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Intonation of Interrogative Sentences in Zan (Megrelian-Laz) Language

Abstract

In the article, we discuss the intonation of interrogative sentences in Zan. Studying this topic has great importance not only with respect to a linguistic standpoint, but also with reference to teaching the Megrelian-Laz language. Empirical materials have been obtained from respondents of different age, sex and social status and analyzed by using Praat. In Megrelian-Laz like other many languages we have wh-questions, yes/no-questions, tag questions and echo-questions. The material analysis has shown that Megrelian-Laz interrogative sentences have the stress on the subject or on the verb; Mostly sentences with question word have rising intonation at the end; negative and positive question tags have rising intonation contour as well as echo questions on the interrogative particle. In Laz spread in Georgia interrogative sentences formed without suffix -i and a question is expressed only by intonation.

Key words: intonation, stress, interrogative sentence, Zan (Megrelian-Laz) Language

Studying the intonation has great importance not only with respect to a linguistic standpoint, but also with reference to teaching the language.

The project 'Megrelian-Laz Intonation' aimed to conducting a comprehensive study of this issue. At present, we discuss the intonation of interrogative sentences in Zan.

Within the framework of the project 5 expeditions were conducted; two in Samegrelo, two in Historical Lazeti (in Georgia, as well as in the Republic of Turkey) and one - with the descendants of Laz Muhajirs, who live in the inner provinces of Turkey, such as: Yalova, Bursa, Kocaeli, Sakarya, Duzce, Akchakoja. Empirical materials have

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obtained from respondents of different age, sex and social status and analyzed by using Praat.

In Megrelian-Laz like other many languages we have wh-questions, yes/no-questions, tag questions and echo-questions.

**Wh-questions**

Wh-questions can be expressed by interrogative pronouns and interrogative adverbs in Megrelian-Laz.

There are presented some examples when interrogative sentence is expressed by wh-words:

Megrelian: მურეთნა? Mu re tena?
‘What is this?’

Laz: მუჯენა? Mu jen aja?
(Khop.-Chkhal.) / მუღიაჲა? Mun oon haja? (Vits., Ark.) / მუღჲოოჲჰაჲა? Mu oren ham? (Art., Vij.) / მუჲონჲჰამ (ათინ.)? Muja on ham (Atin.)? ‘What is this?’

In Megrelian the stress is on a subject and the sentence has rising intonation contour at the end.

[see Fig. 1].

*Fig. 1. Megrelian, Chkhorotsku, woman  Fig. 2. Laz, Arkabi, woman*
The subject is stressed and the intonation contour is rising at the end in Laz too [see Fig. 2], and the difference is observed in Artashenian and Vjian (Chamlihemshinian), where a verb is stressed and the sentence ends with rising-falling intonation. [see Fig. 3].

In Megrelian-Laz word order is somehow free. We can put the wh-word in the middle of the sentence, but never at the end:

Megrelian: თენა / ენა მურე? Tena / ena mu re? – ‘What is this?’


In this case, in Megrelian the subject is stressed (Zugdidi, Tsalenjikha, Senaki, Martvili, Poti). In Samurzakanoan and Senakian the verb is stressed and the sentence ends with rising intonation.

Like Megrelian the subject is stressed in Laz too, including the Muhajir Laz speech, the sentence is characterized by falling intonation contour, but in Atinan, Artashenian and Vjian a verb is stressed and a sentence has rising-falling intonation at the end.

In the monograph ‘Pazar Laz’ edited by B. Öztürk, M. A. Pöchtrager is marked that in wh-questions stress is on
the wh-word, the most natural position for which is immediate preverbal position. Wh-sentences have rising intonation at the end (Pazar Laz 2011: 154). According to this monograph wh-clauses can alternatively have falling intonation at the end (Pazar Laz 2011: 156). The analysis of our Atinan material resulted in the same.

In Megrelian-Laz a suffix used for quoting may be added to a question word in an interrogative sentence:


In this case, the suffix has rising intonation contour in all subdialects of Megrelian and Laz.

Multiple questions

In the interrogative sentence, which contains two wh-words, the subject is ahead of the object.


Stress is on the verb and the sentence ends by low intonation (L%), but in this case in Atinan (Pazar) Laz B.

Öztürk and M. A. Pöchtrager identified rising intonation at the end (Pazar Laz 2011: 156).

Yes / no-questions

We form yes / no questions with an interrogative suffix in Megrelian-Laz, it is suffix -o in Megrelian, and suffix -i in Laz. The suffix -o of Megrelian in point is a functional and phonological correspondence of the Old Georgian affirmative suffix -a, taken on by a yes/no question (Chikobava 2008: 193). Laz interrogative suffix -i is not phonological correspondence to neither the Megrelian nor the Georgian, they are only functionally identical, Arn. Chikobava thinks that Laz -i should be the same thing as Svan used in the interrogative sentences (Chikobava 2008: 193).

According to I. Kipshidze the interrogative suffix is not stressed, the stress comes on the preceding vowel of this suffix (Kipshidze 1994: 144).

There are some examples with interrogative suffix -o / -i in Megrelian-Laz:
In Megrelian penultimate vowel is stressed (ხენი? Xeni? – ‘Is he/she sitting?’ მოხთუი? Moxtui? – ‘Has he/she come?’) [see Fig. 4], but in Laz initial vowel is stressed in both two-syllable (ხენ? Xeno? – ‘Is he/she sitting?’) and three-syllable words (ჰობიჯო? Moxtui? / ჰობიჯო Moxt’ui? – ‘Has he/she come?’) [see Fig. 5]. In the Laz speech of Muhajirs a penultimate vowel is stressed as it is in Megrelian. [see Fig. 6].

![Fig. 4. Megrelian, Martvili, woman](image1)

![Fig. 5. Vija (Chamlihemshin), man](image2)
In Laz speech, spread in Georgia, we identified yes/no questions formed without interrogative suffix -i (the influence of Georgian), and a question is expressed only by intonation, for example:

**Fig. 6.** Laz, Duzce, man

**Fig. 7.** Laz, Sarpi (Georgia), man
Laz: აჲა ბეექ ქითაბი იკითხუ? Aja beek kitabi ik’itxu? (Sarp.) – ‘Has this child read the book?’ [see Fig. 7]. Compare to other Laz subdialects: აჲა ბეექ ქითაბი იკითხუ? Aja beek kitabi ik’itxui? (Khop.-Chkhal.) / ჰა ბერექ ქეთ აბი იკითხუი? Ham berek č’itabi tkui? – ‘Has this child read the book?’

As we can infer, the question suffix does not exist in Sarpian Laz speech spread in Georgia and the last vowel of the verb is stressed, it has falling intonation contour at the end. In other Laz subdialects the penultimate vowel of the question suffix is stressed and the sentence has falling intonation contour at the end. Compare to Megrelian: თე ბაღანაქ წიგნი წეკითხუო? Te baγanak c’igni c’ek’itxuo? (Zugd., Samurz. Senak.-Martv.) / ჰამ ბერექ ჩითაბუი თქუი? Ham berek č’itabi tkui? – ‘Has this child read the book?’.

Like Laz (spread in Turkey) in this sentence in Megrelian the penultimate vowel of the question suffix is stressed and the verb has falling intonation contour.

The interrogative particle /-o/ expresses not only a question but also to asking again. It is mostly taken on by a verb; sometimes, it may be taken on by a substantive: ჩ’aruns-о? “Is s/he writing?” k’očk-o “The man?”. An interrogative intonational stress falls on a preceding vowel (Boeder 2012: 13). We have the same situation in Laz too.

Sometimes in Megrelian-Laz question is expressed without question word and suffixes too, by only rising intonation. This happened, when the answer has been given to the question, and further details are being clarified:


- ჳo. Ho.
In all dialects of Megrelian-Laz such word has rising intonation contour at the end (რვეული rveuli, დეჶთერი defteri).

In many cases in Megrelian-Laz question is expressed by conjunction too and it is characterized by rising intonation contour. It is worth noting that in Sarpian question suffix -ი (i) persists in this case.


By the way in Megrelian-Laz we have a question suffix with above mentioned conjunction: Megrelian: მურენო? Meurko tu murku? Laz: Nului vana mului? – ‘Are you going or coming?’

Tag questions

According to ‘Linguistic analysis of Megrelian’ negative and positive question tags are stressed (Kartozia, Gersamia, Lomia, Tskhadaia 2010: 323).

Megrelian: ფოჯხეთ, ჰყით? Doč’ari, varo? – ‘You have written, haven’t you?’

In such cases, the vowel before the suffix -ო (o) is stressed in Megrelian. In Laz ჰაფუ (var) ‘no’ is stressed, but the question suffix -ი (i) is not added directly to it, but it has the following form: Laz: ფოჯხეთ, ჰაფუ ჰარე? Doč’ari, hasho va reni? – ‘You have written, haven’t you?’ [word by word ‘isn’t it so?’].

Megrelian: დოჭარი, ვარო? Nini 'ari, varo? Laz: თუთა ჷს ჰარე? Tuta 'ari, hasho va reni? – ‘You have written, haven’t you?’ [word by word ‘isn’t it so?’].


Like the negative question tags we have the rising intonation contour on the positive ones in Megrelian-Laz.

Echo-questions

Echo-questions are presented in Megrelian as well as Laz. When the wh-word and interrogative particle are used in the sentence, the particle has the rising intonation.

Conclusion

Summing up everything we can conclude that the Megrelian-Laz interrogative sentences have the stress on the subject or on the verb; Mostly sentences with question word have rising intonation at the end; negative and positive question tags have rising intonation contour. In Laz spread in Georgia interrogative sentences formed without suffix -i (the influence of Georgian), and a question is expressed only by intonation. Echo questions are characterized by rising intonation on the interrogative particle.

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