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Preface

This paper provides a brief description of Georgian, the principal member of the Kartvelian (South Caucasian) language group. It covers all main features of the language, but particular emphasis is placed on identifying general patterns in the complex verb system, once rather unfairly described by a native scholar as consisting solely of irregular verbs. The use of the Georgian script has been kept to a minimum for technical reasons and also to make the material more accessible. There is insufficient space for detailed English glosses of the Georgian examples, but an English translation is always given. Two points should be kept in mind throughout: (a) Georgian does not distinguish between 'he/him', 'she/her' and 'it' and, although only the first is used in the translations below, either of the other two pronouns can usually be substituted; and (b) the Georgian verb invariably includes an implicit subject and – if transitive – one or more objects, whether or not these are always expressed in English. Morpheme boundaries are usually indicated below, but they have sometimes been omitted for the sake of clarity. In keeping with the Georgian practice, proper names have not been capitalized in the transliterations.

Non-standard abbreviations used in the text include the following:

AV auxiliary verb	PSF present stem formant	-	morpheme boundary
C verb class	PV pre-radical vowel	+	as 'l' but tightly bound
PI passive infix	PVB preverb	0	zero morph
Pl. plural marker	SA stem augment	-	root or stem
PM pronominal marker	SM screeve marker		root of finite verb

Introduction

There is considerable linguistic diversity in the area between the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea that is divided into the North and South Caucasus by the Caucasus mountains. It is not surprising that a number of the world's major language families are represented in this region which finds itself between Europe, the Near East and Asia: Indo-European (Armenian, Ossete, etc.), Altaic (Azerbaijani, Karachai-Cherkess, etc.) and Afro-Asiatic (Modern Aramaic). These language families have extended into a part of Eurasia where a number of indigenous tongues (about 40), collectively known as the Caucasian languages, have been spoken for at least four millennia, and which today have a total of about 5.5 million speakers in the Caucasus and in some countries of the Near East (the latter largely as the result of forced migrations).

The Caucasian languages are divided into four areal groups each consisting of a number of related languages: North West Caucasian (NWC), whose main members are Kabardian and Adyghe; North Central Caucasian (NCC) or Nakh (which includes Chechen and Ingush, and which is viewed by some as part of the NEC group); North Eastern Caucasian (NEC) or Daghestanian (includes Avar, Lezgi and Dargva); and the South Caucasian (Kartvelian) languages which are spoken in west and central South Caucasus.

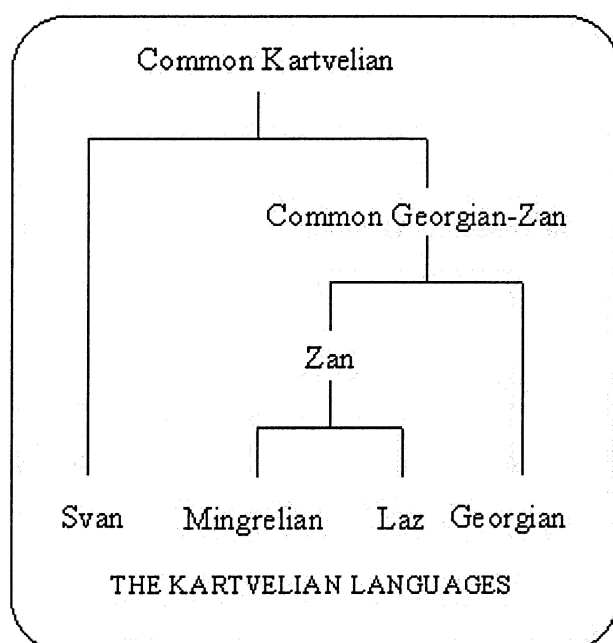
Although taken as axiomatic by a number of specialists, a genetic relationship between the four Caucasian language groups has not satisfactorily been demonstrated. Areal features, such as ejective consonants, an agglutinative morphology, verb subject and object prefixes, postpositions and ergativity, may also be accounted for in terms of a sprachbund (linguistic area), based either on long contiguity or on a common prehistoric substratum. While it is possible that a link between the North Caucasian groups may one day be demonstrated, a relationship between these and the Kartvelian languages will be more difficult to establish. Numerous attempts have been made to link Caucasian languages with other



languages and language families, but several have been discredited and others lack convincing evidence. There have been several attempts to find links with Basque or with the languages of the ancient Near East (Hattic, Hurrian, etc.). Ablaut patterns (morphologically determined root vowel changes) and a small number of loan words have been used to support the view that there were early contacts between the Kartvelians and the Indo-Europeans. More speculative hypotheses include the Kartvelian languages in the Nostratic 'superfamily', while the other groups have been assigned to the Sino-Caucasian (or Dene-Caucasian) superfamily.

In spite of the areal features common to all or some of the Caucasian language groups there are also some striking differences in phonology, grammar and syntax between the various languages. The Kartvelian group is distinguished from the other three in a number of respects, including the use of relative pronouns and conjunctions together with finite verb forms in subordinate and relative constructions, the absence of noun classes, formal rather than functional ergativity, and the exclusive use of postpositions in locative expressions. The Kartvelian group also has the simplest consonantal system, although it permits more complex consonant clusters than any other Caucasian language. Georgian, the Kartvelian literary language, is written in the only native Caucasian script to have survived in use up to the present day.

The Kartvelian languages of the South Caucasus are: Svan, spoken by about 40,000 in the high mountainous areas of the north-west Caucasus centred on Mest'ia and Lent'ekhi; Georgian, spoken by more than 3 million over an area stretching from the Black Sea to east of the Alazani river; Mingrelian, with about 360,000 speakers in an area between the Black Sea and the Tskhenists'q'ali river and bordering the Svan homeland to the north; and Laz (Ch'an), spoken by about 50,000 on the Black Sea littoral between Pazar (Atina) and Sarpi. Although mutually unintelligible, Mingrelian and Laz are viewed by some as dialects of a single language, Zan. Georgian serves both as a lingua franca and as a literary language for speakers of Svan and Mingrelian, while most Laz speakers are bilingual in Turkish.



The relationship between Mingrelian and Laz is close. Glottochronological studies suggest that Zan diverged from Georgian – both of which are derived from Common Georgian-Zan – about 2,700 years before the present. Mingrelian is somewhat closer to Georgian than is Laz). The validity of such studies, which are based upon lexical comparisons, is disputed. The time depth for the separation of the Svan language from Common Georgian-Zan, is of the order of 4,000 years. As a result of this early separation Svan preserves a number of archaic forms. Also, on account of its relatively isolated location in the Caucasus mountains, it has fewer loan-words from languages such as Arabic, Turkish, Persian and Greek from which the other Kartvelian languages to the south have borrowed extensively. A subject of ongoing study is the possibility of a NCC-NEC substratum in Svan. All Kartvelian languages have, to a greater or lesser extent, been influenced by the culturally dominant member of the group, Georgian. Although the above figures for the divergence of the various branches may be speculative, the internal relationships within the Kartvelian language group are well established. It has been possible to reconstruct a number of the features of the proto-language, known as Common Kartvelian or Proto-Kartvelian, partly by distinguishing between the innovations and the inherited features in each language. A straightforward illustration is the reconstructed Common Kartvelian root $-\ast\sqrt{\text{on}}-$ corresponding to the concept of 'weigh' which has identical reflexes in the four Kartvelian languages: $\text{on-}\sqrt{\text{on}}$ (Svan), $\text{do-}\sqrt{\text{on-i}}$ (Mingrelian), $\text{p-}\sqrt{\text{on-i}}$ (Laz) and $\text{a-}\sqrt{\text{on-e}}$ (Georgian), all meaning 'I weighed it'.

An extract from a Mingrelian folk tale is given below, together with a translation into Georgian, as a general illustration of the surface similarities between the two languages. The symbol '@' is used to

indicate an unrounded mid-back vowel (and not the schwa) present in the Zugidi-Samurzaq'an dialect of Mingrelian. The '?' indicates the glottal stop.

Mingrelian

arti sats'@q'ali chilami k'ochi ko?open do arti skuashi met'i vano?unue, mara dzalami skvimi do shelebiani ?ope do sakheli jokhod@ 'geria'. arti dghas@ te boshik ot'q'al@sha midart@ do onjuas ? udesha miish@ni, ...

Georgian

erti sats'q'ali tsoliani k'atsi q'opila da erti shvilis met'i ar hq'olia; magram dzalian lamazi da dzlieri q'opila da sakheli erkva 'geria'. ert dghes es bich'i sanadirod ts'avida da saghamos sakhlishi rom modioda, ...

The table below lists the first ten cardinal numbers in each of the Kartvelian languages. Equivalent data from representatives of each of the other Caucasian groups have been included to contrast with the obvious similarities between the Kartvelian languages. Each of the three non-Kartvelian languages shown is spoken in close proximity to a member of the Kartvelian group. Abkhaz belongs to the NWC group and has about 80,000 speakers to the north-west of the areas where Mingrelian and Svan are spoken. The NCC language Bats (Ts'ova-Tush) has about 3,000 speakers in the otherwise Georgian-speaking district of Tusheti. The Lezgian (South-East Daghestanian) language Udi, the putative descendant of Caucasian Albanian, has about 4,000 speakers in three villages, one of which is in the Georgian-speaking Q'vareli district.

KARTVELIAN NUMERALS					NWC	NCC	NEC
num.	Svan	Mingrelian	Laz	Georgian	Abkhaz	Bats	Udi
1	<i>eshkhu</i>	<i>arti</i>	<i>ar</i>	<i>erti</i>	<i>ak'ə</i>	<i>tsʰa</i>	<i>sa</i>
2	<i>yori</i>	<i>zhiri</i>	<i>zhur</i>	<i>ori</i>	<i>y^wəba</i>	<i>shi</i>	<i>p'q</i>
3	<i>semi</i>	<i>sumi</i>	<i>sum</i>	<i>sami</i>	<i>khpa</i>	<i>qo</i>	<i>khib</i>
4	<i>wōshtkhw</i>	<i>otkhi</i>	<i>otkho</i>	<i>otkhi</i>	<i>pshba</i>	<i>d-wiv'</i>	<i>bip'</i>
5	<i>wokhwishd</i>	<i>khuti</i>	<i>khut</i>	<i>khuti</i>	<i>kh^wba</i>	<i>pkhi</i>	<i>qo</i>
6	<i>usgwa</i>	<i>amshvi</i>	<i>ans</i>	<i>ekvsi</i>	<i>fba</i>	<i>yetkh</i>	<i>uq</i>
7	<i>ishgwid</i>	<i>shk'viti</i>	<i>shkvit</i>	<i>shvidi</i>	<i>bəzhbà</i>	<i>vorl'</i>	<i>vugh</i>
8	<i>ara</i>	<i>bruo</i>	<i>ovro</i>	<i>rva</i>	<i>ābà</i>	<i>barl'</i>	<i>mugh</i>
9	<i>chkhara</i>	<i>chkhoru</i>	<i>tskho(v)ro</i>	<i>tskhra</i>	<i>zh^wba</i>	<i>iş</i>	<i>vuy</i>
10	<i>yeshd</i>	<i>viti</i>	<i>vit</i>	<i>ati</i>	<i>zh^wabà</i>	<i>iṭ</i>	<i>vits'</i>

The dialects of Georgian can be divided into an eastern and a western group on the basis of shared features; a total of 17 can be identified. They differ from each other in certain aspects of phonology, morphology, syntax and vocabulary, but all retain an overall set of features not very dissimilar to the standard language as described below. Some of the dialects have come under the strong influence of neighbouring languages. Ingilo, spoken in an area to the east of the Alazani river, has been influenced by Azerbaijani and by Avar, while Klarjian has come under the influence of Turkish, the dominant language of the region in which it is spoken. The Persian influence on the Fereidan dialect of Georgian is a special case, as the latter is spoken today in Iran by the descendants of Kakhétians who were deported there by the Safavid monarch Shah 'Abbas I in the 17th century. Among the features which are found in the Georgian dialects are: the addition of *i-* and *w-* before certain vowels (as in *yerti* and *wori* in place of the standard *erti* and *ori*); the distinction between long and short vowels; umlaut; the presence of both *q* and *q'* phonemes; the use of the *n-plural*; plural adjectival forms; and others. In

general, the mountain dialects are more conservative and preserve a number of archaisms that have disappeared from other dialects. However, the simplification of certain complexities of standard Georgian also occurs in the dialects. The standard literary language is based on the eastern lowlands Kartlian dialect.

From the morphological viewpoint Georgian is predominantly an agglutinative language with inflectional features. The agglutinative nature of the language is most evident in the verb complex. For example, the Georgian verb დაგვალევინებდითო *dagvalevinebdito* ("you would give it to us to drink", he said) may be broken down into the following morphological units:

დაგვალევინებდითო

da-gv-a-lev-in-eb-d-i-t-o

preverb - indirect object marker - pre-radical vowel - verb root (-ლევ- *-lev-* 'drink') - causative marker - present stem formant - stem augment - screeve marker - plural marker - indirect speech marker.

These various elements and their functions are examined in some detail below. As has been noted above, a common characteristic of the Caucasian languages is that they are of the ergative grammatical type. This refers to the occurrence of constructions in which the object of a transitive verb is marked in the same way as the subject of an intransitive verb. Compare the two Georgian sentences:

ბიჭმა ძაღლი ბაღში დამალა.

bich'-ma dzaghl-i bagh-shi da-mal-a.

boy (nar sg) dog (nom sg) garden (dat sg) - in X-hides-Y (aor 3s 3s; trans) dog (nom sg)

The boy hid the dog in the garden.

ძაღლი ბაღში დაიმალა.

dzaghl-i bagh-shi da-i-mal-a.

dog (nom sg) garden (dat sg) - in X-hides-himself (aor 3s; intrans)

The dog hid in the garden.

Here the absolutive is marked by the nominative case suffix -ი *-i*, while the ergative is marked by narrative case suffix -მა *-ma*. Ergativity is a feature of the aorist series only, as is seen by putting the above sentences into the future (the -ს *-s* suffix marks the dative case):

ბიჭი ძაღლს ბაღში დამალავს.

bich'-i dzaghl-s bagh-shi da-mal-av-s.

boy (nom sg) dog (dat sg) garden (dat sg) - in X-hides-Y (fut 3s 3s; trans)

The boy will hide the dog in the garden.

ძაღლი ბაღში დაიმალემა.

dzaghl-i bagh-shi da-i-mal-eb-a.

dog (nom sg) garden (dat sg) - in X-hides-himself (fut 3s; intrans)

The dog will hide in the garden.

The intransitive verb in the examples above is a member of Class 2, the 'intransitive verbs'. There is also another class of intransitive verbs (Class 3) that pattern as the transitive (Class 1) verbs. The following sentences illustrate the behaviour of these two types of intransitive in the aorist series:

ბიჭმა ბაღში ითამაშა.

bich'-ma bagh-shi i-tamash-a.

boy (nar sg) garden (dat sg) - in X-plays[-Y] (aor 3s; intrans)

The boy played in the garden.

ბიჭი ბაღში დარჩა.

bich'i bagh-shi da-rch-a.

boy (nom sg) garden (dat sg) - in X-remains (aor 3s; intrans)

The boy remained in the garden.

This behaviour has led to the suggestion that Georgian is more accurately portrayed as an example of an 'active' language. In this language type the subject of a transitive verb is marked with the same case as the subject of an 'active' intransitive, while the object of a transitive verb is marked with the same case as the subject of an 'inactive' intransitive (the narrative and the nominative, respectively, in the case of Georgian). Note that the terms 'active' and 'inactive' are used here not to describe semantic categories, but rather as verb class labels. Ergativity in Georgian is purely formal, unlike the situation in some other Caucasian languages where it can have semantic significance. In Bats the contrast between the use of the absolutive and the ergative is used to express the degree of control by the subject over the events described. Svan patterns similarly to Georgian, whereas Mingrelian uses the narrative case to mark the subjects of both transitive and intransitive verbs in the aorist, while Laz uses the narrative to mark the subject of transitive verbs in all series, not only the aorist.

Ergativity is just one of the features that make the Caucasian languages especially interesting to linguists. Georgian is not only more accessible than the other Caucasian languages because of the wealth of published material available, it is also often the only language in which materials essential to the study of Georgian and Caucasian linguistics, history, culture and society is available. Georgian has a rich literary tradition stretching back over one and a half millennia. The oldest extant works are hagiographical, although historiographical and philosophical texts survive from an early date. The apogee of the Golden Age of Georgian literature is represented by the thirteenth century epic romance ვეფხისტყაოსანი *vepkhist'q'aosani* ('The Knight in the Panther's Skin') by Shota Rustaveli. Georgian literary output declined after the area suffered a number of invasions, but the sixteenth century saw the beginning of a renaissance that lasted until the middle of the nineteenth century. The most prominent figures in this revival were the lexicographer Sul Khan-Saba Orbeliani, David Guramishvili and Besik'i. Although in earlier periods Georgian literature incorporated elements from neighbouring Byzantium and Persia, it later found a more European orientation. The main representatives of the Romantic movement were Aleksandre Ch'avch'avadze and Nik'oloz Baratashvili. In the late nineteenth century Georgian literature played an important role in the reawakening of national consciousness (Ilia Ch'avch'avadze and Ak'ak'i Ts'ereteli). Important writers of the modern period include the novelists Mikheil Javakhishvili, K'onst'ant'ine Gamsakhurdia and Grigol Robakidze, the singular poet Vazha-Pshavela, and the outstanding lyric poets Galak't'ion T'abidze, P'aolo Iashvili and T'itsian T'abidze. Georgian also has an extremely rich repertoire of folk poetry and songs.

Script

The contemporary Georgian script is known as მხედრული *mkhedruli* ('military') in contrast to the earlier ხუტური *khutsuri* ('ecclesiastical') script. The oldest surviving examples of *mkhedruli* date from the 11-12th centuries, and it may well be that the script was a development of a cursive form of *khutsuri*. The forms of the *khutsuri* letters may have been derived from the northern Arsacid variant of the Pahlavi (or Middle Iranian) script, which itself was derived from the older Aramaic. However, the direction of writing (from left to right), the use of separate symbols for the vowel sounds, the numerical values assigned to the letters in earlier times, and the order of the letters all point to significant Greek influence on the script.

ა	ბ	გ	დ	ე	ვ	ზ	თ	ი	კ	ლ	მ	ნ	ო	პ	ჟ	რ
a	b	g	d	e	v	z	t	i	k'	l	m	n	o	p'	zh	r
ს	ტ	უ	ფ	ქ	ღ	ყ	შ	ჩ	ც	ძ	წ	ჭ	ხ	ჯ	ჰ	
s	t'	u	p	k	gh	q'	sh	ch	ts	dz	ts'	ch'	kh	j	h	

Modern Georgian makes use of 33 letters. These are given above, together with the transliteration

system adopted here. This scheme is not ideal in that it uses several digraphs, but it does have the merits of avoiding diacritics (with the exception of the apostrophe), and of being suited to the English-speaking reader. There is little ambiguity, as the digraph letter pairs rarely occur as combinations of two individual letters. Georgian does not distinguish between upper and lower case letters. For emphasis, letters which are normally printed with ascenders and descenders, or both, are all printed as if to fit between two parallel horizontal lines. Some four letters have variant forms which are widely encountered in handwriting. Georgian handwriting can sometimes present difficulties, not least because of the number of ligatures used.

Note

Examples of the potential ambiguities in the non-scientific transcription scheme used here are the Georgian words ხიდზე *khid.ze* ('on the bridge') and სურათს *surat.s* ('picture' - accusative). In such cases the use of a dot in the transcription serves to remove the inherent ambiguity.

Phonology

Vowels

Georgian has five vowel sounds: two front, unrounded ი, ე *i, e*, two back, rounded უ, ო *u, o*, and one neutral ა *a*. Short and long vowels are not distinguished in standard Georgian, and vowel length is between short and half-long. The sound values are approximately as shown below. The International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) symbols used are those closest to the sounds of Georgian. The English accent referred to is Received Pronunciation (RP).

GEORGIAN	IPA	RP	GERMAN	FRENCH	EXAMPLE
<i>i</i>	[i]	pit	bitte	—	<i>ik</i> ('there')
<i>e</i>	[e]	pet	Bett	merci	<i>es</i> ('this')
<i>u</i>	[u]	put	Hund	—	<i>tu</i> ('if')
<i>o</i>	[o]	—	Advokat	eau	<i>okro</i> ('gold')
	[ɔ]	—	Sonne	donner	
<i>a</i>	[a]	—	matt	plage	<i>ak</i> ('here')

The precise value of ო *o* lies between the two cardinal vowels shown. Note that there are different phonemic realizations (allophones) of ი *i* and ე *e*.

In general, there are no diphthongs in Georgian, so there are as many syllables as vowels, e.g. the word მიუახლოებს *miuakhloeb's* ('he brings it closer to him') has five syllables, and each of the four vowels in გაახლა *gaaakhla* ('he renewed it') is individually pronounced.

Consonants

Georgian plosives and fricatives exhibit a three-way opposition: voiced, voiceless aspirated and voiceless ejective. The table below groups these consonants together, with the corresponding IPA transcriptions in brackets. Note that *q'* does not form part of such a triad.

VOICED	<i>b</i> [b]	<i>d</i> [d]	<i>dz</i> [d͡z]	<i>j</i> [d͡ʒ]	<i>g</i> [g]	—
VOICELESS ASPIRATED	<i>p</i> [pʰ]	<i>t</i> [tʰ]	<i>ts</i> [tsʰ]	<i>ch</i> [t͡ʃʰ]	<i>k</i> [kʰ]	—
VOICELESS EJECTIVE	<i>p'</i> [pʰ̥]	<i>t'</i> [tʰ̥]	<i>ts'</i> [tsʰ̥]	<i>ch'</i> [t͡ʃʰ̥]	<i>k'</i> [kʰ̥]	<i>q'</i> [qʰ̥, xʰ̥]

Let us take the $g-k-k'$ triad as an example. The difference between the voiced and the voiceless aspirated phonemes in Georgian is similar to the difference between the 'g' sound in 'ghoul' [gu:] and the 'k' sound in 'cool' [k'u:]. The 'k' sound in 'school' [sku:], on the other hand, is voiceless but not aspirated (no breath is detected if the palm of the hand is placed in front of the mouth while saying it). If the exhortation 'Just think!' is spoken 'in a clipped precise manner' then the final 'k' sound can sometimes approach that of the third element of the triad. In technical terms, the ejectives are produced using air compressed in the mouth cavity while the supply of air from the lungs is cut off by complete closure of the glottis. In other words, the basic 'k' sound (as in 'school') and a glottal stop (as between the two 'o's in 'co-operate') are produced simultaneously. Georgian has six such ejectives: $\text{პ } p'$, $\text{ტ } t'$, $\text{წ } ts'$, $\text{ჭ } ch'$, $\text{კ } k'$ and $\text{ყ } q'$. Their phonemic status is demonstrated by such word pairs as $\text{ქუდი } kudi$ ('cap') / $\text{კუდი } k'udi$ ('tail') and $\text{ცილი } tsili$ ('slander') / $\text{წილი } ts'ili$ ('share').

Note that all English near equivalent sounds are only approximations to the Georgian.

The ejective $\text{ყ } q'$ can present some difficulty as there is no near equivalent English sound. Its pronunciation can vary dependent upon neighbouring sounds. The basic $\text{ყ } q'$ sound is uvular, as is the similar Arabic *qaaf*, but it is sometimes realized as an ejective uvular fricative similar to the Arabic *khaa'*.

The non-ejectives in the above table can be approximated as follows: $\text{ბ } b$ ('bat'), $\text{დ } d$ ('dab'), $\text{ძ } dz$ ('ads'), $\text{ჯ } j$ ('just'), $\text{გ } g$ ('got'), $\text{ფ } p$ ('poor'), and $\text{თ } t$ ('too'). Three other pairs of consonants show a voiceless / voiced contrast: $\text{ს, ზ } s, z$ ('see', 'zoo'), $\text{შ, ჯ } sh, zh$ ('she', 'leisure'), and $\text{ღ, ხ } gh, kh$. The velar sound $\text{ხ } kh$ is similar to the 'ch' sound in the Scottish 'loch' or the German 'acht'. Its voiced equivalent, $\text{ღ } gh$, occurs in the Spanish 'luego', and is similar to the Arabic *ghayn*.

The sounds of $\text{მ } m$ and $\text{ნ } n$ are approximately as in 'mow' and 'now', and $\text{ჰ } h$, which is rare in Georgian, is as in 'ham'. The pronunciation of $\text{რ } r$ varies from that in RP 'rate' to the *r* in the Spanish 'pero' (a single tap). Two varieties of $\text{ლ } l$ occur: as in RP 'late' and as in RP 'all'. The sound of $\text{ვ } v$ can vary from the English 'v' ('f' before voiceless consonants), through the sound of 'b' in the Spanish 'saber', to that of 'w' in 'wail', dependent upon adjacent sounds.

Consonant clusters

Groups of consonants are widespread in Georgian, especially harmonic clusters in which the point of articulation of the group moves from the front to the back of the mouth, and in which the individual elements are of the same type (voiced, voiceless aspirated or voiceless ejective). Examples are $\text{ღღე } dghhe$ ('day'), $\text{ტყე } t'q'e$ ('forest'), $\text{ბგერა } bgera$ ('sound'), $\text{თქვენ } tkven$ ('you'), $\text{ზღვა } zghva$ ('sea') and $\text{სხვა } skhva$ ('other'). In general, consonant clusters can range from two to six or more terms, extreme examples of word initial clusters being represented by $\text{მწვრთნელი } mts'vrtneli$ ('trainer') and $\text{ვფრცქვნი } vprtskvni$ ('I am peeling it'). In general, there is little or no assimilation in Georgian.

Syncope

Under certain circumstances the last vowel of a stem ending in a consonant is lost. This is quite common with $\text{ა } a$, $\text{ე } e$ and $\text{ო } o$. Note that the loss of an $\text{ო } o$ can result in the reinstatement of a $\text{ვ } v$ (certain phonological conditions can give rise to the loss of a $\text{ვ } v$). Adding the plural marker $\text{-ებ- } -eb-$ to a noun can cause syncope, e.g. $\text{მხატვარი } mkhat'vari$ ('painter'), $\text{მხატვრები } mkhat'vrebi$; $\text{მეზობელი } mezobeli$ ('neighbour'), $\text{მეზობლები } mezoblebi$, and $\text{მინდორი } mindori$ ('field'), $\text{მინდვრები } mindvrebi$.

Metathesis

The letter $\text{ვ } v$ can sometimes shift its position from after certain other consonants to before. For example, in place of the expected $\text{*თრვამეტი } *trvame'ti$ for '18', we find instead $\text{თვრამეტი } tvrame'ti$. Compare also $\text{მოკლავს } mok'lavs$ ('he will kill him') and $\text{მკვლელი } mk'vleli$ ('killer'), where both syncope (the loss of the $\text{ა } a$) and metathesis (the change in position of the $\text{ვ } v$) are evident.

Stress

Stress in Georgian is very weak and is not significant at the lexical level (i.e. it is not used to differentiate between words that are otherwise the same). In words of two and three syllables the stress is usually on the first. It is often on the second syllable in words of four syllables. It is difficult to generalize where the stress will fall in longer words, and there is often a secondary stress in addition to the main one. Examples are ჩიტი *chi.t'i* ('bird'), ქალაქი *ka.laki* ('town') and პარასკევი *p'ara.sk'evi* ('Friday'). Georgian intonation is generally even except in the case of yes-no questions, which end on a rising pitch (cf. ხვალ მოვა *khval mova* 'he will come tomorrow' and ხვალ მოვა? *khval mova/?* 'will he come tomorrow?').

Sample recording

A sample recording of spoken Georgian is available [here](#).

Derivation

Georgian uses three main derivational means to form new stems:

Reduplication The stem is repeated, sometimes with a slight alteration. Examples are ნელა *nela* ('slowly') > ნელნელა *nel-nela* ('very slowly, gradually'), ცხელი *tskheli* ('hot') > ცხელცხელი *tskhel-tskheli* ('very hot'), ახლო *akhlo* ('close') > ახლომახლო *akhlo-makhlo* ('near at hand').

Compounding The two stems, which may be from different parts of speech, are combined as in the following examples: ჯარი *jari* ('army') + კაცი *k'atsi* ('man') > ჯარისკაცი *jarisk'atsi* ('soldier'), გონება *goneba* ('mind') + მახვილი *makhvili* ('sharp') > გონებამახვილი *gonebamakhvili* ('quick-witted'), ორი *ori* ('two') + სული *suli* ('soul') > ორსულად *orsulad* ('pregnant').

Affixation This is the most productive method of derivation, and usually involves either suffixation or the use of a prefix and a suffix together. The list of affixes below is not exhaustive. Affixes are grouped according to general function.

Attribution

-ian: ცოლი *tsoli* ('wife') > ცოლიანი *tsoliani* ('married'), მარილი *marili* ('salt') > მარილიანი *mariliani* ('salty');
-ier: ნიჭი *nich'i* ('talent') > ნიჭიერი *nich'ieri* ('talented'), კანონი *k'anoni* ('law') > კანონიერი *k'anonieri* ('legal') (-იელ *-iel* if the stem contains an *r*. ხორცი *khorts'i* ('meat, flesh') > ხორციელი *khortsieli* ('corporal, carnal');
-osan: ცხენი *tskheni* ('horse') > ცხენოსანი *tskhenosani* ('horseman'), ქუდი *kudi* ('cap') > ქუდოსანი *kudosani* ('wearing a cap');
-ovan: სახელი *sakheli* ('name') > სახელოვანი *sakhelovani* ('renowned'), კლდე *k'ide* ('rock') > კლდიანი *k'ldiani* ('rocky').

Deprivation

- -ო u- - -o: ცოლი *tsoli* ('wife') > უცოლო *utsolo* ('unmarried'), მარილი *marili* ('salt') > უმარილო *umarilo* ('without salt')
- -ურ u- - -ur: ბედი *bedi* ('fate, fortune') > უბედური *ubeduri* ('unfortunate'), გემო *gemo* ('taste') > უგემური *ugemuri* ('tasteless') [also უ - ულ *u - ul* if the stem contains an *r*. ფერი *peri* ('colour') > უფერული *uperuli* ('colourless')].

Trade

მე- – -ე me- – -e: ფური *puri* ('bread') > მეფურე *mepure* ('baker'), ბალი *baghi* ('garden') > მებაღე *mebaghe* ('gardener');

მე- – ურ me- – -ur: ზღვა *zghva* ('sea') > მეზღვაური *mezghvauri* ('sailor'), ბაღე *bade* ('net') > მებაღური *mebaduri* ('fisherman') [also მე – ულ *me – ul* if the stem contains an *r*: ბარგი *bargi* ('luggage') > მებარგული *mebarguli* ('porter')].

Placename

-ეთ -et: სომეხი *somekhi* ('Armenian') > სომხეთი *somkheti* ('Armenia'), უცხო *utskho* ('foreigner') > უცხოეთი *utskhoeti* ('abroad');

სა- – -ეთ sa – -et: ფრანგი *prangi* ('Frenchman') > საფრანგეთი *saprangeti* ('France'), ბერძენი *berdzeni* ('Greek') > საბერძნეთი *saberdzneti* ('Greece');

სა- – -ო sa – -o: ქართველი *kartveli* ('Georgian') > საქართველო *sakartvelo* ('Georgia'), მეგრელი *megreli* ('Mingrelian') > სამეგრელო *samegrelo* ('Mingrelia').

Origin

-ელ -el: სოფელი *sopeli* ('village') > სოფლელი *sopleli* ('villager'), თბილისი *tbilisi* ('Tbilisi') > თბილისელი *tbiliseli* ('person from Tbilisi');

-ურ -ur: ბერძენი *berdzeni* ('a Greek') > ბერძნული *berdznuli* ('Greek'), ქალაქი *kalaki* ('town') > ქალაქური *kalakuri* ('urban') [also -ულ *-ul* if the stem contains an *r*: რუსი *rusi* ('a Russian') > რუსული *rusuli* ('Russian')].

Purpose

სა- – -ე sa- – -e: თითი *titi* ('finger') > სათითე *satite* ('thimble'), ღორი *ghori* ('pig') > საღორე *saghore* ('pigsty');

სა- – -ო sa- – -o: ექიმი *ekimi* ('doctor') > საექიმო *saekimo* ('medical'), სტუმარი *st'umari* ('guest') > სასტუმრო *sast'umro* ('hotel, guest-');

სა- – -ურ sa- – -ur: ფეხი *pekhi* ('foot') > საფეხური *sapekhuri* ('step'), დგომა *dgoma* ('standing') > სადგური *sadguri* ('station') [also სა – ულ *sa – ul* if the stem contains an *r*: ბარგი *bargi* ('burden') > საბარგული *sabarguli* ('lorry platform')].

Abstraction

-ობა -oba: მეგობარი *megobari* ('friend') > მეგობრობა *megobroba* ('friendship'), მუშა *musha* ('workman') > მუშაობა *mushaoba* ('work');

-ება -eba: ბედნიერი *bednieri* ('happy') > ბედნიერება *bedniereba* ('happiness'), მეცნიერი *metsnieri* ('scientist') > მეცნიერება *metsniereba* ('science');

სი- – -ე si- – -e: ლამაზი *lamazi* ('beautiful') > სილამაზე *silamaze* ('beauty'), ღარიბი *gharibi* ('poor') > სიღარიბე *sigharibe* ('poverty').

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FEEDBACK

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Word classes 2 (The verb)

In contrast to other word classes the Georgian verb is relatively complex. Comparison with the verb systems of the more familiar Indo-European languages shows a number of significant differences, including the following:

- a higher average number of morphemes per word (agglutination)
- contrasts between intransitive / transitive and static / dynamic verbs (class)
- tense-aspect-mood-status paradigms in place of the more familiar tenses ('screeves')
- the ability to encode the person and number of the subject, direct object and indirect object (polypersonalism)
- the ability to mark indirect objects as benefactors, possessors, etc. ('version')
- a more complex system of identifying subject and objects (case marking)
- a more precise distinction of direction with verbs of motion than in many of the more familiar languages (directional preverbs).

Given the complexity of the Georgian verb it is not surprising that differing analyses have been proposed by linguists. Here an attempt is made to give a broad overview of the verb system while, at the same time, illustrating some of the more unfamiliar concepts. Certain simplifications have had to be made, and many details and irregularities have had to be omitted due to lack of space.

Screeve system

Each 'conjugational pattern' in Georgian represents a unique combination of tense, aspect, mood and 'status', and is known as a screeve. This word was coined from the Georgian term მწკრივი *mts'k'rivi* ('row') to avoid using the label 'tense' with its strong temporal connotations. A screeve consists of the pattern of verb forms for each person and number (cf. Latin *amo, amas, amat*, etc.). There are eleven screeves in Georgian, grouped into three series (see table below). Series 1 (S1) (the 'present series') has two subseries ('present' and 'future'), each with three screeves. Series 2 (S2) (the 'aorist series') has two screeves, while Series 3 (S3) (the 'perfect series') has three, although the perfect subjunctive is now obsolescent. The status of a Georgian verb may be 'evidential' or 'nonevidential'. All Series 3 screeves are evidential, indicating a certain distancing of the speaker from the statement.

SCREEVE SYSTEM

SERIES	SCREEVES	
1 ('present')	present subseries	future subseries
	present imperfect	future conditional
	present subjunctive	future subjunctive
2 ('aorist')	aorist	
	optative (second subjunctive)	
3 ('perfect')	perfect (first evidential)	
	pluperfect (second evidential)	
	[perfect subjunctive (third evidential)]	

Verb class

Georgian verbs as a whole may be divided into broad categories, called classes, which share general morphological, syntactic or semantic characteristics. These groupings are generalizations: some verbs in each class may show a level of irregularity, and some verbs may not fall into any of the classes.

Class 1 (C1) (the 'transitive verbs')

This comprises for the most part transitive verbs, i.e. there is a subject and a direct object. Examples are წერს *ts'er-s* ('he writes it') and ზრდის *zrd-i-s* ('he rears him', 'he grows it'). A small number of verbs are intransitive, e.g. ახველებს *a-khvel-eb-s* ('he coughs'), while others can include both an indirect and a direct object, e.g. აწუქებს *a-chuk-eb-s* ('he will give it to him as a gift'). This class also includes causatives such as აწერინებს *a-ts'er-in-eb-s* ('he will cause him to write it'). The future / aorist stem of C1 verbs is formed by adding a preverb, e.g. გაზრდის *ga-zrd-i-s* ('he will raise him', 'he will grow it'), დააწერინა *da-a-ts'er-in-a* ('he caused him to write it').

Class 2 (C2) (the 'intransitive verbs')

This includes the following three types:

Type (a) (the radical intransitives) have the suffix -ებ *-eb* in the present series, but no distinctive C2 marker in the aorist series. In many cases there is a corresponding C1 verb using the same root. This type includes verbs such as თბება *tb-eb-a* ('it warms up') and რჩება *rch-eb-a* ('he remains').

Type (b) (the prefixal intransitives) use the prefix ი- *i-* to derive intransitive verbs (which also usually have corresponding C1 forms), and have the suffix -ებ *-eb* in the present series, e.g. გაიზრდება *ga-i-zrd-eb-a* ('it will grow (up)'). The resulting verbs are almost invariably passive in meaning with respect to their C1 counterparts, e.g. დაიწერა *da-i-ts'er-a* ('it was written') (cf. დაწერა *da-ts'er-a* 'he wrote it').

Type (c) (the suffixal intransitives) use the suffix -დ *-d* to derive verbs from nouns or adjectives (denominatives). Many of these denote changes of state, e.g. გაძვირდება *ga-dzvir-d-eb-a* ('it will become dear'), from ძვირი *dzviri* ('dear'). There are some exceptional transitive verbs in C2, e.g. უყვება *u-q'v-eb-a* ('he tells it to him').

Class 3 (C3) (the 'medial verbs')

Although case marking is the same as in C1, C3 verbs differ in that most denote intransitive activities, and so never take a direct object, e.g. ტირის *t'ir-i-s* ('he cries'). In some instances a direct object is optional, e.g. (ბურთს) თამაშობს (*burts*) *tamash-ob-s* ('he plays (ball)'), while in others a direct object is obligatory, e.g. ყიდულობს *q'id-ulob-s* ('he buys it'). There are three main verb types: basic verbs such as ყვირის *q'vir-i-s* ('he yells'), denominatives such as ბატონობს *bat'on-ob-s* ('he rules') from ბატონი *bat'oni* ('lord, master'), and expressives such as კრიალებს *k'rial-eb-s* ('it gleams, shines'), კანკალებს *k'ank'al-eb-s* ('he trembles'), which depict noise, light or certain types of motion. All C3 verbs form the future / aorist stem with the prefix ი- *i-*, e.g. იტირებს *i-t'ir-eb-s* ('he will cry') and usually – but not always – with the suffix *-eb* in the future subseries (cf. ისტვენს *i-st'ven-s* 'he will whistle'). With the exception of those verbs that take an obligatory direct object (and whose stems mostly end in -ულობ *-ulob* in the present subseries), C3 verbs describe dynamic situations that are viewed as lasting for a certain period of time.

Class 4 (C4) (the 'inversion verbs')

A characteristic of C4 verbs in all series is that the subject is marked with the dative case, and the direct object with the nominative (inversion), e.g. გოგოს წიგნი აქვს *gogo-s ts'ign-i a-kv-s* ('the girl has a book'). This 'inverted' construction can be approximated in English in this case by 'to-the-girl a-book in-her-possession-is'. Most C4 verbs denote feelings, emotions, sensations and states of being that endure for periods of time. The C4 verbs include desideratives, which indicate an urge to do something and which are formed using the circumflex ე- – ებ *e- – -eb*, e.g. ეცეკვება *e-tsek'v-eb-a* ('he feels like dancing') (cf. ცეკვავს *tsek'v-av-s* 'he dances'). A few C4 verbs mark the direct object with the genitive,

e.g. გოგოს ძაღლის ეშინია *gogo-s dzaghl-is e-shin-i-a* ('the girl is afraid of the dog').

Case marking

A characteristic feature of Georgian is that apparent subjects and objects are not always marked consistently. Indeed, the subject of a clause may be marked with either the nominative, narrative or dative case. There are three patterns of case marking for the subject and direct object (Nom./Dat., Nar./Nom., Dat./Nom.), the actual pattern being determined by the verb class and series (see table below). Both C1 and C3 verbs have the same case marking patterns. Note that the narrative is only used to mark the subjects of C1 and C3 verbs in the aorist series. When the subject is marked with the dative and the direct object with the nominative ('inversion'), then the postposition -თვის *-tvis* ('for') is used to mark any indirect object (referred to as a *tvis*-nominal), e.g.

დათოს მეგობრისთვის დაურეკია.

dato-s megobr-is-tvis da-u-rek'-i-a

dato (dat sg) friend (gen sg) - for X-rings-Y (perf 3s 3s)

Dato [apparently] telephoned his friend.

CASE MARKING

CLASS	SERIES	SUBJECT	DIRECT OBJECT	INDIRECT OBJECT
1,3	Present	Nominative	Dative	Dative
	Aorist	Narrative	Nominative	Dative
	Perfect	Dative	Nominative	(-tvis)
2	all	Nominative	Dative	Dative
4	all	Dative	Nominative	—

Verb structure

Georgian verbs consist of an obligatory root or stem, and zero or more affixes. One analysis posits a total of 24 affix slots, or positions, in addition to the root slot. In practice, no verb will have all possible slots occupied. The minimum of zero affixes is illustrated by the imperative წერ *ts'er* ('write it'). The model proposed here has a total of eleven slots (three pre-radical and seven post-radical - see table). Verb stems range from the single consonant -ქ- *-k-* ('praise') to the compound -ერთმნიშვნელიან- *-ert+m+nishvn+el+ian-* ('reduce to a common denominator'), but the most common form is consonant(s)-vowel-consonant(s), e.g. -კეთ- *-k'et-* ('do'), -მსხვერფლ- *-mskhverpl-* ('sacrifice').

VERB COMPLEX

-3	-2	-1	0		1
preverb(s)	pronominal marker(s)	pre-radical vowel	ROOT or STEM		passive infix
		participle prefix			
2	3	4	5	6	7
present stem formant	causative marker(s)	stem augment	screave marker	pronominal marker	plural marker
	participial suffix	(i)n-infix		auxiliary verb	

Pronominal marker (PM)

In addition to marking the subject, the Georgian verb can also incorporate markers for direct and indirect objects. These pronominal markers can occupy either a pre- or post-radical slot, or both (see table). The second person subject marker is usually 0 (i.e. no written affix), but a few verbs retain an older form, *kh-*, e.g. *ხარ kh-ar* ('you are'), *მიხვალთ mi-kh-val-t* ('you will go'). Note how the plural marker (Pl.) *-t* is used.

PRONOMINAL MARKERS

PERSON	SUBJECT	DIR. OBJECT	INDIR.
1 sing.	<i>v-</i> —	<i>m-</i> —	<i>m-</i> —
2 sing.	∅; (<i>kh-</i> —)	<i>g-</i> —	<i>g-</i> —
3 sing.	— <i>-s</i> , <i>-a</i> , <i>-o</i>	∅	<i>s</i> -, <i>h-</i> —; ∅
1 plur.	<i>v-</i> — <i>-t</i>	<i>gv-</i> —	<i>gv-</i> —
2 plur.	— <i>-t</i> ; (<i>kh-</i> — <i>-t</i>)	<i>g-</i> — <i>-t</i>	<i>g-</i> — <i>-t</i>
3 plur.	— <i>-en</i> , <i>-an</i> , <i>-nen</i> , <i>-n</i> , <i>-es</i>	∅	<i>s</i> -, <i>h-</i> — <i>-t</i> ; — <i>-t</i>

— indicates the verb root or stem. Note the plural marker *-t*.

— indicates the verb root or stem. Note the plural marker *-t*.

The choice of third person subject marker is dependent upon the verb class and screeve, and some examples are given below. The form of the third person indirect object marker depends upon the following letter. The use of *ს-* *s-* and *ჰ-* *h-* is declining in the modern language. Where a subject and an object marker occur together the former is usually omitted. The only exception is when a first person subject and a third person indirect object co-occur. The norm is that both are written, but this is seldom the case in the contemporary language, where the object marker is omitted. Examples of the use of the PM are: *გხედავ g-khed-av* ('I see you'), *მხედავ m-khed-av* ('you see me'), *გვხედავთ gv-khed-av-t* ('you see us'), *ხედავენ khed-av-en* ('they see him / them'), *ვხედავთ v-khed-av-t* ('we see him / them'), and *მივწერეთ mi-v-[s]-ts'er-e-t* ('we have written it to him / them').

Preverb (PVB)

The primary function of the preverb is to indicate direction when used with verbs of motion. It has the secondary functions of indicating the perfective aspect, and of changing the basic meaning of a verb stem. The preverb has also acquired additional functions which are not considered here. The more common preverbs with their directional meanings are: *მი-* *mi-* ('thither'), *მო-* *mo-* ('hither'), *ა(ღ)-* *a(gh)-* ('up'), *გა(ნ)-* *ga(n)-* ('out, away, off'), *გა(რ)და-* *ga(r)da-* ('over, across, through'), *და-* *da-* ('down'), *შე-* *she-* ('in'), *ჩა-* *cha-* ('(in and) down'), *წა(რ)-* *ts'a(r)-* ('away, off'). Compound preverbs, formed by adding *-მო-* *-mo-* to any but the first two in this list, result in a reversal of direction from 'away from' the speaker to 'towards' the speaker. Examples of the use of directional preverbs are *მიდის mi-di-s* ('he goes'), *გადმოწურა gad-mo-tsur-a* ('he swam across to here') (the final *-ა* *-a* of *გადა-* *gada-* is dropped before *-მო-* *-mo-*).

There is an aspectual difference between the corresponding screeves of the present and future subseries, a contrast between incompleted action ('imperfective') and completed action ('perfective'), marked by a PVB in the case of C1 and C2 verbs. This aspectual distinction is clearer if there are no additional time or mood contrasts, as in the aorist screeve where there is an imperfective aorist (albeit seldom used) in addition to the usual perfective aorist described below, e.g.

გუშინ ორი საათი ვწერე ერ სტატია, მაგრამ ვერ დავწერე ბოლომდე.

gushin ori saati v-ts'er-e es st'at'ia, magram ver da-v-ts'er-e bolomde

yesterday two hour (nom sg) X-writes-Y (aor 1s 3s) this (nom sg) article (nom sg), but cannot X-writes-Y (aor 1s 3s) end (adv sg) - until

For two hours yesterday I wrote this article, but I could not complete it.

Preverbs can qualify the basic meaning of a verb root and, on occasions, the resulting verbs may have apparently totally unrelated meanings, e.g. ჩართავს *cha-rt-av-s* ('he will switch it on'), მორთავს *mo-rt-av-s* ('he will decorate it'), შერთავს *she-rt-av-s* ('he will marry him to her', 'he will mix it with it'). In such cases the verb form in the present subseries is not in itself sufficient to distinguish between the various meanings, and contextual information must be used instead.

Pre-radical vowel (PV)

The pre-radical vowels (version vowels) ა- *a-*, ე- *e-*, ი- *i-* and უ- *u-* occur immediately before the verb root or stem. They have a number of functions, the more common of which are summarized below. In some cases, however, no apparent function can be assigned to the PV. (The PV ა- *a-* should not be confused with the PVB of the same form.)

ა- *a-*: forms C1 denominatives, e.g. აფართოებს *a-parto-eb-s* ('he widens it' – from ფართო *parto* 'wide'); forms causatives (see [C1 verbs](#)); indicates that the action takes place 'on' something (see [superessive version](#)), e.g. აწერს *a-ts'er-s* ('he writes it on it');

ე- *e-*: refers to indirect objects, mostly with C2 verbs; refers to pluperfect screeve subjects;

ი- *i-*: indicates first and second person indirect objects when the action takes place for someone's benefit (see [version](#)), and marks inverted subjects in the first and second persons, e.g. გიშენებთ *g-i-shen-eb-t* ('we build it for you'), გაგიგია *ga-g-i-g-i-a* ('you have heard it'); indicates reflexivity, e.g. იბანს *i-ban-s* ('he washes himself'); forms the future / aorist stem of C3 verbs;

უ- *u-*: indicates an indirect object or an inverted subject in the third person (cf. ი- *i-* above).

C1-3 present and aorist series verbs

In these screeves the verb is based on one of two stems: the 'present' and the 'future / aorist'. The present stem consists of the verb root followed by a suffix – the present stem formant (PSF) – and forms the stem used in the screeves of the present subseries, e.g. -ხატავ- *-khat'-av-* ('paint'). The future / aorist stem consists of the root alone, and is used in forming the future subseries and the aorist series, e.g. -ხატ- *-khat'*.

VERB STRUCTURE (PRESENT, AORIST SERIES)

SCREEVE	CLASS 1
Present	PM - [PV] - ROOT - PSF - PM - [Pl.]
Imperfect, Present subjunctive	PM - [PV] - ROOT - PSF - SA (<i>d</i>) - SM - PM - [Pl.]
Aorist, Optative	PVB - PM - [PV] - ROOT - SM - PM - [Pl.]
SCREEVE	CLASS 2
Present	(a) PM - ROOT - PI (<i>eb</i>) - SM - PM - [Pl.] (b) PM - PV (<i>i</i>) - ROOT - PI (<i>eb</i>) - SM - PM - [Pl.] (c) PM - ROOT - PI (<i>d</i>) - PSF (<i>eb</i>) - SM - PM - [Pl.]
Imperfect, Present subjunctive	as Present screeve, but with SA (<i>od</i>)
Aorist, Optative	(a) PVB - PM - ROOT - SM - PM - [Pl.] (b) PVB - PM - PV (<i>i</i>) - ROOT - SM - PM - [Pl.] (*) (c) PVB - PM - ROOT - PI (<i>d</i>) - SM - PM - [Pl.]
SCREEVE	CLASS 3
Present, Imperfect, Pres. subj.	as Class 1, but with PV (\emptyset), SA (<i>od</i>) with PSF (<i>i</i>)
Future †	PM - PV (<i>i</i>) - ROOT - [PSF (<i>eb</i>)] - PM - [Pl.]
Aorist, Optative	PM - PV (<i>i</i>) - ROOT - SM - PM - [Pl.]

Fut. (exc. †) = PVB + Pres.; Cond. = PVB + Imp.; Fut. subj. = PVB + Pres. subj.

* Many Class 2(a) verbs show peculiarities in the formation of aorist series screeves.

The most frequent forms of the PSF are *-i* (e.g. ჭრი *ch'r-i* 'you cut it'), *-av* (e.g. ხატავ *khat'av* 'you paint it'), *-am* (e.g. *ch'am* 'you eat it'), *-eb* (e.g. დებ *d-eb* 'you put it'), *-ob* (e.g. ცხოვრობ *tskhovr-ob* 'you live'), and 0 (e.g. წერ *ts'er* 'you write it'). The forms *-em* and *-op* are much less common. The PSF *-eb* is usual with C1 denominatives, C2(c) verbs and in the C3 future subseries, while *-ob* often occurs with C3 verbs. Note the PSF 0 with C2 (a, b) verbs.

SCREEVE AND PRONOMINAL MARKERS

SERIES	SCREEVE	VERB CLASS	SCREEVE MARKER	PRONOMINAL MARKER	
				3 sing. subj.	3 plur. subj.
present	present, future	1, 3	\emptyset	<i>-s</i>	<i>-en, -an</i>
		2	<i>i, \emptyset^*</i>	<i>-a^*, -s^*</i>	<i>-an</i>
	imperfect, conditional	1,2,3	<i>i, \emptyset^*</i>	<i>-a^*</i>	<i>-nen^*</i>
subconjunctive		1,2,3	<i>e, \emptyset^*</i>	<i>-s</i>	<i>-nen^*</i>
aorist	aorist	1,3	<i>e, \emptyset^*</i>	<i>-a^*, -o^*</i>	<i>-es^*</i>
			<i>i, \emptyset^*</i>	<i>-a^*</i>	<i>-es^*</i>
		2 (a, c)	<i>i, \emptyset^*</i>	<i>-a^*</i>	<i>-nen^*</i>
		2 (b)	<i>e, \emptyset^*</i>	<i>-a^*, -o^*</i>	<i>-nen^*</i>
	optative	1, 2 (b), 3	<i>o</i>	<i>-s</i>	<i>-n</i>
<i>a</i>			<i>-s</i>	<i>-n</i>	
2 (a, c)		<i>e, \emptyset^*</i>	<i>-s</i>	<i>-nen^*</i>	

* denotes that the SM \emptyset is used with the corresponding third person PM

In some verbs the form of the verb root as used in the present and future stems differs from that used in the aorist stem; examples are ჭრ- *ch'r-*, ჭერ- *ch'er-* ('cut'); კლ- *k'l-*, კალ- *k'al-* ('kill'); ცხ- *tskh-*, ცხვ- *tskhv-* ('bake'). Some C2(b) verbs show peculiarities in the formation of the aorist series.

The screeve marker (SM), which is either a vowel (except u) or 0, precedes the second PM slot, but it is seldom sufficient in itself to identify the screeve unambiguously. It is always 0 in the present and future screeves and, in all but two screeves, it is omitted before the third person PM (see table above).

The stem is extended by the addition of a suffix (-ღ *-d* or -ოდ *-od*), known as the stem augment (SA), in the imperfect and present subjunctive. The passive infixes (PI), -ღ- *-d-* and -ებ- *-eb-*, are used in the formation of C2 screeves. In addition to these affixes there are also the PM, PV and plural marker as described earlier. This complex structure is tabulated above in very general terms. The table is primarily for reference purposes, and contains details which cannot be examined in the space available here. Instead, some examples of verb conjugation patterns are given to illustrate how these various affixes combine in typical Georgian verbs:

Screeve:	Present	Conditional	Aorist	Optative
Root:	-კეთ- -k'et- (C1)	-წითლ- -ts'itl- (C2)	-წერ- -ts'er- (C1)	-თამაშ- -tamash- (C3)
1st person	ვაკეთებ(თ) <i>v-a-k'et-eb(-t)</i>	გავწითლდებოდი(თ) <i>ga-v-ts'itl-d-eb-od-i(-t)</i>	დავაწერინე(თ) <i>da-v-a-ts'er-in-e(-t)</i>	ვითამაშო(თ) <i>v-i-tamash-o(-t)</i>
2nd person	აკეთებ(თ) <i>a-k'et-eb(-t)</i>	გაწითლდებოდი(თ) <i>ga-ts'itl-d-eb-od-i(-t)</i>	დააწერინე(თ) <i>da-a-ts'er-in-e(-t)</i>	ითამაშო(თ) <i>i-tamash-o(-t)</i>
3rd singular	აკეთებს <i>a-k'et-eb-s</i>	გაწითლდებოდა <i>a-ts'itl-d-eb-od-a</i>	დააწერინა <i>da-a-ts'er-in-a</i>	ითამაშოს <i>i-tamash-os</i>
3rd plural	აკეთებენ <i>a-k'et-eb-en</i>	გაწითლდებოდნენ <i>ga-ts'itl-d-eb-od-nen</i>	დააწერინეს <i>da-a-ts'er-in-es</i>	ითამაშონ <i>i-tamash-on</i>
Gloss	'do it'	'would blush'	'made him write it'	'may play'

C4 and perfect series verbs

In the present screeve the noun or pronoun logical subject of a C4 verb is marked with the dative case, and the verb incorporates the corresponding indirect object PM often together with a PV that points to the logical subject. The logical direct object is marked with the nominative case and, within the verb, with a suffixed auxiliary verb (AV) which is a variant of the present tense of the verb ყოფნა *q'opna* ('be'), viz. ვარ(თ) *v-ar(-t)* ('I am / we are') > ვ- - ვარ(თ) *v- - -var(t)*, ხარ(თ) *kh-ar(-t)* ('you are') > - ხარ(თ) *- - -khar(t)*, and არის *ar-i-s* ('he is') / არიან *ar-i-an* ('they are') > - ს *-s*, ა *-a*. Examples are:

თავი მტკივა.

tav-i m-t'k'iv-a.

head (nom sg) X's-Y-pains-him (pres 1s 3s)
I have a headache.

გინდა რამე?

g-i-nd-a rame?

X-wants-Y (pres 2s 3s) something (nom sg)?
Do you want something?

მცენარეებს წყალი უნდა.

msenare-eb-s ts'q'al-i u-nd-a.

plant (dat pl) water (nom sg) X-wants-Y (pres 3s 3s)
Plants need water.

ბავშვებს ძალიან ვუყვარვართ.

bavshveb-s dzalian v-u-q'var-vart.

child (dat pl) very X-loves-Y (pres 3p 1p)
The children love us very much.

მამას ფული აქვს.

mama-s pul-i a-kv-s.

father (dat sg) money (nom sg) X-has-Y (pres 3s 3s)

Father has money.

The pattern in the other screeves is similar to that of C2 verbs with PV *g e* (i.e. the relative verbs). Many C4 verbs have no aorist screeve, and use the imperfect instead. In screeves other than the present, the direct object is not marked with an AV, but with a combination of SM and subject PM as in direct verbs. Examples are:

მისარია *m-i-khar-i-a* ('I am glad') > გამისარდებოდა *ga-m-i-khar-d-eb-od-a* ('I would be glad')

გიყვარს *g-i-q'var-s* ('you love him') > გიყვარდა *g-i-q'var-d-a* ('you loved him')

ვუყვარს *v-u-q'var-s* ('he loves me') > ვუყვარდი *v-u-q'var-d-i* ('he loved me' – note the *v*).

Inversion occurs in all screeves.

The perfect series of C1 and C3 verbs is based on the future / aorist stem, while C2 verbs use a combination of the perfect participle and the verb 'be' (in the case of 'absolute verbs'), or a stem based on the verb noun (in the case of 'relative verbs'). The AV is used to mark logical direct objects in the perfect screeve and in the pluperfect of absolute C2 verbs, although the third person plural forms sometimes differ from those used with C4 verbs; the past tense of ყოფნა *q'opna* ('be') is used in the pluperfect of absolute C2 verbs. Inversion occurs with C1 and C3 verbs. Space does not permit more than a few examples (the nouns are all subjects). Note the behaviour of the C1 verbs with PSF -ავ *-av* and -ებ *-eb*.

Class	Aorist	Perfect	Pluperfect
C1	კაცმა დაწერა <i>k'ats-ma da-ts'er-a</i>	კაცს დაუწერია <i>k'ats-s da-u-ts'er-i-a</i>	კაცს დაეწერა <i>k'ats-s da-e-ts'er-a</i>
C1	ქალმა დახატა <i>kal-ma da-khat'-a</i>	ქალს დაუხატავს <i>kal-s da-u-khat'-av-s</i>	ქალს დაეხატა <i>kal-s da-e-khat'-a</i>
C1	დედამ გააკეთა <i>deda-m ga-a-k'et-a</i>	დედას გაუკეთებია <i>deda-s ga-u-k'et-eb-i-a</i>	დედას გაეკეთებინა <i>deda-s ga-e-k'et-eb-in-a</i>
C2 (abs.)	ძმა დარჩა <i>dzma da-rch-a</i>	ძმა დარჩენილა <i>dzma da-rchen-il-a</i>	ძმა დარჩენილიყო <i>dzma da-rchen-il-iq'o</i>
C2 (rel.)	გოგო დახმარა <i>gogo da-e-khmar-a</i>	გოგო დახმარებია <i>gogo da-khmar-eb-i-a</i>	გოგო დახმარებოდა <i>gogo da-khmar-eb-od-a</i>
C3	ბიჭმა ითამაშა <i>bich'-ma i-tamash-a</i>	ბიჭს უთამაშ[ნ]ია <i>bich'-s u-tamash-[n]-i-a</i>	ბიჭს ეთამაშ[ნ]ა <i>bich'-s e-tamash-[n]-a</i>

Indirect relations

The Georgian verb can code both direct and indirect objects. For example, in the sentence

გოგო მეგობარს წიგნს მისცემს.

gogo megobar-s ts'ign-s mi-s-tsem-s.

girl (nom sg) friend (dat sg) book (dat sg) X-gives-Y-to-Z (fut 3s 3s 3s)

The girl will give [her] friend a book.

the indirect object PM ს- s- in the verb refers to the indirect object (მეგობარს *megobar-s*) which is in the dative, as is the direct object (წიგნს *ts'ign-s*) which is marked in the verb with the PM 0. The indirect object relation is clearer in the aorist:

გოგომ მეგობარს წიგნი მისცა.

gogo-m megobar-s ts'ign-i mi-s-ts-a.

girl (nar sg) friend (dat sg) book (nom sg) X-gives-Y-to-Z (aor 3s 3s 3s)

The girl gave [her] friend a book.

However, the structure changes in the perfect, where the sentence becomes

გოგოს მეგობრისთვის წიგნი მიუცია.

gogo-s megobr-is-tvis ts'ign-i mi-u-ts-i-a.

girl (dat sg) friend (gen sg) - for book (nom sg) X-gives-Y-to-Z (perf 3s 3s 3s)

The girl gave [her] friend a book.

the process of inversion has put the subject of the English sentence into the dative in Georgian, and the English indirect object has become a *tvis-nominal*. The verb still expresses an indirect relationship, but it now points to the 'logical subject' (გოგოს *gogo-s*) using the pre-radical vowel უ- *u-*.

The PV plays an important role in expressing an indirect relation, a concept which itself is much broader in Georgian than in English. The sentence

კაცი სახლს აშენებს.

k'ats-i sakhl-s a-shen-eb-s.

man (nom sg) house (dat sg) X-builds-Y (pres 3s 3s)

The man is building a house.

makes no reference to an indirect relation (and is thus sometimes said to have neutral version).

Changing the PV to ი- *i-* (კაცი სახლს იშენებს *k'ats-i sakhl-s i-shen-eb-s*) changes the meaning to 'the man is building a house for himself' (subjective version). The PV უ- *u-* refers to a third person indirect relation as in

კაცი ძმას სახლს უშენებს.

k'ats-i dzma-s sakhl-s u-shen-eb-s.

man (nom sg) brother (dat sg) house (dat sg) X-builds-Y-for-Z (pres 3s 3s 3s)

The man is building a house for [his] brother

and is known as the objective version. This distinction is preserved in the aorist series, but it is lost in the perfect series as the PV now points to the 'logical subject' (კაცს *k'ats-s*) and not to the beneficiary of the action. Class C2(c) verbs also use the PV უ- *u-* to express an indirect relation, e.g.

ძმას სახლი უშენდება.

dzma-s sakhl-i u-shen-d-eb-a.

brother (dat sg) house (nom sg) X-is-built-for-Y (pres 3s 3s)

The house is being built for the brother.

Relative verbs

The prefixal intransitives (C2(b) verbs) use the PV ე- *e-* in their relative forms: cf. ბიჭი იმალება *bich'-i i-mal-eb-a* ('the boy is hiding') and ბიჭი დას ემალება *bich'-i da-s e-mal-eb-a* ('the boy is hiding from [his] sister'). In this case the contrast between the unmarked (absolute) and the marked (relative) forms of the verb is preserved in the perfect series (see the examples in the table above).

The PV ა- *a-* is used to mark another indirect relationship, indicating that the action of the verb takes place 'on' a surface; cf. სურათს ხატავს *surat-s khat'-av-s* ('he is painting a picture') and სურათს კედელს ახატავს *surat-s k'edel-s a-khat'-av-s* ('he is painting a picture on the wall'). This is sometimes referred to as the superessive version.

It should be noted that, in general, the pre-radical vowels have a number of different functions in addition to signalling an indirect relation as described here.

Non-finite verb forms

The masdar is a verbal noun which may be imperfective or perfective in aspect. The derivational methods vary; cf. წერს *ts'er-s* ('he writes it') > წერა *ts'er-a* ('writing'), ხატავს *khat'av-s* ('he paints it') > ხატვა *khat'-v-a* ('painting'), სთხოვს *s-tkhov-s* ('he asks him for it') > თხოვნა *tkhov-na* ('request'), უნდა *u-nd-a* ('he wants it') > ნდობა *nd-oma* ('desire'), იბრძვის *i-brdzv-i-s* ('he fights') > ბრძოლა *brdz-ola* ('fight'). As a derived nominal the masdar behaves as any other noun, and may be translated in various ways, e.g.

აღარ მინდა იმის ნახვა.

agh-ar m-i-nd-a im-is nakh-v-a.

no-longer X-wants-Y (pres 1s 3s) that (gen sg) X-sees-Y (masdar nom sg)

I no longer wish to see that.

გასვლის წინ შუქი გამოერთო.

ga-svl-is ts'in shuk-i ga-mo-rt-o.

X-goes-out (masdar gen sg) before light (nom sg) X-switches-Y-off (aor 3s 3s)

He switched off the light before going out.

Note that the masdar is the usual citation form of the verb in Georgian dictionaries. The usual practice of listing verbs by masdar (and not by root) can make the use of Georgian dictionaries particularly difficult for the student unfamiliar with the verb system.

Georgian possesses a number of participles, some of which can also often function as nouns. The present active participle is formed with *მ(ო)- m(o)-* and is used to derive the name of the 'doer' of the action described by the corresponding verb, e.g. კლავს *k'l-av-s* ('he kills him') > მკვლელი *m-k'vl-el-i* ('killer'), შეკერავს *she-k'er-av-s* ('he will sew it') > მკერავი *m-k'er-av-i* ('tailor'). The future passive participle is formed with *sa-* and usually describes what something is intended for, e.g. გააღებს *ga-a-gh-eb-s* ('he will open it') > გასაღები *ga-sa-gh-eb-i* ('key'), ჭამს *ch'am-s* ('he eats it') > საჭმელი *sa-ch'-m-el-i* ('food'). The perfect participle is formed in a number of different ways and is usually translated by the English past participle, e.g. დაწერს *da-ts'er-s* ('he will write it') > დაწერილი *da-ts'er-il-i* ('written'), დახატავს *da-khat'av-s* ('he will paint it') > დახატული *da-khat'-ul-i* ('painted'), გამოაცხობს *gamo-a-tskh-ob-s* ('he will bake it') > გამომცხვარი *gamo-m-tskhv-ar-i* ('baked'), მოვა *mo-v-a* ('he will come') > მოსული *mo-sul-i* ('come').

A privative participle may be formed with *უ- - (-ელ/-არ-) u- - (-el/ar-)*, e.g. დაწერს *da-ts'er-s* ('he will write it') > დაუწერელი *da-u-ts'er-el-i* ('unwritten'), მოისვენებს *mo-i-sven-eb-s* ('he will rest') > მოუსვენარი *mo-u-sven-ar-i* ('restless').

The future passive participle in the adverbial case can often be translated by the English infinitive, e.g.

შესახედავად არაფერი არ არის.

she-sa-khed-av-ad ara-per-i ar ar-i-s.

X-looks-at-Y (fut pass part adv) nothing (nom sg) not X-is (pres 3s)

He's nothing to look at.

დასასვენებლად წავიდა უცხოეთში.

da-sa-sven-eb-l-ad ts'a-vid-a utskho-et-shi.

X-rests (fut pass part adv) X-goes-away (aor 3s) abroad (gen sg) - in

He went abroad to rest.