

Linguistics

The Basic Aspects of Dialectological Research (The Speech of the Forcibly Displaced People from Abkhazia)

Ketevan Margiani*, Tamila Zviadadze*, Marine Kakachia*,
Marina Jgharkava*

* Faculty of Humanities, Sokhumi State University, Tbilisi, Georgia

(Presented by Academy Member Vazha Shengelia)

The goal of the publication is a dialectological analysis of Abkhazian Georgian, a linguistic study of the speech of the forcibly displaced people from Abkhazia: dynamics of the interference of the Kartvelian languages and dialects (mutual influence, mutual entering), merging of speech codes, results of diglossia-bilingualism: Russianisms, foreign vocabulary, calques... It is the result of interference, diglossia, and living in a bilingual (trilingual!) environment that the respondents and informants themselves have repeatedly stated in the texts: Abkhazian Georgian speech, Sokhumi – city without mother tongue (as multilingual!), Kodorian Svan, Abkhazian Lechkhumian, Sokhumian Megrelian, Abkhazian Imeretian. However, to turn each of these lexemes or syntagmas into a term denoting a dialectal entry (local dialect, subdialect...), the authors of the present paper believe that it requires additional materials and linguistic arguments. It can be said that the speech of the forcibly displaced people from Abkhazia is a kind of “mixed” speech with the interference of Kartvelian languages (Megrelian, Svan) and literary Georgian dialects (Rachian, Lechkhumian, Imeretian...), in which diglossia (Georgian-Svan, Georgian-Megrelian) and bilingual (Russian-Abkhazian, Russian-Armenian, Russian-Greek) occurrences take a serious place. Based on the dialectological research, the interference of Abkhazian Georgian, Sokhumian Georgian, and Abkhazian Megrelian-Svan is attributed to the field of general linguistic universals due to the abundance and numerousness of “crossed-bred” language forms, syntagmas, lexemes, grammatical forms (inclusive-exclusive, ergative construction, khanmeti phenomenon...). The dialectological study of the forcibly displaced people’s discourse, the description and analysis of the data of the Western Kartvelian languages and sub-dialects are important not only from the standpoint of linguistic Kartveliology but also from the standpoint of theoretical linguistics, as the Iberian (Kartvelian) languages – with a highly independent linguistic landscape and the degree of historical durability - contain too noteworthy information for theoretical linguists. © 2024 Bull. Georg. Natl. Acad. Sci.

Kartvelian, Svan, Megrelian, interference, diglossia

In modern science, the superiority of interdisciplinary studies is recognized. Interference, diglossia, bilingualism are the main dialectological

(linguistic) features of the speech of the forcibly displaced people from Abkhazia, and it implies “to assist” in the research of such interdisciplinary

fields as sociolinguistics, linguistic geography, ethnolinguistics... Interrelation between language and culture, language and society, language and human are known to be a topical problem of the globalization era: As Ch. Hockett rightly says, linguistics without anthropology is infertile, anthropology without linguistics is blind.

The speech of Georgians who lived in the Black Sea coastal city of Sokhumi in particular, and in general, in entire Abkhazia, was characterized by several peculiarities caused by the interference, diglossia-bilingualism. The specificity of the speech of Abkhazian Georgians was determined by the close relationship and daily contacts and communication with different languages (Russian, Abkhazian, Greek, Armenian, Estonian...).

The goal of the publication is a dialectological analysis of Abkhazian Georgian, a linguistic study of the speech of the forcibly displaced people from Abkhazia: dynamics of the interference of the Kartvelian languages and dialects (mutual influence, mutual entering), merging of speech codes, results of diglossia-bilingualism: Russianisms, foreign vocabulary, calques... Back in 1935, a great Georgian linguist Varlam Topuria began the introduction to his doctoral dissertation with the following words: "Caucasian languages have such a mixed look due to the influence and mutual influence of languages of other systems that without a thorough study of the influenced and the influencer languages, it becomes difficult to find the way in their grammatical-lexical desert." [1: 293]. The same assessment can be said about the speech of the forcibly displaced people from Abkhazia. In fact, the Georgian speech of Abkhazia is a kind of Western Kartvelian linguistic-dialectological "kaleidoscope", represented by such entries as Megrelian, Svan (Kartvelian languages), Lechkhumian, Rachian, Imeretian (Georgian dialects). In "this world" of Western Georgia, almost in all eras, different language-dialectal phenomena always merged and are still merging today, which made the interference, mixed, bilingual speech of

the inhabitants of this region so linguistically interesting.

It should be noted with offense that Georgian linguistics is quite poor in terms of studying the speech of Abkhazia's population from a dialectological standpoint if we do not take into account the provisions and conclusions of O. Mikiashvili [2:1-187] on Georgian of the Sochian (Plastunkians) and V. Topuria's researches on Rachian-Lechkhumian: in the scientific literature about the speech of the Lechkhumian people living in Abkhazia, it is only mentioned that the local Georgians preserved the Georgian language and that no new dialectal entry was formed here [3:165].

The analytical materials of the paper are: a) empirical material, conversations of the forcibly displaced people, speech samples of Abkhazian Georgians in natural form recorded (30 hours duration) by the authors within the Shota Rustaveli National Science Foundation project (#OTG-I-23-229); b) texts: The speech of the forcibly displaced people, Tb., 2016; Kodorian Chronicles, vol. 2010 [4: 1-834]; Kodorian Svan, Tb., 2020; I. Kipshidze, Megrelian texts; G. Dumézil, Laz Texts; a four-volume of Svan prose texts.

Based on the analysis of the texts, a special excess of foreign vocabulary (Russianisms) is revealed in the speech of the forcibly displaced people from Abkhazia: the determining factor of such result was undoubtedly the language policy of the Soviet Union, based on which in all-over Abkhazia the clerical work was conducted in the Russian language throughout the "Communism Great Era". In the linguistic literature, it is believed that a large part of the lexical stock of the languages of civilized peoples is borrowed. This is a natural process. Nations with a long history have borrowed most of their vocabulary from the languages of ancient civilizations (Sumerian, Latin, Greek...), today from English. That is why in linguistics the word-phrase *borrowing process* is considered a completely moderate, natural, and even necessary phenomenon. Ethno-cultural contacts with

civilized nations are clearly imprinted in the structure of the Georgian language and especially, in the vocabulary. The detection of foreign language layers sheds light on the way of historical development of Georgians and their social relations with ethnic groups of different origins. In addition, the Georgian language has also contributed to the historical development of other languages. It is believed that from the end of the 18th-19th centuries, the Georgian literary language and, accordingly, the dialects underwent great influence of Russianisms. Georgian scholars (A. Shanidze, K. Lomtadze, A. Arabuli, Sh. Apridonidze, O. Mikiashvili...) have consistently studied Russianisms in the Georgian literary language and dialects. From the 18th-19th centuries, information reflecting European lifestyle and European culture entered Georgian through Russian. Lexical borrowing from Russian has been greatly established, but, fortunately, lexical borrowing did not go beyond the sphere of the objects and phenomena reflecting and arising in life. The Georgian rich vocabulary has greatly contributed to it – the Russian vocabulary was not given a range to narrow the Georgian vocabulary. That is why, even at the level of dialectal discourse, the number of borrowed Russian words did not exceed one hundred [5:215-234]. The dynamics of interference and chronology of the establishment of Russianisms in the speech of the forcibly displaced people from Abkhazia, in the Kartvelian languages can be determined from published texts (Al. Tsagareli, N. Marr, B. Nizharadze, I. Kipshidze, Z. Dumézil, Arn. Chikobava, A. Shanidze, A. Oniani, I. Asatiani...) and on the comparison-contrast ground of live speech data.

Empirical material and the analysis of the speech texts of the forcibly displaced people reveal that lexical Russianisms undoubtedly prevail over syntactic-structural and semantic Russianisms. But it is a fact that in many cases lexical Russianisms have driven out even the prop Georgian material: e.g. The Svan word *pičk* “table” was substituted by the Russian word *stol*, the Georgian word *satli*

“water pail/bucket” was lost in the speech due to the wide spread of the Russian word *vedro*. Similar examples are attested in abundance.

It should be noted that, compared to the rest of Georgia, the number of Georgians of Abkhazia, who received their education (primary, secondary, higher) in Russian, is much larger. In many cases, this part of the society finds difficulties in academic writing communication in their native Georgian language. This is a regrettable reality in the lives of the forcibly displaced people – the reality caused by the accompanying phenomenon of diglossia-bilingualism in the Abkhazian “Soviet Era”. It is also a fact that the Russian language influences and expansion in the speech of the forcibly displaced people are quite weakened today. The difference in the use of Russianisms is obvious between generations. In the speech of so-called teenagers, those born in exile, Russianisms have already been substituted by Anglicisms, which cannot be said regarding the generations born in Abkhazia.

Along with an abundance of Russianisms, Zanisms, Svanisms which are the main dialectal characteristics of the Rachian, Lechkhumian, and Imeretian discourses of the forcibly displaced people from Abkhazia, is interference, which is of both grammatical and lexical-phraseological nature in terms of linguistic hierarchy: household, economic, field vocabulary, archaic layer (archaisms considered as dialectisms), vocabulary reflecting ethnographic features, forms established under the influence of the Russian language: *goroxi* “dry land, clod”, *očkoče* “forest troll”, *bažbaža* “delicious, fat”, *erti daždoma mica* (lit. “only one can sit on this soil/ground”) “a very small place”, *čičiver camoisveneb*s (lit. “a bird cannot rest”) “a place where there is neither a tree nor a bush”, *aaquda qalion*i “died”... Russianisms are: *ačkazi* “refusal”, *perevarot*i “coup”, *romeli goda khar?* “In what year were you born?”, *večni* “forever”, *ķanešna* “of course”, *dačniki* – “vacationer”... Jargonisms are: *prostā* “simply”, *nu* “look here”, *sestrička* “(dear) sister”, *vabše* “at all”, *ķavarot*i

“turn-off”, sasedi “neighbor”, mužiki “men”, mužikurad “like a man”...

Examples from the texts: This is how an 83-year-old Georgian from Sokhumi, who has lived in Sokhumi for exactly half a century, has been living as a forcibly displaced person in Tbilisi for 30 years: “In Sokhumi, there was Council Street, then it was called Karl-Marx, there was nothing beyond that and then 4 new streets were built: Pervaya Novaya (“the first new”) – Jguburia Street; Vtaraya Novaya (“the second new”) - Mayakovsky Street; Tretaya Novaya (“the third new”) - Shervashidze Street; Chetvyortaya Novaya (“the fourth new”) - Tarkhishvili Street. I lived on Vtaraya Novaya (“the second new”) and worked in Turbaza in Sokhumi. At that time, there were turisticheskie profsauzis (“Tourist Trade Union”) in Russia. Tourists were of different categories. A group came legally. The second group was “dikar” (“wild”), they did not agree with (uṭanxmdeboden) anyone there and when they arrived here, they contacted us, and the third was – “savsemdikar” (“too wild”). They gathered (šeikribeboden) and walked (dadioden) wherever they wanted”. This kind of mixed forms, the abundance of such bilingual “mixed” forms are a typical characteristic of Abkhazian Georgian.

The Kartvelian (Svan, Megrelian) speech of the forcibly displaced people from Abkhazia is characterized by interference. Numerous cases of structural-grammatical and lexical-phraseological interference have been revealed, however, due to the format of the article, the authors of the present paper brings only a few examples this time. Megrelian: “Irpel punkcionirens tek, irpel: berkasa gokonoo, banki gokono, bazar gokono” [6:I-132] – “Everything is functioning there, everything: savings bank, bank, market”; berkasa < зберкаса “savings bank”. From the standpoint of interference, the ergative and ergative construction turned out to be particularly noteworthy: in Svan, the ergative is derived by means of ergative case formants (-d, -em), and has two- (v-em, -n-em, -a-

d) and even three-stem (-em-n-em, -em-n-em-d): muxvbe-m-n-em “brother”, mare-m-n-em “man”. In Abkhazia’s Svan discourse, in Kodorian texts, there is attested Ergative double affixation (-em-d) which is relatively rare at pronouns and almost unusual at nouns in Upper Svan of the Enguri Gorge. This phenomenon of Abkhazian Svan is archaism due to interference: či-em-d “everyone” (cf. či-em): limkhubaal čiemd ži okhsqəd (cf. či-em) “We all formed a brotherhood”, γert-em-d “God” makdis, limzir mam maṭndeeds (cf. γert-em) - “Let God spare me if I don’t like praying and pea.”

As a trend, it can be noted that this type of declension is trying to prevail in the speech of the descendants of the Svans forcibly displaced from Abkhazia. Despite the variety of formants and allomorphs, the forms with Ergative case -d formant are used almost uniquely by the representatives of both dialects. According to the Abkhazian Svan language, the Ergative with -d formant can be found at almost all types of nominals – adjectives (mešxe-d “black”), numerals (semi-d “three”, meesgve-d “the sixth”), deverbative nouns (lichvdaani-d “question”, limzir-d “prayer”, luge-d “built”, mugem-d “builder”)...It should also be noted that in the Svan language of the forcibly displaced people from Abkhazia, the Ergative case with formant -em is very rare, but still occurs (mainly in the speech of respondents of Lower Bal origin). It is undoubtedly noteworthy that, despite the domination of the tendency of Svan Ergative forms with -d the -em formant are firmly preserved in idiomatic expressions: Ghert-em makdis “Let God spare me”, Ghert-em žasaarvinas “May God forgive you” (cf. Gheerbet-d ežas žala lakhvem “God gave strength to smb”), which indicates its archaic nature. In the format of the Ergative construction (as individual cases of three-stemmed!) the following forms of indefinite pronouns are noteworthy: er-d-va-m (cf. er-d-va-id) “who/whom”, erd-va-l-a-š-em (cf. er-va-l-e-d) “someone” [7: 177]. From the standpoint of interference, the

analysis of geographic names (especially of micro-toponyms) is noteworthy, as well.

As a trend, it should be noted that today the speech of the forcibly displaced people from Abkhazia is more strongly influenced by the literary language than before exile; This fact becomes especially clear when observing the younger generation: in this generation, when speaking in Svan, Megrelian, “attacking” of Georgian vocabulary is most intense, noticeable and observed. There are rarely confirmed cases of Georgian word-forms with Megrelian and Svan affixes... It is noteworthy that in the speech of the forcibly displaced children from Abkhazia, even special cases of *khanmeti* (middle stage of Old Georgian when *x*-marked verbs occurred) were revealed [8: 698-704]. It is a well-known fact in Kartvelology that the analysis and explanation of the term (*khanmeti*) first used by the greatest Georgian Enlightenment of the 11th century Giorgi Mtatsmindeli (George the Hagiorite) resulted in differences of opinion among Georgian scholars. As a linguistic phenomenon, *khanmeti* is characterized of the ancient Georgian literary language in the 5th-7th centuries: *kh-ikhilo* “You will see”, *kh-can* “You recognized someone”, *da-kh-idva* “Put down”, *še-kh-uabt* “Hang on”... The archaic nature and complexity of the Svan language have been repeatedly pointed out by Georgian and foreign researchers. Along with many other lexical and grammatical phenomena of the Old Georgian language (inclusive-exclusive, *tmesis*...) among the Kartvelian languages, only the modern Svan has preserved the *khanmeti* phenomenon: *kh-asq̄eene* “You make/do smth”, *kh-agem* “You build”, *kh-aambvi* “You narrate smth.”, *kh-ighraal* “You sing”. ..

It turns out that a new kind of interference type of *khanmeti* phenomenon appears in the speech of the children forcibly displaced from Abkhazia. And the interference is conveyed by a kind of fusion of the language forms of Old Georgian, modern Svan, and literary Georgian: e. g.: *khvezakhit* “We call”, *khičkhubot* “We quarrel”, *khvibanavaald* “We

bathe”, *khivknebi* “I will be”, *khvaçarmoeb* “I produce”... The analysis of the texts reveals that the *khanmeti* phenomenon of the forcibly displaced children means that the adding of an *x*-/(*kh*-) prefix to the Georgian verbal stems gives a Svan nuance to the speech, i.e. speaking in Svan. It can be observed that this is how adults express their attitude, one might say, loyalty to “the home language or the cradle language” (A. Shanidze). Separate examples also reveal additional “arguments” of the *khanmeti* phenomenon in children's speech, when not only the *khanmeti* *x* - prefix is added to the Georgian verbal stem, but even a theme marker and a marker of multiple features are of Svan: *khvaketavi* (<*khv*-*a*-*ket*-*av*-*i*) “I do/make”, *khvitamašavaal* (<*khv*-*i*-*tamaš*-*av*-*aal*) “I play sometimes” [8: 700-704].

While collecting the dialectological materials of Abkhazia, the authors of the present publication especially met the compactly settled forcibly displaced people (the total number of informants exceeded hundreds). Unlike the generation of teenagers, the elderly respondents were selected according to awareness of the Abkhazian topic, knowledge of facts, and oratorical talent... The research goal was to reflect effortless, natural forms and expressions, ordinary speech of the representatives of all parts of Abkhazia in the materials, it was especially interesting to work with young people even because of their new way of thinking and mentality, and their imperfect knowledge of their native language. As if they were unanimous, nearly all the forcibly displaced people noted that the ten years of living in exile made them almost forget their daily communication in Russian, more or less they forgot their native languages: Megrelian and Svan... They notice and see these “metamorphoses” of their speech: “My speech has become more perfect.”- this is the self-estimation of the forcibly displaced people [6:5].

It is the result of interference, diglossia, and living in a bilingual (trilingual!) environment that the respondents and informants themselves have

repeatedly stated in the texts: Abkhazian Georgian speech, Sokhumi – city without mother tongue (as multilingual!), Kodorian Svan, Abkhazian Lechkhumian, Sokhumian Megrelian, Abkhazian Imeretian. ... However, to turn each of these lexemes or syntagmas into a term denoting a dialectal entry (local dialect, subdialect...), the authors of the present paper believe, that it requires additional materials and linguistic arguments.

In conclusion, it can be said that the speech of the forcibly displaced people from Abkhazia is a kind of “mixed” speech with the interference of Kartvelian languages (Megrelian, Svan) and literary Georgian dialects (Rachian, Lechkhumian, Imeretian...), in which diglossia (Georgian-Svan, Georgian-Megrelian) and bilingual (Russian-Abkhazian, Russian-Armenian, Russian-Greek) occurrences take a serious place.

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(აფხაზეთიდან დევნილთა მეტყველება)**

ქ. მარგიანი*, თ. ზვიადაძე*, მ. კაკაჩია*, მ. ჯღარკავა*

** სოხუმის სახელმწიფო უნივერსიტეტი, ჰუმანიტარულ მეცნიერებათა ფაკულტეტი, თბილისი, საქართველო*

(წარმოდგენილია აკადემიის წევრის ვ. შენგელიას მიერ)

აფხაზეთის ქართველთა მეტყველება, გამორჩეული თავისი მოზაიკურობით, გვევლინება საცხებით უნიკალურ მოვლენად ქართველურ ენობრივ სამყაროში, რაც ზოგადი ლინგვისტიკის თვალსაზრისითაც საყურადღებო ფაქტებს წარმოაჩენს. ეს არის ერთგვარი ლინგვისტიკური-დიალექტოლოგიური „კალეიდოსკოპი“, წარმოდგენილი სალიტერატურო ქართულის დიალექტებით (რაჭული, ლეჩხუმური, იმერული...) და ქართველური ენებით (მეგრული, სვანური). აფხაზეთიდან დევნილთა მეტყველება დიალექტოლოგიური ასპექტით წარმოდგენს ქართველური ენა-კილოების ინტერფერენცირებულ „ნაჯვარს“, რომელშიც სერიოზული ადგილი უკავია დიგლოსიურ (ქართულ-სვანურ, ქართულ-მეგრულ) და ბილინგვურ (ქართულ-რუსულ, ქართულ-აფხაზურ, რუსულ-აფხაზურ, რუსულ-სომხურ, რუსულ-ბერძნულ) მოვლენებს. დიდძალი საილუსტრაციო მატერიალს საფუძველზე გამოიკვეთა ძირითადი თემები: უცხოენოვანი ლექსიკა (რუსიზმები), სამეტყველო კოდების შერწყმა, კალკები, გრამატიკულ-სტილისტური ინტერფერენცია, ერგატიული კონსტრუქციის თავისებურებანი; სწორედ, ამ კუთხით არის შესწავლილი აფხაზეთური ქართული ტექსტები, ლექსიკა, მორფემიკა, ფრაზეოლოგია... სწორედ ინტერფერენციის, დიგლოსიის, ბილინგვურ (ტრილინგვურ!) გარემოში ცხოვრების გამოხატულებაა თავად რესპონდენტთა, ინფორმატორთა მიერ ტექსტებში არაერთგზის გაცხადებული შეფასებები: აფხაზეთის ქართული მეტყველება, სოხუმი – უდედაენო ქალაქი (როგორც მრავალენოვანი), კოდორული სვანური, აფხაზეთური ლეჩხუმური, სოხუმური მეგრული, აფხაზეთის იმერული... თუმცა თითოეული ამ ლექსემისა თუ სინტაგმის დიალექტური ერთეულის (თქმა, კილოკავი...) აღმნიშვნელ ტერმინად ქცევას, ვფიქრობთ, დამატებითი მასალები და ლინგვისტიკური არგუმენტები დასჭირდება. დიალექტოლოგიური ასპექტით კვლევის საფუძველზე აფხაზეთის ქართულის, სოხუმური ქართულის, აფხაზეთის მეგრულ-სვანურის ინტერფერენცია „შეჯვარებული“ ენობრივი მასალების, სინტაგმების, ლექსემების, გრამატიკული ფორმების (ინკლუზივ-ექსკლუზივი, ერგატიული კონსტრუქცია, ხანმეტობა...) სიჭარბით, სიმრავლით თავსდება ზოგადლინგვისტიკურ უნივერსალიათა არეალში. დევნილთა მეტყველების დიალექტოლოგიური კვლევა, დასავლურ ქართველური ენა-კილოების მონაცემთა აღწერა და გაანალიზება მნიშვნელოვანია არა მხოლოდ ლინგვისტიკური ქართველოლოგიის, არამედ თეორიული ენათმეცნიერების კუთხითაც, რამდენადაც იბერიული (ქართველური) ენები უაღრესად თვითმყოფადი ლინგვისტიკური ლანდშაფ-

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