

# Identifying the immediate donor: Preverbs in loan verb accommodation in Megrelian and Svan

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We use the Typology of Verbal Borrowings [13] to account for the use of preverbs in Russian loan verbs in Svan [10, 12] and Megrelian [4, 1] (both Kartvelian, unwritten) and to identify the immediate donor language in the presence of several potentially immediate donors (here, among Georgian (Kartvelian) and Russian).

In Megrelian and Svan, just like in Georgian [9, 2], in order to construct a verb form, it is obligatory to use a preverb in certain TAM paradigms. Preverbs are used with more or less the same functions: to express tense, aspect, direction, location and/or orientation. One of the main differences between Georgian as opposed to Megrelian and Svan is that the latter two have richer preverb systems.

Borrowed verbs, when entering Megrelian and Svan, have to employ a preverb in those TAM paradigms. Georgian, representing the state language in Georgia, has a considerable influence over other sister languages and represents an intermediate donor language for them. Loans pass through Georgian (having a simpler preverb system) into Megrelian and Svan (both possessing more complex preverb systems).

According to [3] (for Megrelian) and [11, 6, 7] (for Svan), there are the following options in the use of preverbs with loan verbs in these languages:

- (i) **Megrelian uses an exact copy of the Georgian preverb to form a synthetic verb** (*matter borrowing* [8, 5], cf. (1a) vs. (1c));
- (ii) **Megrelian and Svan employ a cognate of the Georgian preverb** (*pattern borrowing* [8, 5], cf. (2a) vs. (2b), (1b) vs. (1c) for Megrelian and (3a) vs. (3b) for Svan);
- (iii) **Megrelian and Svan use a preverb which is neither a copy of the preverb used in the corresponding borrowing in Georgian, nor its cognate.** For instance, in the Russian loan verb *gila-bradiag-en-s* (4a), Megrelian uses a preverb *gila-* which is neither a copy (*da-*, (4b)) of the preverb used in the corresponding borrowing in Georgian (*da-bradiag-ob-s*, (6a)), nor its cognate (*do-*, (4c)). The same is true for Svan: in the Russian loan verb *ad-krask-av-e* (5a), Svan uses a preverb *ad-* which is neither a copy (*še-*, (5b)) of the preverb used in the corresponding Georgian verb (*še-γeb-a*, (6b)), nor its cognate (*sga-*, (5c)).

We are particularly interested in exploring the third option, namely, in the use of Megrelian and Svan preverbs in loan verbs that cannot clearly be identified with cognates or copies of preverbs in the closely related and a potential donor language Georgian. In such cases, one could argue for a direct borrowing from Russian, a potential donor. However, a more careful investigation of the history of borrowing is needed.

We follow [13], and among potential donors we distinguish between immediate and ultimate donor languages. A language is the *immediate donor*, if a word is actually borrowed from it into the recipient language, while it is the *ultimate donor*, if the word has originated from it but has entered the recipient language via another language. According to [13, p. 27], for any given language pair, the immediate donor language is the only one relevant to the typology of verb borrowing, “since the borrowing per se involves the taking over of an actual lexical item from that very language, regardless of the word’s ultimate origin, of which the speakers of the recipient language may have no inkling.”

In the case of Megrelian and Svan, the borrowed roots have no particular marking, to identify the immediate donor among the potential two donors – Georgian and Russian. However, preverbs in loanverbs in Megrelian and Svan are the only possibility to better understanding contact phenomena in the presence of several potential donors, identify the immediate one and draw a more accurate chronology of borrowing into those languages.

- (1) Russian loan verb in Megrelian and Georgian (Russian INF *gazov+at* ‘“accelerate speed of a vehicle via pressing the gas pedal”’)
- |                           |                        |                           |
|---------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------|
| a. Megrelian, seldom      | b. Megrelian, frequent | c. Georgian               |
| mi-gazav-en-s             | me-gaz-un-s            | mi-gaza(v)-ob-s           |
| PV-(Russ.)gaz-TS-TS-S3.SG | PV-(Russ.)gaz-TS-S3.SG | PV-(Russ.)gaz-TS-TS-S3.SG |
| ‘(S)he rushes away.’      | ‘(S)he rushes away.’   | ‘(S)he rushes away.’      |
- (2) Cognate preverbs: Megrelian *do-* and Georgian *da-* (the borrowed 3rd person present tense verb form from Russian, *pišet* ‘“(s)he writes it”’)
- |                                     |                    |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------|
| a. Megrelian                        | b. Georgian        |
| do-pišiṭ-u                          | da-ṭer-a           |
| PV-(Russ.)(s)he.writes.it-S3.SG.AOR | PV-write-S3.SG.AOR |
| ‘(S)he wrote it.’                   | ‘“(S)he wrote it.’ |
- (3) Cognate preverbs: Svan *ad-* and Georgian *da-*
- |   |                     |
|---|---------------------|
| a. Svan (cf. Russ. <i>stročka</i> ‘seam’) | b. Georgian         |
| ad-ṣtročk-av-e                            | da-lamb-a           |
| PV-seam-TS-S3.SG.AOR                      | PV-baste-S3.SG.AOR  |
| ‘(S)he basted it.’                        | ‘“(S)he basted it.’ |
- (4) A Russian loan in Megrelian (cf. Russ. *brodjaga* ‘tramp’)
- |                           |                           |                           |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| a. gila-bradiag-en-s      | b. *da-bradiag-en-s       | c. *do-bradiag-en-s       |
| PV-tramp-TS-S3.SG         | PV-tramp-TS-S3.SG         | PV-tramp-TS-S3.SG         |
| ‘(S)he goes on prowling.’ | ‘(S)he goes on prowling.’ | ‘(S)he goes on prowling.’ |
- (5) A Russian loan in Svan (cf. Russ. *kraska* ‘paint’)
- |                       |                       |                       |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| a. ad-ḱrask-av-e      | b. *še-ḱrask-av-e     | c. *sga-ḱrask-av-e    |
| PV-paint-TS-S3.SG.AOR | PV-paint-TS-S3.SG.AOR | PV-paint-TS-S3.SG.AOR |
| ‘(S)he painted it.’   | ‘(S)he painted it.’   | ‘(S)he painted it.’   |
- (6) Georgian
- |                           |                     |
|---------------------------|---------------------|
| a. da-bradiag-ob-s        | b. še-ṭeb-a         |
| PV-(Russ.)tramp-TS-S3.SG  | PV-paint-S3.SG.AOR  |
| ‘(S)he goes on prowling.’ | ‘(S)he painted it.’ |

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