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.

 uç- 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 aketebbs (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 gamiKatebibia (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>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1. Three-member system of negation and mood</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Indicative mood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subjunctive mood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imperative mood</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**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: ʒal-uʒs > ʒal-uc, ʒer-ars, Qel-ecipebis, ʃesazlo ars, ʃemʒlebel ars. Since the IX century we see modal forms of another type like uʃlavs [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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Modality Type</th>
<th>Example Verbs/Particles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Modal verbs</td>
<td>ndoma, ʃeʒleba</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impersonal modal verbs</td>
<td>ʃeʒleba, ʃesazlo, ʃesazlebelia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modal particles</td>
<td>unda, ikneb, egeb, lamis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modal interrogative particles</td>
<td>gana, nutu, aki</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modal negative particles</td>
<td>ver, nu</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 3. Quantifiers with particle ver

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quantifier Type</th>
<th>Particle</th>
<th>-c particle expressing focus and additive meaning</th>
<th>-ɡɑ negative particle with the meaning of limitation</th>
<th>-ɡɑ , -c</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal animate pronoun</td>
<td>veravin</td>
<td>veravinac</td>
<td>vegaravin</td>
<td>vegaravinc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal inanimate pronoun</td>
<td>veraperi</td>
<td>veraperic</td>
<td>vegaraperi</td>
<td>vegaraperic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indefinite inanimate pronoun</td>
<td>veraviti</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative temporal adverb</td>
<td>verasdros, verasodes</td>
<td>verasdrosac, verasodes</td>
<td>vegarasdros, vegarasodes</td>
<td>vegarasdrosac</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative adverb of place</td>
<td>versad</td>
<td>versadac</td>
<td>vegarsad</td>
<td>vegarsadac</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conjunction</td>
<td>verc ... verc</td>
<td></td>
<td>vegrar ... vegrar</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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/ва [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 GoV MedPass Pres Pv S:1Sg
versad ver mivdivar (I cannot go anywhere)
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* չավալ“ (I cannot go), „*ver* կարեցում“ (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* չի and a verb with subjective marker – with particle *ar*.

*ar* չեմիշլա – *ver* չեվեցել

“*ver* չեմիշլա” combination has not developed. The reason may be the fact that the verb „չեմիշլա“ with the meaning of dynamic modality and an objective marker easily forms collocations with particle *ar* that expresses neutral negation. „*ver* չեվեցել“ 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>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verbs of physical and mental perception (Verbs of perception)</th>
<th>mšia (I am hungry), mcquria (I am thirsty), mtkiva (it hurts me), mciva (I feel cold), miqvars (I love), mjuls (I hate), minda (I want), mesmis (I can hear)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive verbs</td>
<td>vici (I know)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Existential Verbs</td>
<td>aris (be), arsebobs (exists), imqopeba (is), mdebareobs, akvs, hqavs (have)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stative Verbs</td>
<td>ceria (is written), abadia, gaaćnia (have), etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

“asoci չիսա դա չեվ միզլավ դա գանսվան tkuen չինաշ“

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 *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 aģcera (= he could not describe) – ar aģcera (= he did not want to describe), ver ċarmoidgina (he could not imagine) – ar ċarmoidgina (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:

mkiitxvels gauĉirdeba am suratis agkma, tu ar ċarmoidgina dġevandeli pilarmonis 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 cząvida teatṛši.
   
   Adv Temp N Neg V Aor Pv S:3Sg N Dat Sg PP
   
   Yesterday Anna was unable to go to the theater.

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

   
   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, veģarc) with the limiting particle “ġa” and the additive particle „c” emphasize the word they are attached to:

4. veģarc me gnaxet da veģarc tkven gnaxet.
   
   Neg Pot Pron Pers 1 Sg Cj Coord Pron Pers 2 Nom Pl Encl PQ Foc Pron Pers 2 Pl I 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 “ġa” 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 șeiżleba stand between particle ver and a verb.

unda expresses epistemic necessity, șeiżleba – 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 – Nver + Munda +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. Nver +Munda +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:

   \[
   \text{[negation of possibility + [epistemic necessity + verb] + verb]}
   \]

   pațara ver unda grnobdes, rom dayahuli xart.
   *The little one should not feel your tension.*

   Sometimes the co-occurrence is intensified with double negation:

   șesacaravis moṭana veravin ver unda mogascros am țažartan.

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

2. Interrogative word +Nver +Munda +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:

   \[
   \text{[surprise + [negation + [epistemic necessity] + verb]}}
   \]

   ocneba rogor ver unda aisruloid?
   *How can a man not realize his dream?!

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

   1. Mșeiżleba+Nver+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 șeiżleba ver gaigon čveni iumori.
      *It is possible that they may not understand our humor.*

   2. Nver + Mșeiżleba +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 mekobreoba, sxvanairad ver șeiżleba šepasdes es gadacqevêleba.
      *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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ქართული ენისთვის დამახასიათებელია ორმაგი უარყოფა. ვერ ნაწილაკით გამხატულ უარყოფას აძლიერებს ზღვრული უარყოფის "ღა" და დამატებითობის "ც" ნაწილაკით გართულებული ფორმები. იგი მოადარბა ქართული მოდალური ფორმათა საფუძველზე და ალცად არ გაწოდებული ფორმები. ქართული უარყოფა შესაძლებლობის უარყოფის სემანტიკას აფართოებს ვერ ნაწილაკით წარმოებული უარყოფითი ნაცვალსახელები და ზმნიზედები, რომლებსაც ასევე აქვთ შესაძლებლობის უარყოფის სემანტიკი. ქართული დამახასიათებელი გამოყენებით იწარმოება უარყოფითი ნაცვალსახელები და ზმნიზედები, რომლებსაც ასევე აქვთ შესაძლებელი უარყოფის მოდალური სემანტიკი. ვერ ნაწილაკით გამოეკრთიანებს უარყოფით და მოდალურის სემანტიკის ერთ ფორმები ახალი სისტემა.
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