

The Interaction of Modality and Negation in the Georgian Language

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ABSTRACT. Negation and modality are universal phenomenon that are common to all languages. Georgian has three-member system of negation: particle *ar* for expressing neutral negation, particle *ver* expresses possibility and particle *nu* expresses request/prohibition. *ar* is used with all forms of mood, *ver* is used with the indicative and conjunctive mood, *nu* – with the imperative mood. Particle *ver* represents a form with the semantics of both negation and modality. The expression of modality differs in old and modern Georgian languages: after grammaticalization a new modal system has been formed though particle *ver* is the oldest form of expression of negation and dynamic modality in Georgian. Particle has retained this function in the language. Particle *ver* forms negative pronouns and adverbs that also have the modal semantics of negation of possibility. The scope of use of particle *ver* is determined/limited. It is not used with the verbs of perception, existential and static verbs. Particle *ver* always precedes a verb. The Georgian language is characterized by the expression of double plural. Plural expressed by particle *ver* is intensified with the complicated forms – particles “*ga*” (limited negation) and “*c*” (complementary function). Double negation in Georgian comprises both noun and verbal negation. As for the semantics of negation of possibility, it is extended with the complicated forms of negative pronouns and adverbs derived from particle *ver*. Analysis of the contexts with particle *ver* has revealed phrases with double modality where the scope of the first modal is wider than the scope of the next modal. © 2019 Bull. Georg. Natl. Acad. Sci.

Key words: modality, modal form, modal meaning, negation, negative particle

From the cognitive point of view negation involves comparison between two situations: real that lacks some element and imaginary that does not lack this element. Negation is expressed by different means: lexical, morphological, and syntactic. Negative expressions are marked and their purpose is to deny a fact, object, etc. in human cognition. In natural languages negation, modality and quantifiers play a role of operators. An operator

has its scope and influences the members of the sentence in the same or in the previous clause.

Negation is treated as a grammatical category. There are two main types of negation: rejection of a suggestion and denial of an assertion. Negation may be explicit and implicit [1]. It may cover the whole sentence (clausal negation) or some items of the sentence (constituent negation). In Georgian there is verbal and nominal negation [2].

Negation in languages has various shades of meaning. It expresses negation of existence, actions, facts, speech acts, etc. [3]. Negation may be expressed by different parts of speech: particle, verb, noun, adjective, pronoun, adverb, preposition, quantifier, conjunction, complementizer [4]. Some lexical items are often used in collocation with negation. They contribute to its intensification. Their combination expresses emphasis. In Georgian negation is expressed by both grammatical and lexical means.

u- prefix can be attached to a noun (*uçigno* – without book), an adjective (*ulamazo* – pretty), and to a noun derived from the verb (*dauçereli* – not written).

Georgian uses three-member system of particles for expressing negation. *ar* (not) expresses neutral or strong negation. It is used with verbs of all three types of mood: indicative – *ar aķeteb*s (he does not make), subjunctive – *ar unda gaaketo* (you should not do), imperative – *ar gaaketo* (Do not do!). With some verbs particle expresses a neutral negative result of the action: *ar gamiķetebia* (I have not done).

Particle *ver* (cannot) expresses negation of possibility. It occurs only with the verbs of indicative and subjunctive mood. It is never found with the verbs in imperative mood.

Particle *nu* (do not!) expresses prohibition and request. It occurs with verbs of imperative semantics – present and future tenses. It is never found with the past tense verbs [5-7, 1].

Table 1. Three-member system of negation and mood

Indicative mood	ver (<i>can not</i>)	ar (<i>not</i>)
Subjunctive mood		
Imperative mood	nu (<i>do not!</i>)	

Category of Modality

Modality as a grammatical category has been studied in linguistics for a long time. Modality is based on the idea of subjective perception of the universe. Naturally, in all languages there are linguistic means that convey the subjective perception of the universe

or various phenomena although different languages have different linguistic means of its expression. If one considers modality in a broader sense, there is no sentence or discourse without modal content. Modality as the attitude of a speaker towards the expression is manifested at all levels of the language. It can be expressed by intonation, word order, sentence structure with complex hypotaxis, by adding modal verbs or some particles or by the mood of the verb.

Modality is a cognitive, emotional aspect or the will/desire of a speaker expressed by linguistic means. Modality cannot be understood by analyzing a text taken out of the wide context.

First of all, the types of modality should be defined – epistemic, deontic and dynamic [8]. The epistemic modality expresses the knowledge and belief of a speaker, while the deontic modality implies the subject that performs an action conditioned by the speaker's desire or other motives (law, morality, internal or external directives, etc.) [9-15]. Dynamic modality refers to ability, disposition. Deontic modality is known also as root modality, agent/ participant-oriented (obligation, will, ability, permission, possibility), speaker-oriented (imperative, directive, optative, permissive, prohibition), and subordinating [16, 17]. Non-deontic modality comprises possibility and necessity determined by the environment [18]. Dynamic modality is divided into possibility due to the external (neutral) factors and internal possibility or acquired ability – subject-oriented [10, 14].

The basic means of expression of modality are specific modal verbs – auxiliary verbs. They express strong modality (must, deontic modality) and weak modality (may). The latter expresses permission (deontic modality) or possibility (epistemic modality). Thus, may refers to both epistemic and deontic modality. This is a cross-linguistic phenomenon and it has diachronic bases as epistemic meaning derives from deontic meaning [18]. Such ambiguity, i.e. the use of one form for both strong and weak modality, is typical for German, Slavic,

Roman, African languages [19]. The same is observed in Georgian. Modal form *unda* expresses both deontic and epistemic modality. The same refers to the modal particle *ver*. It expresses dynamic modality, but there are some phrases where its meaning refers to epistemic modality.

There are different systems for the expression of modality in the old and modern Georgian language. In old Georgian modal semantics was expressed by special verbs: *zal-uzs* > *zal-uc*, *žer-ars*, *Qel-eçipebis*, *šesazlo ars*, *šemžlebel ars*. Since the IX century we see modal forms of another type like *uzlavs* [20]. Since the XV century, in middle Georgian a new system was formed based on grammaticalization.

The expression of modality has been imposed on modal particles, modal items that complement subjunctive and indicative forms and introduce modal semantics in the sentence. But as modality is not fully grammaticalized in Georgian, adverbs and other lexical units are used for conveying modal semantics.

Table 2. List of some Georgian modals

Modal verbs	<i>ndoma, šezleba</i>
Impersonal modal verbs	<i>šeižleba, šesazoa, šesazlebelia</i>
Modal particles	<i>unda, ikneb, egeb, lamis</i>
Modal interrogative particles	<i>gana, nutu, aқи</i>
Modal negative particles	<i>ver, nu</i>

Table 3. Quantifiers with particle *ver*

		-c particle expressing focus and additive meaning	-ga negative particle with the meaning of limitation	-ga, -c
Personal animate pronoun	<i>veravin</i>	<i>veravinac</i>	<i>veğaravin</i>	<i>veğaravinac</i>
Personal inanimate pronoun,	<i>veraperi</i>	<i>veraperic</i>	<i>veğaraperi</i>	<i>veğaraperic</i>
Indefinite inanimate pronoun	<i>veravitari</i>	-----	<i>veğaravitari</i>	-----
Negative temporal adverb	<i>verasdros, verasodes</i>	<i>verasdrosac</i> -----	<i>veğarasdros, veğarasodes</i>	<i>veğarasdrosac</i> -----
Negative adverb of place	<i>versad</i>	<i>versadac</i>	<i>veğarsad</i>	<i>veğarsadac</i>
Conjunction		<i>verc ... verc</i>	<i>veğarc ... veğarc</i>	-----

Modal units precede verbs. Only a negative particle may be used between them. Usually modal lexical units introduce modal semantics in the

phrase though other grammatical categories (tense, aspect) are expressed by a verb.

Particle *ver* in Georgian

Particle *ver* is presented in two Kartvelian languages. The corresponding form of particle *ver* is not found in the Svan language, but it is restored at the stage of Georgian and Zan languages unity. The relevant particle for *ver* in Mingrelian-Laz language is *var/va* [21]. The development of the semantics of negation of possibility expressed by particle *ver* is observed only in the Georgian language.

Particle *ver* is the oldest and the most fixed expression of the modal semantics and negation in Georgian. *ver* also forms quantifiers.

All forms with particle *ver* can express negation of possibility. This is well manifested in other opposite forms based on the three-member system of negation (*aravin-veravin-nuravin*, *araperi-veraperi-nuraperi*, *arsad-versad-nursad*).

The difference between them is determined by their initial semantics. *veravin*, *veraperi*, *versad* – may be translated as neutral negative pronouns.

In case of double negation in Georgian each negative particle (*ar*, *ver*, *nu*) always triggers the use of the relevant quantifier (*ar* – *arsad*, *ver* – *versad*, *nu* – *nursad*....).

arsad ar mivdivar (*I do not go anywhere*)

Adv Neg Loc Neg GoV MedPass Pres Pv S:1Sg

versad ver mivdivar (*I can not go anywhere*)

Adv Neg Loc Neg GoV MedPass Pres Pv S:1Sg
nursad nu midixar (Do not go anywhere)

Adv Neg Loc Neg GoV MedPass Pres Pv S:2Sg

Negative Particle *ver* and Negation

Particle *ver* expresses dynamic modality and denotes the negation of possibility related to physical/mental ability or other circumstances. Semantics of collocations “*ver*+verb” can be defined as neutral (caused by environmental conditions) as well as subject-oriented (internal or acquired ability) negation of possibility. In Georgian particle *ver* expresses both neutral and subject-oriented negation. „*ver çaval*“ (I cannot go), „*ver gavaketeb*“ (I cannot do) may mean negation of physical and mental ability, as well as negation caused by external factors. The semantics may be specified by a broad context and not only by the collocation itself.

From the point of view of modality, one may point out an example in old Georgian that does not occur in modern Georgian. It is established in the modern Georgian language in a different way. „*ver*

ar and a verb with subjective marker – with particle *ver*.

ar šemizlia – ver ševzleb

“*ver šemizlia*” combination has not developed.

The reason may be the fact that the verb „*šemizlia*“ with the meaning of dynamic modality and an objective marker easily forms collocations with particle *ar* that expresses neutral negation. „*ver ševzleb*“ combination means that negation of a subject’s possibility/ability is based on the knowledge/belief that is a key feature of epistemic modality.

The semantics of particle *ver* prevents the formation of some collocations. Particle *ver* never forms combinations with the meaning of deontic modality, as dynamic modality expresses ability and disposition and particle *ver* negates it. The fact that particle is never used with imperative mood is determined by its semantics.

Particle *ver* never forms combinations with some verbs – verbs of physical and mental perception (*Verba Sentiendi*) and existential verbs. (Table 4).

Table 4. Incompatibility of particle *ver*

Verbs of physical and mental perception (Verbs of perception)	<i>mšia</i> (I am hungry), <i>mçquria</i> (I am thirsty), <i>mḡkiva</i> (it hurts me), <i>mciva</i> (I feel cold), <i>miçvars</i> (I love), <i>mçuls</i> (I hate), <i>minda</i> (I want), <i>mesmis</i> (I can hear)
Cognitive verbs	<i>vici</i> (I know)
Existential Verbs	<i>aris</i> (be), <i>arsebobs</i> (exists), <i>imçopeba</i> (is), <i>mdebareobs</i> , <i>akvs</i> , <i>hçavs</i> (have)
Stative Verbs	<i>çeria</i> (is written), <i>abadia</i> , <i>gaaçnia</i> (have), etc.

mizlavs“ (= *ar šemizlia*, I cannot...) expresses the negation of possibility of action where subject against his/her will is unable to perform the action:

“*asoci çlisa var da ver mizlavs me šemoslvad da gansvlas tkuen çinaše*”

Here the verb is presented with an objective marker and particle *ver*. This is an example of dynamic modality that expresses negation of possibility/ability. The collocation is not used. In the modern Georgian language a verb with objective marker forms combination with particle

Particle *ver* does not occur with static verbs (Stative Verbs).

Particle *ver* is fully compatible with cognitive verbs (knowledge, understanding, comprehension, application/analysis, synthesis, assessment/evaluation), as cognitive verbs express ability and disposition and particle *ver* relates to the degree of ability or possibility of its use. It should be noted that the verb *codna* (*vici*) (*to know*) is an exception, it never occurs with particle *ver*. It always forms a combination with particle *ar* (*ar vici*) that has the

meaning of neutral negation. As knowledge is a factual phenomenon particle of negation of possibility is not used with this verb. Cognitive verbs are used both with particle *ver* and particle *ar* of neutral negation, but they have different meanings: *ver aqçera* (= *he could not describe*) – *ar aqçera* (= *he did not want to describe*), *ver çarmoidgina* (*he could not imagine*) – *ar çarmoidgina* (*he did not want to imagine*). Cognitive verbs with particle *ar* are rarely used. They are mostly used with the conjunction *tu* in conditional sentences. There was only one example found in KAWAC Corpus:

mkitxvels gauçirdeba am suratis agkma, tu ar çarmoidgina dgevandeli pilarmoniis adgilze morkaluli liandagi (KAWAC)

The reader will find it difficult to reproduce the view, if not to imagine the curved railway track on the site of today's Philharmonic.

As shown by the examples particle *ver* is not used with existential verbs. Although in the modern Georgian colloquial speech we have two combinations with two meanings: „*ver aris*“ – (1) does not feel well, is not healthy, (2) mentally unhealthy. Therefore, we can say that the language removes the semantic blockade. This led to the change of the expression, its semantics and assumed an additional pragmatic aspect. The same semantic change is observed in the following phrases: *ar mesmis* = *I can not hear, but: ver mesmis* = *I can not comprehend, understand, realize it*. The examples represent additional pragmatic function of particle *ver* and reveal the tendencies in oral discourse.

Particle *ver* at the Syntactic Level

There are some cases of use of particle *ver* in the sentence:

1. Particle *ver* negates an action or a state that does not happen due to the lack of opportunities associated with external or internal conditions. Particle *ver* always precedes a verb and negates the possibility of the action expressed by a verb. The

distinction between internal and external possibilities in case of particle *ver* is possible only at the lexical level or by the introduction of a subordinate clause.

(2) *gušin ana ver çavida teatrši.*

Adv Temp N Neg V Aor Pv S:3Sg N Dat Sg PP
Yesterday Anna was unable go to the theater.

2. *ver* is used as an answer to a question and stands for the whole sentence.

(3) *šeasrule davaleba? – vera.*

V Act Aor Pv S:2Sg DO:3 N VN Pv Nom Sg –
Neg L Pot

Have you done your assignment? – No, I could not.

3. Complicated forms (*verc*, *veğarc*) with the limiting particle „*ğa*“ and the additive particle „*c*“ emphasize the word they are attached to:

(4) *veğarc me gnaxet da veğarc tkven gvnaxet.*

Neg Pot Pron Pers 1 Sg Cj Coord Pron Pers 2
Nom Pl Encl:3 Foc Pron Pers 2 Pl V Act Aor S:2Pl
DO:1Pl

(Neither could I see you, nor could you see me)

Particle *ver* forms the same syntactic collocations as other negative particles. [2]

Particle *ver* and Double Negation

Georgian belongs to the group of languages with double negation. The cases with double negation in Georgian are the following:

1. a pronoun/adverb and a verb are separated with other word/words.
2. a negative pronoun or an adverb follows a verb.
3. a pronoun/adverb are used with particles „*ğa*“ and „*c*“.

Double negation cannot be used when a negative pronoun or adverb precedes a verb [22,23]. However, there are cases where the double negation is permissible, and it has a stylistic function – emphasis, intensification.

Double negation gives single negation reading and intensifies it [4]. Interpretation of negation is related to the pragmatics. The use of double negation in natural languages has its prerequisites.

In Georgian double negation refers to two members of the sentence. Therefore there are nominal and verbal negations. Quantifiers with particle *ver* are often used in sentences and form verbal negation with nominal negation. In this case negation of modality of possibility has a wider scope and refers to both: a noun and a verb.

Particle *ver* and Double Modality

As noted above particle *ver* always precedes a verb and conveys the meaning of impossibility to perform the action presented by the verb. Accordingly, the collocation expresses modal semantics of the negation of possibility. There are examples in the KAWAC Corpus where modal forms – *unda* and *šeižleba* stand between particle *ver* and a verb.

unda expresses epistemic necessity, *šeižleba* – epistemic possibility. Collocations with particle *ver* convey complicated modal semantics. Key point in this case is a location of a modal item and word order. *ver* and *unda* modals – $N_{ver} + M_{unda} + V$: This order is the only example in the KAWAC out of 82. There is not any case with the inverse order. The analysis reveals two groups:

1. $N_{ver} + M_{unda} + V$ – phrase expresses negation of possibility of epistemic necessity. In this case the scope of negation is wider and covers the semantics of epistemic necessity:

[negation of possibility+ [epistemic possibility] + verb]

paṭara ver unda gr̄znobdes, rom daṭabuli xart.
The little one should not feel your tension.

Sometimes the co-occurrence is intensified with double negation:

šesaçiravis moṭana veravin ver unda mogasçros am ṭazartan.

No one should forestall you in making a donation to this temple.

2. Interrogative word + $N_{ver} + M_{unda} + V$ – the phrase expresses complex semantics: surprise +

negation + epistemic necessity, i. e. the phrase in relation with negation of epistemic necessity expresses the emotional attitude of surprise: [[surprise + [negation + [epistemic necessity] + verb]

ocneba rogor ver unda aisrulo?!

How can a man not realize his dream?!

ver and *šeižleba* modal forms: In this case the negation of epistemic possibility (*šeižleba*.) and dynamic possibility (*ver*) occurs in two sequences:

1. $M_{šeižleba} + N_{ver} + V$ -in the sequence (81 examples) the scope of modal form is more wide, *ver* negates possibility of the activity expressed by the verb. The semantics of the phrase may be presented as the following: [epistemic possibility + [negation of possibility + verb]]:

mat šeižleba ver gaignon čveni iumori.

It is possible that they may not understand our humor.

2. $N_{ver} + M_{šeižleba} + V$ – context with this order is limited. Only 6 cases are found in the KAWAC Corpus. The scope of the negative particle is wider and covers semantics of modality of epistemic possibility. [negation of possibility+ [epistemic possibility + verb]]:

tu ara meḳobreoba, sxvanairad ver šeižleba šepasdes es gadaçqveṭileba.

This decision cannot be assessed otherwise but piracy.

As a result we can say that the use of double modality in Georgian is possible and the key point is a sequence of modal forms: the scope of the first modal form is wider than the second one as the latter refers to a verbal form only.

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ქართველოლოგია

მოდალობისა და უარყოფის კატეგორიათა გადაკვეთა ქართულში

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**უმბლესი სკოლა, ჰუმანიტარული ფაკულტეტი, თბილისი, საქართველო

(წარმოდგენილია აკადემიის წევრის მ. შანიძის მიერ)

უარყოფისა და მოდალობის კატეგორიები უნივერსალურ კატეგორიათა რიგს განეკუთვნება და ყველა ენას ახასიათებს. ქართულ ენაში უარყოფის სისტემა სამწევრია და ნეიტრალური უარყოფის გამოხატველ ნაწილაკთან ერთად (*არ*) ენაში არის შესაძლებლობის უარყოფისა (*ვერ*) და თხოვნა-აკრძალვის გამოხატველი (*ნუ*) ფორმები, რომელთა გამოყენება კილოს მიხედვით ნაწილდება: *არ* სამივე კილოს ფორმასთან გამოიყენება, *ვერ* თხოვნი და კავშირებითი კილოს ფორმებთან, ხოლო *ნუ* – ბრძანებითი კილოს ფორმებთან. ქართული ენის *ვერ* ნაწილაკი წარმოადგენს უარყოფისა და მოდალობის სემანტიკის ერთ ფორმაში ასახვის ნიმუშს. მოდალობის სემანტიკის გამოხატვა ძველსა და ახალ ქართულში განსხვავებული იყო: გრამატიკალიზაციის მოვლენის შედეგად ჩამოყალიბდა მოდალურ ფორმათა ახალი სისტემა. თუმცა, *ვერ* ნაწილაკი უარყოფისა და დინამიკური მოდალობის გამოხატვის უძველესი ნიმუშია და იგი ენაში უცვლელად ასრულებს თავის ფუნქციას. *ვერ* ნაწილაკის გამოყენებით იწარმოება ქართულში უარყოფითი ნაცვალსახელები და ზმნიზედები, რომლებსაც ასევე აქვთ შესაძლებლობის უარყოფის მოდალური სემანტიკა. *ვერ* ნაწილაკი არ გამოიყენება გრძობა-აღქმის, მყოფობა-მქონებლობის და სტატიკურ ზმნებთან. იგი ყოველთვის წინ უძღვის ზმნას. ქართულისთვის დამახასიათებელია ორმაგი უარყოფა. *ვერ* ნაწილაკით გამოხატულ უარყოფას აძლიერებს ზღვრული უარყოფის „ღა“ და დამატებითობის „ც“ ნაწილაკით გართულებული ფორმები. ორმაგი უარყოფა ქართულში მოიცავს როგორც სახელურ, ასევე ზმნურ უარყოფას, ხოლო შესაძლებლობის უარყოფის სემანტიკას აფართოებს *ვერ* ნაწილაკით წარმოებული უარყოფითი ნაცვალსახელები და ზმნიზედები. *ვერ* ნაწილაკიანი კონტექსტების გაანალიზებისას გამოვლინდა ორმაგი მოდალობის შემცველი ფრაზები. ასეთ შემთხვევაში პირველი მოდალური ფორმის გავრცელების არეალი (scope) უფრო ფართოა, ვიდრე მომდევნო მოდალური ფორმისა.

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