

Linguistics

Directions of Diachronic Development of the Kartvelian Languages

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ABSTRACT. Based on the comparative and/or internal reconstruction of the Kartvelian languages and taking into account the possibility of differentiation within a reconstructed-language of several chronological levels (Pre-Kartvelian > Proto-Kartvelian), one interpretation of development of the Kartvelian languages is suggested:

Stage I: the Pre-Kartvelian level showing three series of sibilants;

Stage II: the Proto-Kartvelian-I level showing the beginning of the ‘Phonemes back Deviation’ (PbD) phonetic process which takes place in the East region and does not work in the West one. Due to this process the Kartvelian linguistic space falls into two parts: East group showing s-sibilants and West group showing š-sibilants);

Stage III: the Proto-Kartvelian-II level showing the continuing of PbD process. In the North-West linguistic space the process of PbD stops because of the beginning of the new phonetic process of ‘Palatalization’. This space is isolated and as a result the Svan language rises. In the South-West, which is still in close relation with the East, PbD process continues and involves vowels as well;

Stage IV: PbD process is completed: a > o, and as a result the Zan language is separated from the East (resp. Georgian);

Stage V: the southern most part of the West-South linguistic space ‘runs down’ and the Zan union is divided into two parts: Megrelian and Laz.

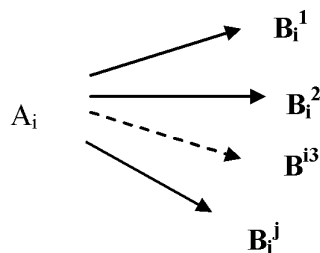
The processes are in conformity with all other linguistic data. The stages clarify the direction of Kartvelian migration. Such an interpretation creates a background for the explanation of Kartvelian cultural ‘diversity’ and/or historical changes. © 2008 Bull. Georg. Natl. Acad. Sci.

Keywords: historical-comparative linguistics, the Kartvelian languages, migration process and diachronic changes.

I. Introduction: Theoretical Background

Language is one of the means of structuring ‘reality’. Reality is a whole unity which is structuralized according to specific linguistic structures. During the process of conceptualization various linguistic entities are defined as linguistic categories. This is a way of creating a specific linguistic picture of ‘world view’.

Any ‘object’ of reality (A_i) is structuralized and reflected by specific collective human consciousness, and as a result a corresponding concept (B_i) rises, which could be different according to various mentalities:



As an object is ‘defined’ on the basis of typically one and same consciousness (res. Homo sapiens), a reflection $A_i \rightarrow B_i$ could not be absolutely free and, respec-

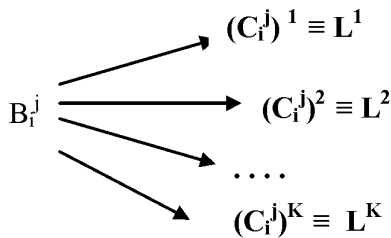
tively, $B_1^1, B_1^2, \dots, B_1^m$ concepts would not be radically different. A set of B_i -entities represents universal and specific features simultaneously:

$$R(B_i) \equiv P(B_iUn) \cup Q(B_iSp).$$

Reality can be regarded as a set of A_i objects which represent a union of universal and specific features as well: $R(A_i) \equiv P(A_iUn) \cup Q(A_iSp)$. 'Icon'-mirrored concepts could differ for any A_i object:

$$\begin{aligned} A_1 &\rightarrow B_1^1, B_1^2, B_1^3 \dots B_1^m \\ A_2 &\rightarrow B_2^1, B_2^2, B_2^3 \dots B_2^m \\ &\dots \dots \dots \\ A_n &\rightarrow B_n^1, B_n^2, B_n^3 \dots B_n^m \end{aligned}$$

Concepts are represented in various linguistic structures (C_i) and they could be cross-linguistically diverse:

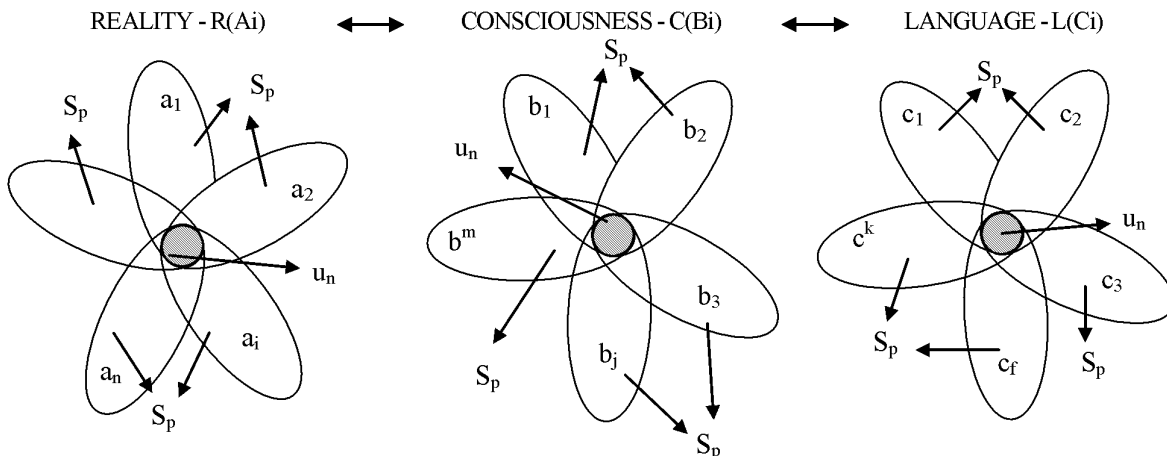


(Set $L^1 \dots L^K$ designates various languages.)

Languages are characterized by universal and specific structures as well as objects or concepts:

$$R(C_i) \equiv P(C_iUn) \cup Q(C_iSp).$$

Relations between objects, concepts and languages are bilateral: they define each other in both directions: REALITY ↔ CONSCIOUSNESS ↔ LANGUAGE; and at any stage of mirroring there is a union of universal and specific entities. The complicated relations can be represented by the following figure:



The main goal of linguistic studies is to 'discover' such universal and specific features that is possible within a general linguistic theoretical approach and on the basis of an analysis of concrete languages. The goal can be achieved by the typological, cross-linguistic investigations based on the method of comparative linguistics.

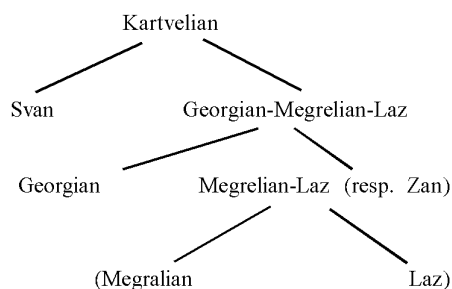
Comparison of languages traditionally gained ground along two directions: Diachronic (Comparative-historical linguistics) and Synchronic (Typological linguistics).

Comparative-historical linguistics makes it possible to represent diachronic changes of conceptualization and linguistic structuring of reality. Changes of a language system mirror changes within various social-cultural spheres of human being such as art, religion, ethnic traditions, economy, civilization, culture, and so on. On the basis of the comparative-historical methodology, reconstructed proto-language and its diachronic development help us to get complete information about the historical existence of the speakers, which includes the ecological environment (fauna, flora, geographic surrounding, climate) and human habitation, and migration in the environment as well as culture in the broadest sense (including both, material and spiritual culture).

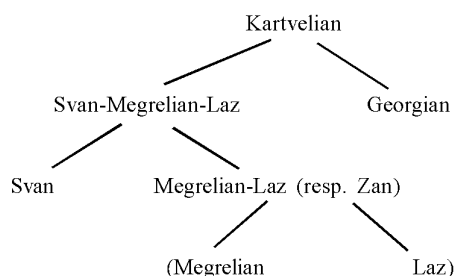
II. The Kartvelian Languages

Common genesis of the Kartvelian languages and their relatedness are not the issues of a discussion, but the directions of their development still are under investigation. Various interpretations of the regular correspondences of isoglosses between the modern Kartvelian languages (Georgian, Svan, Megrelian and Laz) suggest us to present two main directions of diversity of the proto-Kartvelian language. According to the first interpretation, first of all, the linguistic space corresponding to Svan is isolated, and at the second stage of diversity, Zan (= Megrelian+Laz) linguistic space is separated from Georgian. At the end of the modern Kartvelian languages

formation process, Laz and Megrelian linguistic spaces rise (The independent linguistic status of these languages is still under discussion and some linguists interpret them as the dialects of Zan.). So, the development of the Kartvelian languages according to this interpretation can be represented by the following scheme:



According to the second interpretation, first of all, Georgian is isolated and then Svan and Zan linguistic entities rise:

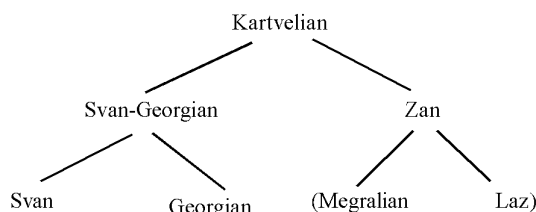


The main arguments for the first interpretation are lexical correspondences: According to present-day data, common lexical entities are more usual and characteristic of Georgian-Laz unity than of Georgian-Svan union. The second scheme is based on the correspondences of consonants (sibilants).

In general, on the basis of manifested consonant-correspondences there are the following regularities: According to sibilants, Svan and Zan show similarities (so-called, *s-sibilants* dialect) and they build an opposition with Georgian (so-called, *s-sibilants* dialect). But vowel correspondences represent a different matter of fact: Georgian-Svan union makes an opposition to Zan vowel phoneme *a* corresponds to the vowel phoneme *o*. Thus, due to the sibilants regularity Svan is close to Zan, while due to vowels regularity it is close to Georgian, and it is difficult to say which interpretation is more decisive:

	sibilants	vowels
Georgian	<i>s</i>	<i>a</i>
Svan	<i>ʃ</i>	<i>a</i>
Zan	<i>ʃ</i>	<i>o</i>

If we define the diachronic diverse processes of the Kartvelian languages on the basis of vowel correspondences the third possibility could be taken into account as well:



The schemes of development of the Kartvelian languages based on correspondences are opposed to lexical data which is decisive for such interpretations. To resolve the problems it is possible to suggest the following interpretation:

Reconstructed language must be as natural as any concrete language. It has to have any features characteristic of the natural languages. It would have its own space and time and, consequently, some dialectic and diachronic varieties must be quite natural for it. We can suppose that a reconstructed language per se has various stages of internal development. Th. Gamkrelidze suggests two different levels of internal development of the Kartvelian language: Pre-Kartvelian and Proto-Kartvelian. Presumably, vowels and sibilants correspondences are characteristic of these various dialectic entities and on the basis of the lexical data the following stages of development could be possibly suggested:

Stage I: The Pre-Kartvelian level showing three series of sibilants: *s* - *sʃ* - *ʃ*;

Stage II: The Proto-Kartvelian-I level showing the beginning of the ‘phonemes back deviation’ (PbD) phonetic process which takes place in the Eastern region and does not work in the Western one. Due to this process the Kartvelian linguistic space falls into two parts: East group showing *s*-sibilants and West group showing *ʃ*-sibilants);

Stage III: The Proto-Kartvelian-II level showing the continuation of PbD process. In the north-western linguistic space the process of PbD stops because the new phonetic process of ‘palatalization’ begins. This space is isolated and as a result the Svan language emerges. In the South-West, which is still in close relation with the East, the PbD process continues and involves vowels as well;

Stage IV: The PbD process is completed: *a* > *o*, and as a result the Zan language is separated from the East (res. Georgian);

Stage V: The very south part of the west-south linguistic space ‘runs down’ and Zan union is divided into two parts: Megrelian and Laz.

The processes are in conformance with all other linguistic and historical data, and such an interpretation creates a background for the explanation of Kartvelians’ cultural ‘diversity’ and/or historical changes. The stages clarify the direction of Kartvelians’ migration as well:



Stage I: Stage II: Stage III: Stage IV: Stage V:

ენათმეცნიერება

ქართველურ ენათა დიაქრონიული განვითარების მიმართულებები

რ. ასათიანი

გ.წერეთლის აღმოსავლეთმცოდნეობის ინსტიტუტი
(წარმოდგენილია აკადემიკოს თ. გამყრელიძის მიერ)

საერთო-ქართველური ენის შიდა განვითარების ორი ქრონოლოგიური დონის (წინარე-ქართველური>პროტო-ქართველური) გამოყოფის შემთხვევაში ქართველურ ენათა დიაქრონიული განვითარების შედეგი საფეხურები შეიძლება ვივარაუდოთ:

I. წინარე-ქართველური დონე: საერთო-ქართველურ ენაში ფუნქციონირებს სამი სიბილანტური რიგი: s - s/š - š ;

II. პროტო-ქართველური-I დონე: მოქმედებას იწყებს „ფონემათა უკან გადაწევის“ ფონეტიკური პროცესი, რომელიც აქტიურია დასავლეთში და პასიური აღმოსავლეთში, რის შედეგადაც საერთო-ქართველური ენა იშლება აღმოსავლეთის სისინა (resp. ქართული) და დასავლეთის შიშინა (resp. სვანურ-ზანური) ლინგვისტურ სოვრცეებად;

III. პროტო-ქართველური-II დონე: საერთო-ქართველური ლინგვისტური სივრცის ჩრდილო-დასავლეთში ახალი ფონეტიკური პროცესის („პალატალიზაციის“) გაძლიერების ფონზე „ფონემათა უკან გადაწევის წესი“ წყვეტს თავის მოქმედებას ამ არეალის ფარგლებში, რის შედეგადაც ჩრდილო-დასავლეთის ლინგვისტური ერთობა (resp. სვანური) სწვდება საერთო-ქართველურს და დამოუკიდებელი განვითარების გზას ადგება, ხოლო სამხრეთ-დასავლეთი ლინგვისტურად უახლოვდება აღმოსავლეთს (ამით აიხსნება ქართულ-ზანური ლექსიკური ინოვაციები), მიუხედავად იმისა, რომ დასავლეთის სამხრეთულ დიალექტში (resp. ზანურში) ფონემათა უკან გადაწევის პროცესი გრძელდება და თანდათან ხმოვნებსაც მოიცავს;

IV. საერთო-ქართველურის დიფერენციაციის განვითარება. დასავლეთის სამხრეთში მიმდინარე ფონეტიკური პროცესი ხმოვანთა გადაწევით სრულდება ($a > 0$), რაც განაპირობებს ამ ლინგვისტური სივრცის (resp. ზანურის) გამოცალკევებას აღმოსავლური სივრციდან (resp. ქართულიდან);

V. საერთო-ქართველურის დიფერენციაციის დასასრული. დასავლეთის სამხრეთს სწვდება მისი უკიდურესად სამხრეთი ნაწილი და წარმოიქმნება ახალი ლინგვისტური ოდენობები (resp. მეგრული და ლაზური).

ეს ლინგვისტური ხასიათის ცვლილებები თანხმობაშია სხვა ენობრივ ცვლილებებთან (აბლაუტი, სონორთა სისტემა და სხვა), უშუალოდ უკავშირდება მიგრაციის პრობლემებს და საერთო ისტორიულსა თუ კულტურულ კონტექსტში ვდებთ.

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