

# Morphosyntax of Eastern Armenian

## GENERAL INFORMATION

- spoken in Armenia, Nagorno-Karabakh, Iran, and Georgia
- 3 million native speakers in Armenia, most speakers in diaspora
- Indo-European language family, isolate branch
- verbally and nominally inflecting, no grammatical gender, SOV, radical pro-drop
- contact languages: Turkic (*սաղ sağ* < *sağ* “alive”), Iranian (*դաշուլ dažan* < \**dažan* “acid, sharp”), South-Caucasian (*ոչըր vočxar* < Laz *ჩხური* “sheep”), Russian (*ավտոբուս avtobus* < *автобус* “bus”)

## PHONOLOGY

- opposition between voiced unaspirated, voiceless unaspirated and voiceless aspirated plosives and affricates:

/b/	/p/	/pʰ/
/d/	/t/	/tʰ/
/g/	/k/	/kʰ/
/dz/	/ts/	/tsʰ/
/dʒ/	/tʃ/	/tʃʰ/
- rarely any consonant clusters at the beginning, with epenthetic schwa:  
*միւրճկել mxrčvel* “to pierce” → /mə.xərtʃvel/

## WRITING SYSTEM

- developed by Mesrop Mashtots (405 CE), maybe modeled on Greek
- alphabet system (*այբուբեն aybuben*)
- capital letters and minuscules

Ա, ա	Բ, բ	Գ, գ	Դ- դ	Ե, է	Զ, զ	Է, է	Ը, ը	Թ, թ	Ժ, ժ	Ի, ի
Լ, լ	Խ, խ	Ծ, ծ	Կ, կ	Հ, հ	Ձ, ձ	Ղ, ղ	Ճ, ճ	Մ, մ	Յ, յ	Ն, ն
Շ, շ	Ո, օ	Չ, չ	Ր, ր	Ջ, ջ	Ռ, ռ	Ս, ս	Վ, վ	Տ, տ	Ռ, ր	Շ, շ
ՈՒ, ու	Փ, փ	Ք, ք	ԷՒ, ւ	Օ, օ	Ֆ, ֆ					
ՈՒ, ու	Պ', պ'	Կ', կ'	ԷՎ, և	Օ, օ						

## MORPHOLOGY

### Nouns:

- 5 or 7 cases: nominative=accusative, genitive=dative, locative, ablative, instrumental
- 7 declension classes: i, u, u>a, an, va, -oč, ay>o, exceptions
- no grammatical gender
- agglutinative plural: NOUN + -(u)t̪n - (n)er + case ending
- definite article -լ -ə between consonants or when consonant precedes it, -լ -n elsewhere
- indefinite article *սի mi* “one” is not fully grammaticalized

- sample word: *pəħħ₂l bžišk* "doctor", with definiteness in parentheses

CASE \ NUMBER	SINGULAR		PLURAL	
NOMINATIVE	ħħ₂l(ø)	bžišk(ø)	ħħ₂l-utp	bžišk-ner(ø)
GENITIVE	ħħ₂l-h	bžšk-i	ħħ₂l-utp-h	bžišk-ner-i
DATIVE	ħħ₂l-h(u)	bžšk-i(n)	ħħ₂l-utp-h(u)	bžišk-ner-i(n)
ACCUSATIVE	ħħ₂l-h(u)	bžišk-i(n)	ħħ₂l-utp-h(u)	bžišk-ner-i(n)
LOCATIVE	ħħ₂l-nu	bžšk-um	ħħ₂l-utp-nu	bžišk-ner-um
ABLATIVE	ħħ₂l-hg	bžšk-ic'	ħħ₂l-utp-hg	bžišk-ner-ic'
INSTRUMENTAL	ħħ₂l-nu	bžšk-ov	ħħ₂l-utp-nu	bžišk-ner-ov

### Adjectives:

- uninflected
- precede nouns
- example: *luħa pħħ₂l lav bžišk* "good doctor"

(cf. exercise 1)

### Verbs:

- 5 tenses: present, future, aorist, imperfect, perfect
- 4 modes: indicative, optative, imperative, conditional:
- 5 different conjugation patterns: -t<sub>1</sub> -el, -a<sub>1</sub> -al, -ut<sub>1</sub> -nel, -u<sub>1</sub>a<sub>1</sub> -na<sub>1</sub>, -gu<sub>1</sub>t<sub>1</sub> -c'ne<sub>1</sub>
- passive: -u -v
- causative: -gu -c'n
- personal ending
- except aorist, tenses are formed analytically with respective participle and auxiliary
  - participles: future, imperfect, perfect
  - auxiliary: *ħħ<sub>1</sub>t<sub>1</sub>* *linei* "to be" used in its present or past form
- sample verb: *ħħ<sub>1</sub>l-ut<sub>1</sub> krkn-el* "to repeat"

PRONOUN		PRESENT INDICATIVE	PRESENT OPTATIVE	IMPERFECT INDICATIVE	AORIST
1SG	tu yes	ħħ <sub>1</sub> l-nu ħħ <sub>1</sub>	ħħ <sub>1</sub> l-ħħ <sub>1</sub>	ħħ <sub>1</sub> l-nu ħħ <sub>1</sub>	ħħ <sub>1</sub> l-ħħ <sub>1</sub>
2SG	η <sub>1</sub> u du	ħħ <sub>1</sub> l-nu ħħ <sub>1</sub>	ħħ <sub>1</sub> l-ħħ <sub>1</sub>	ħħ <sub>1</sub> l-nu ħħ <sub>1</sub>	ħħ <sub>1</sub> l-ħħ <sub>1</sub>
3SG	ħħ <sub>1</sub> u na	ħħ <sub>1</sub> l-nu ħħ <sub>1</sub>	ħħ <sub>1</sub> l-ħħ <sub>1</sub>	ħħ <sub>1</sub> l-nu ħħ <sub>1</sub>	ħħ <sub>1</sub> l-ħħ <sub>1</sub>
1PL	ħħ <sub>1</sub> u <sub>1</sub> menk'	ħħ <sub>1</sub> l-nu ħħ <sub>1</sub> u <sub>1</sub>	ħħ <sub>1</sub> l-ħħ <sub>1</sub> u <sub>1</sub>	ħħ <sub>1</sub> l-nu ħħ <sub>1</sub> u <sub>1</sub>	ħħ <sub>1</sub> l-ħħ <sub>1</sub> u <sub>1</sub>
2PL	ħħ <sub>1</sub> u <sub>1</sub> <sub>2</sub> duk'	ħħ <sub>1</sub> l-nu ħħ <sub>1</sub> u <sub>1</sub> <sub>2</sub>	ħħ <sub>1</sub> l-ħħ <sub>1</sub> u <sub>1</sub> <sub>2</sub>	ħħ <sub>1</sub> l-nu ħħ <sub>1</sub> u <sub>1</sub> <sub>2</sub>	ħħ <sub>1</sub> l-ħħ <sub>1</sub> u <sub>1</sub> <sub>2</sub>
3PL	ħħ <sub>1</sub> u <sub>1</sub> <sub>2</sub> <sub>3</sub> nrank'	ħħ <sub>1</sub> l-nu ħħ <sub>1</sub> u <sub>1</sub> <sub>2</sub> <sub>3</sub>	ħħ <sub>1</sub> l-ħħ <sub>1</sub> u <sub>1</sub> <sub>2</sub> <sub>3</sub>	ħħ <sub>1</sub> l-nu ħħ <sub>1</sub> u <sub>1</sub> <sub>2</sub> <sub>3</sub>	ħħ <sub>1</sub> l-ħħ <sub>1</sub> u <sub>1</sub> <sub>2</sub> <sub>3</sub>

Future:	<b>կրկն-ել-ու եմ</b>	<i>krkn-el-u em</i>	"I will repeat"
Perfect:	<b>կրկն-ել եմ</b>	<i>krkn-el em</i>	"I have repeated"
Conditional:	<b>կ-կրկն-եմ</b>	<i>k-krkn-em</i>	"I will/would repeat"
Debitive:	<b>պետք է կրկն-եմ</b>	<i>petk' ē krkn-em</i>	"I have to repeat"
	<b>պիտի կրկն-եմ</b>	<i>piti krkn-em</i>	"I have to repeat"
Imperative:	<b>կրկն-ի՛ր</b>	<i>krkn-ir</i>	"Repeat!" (SG)
	<b>կրկն-ե՛ք</b>	<i>krkn-ek'</i>	"Repeat!" (PL)
Passive:	<b>կրկնվ-ում է</b>	<i>krkn-v-um ē</i>	"it is repeated" / "it happens again"
(exercise 2)			

## SYNTAX

### Word order

- flexible word order, predominantly SOV
- mostly postpositions, rarely prepositions
- adjective precedes noun: **հին գիրք հին գիրք** "old book"
- genitive precedes noun: **բժիշկի գիրքը բժշկի գիրք** "the doctor's book"

### Radical prodrop

- [Ես] [գիրք-ը] կարդ-ացել եմ:  
[yes] [girk'-ə] kard-ac'el em  
1SG book-DEF read-PTCP.PERF AUX.1SG.PRES  
"I have read the book."
- կարդ-ացել եմ  
kard-ac'el em  
read-PTCP.PERF AUX.1SG.PRES  
"I have read it."

### Comparative

- ablative is used for the compared noun, the adjective follows:  
**կապույտ տուն-ը կանաչ-ից մեծ է:**  
kapuyt tun-ə kanač'-ic' mec ē  
blue house-DEF green-ABL big COP.3SG.PRES  
"The blue house is bigger than the green one."
- adjective is preceded by **ավելի aveli** "more", the conjunction **քան k'an** "than" with the compared noun follows  
**կապույտ տուն-ը ավելի մեծ է, քան կանաչ-ը:**  
kapuyt tun-ə aveli mec e, k'an kanač'-ə  
blue house-DEF more big COP.3SG.PRES than green-DEF  
"The blue house is bigger than the green one."  
(exercise 3)

### Relative clauses

- postpositive: relative pronoun **որ vor**, inflected by case, definiteness, and number
- prepositive: participle construction with **-ող -oց** (present tense, subject only) or with **-ած -ac** (past)

Այն	նամակ-ը,	<b>որ</b>	Արամ-ը	<b>գր-ել</b>	է,	<b>դեռ</b>
ayn	namak-ə,	<b>vor</b>	Aram-ə	<b>gr-el</b>	ē,	deṛ
DEM.DIST	letter-DEF	<b>REL.NOM</b>	Aram-DEF	<b>write-PTCP.PRF</b>	AUX.3SG.PRES	still
չ-եմ	սսացել:					
Չ-եմ	sta-c'el					
NEG-AUX.1SG.PRES	receive-PTCP.PRF					
“I still have not received the letter that Aram wrote.”						

Արամ-ի	գր-ած	նամակ-ը	դե՛ր	չ-եմ	ստա-ցել
Aram-i	gr-ac	namak-ə	der'	č'-em	stac'el
Aram-GEN	write-PTCP.PST	letter-DEF	still	NEG-AUX.1SG.PRES	receive-PTCP.PRF
“I still have not received the letter written by Aram.”					

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Այս	նամակ-ը,	որ	Արամ-ը	գր-ում	Ե,
ayn	namak-ə,	vor	Aram-ə	gr-um	ē,
DEM.DIST	letter-DEF	REL.NOM	Aram-DEF	write-PTCP.PRES	AUX.3SG.PRES
չ-եմ ստանա					
č'-em_stana					
NEG-AUX.1SG.PRES_receive.COND					
“I will not receive the letter that Aram is writing.”					

**BUT:**

*Արամ-ի	գր-ող	նամակ-ը	չ-եմ ստանա
Aram-i	gr-og	namak-ə	č'-em_stana
Aram-GEN	write-PTCP.PRES	letter-DEF	NEG-AUX.1SG.PRES_receive.COND
(?)“I will not receive the letter being written by Aram.”			

- Modified relative pronouns (from: “Gyughi Madonnan” by Revaz Mishveladze, 2006)

Նա	ձեռք-եր-ն	այժմ	ազատ	տարութեր-ում	Եր՝	և
na	dzerk'-er-n	ayzm	azat	taruber-um	ēr	yev
3SG	hand-PL- POSS.3SG	now	free	whisk-PTCP.PRES	AUX.3SG.PST	and
այս	ձեռք-ը,	որ-ով	բռն-ել	Եր	պայսակ-ը,	և
ayn	dzerk'-ə	vor-ov	bfn-el	ēr	payusak-ə	yev
DEM.DIST	hand-DEF	REL-INS	catch-PTCP.PERF	AUX.3SG.PST	bag-DEF	and
այս,	<b>որ-ն</b>	առանց	պայսակ-ի	Եր:		
ayn	<b>vor-n</b>	ařanc'	payusak-i	ēr		
DEM.DIST	REL.NOM-DEF	without	bag-GEN	AUX.3SG.PST		
“He now freely waved about his hands, both the hand with which he grabbed the bag, and the one that was without a bag.”						

**Focus**

- FocV<sub>fin</sub>
- neutral word order:

indefinite noun: Գիրք ես առել:  
girk' es ařel  
“You bought a book.”

definite noun: Գիրքն առել ես:  
girk'n ařel es  
“You bought the book.”

interrogative pronoun: Ի՞նչ ես առել:  
inč' es ařel?  
“What did you buy?”

indefinite noun negative: Գիրք չես առել:  
girk č'es ařel  
“You didn't buy a book”

definite noun negative: Գիրքը չես առել:  
girk č'es ařel  
"You didn't buy the book"  
\*postpositive negation: \*Գիրք(ւ) առել չես:  
girk(n) ařel č'es  
"You didn't buy a/the book"

interrogative negative: Ի՞նչ չես առել:  
inč' č'es ařel?  
"What did you not buy?"

- for analytic tenses, the focused element is followed by the auxiliary:
- auxiliary cannot appear sentence-initially
- neutral word order:

<b>Ես</b>	<b>բժշկի-ի-ն</b>	<b>նամակ-ը</b>	<b>ուղարկ-ել</b>	<b>Եմ:</b>
yes	bžšk-i-n	namak-ə	uğark-el	<b>em</b>
1SG	doctor-DAT-DEF	letter-DEF	send-PTCP.PERF	<b>AUX.1SG.PRES</b>
"I sent the letter to the doctor."				

- impossible word order:

<b>*ԵՄ</b>	<b>ԵՍ</b>	<b>բժշկի-ի-ն</b>	<b>ՆԱՄԱԿ-Ը</b>	<b>ՈՒՂԱՐԿ-ԵԼ:</b>
<b>em</b>	yes	bžšk-i-n	namak-ə	uğark-el
<b>AUX.1SG.PRES</b>	1SG	doctor-DAT-DEF	letter-DEF	send-PTCP.PERF
(?)				

- focus on subject:

<b>ԵՍ</b>	<b>ԵՄ</b>	<b>բժշկի-ի-ն</b>	<b>ՆԱՄԱԿ-Ը</b>	<b>ՈՒՂԱՐԿ-ԵԼ:</b>
yes	<b>em</b>	bžšk-i-n	namak-ə	uğark-el
1SG	<b>AUX.1SG.PRES</b>	doctor-DAT-DEF	letter-DEF	send-PTCP.PERF
"It was <i>me</i> who sent the letter to the doctor."				

- focus on indirect object:

<b>ԵՍ</b>	<b>բժշկի-ի-ն</b>	<b>ԵՄ</b>	<b>ՆԱՄԱԿ-Ը</b>	<b>ՈՒՂԱՐԿ-ԵԼ:</b>
yes	bžšk-i-n	<b>em</b>	namak-ə	uğark-el
1SG	doctor-DAT-DEF	<b>AUX.1SG.PRES</b>	letter-DEF	send-PTCP.PERF
"It was <i>the doctor</i> whom I sent the letter to."				

- focus on direct object:

<b>ԵՍ</b>	<b>բժշկի-ի-ն</b>	<b>ՆԱՄԱԿ-Ն</b>	<b>ԵՄ</b>	<b>ՈՒՂԱՐԿ-ԵԼ:</b>
yes	bžšk-i-n	namak-n	<b>em</b>	uğark-el
1SG	doctor-DAT-DEF	letter-DEF	<b>AUX.1SG.PRES</b>	send-PTCP.PERF
"It was <i>the letter</i> that I sent to the doctor."				

## EXERCISES:

- (1) a) Determine the case and number of the following words:

<i>աթռնից at'oric'</i>	_____	< <i>աթռն at'or</i> “chair”
<i>սեղաններին seğannerin</i>	_____	< <i>սեղան seğan</i> “table”
<i>փողոցով p'oğoc'ov</i>	_____	< <i>փողոց p'oğoc'</i> “street”
<i>քաղաքներում k'ağak'nerum</i>	_____	< <i>քաղաք k'ağak'</i> “town”
<i>թունավոր սնկի t'unavor snki</i>	_____	< <i>թունավոր unınak t'unavor sunk</i> “poisonous mushroom”

- b) Write the case of the word given:

<i>համալսարան hamalsaran</i> “university”	locative singular:
<i>հին գրադարան hin gradaran</i> “old library”	accusative singular definite:
<i>մեծ խնհանչ meç xohanoc'</i> “big kitchen”	ablative plural:
<i>շենք šenk'</i> “building”	dative singular indefinite:
<i>վասիլկան vostikan</i> “policeman”	accusative plural definite:

- (2) a) Determine the tense and mode of the following verbs:

<i>անում են anum es</i>	_____	< <i>անել anel</i> “to do”
<i>զանգեցի zangeç'i</i>	_____	< <i>զանցել zangel</i> “to call”
<i>հանգստանալու են hangstanalu en</i>	_____	< <i>հանգստանալ hangstanal</i> “to relax”
<i>կպունեցնելու pttec'nenk'</i>	_____	< <i>պունեցնել pttec'nel</i> “to turn around”
<i>ժպսում էիր շպտմ եր</i>	_____	< <i>ժպսալ žptal</i> “to smile”

- b) Write the verb in the given tense/mode:

<i>սիրել sirel</i> “to love”	3PL.IMPF.PASS:
<i>զարմացնել zarmac'nel</i> “to surprise”	1SG.OPT:
<i>ստիպել stipeł</i> “to force”	2PL.DEB:
<i>վայելել vayeleł</i> “to enjoy”	3SG.AOR:
<i>լինել lineł</i> “to be”	1PL.PRES:

- (3) a) Rephrase the comparative clause:

*Համալսարանն ավելի հին է, քան փողոցը:*  
*hamalsarann aveli hin ē, k'an p'oğoc'ə*

b) Rephrase the relative clause:

Այս պողոցում գտնվող համալսարանը իիլ է:  
Ays p'oցօ'um gtnvogh hamalsaranə hin ē.

այս – this  
գտնվել – to be found

- (4) a) Place the auxiliary *E ē* “he’s” in the correct position according to the translation.  
(*համացանց hamac'anc'* = Internet)

Բժիշկը \_\_\_\_ այս \_\_\_\_ գիրքը \_\_\_\_ համացանցում \_\_\_\_ առել \_\_\_\_:  
Bžiškə \_\_\_\_ ays \_\_\_\_ girk'ə \_\_\_\_ hamac'anc'um \_\_\_\_ ařel \_\_\_\_.  
“It was *the doctor* who bought this book on the Internet.”

Բժիշկը \_\_\_\_ այս \_\_\_\_ գիրքը \_\_\_\_ համացանցում \_\_\_\_ առել \_\_\_\_:  
Bžiškə \_\_\_\_ ays \_\_\_\_ girk'ə \_\_\_\_ hamac'anc'um \_\_\_\_ ařel \_\_\_\_.  
“The doctor bought this book *on the internet* (and not in a shop).”

Բժիշկը \_\_\_\_ այս \_\_\_\_ գիրքը \_\_\_\_ համացանցում \_\_\_\_ առել \_\_\_\_:  
Bžiškə \_\_\_\_ ays \_\_\_\_ girk'ə \_\_\_\_ hamac'anc'um \_\_\_\_ ařel \_\_\_\_.  
“It was *this book* that the doctor bought on the internet.”

Բժիշկը \_\_\_\_ այս \_\_\_\_ գիրքը \_\_\_\_ համացանցում \_\_\_\_ առել \_\_\_\_:  
Bžiškə \_\_\_\_ ays \_\_\_\_ girk'ə \_\_\_\_ hamac'anc'um \_\_\_\_ ařel \_\_\_\_.  
“The doctor *bought* (and did not sell) this book on the internet.”

- (5) Complete the interlinear glossing below

- a) from: “*Vorteğ ēir, mard astco?*” by Zorayr Khalapyan

Բժշկ-hg	բաղի	բոլոր-ը	ավտոբուս-ով	եին	գնում:
Bžišk-ic'	bac'i	bolor-ə	avtobus-ov	ēin	gn-um.
_____ -	except	all-_____	bus-_____	_____	go-_____

- b) from: *Azg, 13 Nov 2003*

Գուցե	մի	օր	ել	համալսարան-ներ-ն	ու	ակադեմիա-յի	մյուս	շենք-եր-ը
Guc'e	mi	ōr	ēl	hamalsaran-ner-n	u	akademia-yi	myus	šenk'-er-ə
maybe	one	day	PART	university-_____	and	academy-_____	other	building-_____

ևն ստորեր ունենալու:  
nor ter-er unen-an  
new owner-\_\_\_\_\_ have-\_\_\_\_\_

- c) from: “*Patmvack'ner, novelner, felietonner*” by Aleksander Shirvanzade

Բժիշկ	չ-է, —	պատասխան-եց	սինյորա	Ստեֆանիա-ն —	բայց,	Երևի
Bžišk	č'-ē,	patasxan-ec'	sinyora	Stefania-n,	bayc',	yerevi,
Doctor	_____ -	answer-_____	signora	PN-_____	but	perhaps
ցավ-դ	բժշկ-hg	լավ	կ-հասկան-ա,	—.	Զn	հայրենակից-ներ-hg
c'av-d	bžšk-ic'	lav	k-haskan-a;		k'o	hayrenakic'-ner-ic'
pain-POSS.2SG	doctor-_____	good	-understand-_____ .	POSS.2SG	compatriot-_____ -	ē.