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VOWEL PREFIXES OF THE VERB IN THE KARTVELIAN  
LANGUAGES

The principle of distribution of vowel prefixes is essentially identical in all the three Kartvelian languages. Prefixes are usually defined as the formative morphemes of forms of voice, version and situation. They may be given a different interpretation too:

a) The prefix *i-* is a formative of reflexive forms in all the three Kartvelin languages. Transitive as well as intransitive verb forms may be reflexive:

Georgian	Zan	Svan
<i>i-c'er-s</i> [is writing for himself]	Megr.: <i>i-č'ar-un-s</i>	<i>i-bem</i> [is binding smth. to himself]

i-c'er-eb-a [is being written]	Megr.: i-č'ar-u-(n) Chan: i-č'ar-e-n	i-bm-i [is being bound]
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In this respect, the difference between the Kartvelian languages relates to particular forms: e.g., the passive forms **i-pr-i**, **i-sq-i** are of prefixal formation in Svan, **xm-eb-a** [is withering], **ket-d-eb-a** [is being done] representing their Georgian correspondences (the former has no special marker, the latter is formed by means of the suffix **-d**). But such difference is not of fundamental value: both in Georgian and Svan cases of parallel formation are found: **kr-eb-a** — **deg-ni** [is extinguishing] and **i-kr-ob-a** — **i-dig-i** [is being made to extinguish], **brun-d-eb-a** — **t'ex-ni** [is coming back] and: **i-brun-eb-a** — **i-tix-i** [is being made to come back]. Usually there occurs generalization of one of these principles of parallel formation; languages may be differentiated according to the forms generalized in every particular case. The difference found in Zan is more essential. Thus, e.g., the intransitive reflexive form **i-č'ar-e-n** expresses two meanings in Chan: “is being written” (passive) and “may be written” (potential); ; the situation is different in

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Megrelian: **i- č'ar-e-(n)** is potential, the form **i- č'ar-u-n** has been used for passive. Besides in Chan the intransitive **c'** reflexive form (the same as subjective version) is used only when the subject acts on his own body: **xe i-bon-um-s** [is washing his hands], **kiti i-kvat-um-s** [is cutting his finger]. The situation is different in Megrelian — the action is performed by the subject for himself the action is performed by the subject for himself is also expressed: **i-k'et-en-s** [is making smth. For himself], **i-tas-un-s** [is sowing for himself], **i-č'an-s** [is sewing for himself] (analogously to what is attended in Georgian and Svan).

b) As for the prefixes **e-**, **a-** and **u-**, in Georgian they denote possession of an indirect object in the construction. Personal markers of the indirect object are usually found along with these prefixes in verb form. Their function may be defined thus: vowel prefixes point to the kind of indirect object, personal markers to the quality of the indirect object: **m-a-c'mev-s** [is dressing me], **g-a-c'mev-s** [is dressing you], **\*h-a-c'mev-s → a-c'mev-s** [is dressing him] — in all the three forms comitative is expressed by the prefix **a-**, while the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> persons respectively by the prefixes **m-**, **g-**, **h-** (**h-** is lost before a vowel).

The prefix **e-** is found, as a rule, in passive forms: **i-c'er-eb-a is** [it is being written] — **\*h-e-c'er-eb-a → e-c'er-eb-a is mas** [it is being written for him]. The situation is analogous in other Kartvelian languages too: in Megrelian **a** and **e** serve as the correspondences of the Georgian prefix **e-**, in Chan **a-** (of these **a-** is a phonetical and morphological correspondence of the Georgian prefix **e-**, in Megrelian **e-** proper appears to have been adopted from Georgian), in Svan the prefix **e-** is used:

Order	Language		
	Georgian	Zan	Svan
Non-inversive	e-c'er-eb-a (is mas) [it is being written for him]	Megr.: a- č'ar-u- (n) Chan: a-c'ar-e- (n)	x-e-bm-i [is being bound]
Inversive	e-nat'r-eb-a (mas is) [he is longing for her]	Megr.: e-nat'r-eb-u-(n)	x-e-lt'-i (//x-e-lät'-i) [will love her]

In this case too, the difference between the dialects of Zan is analogous to the above-mentioned: in Chan **a-c'ar-e-n** represents both passive and potential, in Megrelian **a-č'ar-u-(n)** [is being written for him] is passive, **a-c'ar-e-(n)** [he may write] is potential.

In Georgian the prefixes (mainly) differentiate comitative and the so-called Ethical Dative (by another terminology — Superessive and Objectival version):

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c'q've-t'-s [is tearing smth.] →  $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{a-c'q've-t'-s [is tearing away from smb.]} \text{smth.} \\ \text{u-c'q've-t'-s [is tearing smth. away for smb.]} \end{array} \right.$

c'q'd-eb-a [is being torn] →  $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{a-c'q'd-eb-a [smt. is trearing away from smb.]} \\ \text{u-c'q'd-eb-a [smt. is tearing away from smb.]} \end{array} \right.$

Both prefixes are found in the forms of active as well as passive voice (see the above examples), also in static verbs (**a-c'eria** [is written on smth.] — **u-c'eria** [is written for him], **a-dgas** [is standing on smth.] — **u-dgas** [is standing for him]).

In Svan we respectively have the prefixes **a-** and **o-**, in Zan **o-** and **u-**:

a) Transitive verb:

Georgian	Zan	Svan
(mi-) a-bam-s [is binding smth. to smth.]	Megr.: o-skir-u-an-s Chan: o-skir-am-s [is drying]	x-a-bem [is binding smth. to smth.]
(mi-)u-bam-s [is binding smth. for him].	u-skir-u-an-s u-skir-am-s [is drying smth. for him]	x-o-bem [is binding smth. for him]

b) Intransitive verb:

a-b-i-a [is bound to smth.]	Megr.: o-por-u-(n) [is spread on smth.]	x-ä:-b // x-ä-b // x-ā-b [is bound to smth.]
u-b-i-a [is bound on smth. for him]	u-por-un-(n) [is spread on smth. for him]	x-ō-b // x-o-b [is bound to smth. for him]

As for the prefix **a-**, evidenced in Zan (**a-k'et-en-s** // **a-k'et-en-c** [is doing], **a-txīn-s** [is ending], it must have been adopted from Georgian, while Georgian **a-** and Zan **o-** are not only morphological equivalents, but phonetic correspondences as well.

**o-** occurs as the morphological equivalent of the Georgian prefix **e-** too: **e-čkar-eb-a** — **o-čkar-u-(n)** [is in hurry], **e-dav-eb-a** — **o-du-u-(n)** [is arguing with smb.]; also in the position of the prefix **u-**: **u-xar-i-a** — **o-xiol-u-(n)** [is glad].

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What at first sight yields a rather obvious difference will — upon consideration of certain factors — be found to be the result of dialectal variation. This variation is found in the dialects proper of the Georgian language too: occasionally it is represented as parallel forms in the literary language as well: **a-dar-eb-s** — **u-dar-eb-s** [is comparing smth. with...], **e-žax-is** — **u-žax-is** [is calling smb...]. More frequent is semantic correlation of vowel prefixes, when one and the same meaning is expressed by different formants within different patterns; Georgian: **a-pen-s** — **e-pin-eb-a** [is spread — was spread], **u-pen-i-a** — **e-pin-a** [is spread smth. for him/her was spread smth. for him/her]; Svan: **x-a-lät'** [loves her] — **x-e-lt'-i** (//**x-e-lät'-i**) [will love her].

In all the three Kartvelian languages in forms of the 1<sup>st</sup> and the 2<sup>nd</sup> objective persons of objective version the prefix **i-** is attested in lieu of the prefix **u-** (**o-**):

Georgian	Zan	Svan
<p>m-i-k'et-eb-s</p> <p>[is making smth. for me]</p>	m-i-k'et-en-s	m-i-sq'i
<p>g-i-k'et-eb-s</p> <p>[is making smth. for you]</p>	g-i-k'et-en-s	j-i-sq'i
<p>u-k'et-eb-s</p> <p>[is making smth. for him]</p>	u-k'et-en-s	x-o-sq'i

In this case too **i-** essentially expresses reflectivity; cf.:

**v-i-k'et-eb** [I am making smth. for myself]

**m-i-k'et-eb-s** [he is making smth. for me]

The result of an action belongs to one and the same person, i. e.: the addressee is one and the same person, however, in one case grammatically it is the subject, in the other, an indirect object. The identity of the addressee has determined the identity of vowel prefixes as well. The situation is analogous with the forms of the second person. In this respect the 3<sup>rd</sup> person is different:

**i-k'et-eb-s** [is making smth. for himself]

**u-k'et-eb-s** [is making smth. for somebody]

The addressees are different persons, being expressed by different morphemes (**i-** and **u-**).

In view of this it should be noted that in the 1<sup>st</sup> and the 2<sup>nd</sup> persons homonymous forms are occasionally evidenced, the former referring to the subjective version, the latter to the objective (in both cases we essentially have reflectivity); in the 3<sup>rd</sup> person these meanings are differentiated by relevant formants:

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Georgian		Svan	
Subjective	Objective	Subjective	Objective
m-i-barebs [is summoning me]	m-i-barebs [is leaving a word for me]	m-i-t'xe [is returning me for himself]	m-i-t'xe [is returning (smth.) for me]
g-i-barebs [is summoning you]	g-i-barebs [is leaving a word for you]	j-i-t'xe [is returning you for himself]	j-i-t'xe [is returning (smth.) for you]
i-barebs			

[is summoning him]	u-barebs		
	[is leaving a word for him]	i-t'xe [is returning him/her for himself]	x-o-t'xe [is returning (smth.) for him]

The semantic correlation of verb vowel prefixes is also identical in the Kartvelian Languages; e. g., in Georgian in the relevant passive form **e-** corresponds to the prefixes **a-** and **u-**, evidenced in the forms of active voice. The relation is analogous in Svan: the prefix **e-** is a correlate of the prefixes **a-** and **o-**.

Georgian		Svan	
a-bam-s [is binding smth.]	e-bm-eb-a [is binding (smth.) for him]	x-a-bem	x-e-bm-i
u-bam-s [is binding smth. for him]		x-o-bem	

Several examples of this were named above too..

Some specific forms are attested in Svan and Zan.

Thus, e. g., in Svan the verb **x-u-ywa** [has] is **u-** prefixal and this prefix is represented in the forms of all three persons of objective alignment:

Svan		Zan	Georgian	
Present	Future		Present	Future

		Megrelian		
m-u-ywa	m-e-yweni	m-i-yu	m-a-kv-s [I have]	m-e-kn-eb-a [I shall have]
j-u-ywa	j-e-yweni	g-i-yu	g-a-kvs [you have]	g-e-kn-eb-a [you will have]
x-u-ywa	x-e-yweni	u-yu	(h)a-kvs [he(she) it has]	(h)-e-kn-eb-a [he(she) it will have]

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The Svan form attracts attention also by the interchange of vowel prefixes in the paradigm of conjugation: **m-u-yw** — **m-e-yweni** — **m-a-ywena**; The situation is analogous in Georgian: **m-a-kv-s** [I have] — **m-e-kn-eb-a** [I shall have] — **m-konda** [it turned out that I had smth.].

The **o-** prefixal verb **o-ko** [wants] is found in Zan (Megrekian); in Svan **a-**, while in Georgian **i-//u-** prefixal verbs correspond to it:

Zan (Megrelian)	Svan	Georgian
m-o-ko	m-a-k'u(č)	m-i-nda [I want]
g-o-ko	j-a-k'u(č)	g-i-nda [you want]
o-ko	x-a-k'u(č)	u-nda [he(she) it wants]

Some other peculiarities of this kind can be also found at the level of the Kartvelian languages, but they are not outside of the framework of form-building variation.



It should be noted that substantives too have vowel prefixes: **e-s** — **i-s** [this — that], **a-mas** — **i-mas** [this — that (Dative)], **did-i** — **u-did-es-i** [big — the biggest], **c'in** [in front] — **a-c'in** [now] — **u-c'in** [before]... The situation like this in all the three Kartvelian languages:

Georgian	e-s [this]	i-s [that]
Zan	Megr.: e-na // a-tena  Chan: ha-m(u) // ha-ja	i-na // e-tina  hi-mu // he-ja
Svan	a-la	e-ja

In this case too, difference is attested at the level of variation. It should be noted that in Chan the initial **h-** is result of aspiration.

Thus, in the Kartvelian languages we have deictic morphemes, common to substantives and verbs. At present their functions are differentiated although historically it is possible to determine relations identical to them, e. g., it is supposed that the nominal **u-** and the verb **a-** prefixes have one and the same function (**u-šeneb-s** [is building smth. for him], **u-xar-i-a** [is glad], **u-čan-s** [is seen on smb.]... **u-did-e-si** [the biggest] **u-c'in** [before], **u-mal** [immediately]...). Several facts point to their common origin: historically in all cases the prefix **u-** referred to the Dative substantive in the construction (**u-šen-eb-s k'ac-s** [is building (a house) for a man], **u-did-e-a k'ac-s-a** [is bigger than a man]); In the forms of degrees a personal marker **x-** was represented: **x-u-mǵ'ob-ejs-i** [the best]. #23

In this contexts attention is also attracted by the interrelation of verb stems and suffixes according to vocalization; Georgian: **še-s-ǵar-i** — **še-i-n-ǵer-i** [move smth. — move yourself], **da-ǵr-av-s** — **ga-an-ǵr-ev-s** [will move smth.]. **da-ǵr-a-s** — **ga-i-n-ǵr-e-s** [let him move smth. — let him move] (opposition is created by the vocalization **a : e**); Svan:

t'ix-e [makes him come back] — t'ex-n-i [is coming back], t'ex-n-i — a-t'äx [has come back], t'ex-n-i — ä-t'x-en-i [will come back]...

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რეზიუმე

ხმოვანი პრეფიქსების განაწილების პრინციპები სამივე ქართველურ ენაში იდენტურია. ქართულში, ზანურსა და სვანურში ი- პრეფიქსი გამოხატავს უკუქცევითობას (რეფლექსივს). ქართულში ე-, ა-, და უ- (შესაბამისად, ზანურში ა- / ე-, ო- და უ-, სვანურში: ე-, ა- და ო-) პრეფიქსები აღნიშნავენ კონსტრუქციაში ირიბი ობიექტის მქონებლობას, სემანტიკური თვალსაზრისით კი გამოიხატება კომიტატივისა და ბენეფიქტივის ფუნქციები.

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Гласные префиксы глагола в картвельских языках

Резюме

Принципы дистрибуции гласных префиксов в картвельских языках идентичны. В грузинском, занском и сванском префикс i- выражает функцию возвратности (рефлексива). Префиксы e-, a- и u- в грузинском (соответственно a-/e-, o- и u- в занском, e-, a- и o- в сванском) указывают на наличие косвенного объекта в конструкции, семантически же выражаются функции комитатива и бенефактива.