

Zaal Kikvidze

Akaki Tsereteli State University

Kutaisi, Georgia

Georgian Interfixal Ablaut Reduplication: Pattern and Constraints

Georgian, a Kartvelian (South Caucasian) language, abounds in onomatopoeic roots which are ungrammatical. One of the devices of their grammaticalization is reduplication; there are two options: Total Reduplication (TR) and Ablaut Reduplication (AR). If we accept the formulaic representations – $[[x]y]$ for derivation and $[[x]z[y]]$ for compounding, then the TR pattern will be the following: $[[x][y]]$ -NOM, where **x** is Base (represented by a simplex), **y** is Reduplicant, and NOM is a nominative case marker; **x=y** (e.g. *čak-čak-i* ‘(horse’s) clumsy and repeating waddling gait’). As for the AR pattern, it is represented as follows: $[[x]z[y]]$ -NOM, where **x** is Base (represented by a simplex), **z** is a linking element (interfix), **y** is Reduplicant, and NOM is a nominative case marker; **x≠y** (e.g. *čak-i/a-čuk-i* ‘(horse’s) clumsy and repeating/alternating waddling gait’). Thus, if $[x]$ and $[y]$ are identical (TR; hence, **x** = *čak*, **y** = *čak*), and **z** does not occur; if $[y]$ is an ablaut-based modification of $[x]$ (AR; hence, **x** = *čak*, **y** = *čuk*), then **z** occurs as a linking element (in Georgian this is either *-a-* or *-i-*).

In this case, TR and AR are not just options but they can also be conceived of as consequential stages of a single, multi-level process:

- A syllable template (simplex) is fully reduplicated and linked to its C/V slots:
[CaC>CaC.CaC]: *čak* > *čak.čak*
- Ablaut-motivated vowel change occurs from /a/ to /u/ for Reduplicant:
[CaC.CaC>CaC.CuC]: *čak.čak* > *čak.čuk*
- An interfix (a construction (compound) marker) occurs between Base and Reduplicant:
[CaC.LINK.CuC]: *čak.a/i.čuk*.

There are two related instances which need to be necessarily commented on. The question is whether such instances are exceptions to the aforestated rule or demonstrate its deficiency:

1) Whereas the aforementioned pattern consists of monosyllabic elements, there are a handful of bi-syllabic ablaut-motivated reduplicated compounds in Georgian; e.g.

naq’ar-nuq’ar.i ‘junk, rubbish’

nač’am-nuč’am.i ‘picked over, (food/leftovers)’

The principal distinction between the two patterns is that the former consists of an onomatopoeic and monosyllabic root while the latter one is bi-syllabic and non-imitative. Therefore, they are neither exceptions nor deviations from the rule.

2) There are a handful of AR compounds with no linking element; e.g.

bax.bux-i

lac’.luc’-i

Such instances are actually exceptions to the rules; they can be assumed as a once occurring transitional pattern.

The constraints for Georgian interfixal ablaut reduplication are the following:

- Monosyllabic simplex: CaC (both consonants can be extended to clusters, maximum three consonants)
- Onomatopoeia
- Ablaut Reduplication ($CaC > CuC$)
- Compounding