

Linguistics

Georgian Grammar Variants of the Words *Genacvale/Dagenacvle* as Means of Lingual Identification of Jews from Georgia

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Georgian words and grammar forms were frequently used by Jews with the same meanings. For example, such words as *dagenacvle/degenacvle* are frequently used in the Georgian spoken by Jews in Western Georgia. In Western Georgia, in particular in Kutaisi, non-Jews would say *genacvale*, which is common in standard Georgian as well as in Georgian dialects. The word *dagenacvle/degenacvle* is used exclusively by the Jews. *Genacvale* and *dagenacvle* were interchangeably used as parallel forms in colloquial Georgian at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries but later *dagenacvle* was used only by Georgian Jews and no longer by the Georgians. To be more exact, *dagenacvle* is common in the speech of lower and middle-class Jews. *Dagenacvle* can be defined as colloquialism and *genacvale* as a literary form. Lower and middle class Kutaisi Jews, especially merchants, preferred to use colloquial variant of the word *dagenacvle* in order to make the customers feel at home. It became a part of the trading business. Adopted by Jewish merchants, later it became common in the speech of Kutaisi Jews. In this way, parallel forms with the same meaning were separated and distributed between the Georgian Jews and Georgians. It is an interesting example of self-differentiation of the speech variants. © 2022 Bull. Georg. Natl. Acad. Sci.

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Georgian-speaking Jews make one of the oldest surviving Jewish communities in the world. Twenty centuries of peaceful coexistence with Georgians and other non-Jewish inhabitants demonstrates that alongside religion, customs, traditions, and culture, language was one of the main identity markers of the Jews in Georgia. At the beginning of the 20th century Z. Tchitchinadze [1: 64] pointed out that language of the Kutaisi Jews

was Georgian and they were part of the Georgian society in every respect, but spoken Georgian by the Jews differed from standard Georgian. Therefore, to describe this speech the following words are widely used by Georgian Jews: *čveneburuli* ‘ours’ (‘we’ vs. ‘them,’ ‘the specific way we live and speak;’); *israeluri* ‘Israeli’; *uriuli* ‘Jewish’ (the word is derived from *Uria* ‘Jew’ as used in the old Georgian Bible) is used only by

non-Jews. In Kutaisi *zeitkučuri* ‘of upper street’ (*zeit-kuč-ur-i*) or *šaumianuri* ‘of Shaumiani’ (Jewish neighborhood in Kutaisi) were used by Jews and non-Jews alike to signify not only Jewish speech in general, but speech variety peculiar to lower-class Jews as well. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, the peculiarities of Judeo-Georgian have been widely debated. Linguistic research on Jewish community in Georgia pointed out that Georgian Jewish speech tended to be distinct from that of their non-Jewish neighbors in prosodic (intonational), grammatical, and lexical features. Judeo-Georgian is a variety of the Georgian language (more precisely, it is based on Georgian), which does not entirely match either standard Georgian or any of the regional dialects of the Georgian language. Phonetic, grammatical, and prosodic features used by Jews varied from one region to another as well as depending on the speaker’s social status, but there were also some linguistic features shared by all regional speech variants. For centuries, Georgian Jews distinguished themselves from the rest of the population of Georgia through their distinctive speech [2].

Judeo-Georgian varied considerably in various situations. For instance:

1. In official/formal communication the upper-middle class would use standard Georgian.
2. Everyday speech was based on the dialect of the region they inhabited but contained specific phonetic, grammatical, and lexical forms as well (as will be discussed below).
3. As far as religious and tradition-related topics are concerned, the Jews used a kind of Georgian-Jewish mix, in which even Hebrew words had Georgian grammatical markers.

The differences from standard Georgian can be seen in prosody/intonation [3], grammar, and lexicon. Georgian words and grammar forms were frequently used by Jews with different meanings. For example, such words as *dagenacvle/*

degenacvle are frequently used in the Georgian spoken by Jews in Western Georgia.

In Western Georgia, in particular in Kutaisi, non-Jews would say *genacvale*, which is common in standard Georgian as well as in dialects. The term *dagenacvle/degenacvle* is used exclusively by Jews. Non-Jews use *dagenacvle/degenacvle* to emphasize that the person they are speaking to is a Jew: “*dagenacvle, kai šarval-koštumi minda...*” “Sometimes this word is used as a synonym of the term “Jew”, e.g. “*dagenacvlea magi?*”

In some cases *dagenacvle* can be found in the speech of Jewish fictional characters. The writer uses it to emphasize the Jewish identity of the protagonist: e.g. “*abramma muštars axeda: sçori brzandebi dagenacvle*” (R. Mishveladze).

They use distinctive word forms to emphasize their unique communal identity or to distinguish themselves from the rest of the population.

According to EDGL, *genacvale/genacvlebi* is a word of endearment (see *cnacvaleba, šmogevle, getaqvane*) [4].

Dagenacvle is defined as a colloquialism in the explanatory dictionary of the Georgian language, but its ethnic usage is ignored. This can be explained by the fact that to illustrate the use of this word in a sentence, Akaki Tsereteli’s and Giorgi Leonidze’s works are referred to: “*ho, magre! magre! tkven dagenacvlet! dahkarit sanam miça svelia*” (A. Tsereteli); “*çamlad dagenacvle, çamlad dagede! čemo siçrmis mzev, šen çi dagenacvle! – çiri movçame*” (G. Leonidze)”. In their works *dagenacvle* can be found in the speech of non-Jewish Georgian (especially Imeretian) fictional characters/protagonists.

EDGL also provides some examples of its use without a preverb: “*bebi, čemo tkbilo bebi, agrenc genacvlebi* (G. Kuchishvili)”; “*zmad moçveulo, rada mmtrōb, agrenc çi genacvalebi* (A. Kazbegi)”; “*roca movkvde, genacvale, zeglad gadamepare* (I. Grishashvili)”; “*ara, genacva, šemosasvlelad sada mcalia*” (J. Karchkhadze).

Based on the material included in the Explanatory Dictionary, the form having the preverb *da-* can be considered to be a fact of a colloquial speech/spoken language while that without a preverb is used only in the written language/literature. Obviously, the disappearance of the vowel *a* makes no difference: *genacvlebi* and *genacvalebi* are considered to be equally normal/ standard. It should be noted that the preverb *da-* is only added to the reduced/compressed base. The word form *dagenacvalebi* is not in usage.

Classifying the forms *dagenacvle* and *genacvale*, it can be argued that the former is informal (colloquialism) because it cannot be found in any variant of the Georgian language other than Jewish.

As we have already demonstrated above, at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries *dagenacvle* could be found in the speech of Jews but in that of non-Jewish Georgian fictional characters/protagonists (Akaki Tsereteli, Giorgi Leonidze). Both forms are common in the speech of Davit Kldiashvili's protagonists.

As a rule, in the forms of blessing person combination *me* (I) *šen* (you) is used: “*arapers ar davezeb, šen dagenacvle! – ačralda igi* [5: 134]”. “*xom ar avadmqopob mainc, šen dagenacvle*“ [5:32]. “*šen dagenacvle, kabā romeli čavicva?*“ [6: 9]. “*šen dagenacvle mag moqargul enaš!*“ [6:22]. “*amattan nurapers izam, šen dagenacvle!*“ [5: 373]. “*veraperi gavige, šen dagenacvle*“ [5: 357]. “*šen dagenacvle, šeni čri šemeqaros*“ [5: 350].

When the third person is *suli* “a soul”, the usual person combination is *me* (I) *mas*, (it) e.g.: “*gvišvele, šens suls davenacvle! ayar vart magišgan*” [6: 325]. “*sekrețari usatuod unda mačvio, magis suls davenacvle, usatuod*“ [6: 321]. “*mama, čemo mama, šens suls davenacvle, gamišvi*” [6: 30]. “*mama, šens suls davenacvle, čemo mama!*“ [5: 355]. “*šens suls davenacvle! sauğunō mosamsaxured gamixade*“ [5: 343].

The forms of **the second conjunctive** are used; the combination of the persons is *is* (he/she) *šen* (ou), e.g. “*nu gešnia, švilo, nu gešnia, šen dagenacvlos šeni deda*” [6: 35]. “*šeni črime... šen dagenacvlos šeni da dariko*” [6: 91].

The person combination *is* (he/she) *mas* (it), e.g. “*šens suls daenacvlos datiķa giorgaze*” [6: 84].

We were able to find one example with future form: “*šen dagenacvleba natliašen*” [5: 359].

All these morphological variants are also used with the forms without preverbs: “*γmertī gadagixdis, venacvale mis glierebas*” [6: 148]. “*magas enacvala misi bebia*”. [6: 257]. “*ķi, švilo, ķi genacvale*“ [6: 257]. “*magas venacvale*” [6: 108]. “*čven šegvašinebs upro, šen genacvale!*“ [6: 318]. “*šens suls venacvale*” [6: 115]. “*γmertī močqalea, venacvale mis glierebas!*” [1: 78] “*ra mogivida, genacvalos mamašeni*“ [6:114].

The future forms can also be found but not in the works by Davit Kldiashvili:

“*lalebi, lalebi, šen ķi genacvalebi*”

Interestingly enough, Davit Kldiashvili uses both preverb (*dagenacvle*) and non-preverb (*genacvlebi*) variants not only in one and the same story or in the speech of the same character (male or female) but sometimes in one and the same remark as well: “*ači gatavisupldebi, šen genacvale, da šeni sačqali dedis guls gaaxareb šeni ķargi iyblita... šen dagenacvlet qvelani... qvelani*” [6: 193]. “*ui, šen dagenacvla mamidašeni, rava mšvidobit, šen genacvale*“ [6: 11].

It is hard to say whether it matters or not that he addresses the stranger with the term *genacvale* and uses the form *dagenacvle* when he speaks to his nephew. However, it cannot be excluded that this difference matters because Kldiashvili's protagonists often express their attitude to others in this way [see 7].

The use of parallel Imeretian dialect forms is one of the peculiarities of Kldiashvili's style [*magram – mara* “but”, *rogor – rava* “how”: [7].

The forms that were common in Davit Kldiashvili's writings can be no longer found in Imeretian dialect; preverb forms are no longer used. Preverb forms are common only in the speech of the lower class Kutaisi Jews.

Needless to say, a question arises: if *genacvale* and *dagenacvle* were interchangeably used as parallel forms in colloquial Georgian at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, why was *dagenacvle* used only by Georgian Jews and no longer by Georgians in the times to follow? To be more exact, *dagenacvle* is common in the speech of lower class Jews. In addition, according to EDGL, *dagenacvle* is defined as colloquialism and *genacvale* as a literary form.

The main occupation of lower class Kutaisi Jews was petty trade. They often used *genacvale*/*dagenacvle* in communication with their customers; most probably, the Jews preferred to use

colloquial variant of the word (*dagenacvle*) in order to make the customers feel at home. It became a part of the trading business. Adopted by Jewish merchants, later it became common in the speech of Kutaisi Jews. Consequently, Georgians no longer used this form as a characteristic feature of Judeo-Georgian.

In this way, parallel forms with the same meaning were separated and distributed between the Georgian Jews and Georgians. It is an interesting example of identification of the speech variants.

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ენათმეცნიერება

ქართული გრამატიკული ვარიაციები (გენაცვალე/დაგენაცვლე), როგორც საქართველოში მცხოვრებ ებრაელთა ენობრივი იდენტიფიკაციის საშუალება

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ქუთაისელ ებრაელთა მეტყველებისათვის დამახასიათებელია გამოთქმა „დაგენაცვლე“ სალიტერატურო ქართული „გენაცვალე“-ს ტოლფასად. როგორც ირკვევა, ქვემოთმხრობულ მეტყველებაში XIX-XX საუკუნეების მიჯნაზე პარალელურად იხმარებოდა ფორმები გენაცვალე//დაგენაცვლე; ამათგან გენაცვალე სალიტერატურო ქართულის ფორმაა, ხოლო დაგენაცვლეს არალიტერატურული, „შინაურული“ გაგება ჰქონდა. მოგვიანებით, XX საუკუნის შუა ხანებიდან, მოხდა პარალელურ ფორმათა გადანაწილება ეთნიკური ნიშნის მიხედვით: ფორმა დაგენაცვლე „მიისაკუთრა“ ქართველმა ებრაელობამ (მირითადად დასავლეთ საქართველოში მცხოვრებმა დაბალი და საშუალო ფენის ებრაელობამ, რომლებიც იყენებდნენ ებრაელთა ქართულისათვის დამახასიათებელ თავისებურ ფორმებს). დაგენაცვლეს განსაკუთრებით ხშირად იყენებდნენ ებრაელი ვაჭრები მოსახლეობასთან – „კლიენტებთან“ – შინაურული ურთიერთობის დასტურად. ამ გამოთქმას ეთნიკური ქართველები, ფაქტობრივად, აღარ იყენებდნენ. ეს არის ქართულ ენაში მეტყველების ნაირსახეობათა ურთიერთგამიჯვნის საინტერესო მაგალითი.

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