha, Chkhorotsku, Martvili, Abasha, Senaki, Khobi, Poti). The obtained material was analyzed in the Praat program.

We recorded and sorted the words based on the number of syllables (from 1 to 7), e.g.

1 σ: და da “sister”, ჩე ცე “white”;

2 σ: დიდა dida “mother”, ცუჯი ‘uži “ear”;

3 σ: კიბირი k’ibiri “tooth”, ჯოღორი ჯოგორი “dog”;

4 σ: მილახუნა / მიდახუნა Milaxuna / mijiaxuna “sitting inside”, დიანთილი / დიანთიდი Diantili / diantiji “mother-in-law”;

5 σ: კიგუბირაფუ kigubirapu

“He/she has sung”, დიდაცონერი dida’oneri “stepmother”;

6 σ: გინოკეთებული / გინოკეთებუდი ginok’etebuli / ginoketebuji “altered”, გინობირაფილი გინობირაფიდი Ginozirapili / ginozirapiji “met for the purpose of marriage”;

7 σ: გინოწინაფილი / გინოწინაფიდი ginoc’ic’inapili / ginoc’ic’inapiji “over-ripe; overfilled”, etc.

All syllables in our study are of CV structure but in four-syllables there is a syllable of VC shape as well. The results of our experiment are summarized in Table below.

**Table. Stress placement in Megrelian according to syllable (σ) count:**

σ count	word	stressed σ	secondary stressed σ	Pitch and intensity
1 σ	და da			
	ჩე ცე			
2 σ	დიდა dida	1 <sup>st</sup>		High pitch on the 1 <sup>st</sup> σ; High intensity on the 1 <sup>st</sup> σ
	ცუჯი ‘uži	1 <sup>st</sup>		High pitch on the 1 <sup>st</sup> σ; High intensity on the 1 <sup>st</sup> σ
	კიბირი k’ibiri	1 <sup>st</sup> or 2 <sup>nd</sup>		High pitch on the 1 <sup>st</sup> σ or on the 2 <sup>nd</sup> σ (Gali);

3 σ				High intensity on the 1 <sup>st</sup> σ or on the 2 <sup>nd</sup> σ
	ჯოლორი ჯოორი	1 <sup>st</sup>		High pitch on the 1 <sup>st</sup> σ or on the 2 <sup>nd</sup> σ (Martvili – M, Khobi - M);  High intensity on the 1 <sup>st</sup> σ
4 σ	მილახუნა / მიდახუნა milaxuna / mijixaxuna	2 <sup>nd</sup>		High pitch on the 2 <sup>nd</sup> σ;  High intensity on the 1 <sup>st</sup> σ or on the 2 <sup>nd</sup> σ
	დიანთილ ო / დიანთიდი diantili / diantiji	2 <sup>nd</sup>		High pitch on the 1 <sup>st</sup> (Martvili), on the 2 <sup>nd</sup> σ or on the 3 <sup>rd</sup> (Gali, Zugdidi, Abasha, Poti);  High intensity on the 1 <sup>st</sup> σ or on the 2 <sup>nd</sup> σ
5 σ	ქიგუბირა ფუ kigubirapu	2 <sup>nd</sup>	penultimate	High pitch on the 2 <sup>nd</sup> σ;  High intensity on the 3 <sup>rd</sup> σ
	დიდაცონე რი dida'oneri	2 <sup>nd</sup>	Penultimate	High pitch on the 2 <sup>nd</sup> σ or on the 3 <sup>rd</sup> or on the 1 <sup>st</sup> σ (Gali);  High intensity on the 1 <sup>st</sup> σ (Gali) or on the 2 <sup>nd</sup> σ
6 σ	გინოკეტებ ული / გინოკეტებ უდი ginok'etebu li / ginoketebuj i	2 <sup>nd</sup>	antepenult	High pitch on the antepenult (Gali) or on the penultimate σ;  High intensity on the penultimate σ (Zugdidi) or on the antepenult
	გინოპირა ფილი /	2 <sup>nd</sup>	antepenult	High pitch on the 1 <sup>st</sup> σ or on the penultimate σ (Martvili);

	გინოძირა ფილი Ginozirapili / ginozirapiji			High intensity on the the penultimate σ (Zugdidi) or on the antepenult
7 σ	გინოწიწივ ალი / გინოწიწინ აფილი ginoc'ic'ina pili / ginoc'ic'ina piji	2 <sup>nd</sup>	on the 4 <sup>th</sup> σ	High pitch on the penultimate σ or on the 2 <sup>nd</sup> σ (Martvili);  High intensity on the antepenult

As we see in the table, a one-syllable word has no stress. The experiment has revealed that in Megrelian, in two-syllable and three-syllable words the stress is on the initial syllable. So, the idea stated in the scientific literature has been proved by the experiment. However, in some case the stress falls on the penultimate syllable in three-syllable words. As for four-syllable words, the stress is on the antepenult though our experiment did not confirm the presence of the secondary stress (the so-called “co-stress”). In five-syllable words the primary stress falls on the second syllable and the secondary stress is on the penultima. In six-syllable and

seven-syllable words the primary stress is on the second syllable but in six-syllable words the secondary stress is on the antepenult while in seven-syllable words the secondary stress falls on the fourth syllable. As it is seen mostly high pitch and intensity are on the stressed syllables. However, in six-syllable words the pitch rises on the initial syllable and in seven-syllable words it rises on the penultima.

According to the authors of “Laz-Megrelian Grammar”, the number of syllables is different but in all cases the stress is on the final vowel, e.g. ღურუ yurú “He/She/It is dying”, ქენოღურუ kenoyurú “He/She/It will die in it”;

ხუმჱ xumú “It is withering”, გობუმჱ goxumú “It will wither”, კენობუმჱ kenoxumú “It will wither in it”, etc. As we can see, at the end of the words a long vowel is really attested. It can be assumed that it is an acoustic impression of the dynamic stress (Kiria, Ezugbaia, Memishishi, Chukhua, 2015: p. 465). Our experiment has revealed that in these cases there is a rising pitch on the last vowel not a stress.

In the monograph “Laz-Megrelian Grammar. I. Morphology”, it is stated that if we discuss the coincidences of forms, then it would be better if we compare not the future and the aorist forms but the future forms and the forms of the objective version of Resultative I, e.g. ღურჱ გურú “He/She/It is dying” – დოღურჱ(ნ) დოგურú(ნ) “He/She/It will die” – დოღურღ დოგურú “He/She/It died”; cf.: დოღურჱ დოგურú “It appeared that his/her/its “someone/something” has died” (Kiria, Ezugbaia, Memishishi, Chukhua, 2015: pp. 465-466).

We think that the phonological value of the Megrelian stress can be seen when the

forms coincide: if in the aorist form the stress is on the initial syllable and the pitch rises on the second syllable in the future form the second syllable is stressed (i.e. stress moves to the next syllable in the future form) and the pitch rises on the final syllable: დოღურღ დოგურú “He/She/It died”; დოღურჱ დოგურú “He/She/It will die”. In Martvilian and Senakian, in the aorist form the subject marker უ u is weakly heard (in this case in Zugdidian and Samurzakanoan subject marker is ჯ ჯ) while in the future form it becomes long or the pitch rises on it. As for the resultative form, both the stress and the rising intonation are on the second syllable in this example: დოღურჱ დოგურú “It appeared that his/her/its “someone/something” has died”.

In the scientific literature it is stated that Stress in Megrelian, like Georgian, is weak (Danelia, 2006: p. 88). At the same time the Megrelian stress is changeable (Kipshidze, 1914, Zhghenti, 1953, Chikobava, 1942). It is apparent in words that are added by a formative: if a two-syllable word becomes a three-syllable one after adding a formative, the stress moves to the penultimate

syllable, e.g. თუთა tuta “month, moon” (the stress is on უ u) and თუთეფო tutepi “months” (the stress is on the penultima); ბაღანა baġana “child” (the stress is on the initial syllable), ბაღანეფო baġanepi “children” (the stress is on the antepenult). So, these examples conform to the rule that was revealed as a result of our experiment, i.e. the position of stress depends on the number of syllables in a word.

### Conclusion

Summing up everything we can conclude, that, stress in Megrelian, like Georgian, is acoustically weak that makes it difficult for language users to determine its location, although experimental analysis has shown that in Megrelian, in two-syllable and three-syllable words the stress is on the initial

syllable and in some cases, in three-syllable words the stress falls on the penultimate syllable. In four-syllable words the stress is on the antepenult and in five-syllable words the stress falls on the penultima. As for six-syllable and seven-syllable words, the primary stress is on the second syllable. Multi-syllable words may also have the secondary stress (the so-called “co-stress”), namely, in five-syllable words the secondary stress is on the penultima while in six-syllable words the secondary stress falls on the antepenult. In seven-syllable words it is on the fourth syllable. High pitch and intensity are on the stressed syllables mostly. However, in six-syllable words the pitch rises on the initial syllable and in seven-syllable words it rises on the penultima.



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