

# Main and Alternative Means of Expressing Negation in the Kartvelian Languages

Maia Lomia & Ramaz Kurdadze

(Institute of the Georgian Language, Faculty of Humanities, Tbilisi State University)

In the Kartvelian languages (Georgian, Svan, Megrelian and Laz), negation is expressed by chief and alternative means. One of the chief morphological means of expressing negation is the negative pronoun. The given research analyzes the negative pronouns with the particle *ara*"no" in the Kartvelian languages. The negative pronoun is of a complex structure. The negative particle *ara*"not" is a clitic (proclitic or enclitic). It belongs solely to the added word (morphological subject/S) and negates the latter.

- (1) Geo ara-vin  
**Neg-QPrn (S) = NegPrn**
- (2) Svan d-är  
**Neg-QPrn(S) = NegPrn**
- (3) Megr mi-t-a  
**QPrn(S)-Ptcl-Neg = NegPrn**  
"nobody"
- (4) Laz – (not found).

In a sentence with a negative pronoun, the verb is affirmative: this rule applies to Old Georgian, Svan and Megrelian. The examples are as follows:

- (5) Geo ara (**Neg**)-vin(**QPrn:S**) modis (**V**)
- (6) Svan d(**Neg**)-är(**QPrn:S**) anyri(**V**)
- (7) Megr mi(**QPrn:S**)+t(**Ptcl**)-a(**Neg**) murs (**V**)  
"nobody is coming".

The affirmative form of the verb represents the negative semantics in the sentence in a non-actualized, less categorical way. In the New Georgian, there are sporadic examples of negative pronouns followed by affirmative verbs. This fact has its explanation.

It is well known that in every language **alternative means** appear with the aim of expressing additional functional-semantic nuances. Likewise, in the Kartvelian languages, the chief and alternative means of expressing negation are semantically differentiated as actualized and non-actualized forms of negation. Actualized negation contains the semantics of categoricity. Categorical negation is expressed by the following means:

- „*Double negation*“ (New Georgian):
- (8) ara(**Neg**)-vin(**QPrn**) ar (**Neg**) modis(**V**)  
"nobody is coming".
- *Indefinite pronoun and the verb with a negative particle* (Megrelian and Laz).
- (9) Megr. mitini (**IndfPrn**) va(**Neg**)murs (**V**)  
"somebody is not coming".
  - (10) Laz miti (**IndfPrn**) var (**Neg**)nulun (**V**)  
"somebody is not going".

- *Compound negative particles (Svan)*

In the Svan language, there are negative particles obtained from the combination of two negative particles. They denote categorical negation of a concrete fact and not of general phenomenon. For instance,

(11) leɣw mad (<ma+d)maɣu “I definitely don’t want any meat”.

N Neg (<Neg+Neg) V

“I definitely don’t want any meat”.

**Conclusion:** In the Kartvelian languages, the chief means of negation express non-actualized, less categorical negation, whereas the alternative means denote actualized, categorical negation. Actualized negation is due to the position of *the negative particle which precedes the verb*. If we assess the data of the Kartvelian languages from the perspective of theoretical linguistics, we will conclude that in these languages the actualization of a language phenomenon happens in accordance with one of the most widespread and universal examples (cf.: **Type 1: NegV**, *World Atlas of Language Structures Online*, 2011).

*The paper has been prepared within the framework of the project “The Category of Negation in the Kartvelian Languages” (#FR17\_388), financed by Shota Rustaveli National Science Foundation of Georgia.*