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

### Language<sup>1</sup>

#### 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: მუ რე თენა? Mu re tena?  
– ‘What is this?’

Laz: მუ ენ აა? Mu jen aja?  
(Khop.-Chkhal.) / მუნ ოონ ჰაა? Mun  
oon haja? (Vits., Ark.) / მუ ორენ ჰამ?  
Mu oren ham? (Art., Vij.) / მუა ონ ჰამ  
(აოთბ.)? 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].

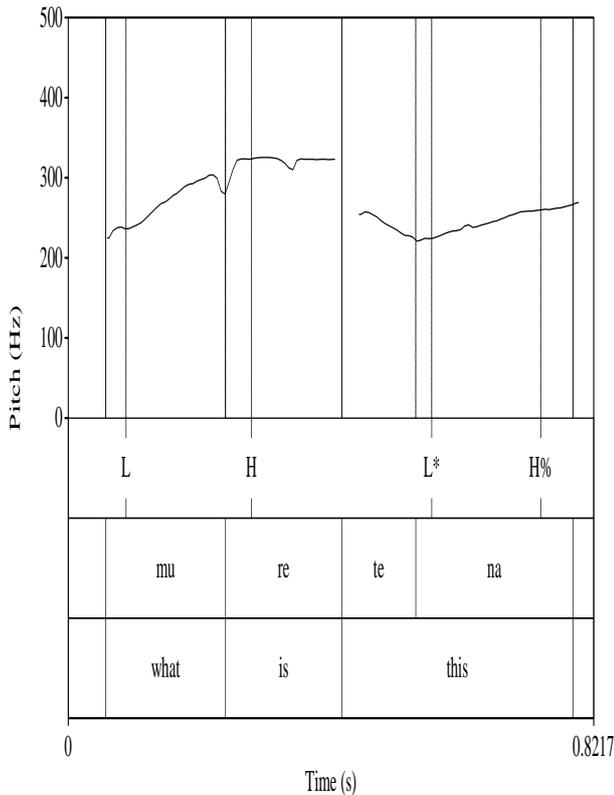


Fig. 1. Megrelian, Chkhorotsku, woman

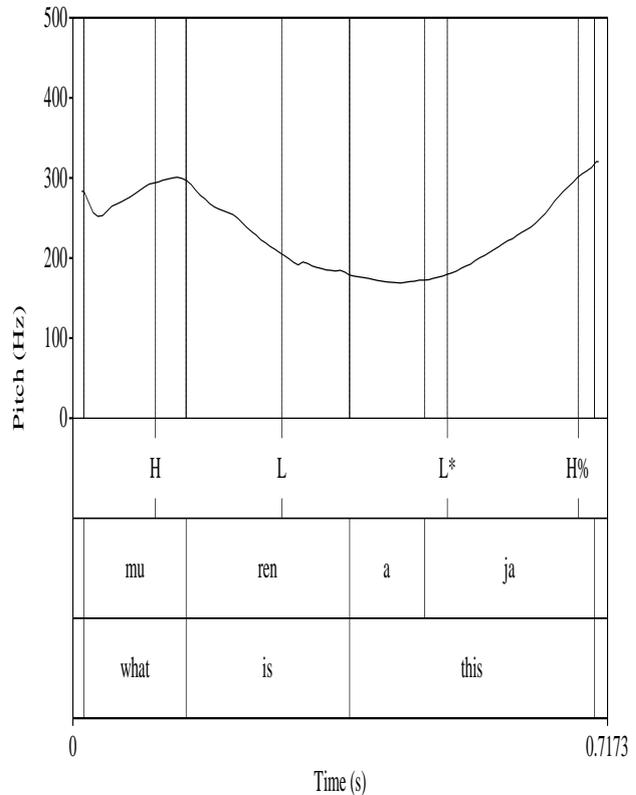


Fig. 2. Laz, Arkabi, woman

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 Vijan

(Chamlihemshinian), where a verb is stressed and the sentence ends with rising-falling intonation.

[see Fig. 3].

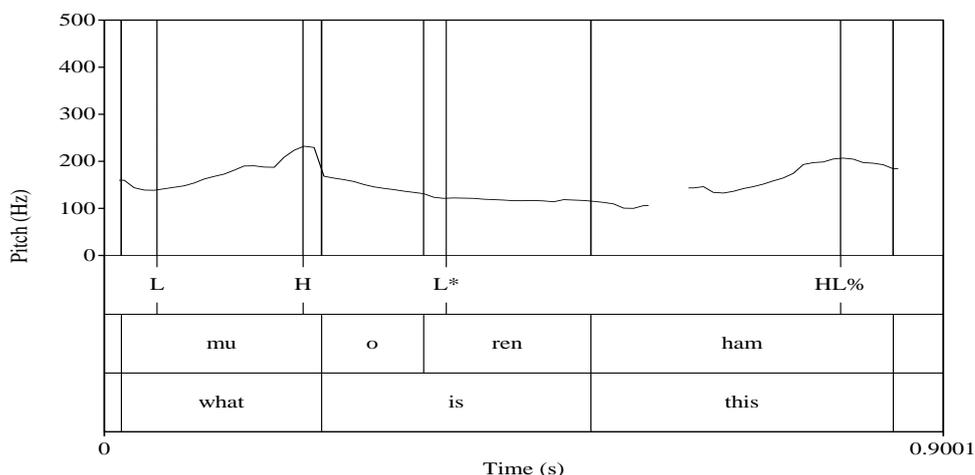


Fig. 3. Laz, Vija (Chamlihemshin), man

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 მუ რე? Tena / ena mu re? – ‘What is this?’

Laz: აჯა მუ ეენ? Aja mu jen? (Khop.-Chkhal.) / ჰაჯა მუნ ოონ? Haja mun oon? (Vits., Ark.) / ჰამ მუ ორენ? Ham mu oren? (Art., Vij.) / ჰამ მუჯა ოონ? Ham muja on? (Atin.) – [This what is] – ‘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 Vijan 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:

Megrelian: მუვა? Muva? / მუა? Mua ? / მუდა? / Muja? (Martv.) Laz: მუდა? Muja? – ‘What?’

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.

Megrelian: მი მუს ღოღანს? Mi mus ოღანს? Laz: მიქ მუ ყვასენ? Mik mu q’vasen? – ‘Who will do what?’

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 (ხენო? Xeno? – ‘Is he/she sitting?’ მორთუო? Mortuo? – ‘Has he/she come?’) [see Fig. 4], but in Laz initial vowel is stressed in both two-syllable (ხენო? Xeni? – ‘Is he / she sitting?’) and

three-syllable words (მობოუო? Moxtui? / მობტუო 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].

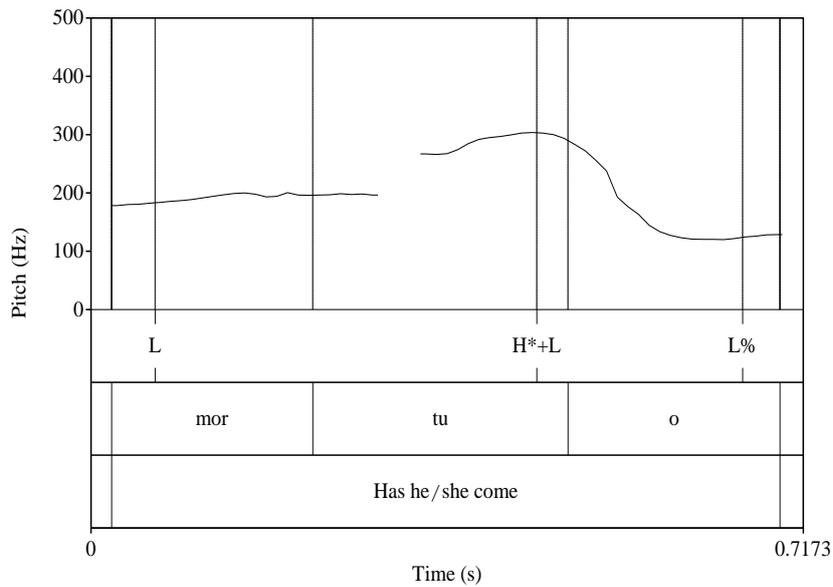


Fig. 4. Megrelian, Martvili, woman

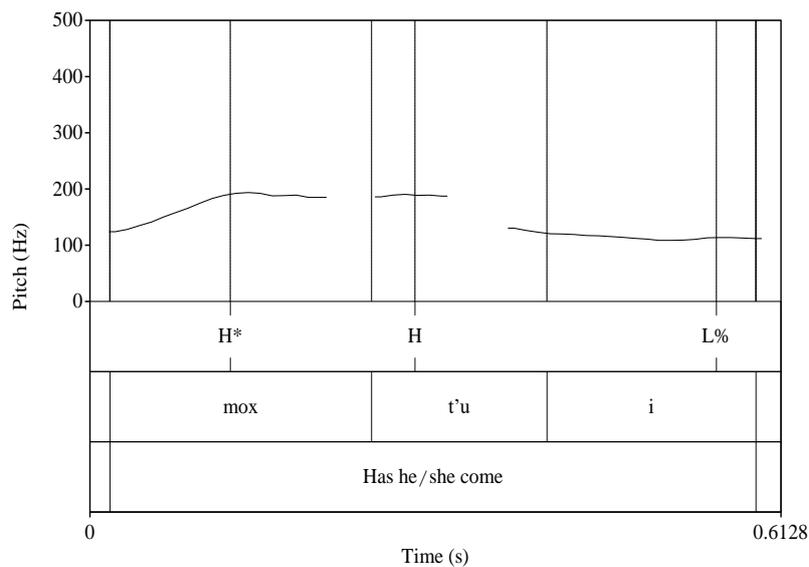


Fig. 5. Vija (Chamlihemshin), man

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:

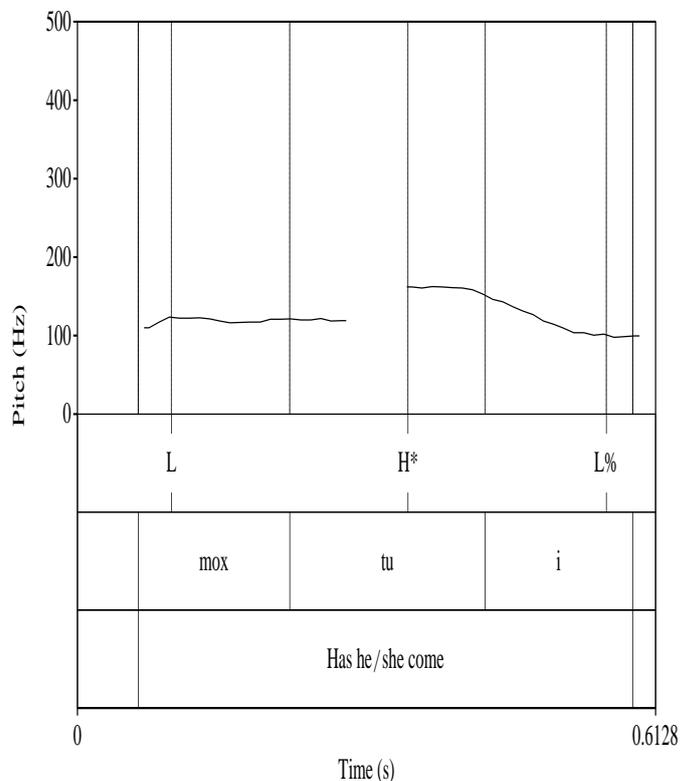


Fig. 6. Laz, Duzce, man

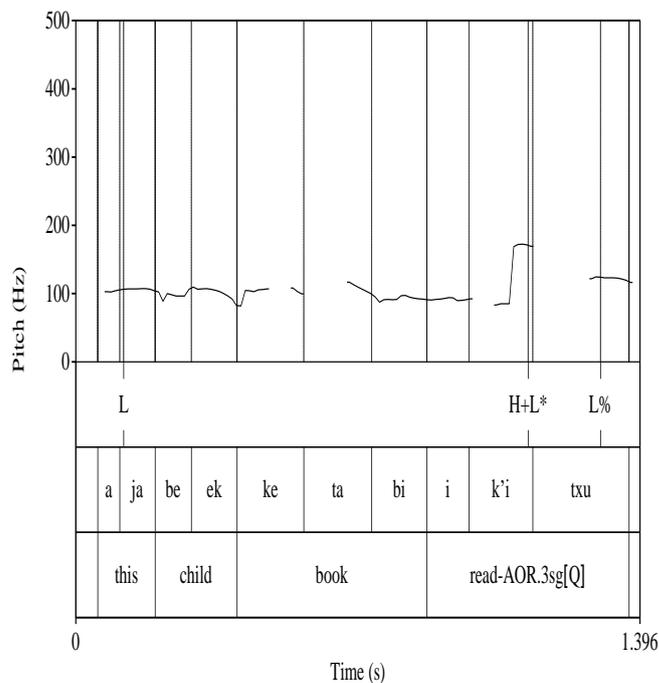


Fig. 7. Laz, Sarpi (Georgia), man

Laz: აა ბექ ქითაბი იკითხუ? Aja beek kitabi ik'itxu? (Sarp.) – ‘Has this child read the book?’ [see Fig. 7]. Compare to other Laz subdialects: აა ბექ ქითაბი იკითხუ? Aja beek kitabi ik'itxui? (Khop.-Chkhal.) / ჰა ბერექ ქეთაბი იკითხუ? Ha beek kitabi ik'itxui? (Vits., Ark.) / ჰამ ბერე ჩითაბი კოგლიონუ? Ham bere čitabi koglionui? (Art., Vij.) / ჰამ ბერექ ჩითაბუი თქუი? Ham berek čitabi 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 bayanak c'igni c'ek'itxuo? (Zugd., Samurz. Senak.-Martv.) / თე ბაღანაქ წიგნი გეკითხუო? Te bayanak c'igni geik'itxuo? (Poti, Khobi) – ‘Has this child read the book?’ (like Laz subdialects spread in Turkey in Megrelian we always

have an interrogative suffix in yes/no questions).

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: č'aruns-o? “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:

Megrelian: – წიგნი ქიციდოო? C'igni ki'idio? – ‘Have you bought a book?’

– ქო. Ko – ‘Yes’.

- რვეული? Rveuli? – ‘Notebook?’

Laz: – ქითაბი აეჭოფიო? Kitabi ječ'opii? – ‘Have you bought a book?’

- ჰო. Ho.

- რვეული? Rveuli? / დეფთერი?  
defteri? –Yes. Notebook?’

In all dialects of Megrelian-Laz such word has rising intonation contour at the end (რვეული rveuli, დეფთერი 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 -ო (i) persists in this case.

Megrelian: მეურქ თუ მურქუ?  
Meurk tu murku? Laz: ნულუი ვანა  
მულუ? Nului vana mulu? (Sarp.) – ‘Are  
you going or coming?’

By the way in Megrelian-Laz we have a question suffix with above mentioned conjunction: Megrelian:  
მეურქო თუ მურქუ? 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: დოქარი, ვარო? 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 ვარ (var) ‘no’ is stressed, but the question suffix -ო (i) is not added directly to it, but it has the following form: Laz: დოქარი, ჰაშო ვა რენი? Doč’ari, hasho va reni? – ‘You have written, haven’t you?’ [word by word ‘isn’t it so?’].

Megrelian: ნინი თაქ რე, ხო? Nini  
tak re, xo? Laz: თუთა აქ ეენ, ხომ? Tuta  
hak jen, xoš? / თუთა ჰაი ორენ, ჰოი?  
Tuta hai oren, hoi? – ‘Nini / Tuta is here.  
– Is she?’

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.

Megrelian: მუ რენო? Mu reno? Laz:  
მუ ეენი? Mu jeni? – ‘What is it?’

## 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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