

# Licensing Negative Pronominals in Georgian

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## 1 Introduction

This paper discusses the licensing of negative pronominals in Georgian, which sometimes must appear in conjunction with a negative marker and sometimes need not. If there is no negative marker in the clause, then the negative pronominal must immediately precede the verb, as in (1); if it occurs elsewhere in the clause, then the structure is ungrammatical. However, if there is an overt negative marker before the verb, then the negative pronominal can appear anywhere in the clause, as in (2).

- (1) a. *šeni Cigni [versad] vnaxe.*  
your book no where-VER 1.see.3  
'I couldn't see your book anywhere.'
- b. \**[versad] šeni Cigni vnaxe.*
- (2) a. *[versad] šeni Cigni ver vnaxe.*  
no where-VER your book Neg-VER 1.see.3  
'I couldn't see your book anywhere.'
- b. *nu gagzavnit [nursad]!*  
Neg-NU 2.send.3 nowhere-NU  
'Don't send it anywhere.'

Why should this be? If the Georgian negative pronominals are licensed by negation, as (2) would suggest, then why can they appear when no negative marker is present, as in (1)? Conversely, if the negative pronominals are not licensed by negation, then why do they require the presence of a negative marker when not immediately preceding the verb?

Before proceeding, it should be noted that this restricted distribution is peculiar to negative pronominals since Georgian normally demonstrates substantial freedom of word order.<sup>1</sup> For example, a counterpart of (1b) in which *versad* 'no where' is replaced by *ik* 'there' or *magidaze* 'table-on' is grammatical.

In this paper, I argue that Georgian negative pronominals need to be licensed in a way similar to traditional Negative Polarity Items (Progovac 1994; Haegeman 1995); here, I will leave aside the details of the semantic licensing of these negative pronominals (Ladusaw 1980, 1992, 1993; Lineberger 1980; Dowty 1993).<sup>2</sup> In Georgian the negative pronominals are constrained to appear in the scope of clausal negation. This constraint can be met in one of two ways. First, it can be provided by the negative marker. Since the negative marker appears with the finite verb in  $I^0$ , it too heads the clause, and thus the

entire clause is within the scope of negation. Second, if the negative pronominal appears in the SpecIP position before the verb, it triggers clausal negation via Spec-head agreement which in turn licenses the negative pronominal. This results in there appearing to be a positional licenser for negative pronominals.

## 2 The Distribution of Negative Pronominals

Before examining the distribution of negative pronominals, consider that of sentential negation. There are three negative particles in Georgian: *ar* indicating simple negation; *ver* indicating impossibility; and *nu* used with negative imperatives (see Nordlinger *to appear* on a similar three way distinction in Wambaya). All three pattern similarly in that they always occur immediately before the verb, as in (3) and (4).

- (3) a. kartul gramaTiKas ar vsCavlobdit.  
 Georgian grammar Neg-AR 1.study.3  
 'We were not studying Georgian grammar.'
- b. \*ar kartul gramaTiKas vsCavlobdit.
- c. \*kartul gramaTiKas vsCavlobdit ar(a).
- (4) a. sTudenTebo, mešvide gaKvetils nu moamzadebt.  
 students seventh lesson Neg-NU 2.prepare.3  
 'Students, don't prepare lesson seven.'
- b. usatvalod ver gxedavt.  
 without glasses Neg-VER 1.see.2  
 'I cannot see you without glasses.'

Corresponding to the three negative markers, there are three sets of negative pronominals, e.g., *veraperi*, *araperi*, and *nuraperi* all mean 'nothing' and are used with the meaning of the corresponding negative marker.<sup>3</sup> The table in (5) provides some examples.

(5)

<i>ar</i> form	<i>ver</i> form	<i>nu</i> form	
aravin	veravin	nuravin	'no one'
araperi	veraperi	nuraperi	'nothing'
arsad	versad	nursad	'nowhere'
arasodes	verasodes	nurasodes	'never'
aravitari	veravitari	nuravitari	'no' (adjective)

## 2.1 With a Negative Marker

When a negative marker is present, the negative pronominal can occur anywhere in the sentence (Aronson 1990; see Topuria 1925 on the historical development of this construction). That is, not only can it occur immediately before the Neg+verb complex, as in (6a), but it can occur further to the left of the complex, as in (6b), or to the right of the verb, as in (6c). Note that imperatives need not be verb-initial (cf. (6c) and (18c)).

- (6) a. čems Klassi am Cignebs [veravin] ver Kitxulobs.  
our class-in these books no one-VER Neg-VER 3.read.3  
'No one in our class can read these books.'
- b. [versad] šeni Cigni ver vnaxe.  
no where your book Neg-VER 1.see.3  
'I couldn't see your book anywhere.'
- c. nu gagzavnit [nursad]!  
Neg-NU 2.send.3 nowhere  
'Don't send it anywhere.'

As can be seen by the sentences in (6), Georgian is what is referred to as a Negative Concord language in that having two or more negative constituents in a clause results in a single negation semantically, not a double one. For example, (6a) only means that it is not the case that someone in the class can read these books; it does not mean that no one cannot read them, that is, that everyone in the class can read them.

## 2.2 No Negative Marker

When there is a negative marker in the clause, the negative pronominal can appear anywhere. However, the situation changes if no negative marker is present. In this case, the negative pronominal must occur immediately before the verb, as in (7a) and (8a) (Aronson 1990); any other order results in ungrammaticality, as in (7b) and (8b).<sup>4</sup>

- (7) a. šeni Cigni [versad] vnaxe.  
your book nowhere-VER 1.see.3  
'I couldn't see your book anywhere.'
- b. \*[versad] šeni Cigni vnaxe.  
(cf. versad šeni Cigni ver vnaxe.)
- (8) a. [nurapers] Čam!  
nothing-NU 2.eat.3  
'Don't eat anything!'

- b. \*Čam [nurapers]!  
 (cf. nu Čam nurapers!)

The Negative Concord seen with the sentences in (6) also appears in sentences without a negative marker when two or more negative pronominals are present, as in (9).

- (9) čvens supraze [aravis] [arasodes] šia.  
 our banquet-at no one-AR never-AR hungry.3  
 'At our banquet no one is ever hungry.'

In (9), the only reading is one in which there is only one negation semantically, with the resulting reading that it is not the case at our banquet that some one is hungry at some time.

To summarize so far, when there is no negative marker in the clause, the negative pronominal must occur immediately before the verb, as shown in (10a); any other ordering is ungrammatical. However, when the negative marker is present, any ordering of the negative pronominal is possible, as seen in (10b/c).

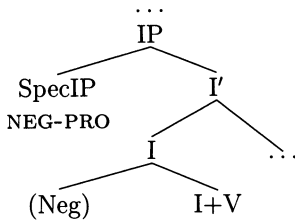
- (10) a. ... NEG.PRO V ...  
 b. ... NEG.PRO ... Neg V ...                      c. ... Neg V ... NEG.PRO ...

### 3 Analysis

#### 3.1 Syntactic Structure

First consider what the syntactic structure of the Georgian clause would have to be in order to allow for the structures in (10). The negative marker always immediately precedes the finite verb. Following Piñón 1992, I posit a complex  $I^0$  which contains both the finite verb and, when present, the negative marker.<sup>5 6</sup> The head-like behavior of the negative marker is seen most clearly in *wh*-questions in which the negative marker must follow the *wh*-phrases and precede the verb (§4.1). The immediately preverbal position of the negative pronominals results when they appear in SpecIP. Note that the preverbal position of the negative pronominals cannot be the result of their being clitic-like heads since when a negative marker is present they distribute like any other maximal projection in the language. The negative pronominals which appear to the right of the verb or further to the left are not in SpecIP and hence are not in a Spec-head relationship with the  $I^0$ +Neg<sup>0</sup> head. The consequences of this disparity are discussed below.

(11)



### 3.2 Movement to SpecIP

Georgian negative pronominals clearly have a licensing requirement. When a negative marker is present, it licenses negative pronominals anywhere in the clause. When there is no negative marker, the negative pronominals must appear immediately before the verb in SpecIP. What is the mechanism of this licensing?

Italian and Spanish negative pronominals have a similar, but by no means identical, distribution to those of Georgian pronominals. The basic distribution of Italian and Spanish negative pronominals is as follows.<sup>7</sup> When a negative pronominal occurs postverbally, the negative marker must be present; when it occurs preverbally, the negative marker cannot be present. This is exemplified by the Spanish sentences in (12).

- (12) a. \*(No) comió [nadie.]      b. [Nadie] (\*no) comió.  
       Neg ate no one                no one Neg ate  
       'No one ate.'                    'No one ate.'

One approach to the Italian and Spanish data is to claim that c-command is the relevant relationship: when the negative pronominal c-commands the head of the clause, the negative marker cannot be present and the negative pronominal licenses the semantic expression of negation. A second approach is to postulate Spec-head agreement between the preverbal negative pronominal and the head of the clause, triggering semantic negation in the head of the clause. These two possibilities are not mutually exclusive, and which approach is necessary for the Romance languages is still under debate.

Let us return to the Georgian problem and consider whether either the notion of Spec-head agreement or c-command can explain the distribution of negative pronominals. First consider the structures in which a negative marker is present and the negative pronominals can appear anywhere in the sentence. In this construction, the negative marker provides the negation which scopes over the entire clause, while the negative pronominals are licensed by this negation but do not contribute any negative meaning themselves. The basic idea is that negation is a clausal head and as such the entire clause is in the domain of negation and any negative pronominals in the clause will be licensed. However, the fact that the negative pronominals are in the scope of negation cannot be directly read off of the surface structure as a c-command relationship. The negative marker licenses both preverbal and postverbal negative

pronominals at the surface structure, and there is no plausible form for the phrase structure which allows preverbal negation to c-command both types of positions. Instead, Georgian has a semantic requirement that the negative pronominals be in the scope of clausemate negation (Ladusaw 1992). What is unusual about Georgian is that there is no syntactic scope requirement other than that the relevant negation be in the same clause since negation in a higher clause cannot license negative pronominals in Georgian (see Progovac 1994 on Serbo-Croatian).<sup>8</sup>

Next consider what happens if there is no negative marker. Above it was assumed that the negative marker indicated that the entire clause was in the scope of negation which licensed the negative pronominals. If there is no negative marker, the negative pronominals must still be licensed by being semantically in the scope of clausal negation. In Georgian this requirement can be satisfied positionally, namely by the appearance of a negative pronominal in SpecIP. This is possible due to Spec-head agreement between SpecIP and  $I^0$ . Following a proposal in Progovac 1994 for Italian, I propose that a negative pronominal in SpecIP triggers negation on the head  $I^0$ . However, this negation is not overtly realised, i.e., it does not force the presence of a negative marker. Once the presence of the negative pronominal in SpecIP triggers the clausal negation in  $I^0$ , the negative pronominals will be licensed, similarly to when the negative marker is present. Note that it is not SpecIP itself which licenses the negative pronominal; rather, this position allows the triggering of sentential negation.

This account has a fortuitous consequence for Negative Concord in Georgian. One problem that analyses of Negative Concord languages face is how to correctly reduce the number of negations to one. If the language always requires a negative marker to license the negative pronominals, this problem is less acute because the negative marker can provide the clausal negation, while the negative pronominals are in fact not negatives at all but instead are licensed by negation.<sup>9</sup> However, such an account becomes more complicated in a language like Georgian or Italian where the negative marker is not always required: if the negative pronominal can provide negation when there is no negative marker, why does it not do so when a negative marker is present, resulting, erroneously, in double negation? Under the account proposed here, the Georgian negative pronominals are not themselves negative. When there is a negative marker present, it provides the clausal negation which in turn licenses the negative pronominals. When there is no negative marker, the negative pronominal in SpecIP triggers clausal negation, which in turn licenses the negative pronominal. If the negative pronominal is not in SpecIP, Spec-head agreement cannot occur and the covert negation is not triggered and as a result the negative pronominal will not be licensed.

#### 4 Predictions of the Account

This account of negative pronominal licensing in SpecIP makes two interesting predictions with regard to Georgian. The first is that positional licensing

of negative pronominals will be impossible in *wh*-questions since *wh*-phrases are also licensed in SpecIP (Harris 1984; King 1995). The second prediction concerns the clausal scope of negation. Negative pronominals in SpecIP show the same clausal negation interpretation as negative pronominals licensed by a negative marker. This is seen most clearly by the distribution of the three classes of negative pronominals which pattern as if the negative marker of the corresponding class were present.

#### 4.1 Wh-Questions

Further evidence for the positional licensing of negative pronominals in Georgian comes from the distribution of *wh*-phrases. Harris (1984) discusses Georgian question formation in detail. Of concern here is the structure of *wh*-questions. The basic generalization is that *wh*-phrases must occur immediately before the verb, as in (13) and (14).<sup>10</sup> Note that the verb does not raise to C<sup>0</sup> in questions, as reflected by the fact that multiple constituents can precede and follow the verb. In the examples below, any order of the constituents is possible as long as the *wh*-phrases immediately precede the verb.

- (13) a. *nino* [sad] *Cavida*?  
 Nino where 3.go  
 'Where did Nino go?'  
 b. [sad] *Cavida nino*?  
 c. \*[sad] *nino Cavida*?  
 d. \**nino Cavida* [sad]?
- (14) a. *es botli araqi* [vis] *uqide*?  
 this bottle vodka who 2.buy.3.3  
 'Who did you buy this bottle of vodka for?'  
 b. [visi švili] *xar šena*?  
 whose child 2.be you  
 'Whose child are you?'

There is one major exception to the generalization that *wh*-phrases must immediately precede the verb. When the verb is negated, the negative marker precedes the verb and any *wh*-phrases precede the Neg+verb complex, as seen in (15). This is to be expected if the negative marker forms a complex head with the verb in I<sup>0</sup> (§3.1).

- (15) a. [vin] *ar mosula*?  
 who Neg-AR 3.came  
 'Who has not come?'

b. \*ar [vin] mosula?

c. \*[vin] mosula ar?

Wh-phrases are also licensed in SpecIP, as reflected by their obligatory preverbal position. This account predicts that either a wh-phrase or a negative pronominal can appear in SpecIP, but not both.<sup>11</sup> This prediction is borne out. In order for a wh-question to contain a negative pronominal, an overt negative marker must appear before the verb, as in (16a) and (17a), thus licensing the negative pronominal to appear in any position in the clause.

(16) a. [vin] ar        ačuka    niKos [araperi]    dabadebis dγeze?  
 who Neg-AR 3.give.3.3 Niko nothing-AR birthday-for  
 'Who didn't give Niko anything for his birthday?'

b. \*[vin] [araperi]    ačuka    niKos dabadebis dγeze?  
 who nothing-AR 3.give.3.3 Niko birthday-for

c. \*[araperi]    vin ačuka    niKos dabadebis dγeze?  
 nothing-AR who 3.give.3.3 Niko birthday-for

(17) a. [romeli Cigni] ar        CauKitxavs ninos        [arasodes]?  
 which book Neg-AR 3.read.3    Nino-DAT never  
 'Which book has Nino never read?'

b. \*[romeli Cigni] [arasodes] CauKitxavs ninos?  
 which book never-AR 3.read.3    Nino

c. \*[arasodes] [romeli Cigni] CauKitxavs ninos?  
 never-AR which book 3.read.3    Nino

The data in (16) and (17) also show that positional licensing of negative pronominals must occur at the surface structure. That is, a negative pronominal cannot move to SpecIP, triggering negation, and then scramble to some other position. This conclusion is compatible with the general distribution of negative pronominals in Georgian. If a negative pronominal could move to SpecIP to trigger negation and then move out of that position, it would be expected that negative pronominals could appear in any position without an overt negative marker. However, this is not the case.

#### 4.2 Interpretation of Negation

An interesting concord phenomenon further supports the claim that the negative marker and the covert negation licensed by the negative pronominal in SpecIP have scope over the entire IP in these constructions. As mentioned previously, Georgian has three negative markers: *ar* marks simple negation, *ver* denotes impossibility, and *nu* marks imperatives. Consider the triple in (18).

- (18) a. *puls axla ar majlevt.*  
 money now Neg-AR 2.give.1.3  
 ‘You are not giving me the money now.’
- b. *puls axla ver majlevt.*  
 money now Neg-VER 2.give.1.3  
 ‘You cannot give me the money now.’
- c. *puls axla nu majlevt!*  
 money now Neg-NU 2.give.1.3  
 ‘Don’t give me the money now.’

The sentences in (18) are identical except for the negative marker. Which negative marker is chosen results in clausal scope not only of negation but also of the corresponding modality. So, in (18a) *ar* simply negates the proposition that you are giving me money now. However, when *ver* is used, as in (18b), the possibility of the action is negated, e.g., perhaps your wallet was just stolen. Finally, (18c) shows how imperative mood is introduced by *nu*. There is no special imperative marking on the verb in (18c), instead this mood is unambiguously marked by *nu*.<sup>12</sup>

Corresponding to the three negative markers, there are three sets of negative pronominals, e.g., *araperi*, *veraperi*, *nuraperi* ‘nothing’. These were shown in Table 5. When a negative marker appears before the verb, not only does it license negative pronominals in the clause, but it also dictates their form; negative pronominals from sets other than that of the negative marker are ungrammatical, as in (19).

- (19) a. \*[*veravin*] am Cigns ar Kitxulobs.  
 no one-VER this book Neg-AR 3.read.3
- b. \*[*aravis*] nu eTqvi!  
 no one-AR Neg-NU 2.tell.3

If the negative marker has the entire clause as its scope and, as a functional head, is providing information as to modality of the clause, it is not surprising that the negative pronominals must agree with the negative marker, otherwise their meaning requirements would be incompatible with those of the clause.

Even more interesting is the case of the negative pronominals in SpecIP. Remember that Spec-head agreement triggered clausal negation, thereby licensing the negative pronominal. A negative pronominal from any of the three sets may appear before the verb. The meanings of sentences like those in (20) suggests that Spec-head agreement also results in the appropriate modality, e.g., impossibility or imperative, being spread to the clause via the clausal head  $I^0$ . In the case of the *ver* set, the clause as a whole has a reading of impossibility, as in (20a), and in the case of the *nu* set it has a reading of imperative mood, as in (20b). That is, the positional SpecIP negative pronominal licensing results in the same clausal scope of negation as the negative marker.

- (20) a. *šeni Cigni [versad] vnaxe.*  
 your book no where-VER 1.see.3  
 'I couldn't see your book anywhere.'
- b. *[nurapers] Čam!*  
 nothing-NU 2.eat.3  
 'Don't eat anything!'

The fact that this is a property of the entire clause can be seen when more than one negative pronominal is present, as in (21).

- (21) a. *[veravin] [verapers] Kitxulobs.*  
 no one-VER nothing-VER 3.read.3  
 'No one can read anything.'
- b. *\*[aravin] [verapers] Kitxulobs.*  
 no one-AR nothing-VER 3.read.3

In (21a), the negative pronominal *verapers* 'nothing' is in SpecIP and the resulting Spec-head agreement gives a reading of impossibility which is compatible with the other negative pronominal *veravin* 'no one'. The clausal scope of the impossibility modality is seen in (21b) in which the negative pronominal *aravin* 'no one' is incompatible with the reading of impossibility and the sentence is ungrammatical.

## 5 Conclusion

In conclusion, evidence from the interaction of the negative marker and the negative pronominals, from wh-questions, and from concord of the negative sets argues that Georgian negative pronominals are licensed when they are semantically in the scope of clausal negation. This negation can be canonically provided by a negative marker. Alternatively, it can be triggered by Spec-head agreement with a negative pronominal in SpecIP.

## Notes

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<sup>1</sup>The default word order in Georgian is SOV, although all other orders are possible (Apridonidze 1986; Počxua 1962; Vogt 1974); in particular, unlike languages like Japanese, Georgian is not strictly verb final.

<sup>2</sup>There is another issue in the literature as to whether Negative Concord pronominals, such as those in Slavic and Georgian, are semantically a subtype of NPIs, such

as those in English, (Laka 1990; Progovac 1994; Ladusaw 1992, 1993) or are not (Haegeman 1995).

<sup>3</sup>A second set of forms can be generated from those in Table 5 by adding the infix *-γα-* which adds the meaning of 'no longer'.

Forms for 'free choice any' are based on the same pronominal roots as the negative pronominals in conjunction with the suffix *-me*, e.g., *vinme* 'anyone'; like 'free choice any' in English, these pronouns are not dependent on negation.

<sup>4</sup>Negative pronominals can appear in isolation as answers to questions, e.g., *vin modis?* 'who is coming?' *aravin.* 'no one'. This seems to be generally true of negative pronominals in Negative Concord languages (see Haegeman 1995), and, in Georgian may be the result of ellipsis.

<sup>5</sup>One could posit a NegP (Laka 1990; Zanuttini 1990). However, as negation and the finite verb form an inseparable unit, Neg<sup>0</sup> and I<sup>0</sup> would have to incorporate via head-movement, resulting in a structure like that in (11).

<sup>6</sup>This complex head also encodes modality in these constructions since the negative markers contain modal information (§4.2). Note that there are also separate modal predicates in the language, e.g., *šeujelebia* 'impossibility', *unda* 'must', *šeijsleba* 'can'. These occur with clausal complements in the optative and pluperfect tenses.

<sup>7</sup>This distribution is more complicated when all of Romance is taken into account. For example, in Catalan preverbal negative pronominals can co-occur with a negative marker. See Ladusaw 1993 for a comparative/historical approach to the problem.

<sup>8</sup>This contrasts, for example, with English in which NPIs must be c-commanded by negation, but this negation may be in a higher clause, e.g., *I do[n't] think that [anyone]<sub>NPI</sub> came.* (see Lineberger 1987 for further discussion of English).

<sup>9</sup>What precisely the negative pronominals are, if not truly negatives, is currently under debate. Ladusaw (1992) provides a proposal whereby they are a type of indefinite.

<sup>10</sup>In addition, in multiple wh-questions all wh-phrases precede the verb, as in (i). (The order of multiple wh-phrases generally reflects the default order of arguments: subj-i.obj-obj.)

- (i.a) niKos dabadebis dγeze [vin] [ra] ačuka?  
Niko birthday-for who what 3.give.3.3  
'Who gave what to Niko for his birthday?'
- (i.b) maiam [rodis] [romeli Cigni] CaiKitxa?  
Maia when which book 3.read.3  
'When did Maia read which book?'

<sup>11</sup>There is a problem for this approach. As seen in (16) and (17), SpecIP cannot be filled by both a negative pronominal and a wh-phrase. However, multiple wh-phrases must all appear immediately before the verb, as in footnote 10, suggesting that SpecIP can be multiply filled in Georgian (see Chomsky 1995 on multiple Specifiers). One possibility is that wh-phrases and negative pronominals are different types of phrases and this incompatibility accounts for their complementary distribution. Another possibility is that, in fact, only one of the wh-phrases, the last

one, is in SpecIP and the rest are adjoined to IP. The problem with this account is ensuring that the adjoined phrases are contiguous, e.g., adverbs and arguments of the verb cannot appear amongst the wh-phrases.

<sup>12</sup>Positive imperatives are formed with the aorist, which is also used for simple past tense.

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