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GEORGIAN DIALECT CLASSIFICATIONS¹

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Abstract

The Georgian language belongs to the Kartvelian language family (also known as South Caucasian languages). At present, Georgian dialects are spread both inside and outside the territory of Georgia (Iran, Turkey and Azerbaijan). This paper presents a historical overview of the classifications of the dialects of Georgia that can be derived from the isoglottic dialect studies. The present-day dialect landscape developed differently from that in other parts of Europe. The country of Georgia has been rich in ethnographic diversity throughout its history, resulting in large differences in ecologies, folklore, customs, cuisine and linguistic characteristics. Special attention is given to the political factors and the massive internal migrations over the past two centuries that caused changes in the dialect landscape.

Keywords: dialect diversity, migration, language islands

Name: ქართული (Kartuli) [kartuli]

Language-code: ka, ISO 639-2: geo (B) kat (T)

CLASSIFICACIONS DIALECTALS DEL GEORGIA

Resum

La llengua georgiana pertany a la família de llengües kartvelianes (també conegudes com a llengües del Caucas Meridional). Actualment, els dialectes georgians s'estenen tant dins com fora del

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territori de Geòrgia (Iran, Turquia i Azerbaidjan). Aquest article presenta una visió històrica de les classificacions dels dialectes de Geòrgia que es poden derivar dels estudis dialectals isoglòtics. El paisatge dialectal actual es va desenvolupar de manera diferent al d'altres parts d'Europa. El país de Geòrgia ha estat ric en diversitat etnogràfica al llarg de la seva història, cosa que ha donat lloc a grans diferències en ecologia, folklore, costums, cuina i característiques lingüístiques. Es fa una atenció especial als factors polítics i a les migracions internes massives dels dos darrers segles que van provocar canvis en el paisatge dialectal.

Paraules clau: diversitat dialectal, migració, illes lingüístiques

GEORGIAN DIALECT CLASSIFICATIONS TRANSLATED IN GEORGIAN

აბსტრაქტი

ქართული მიეკუთვნება ქართველურ ენათა ოჯახს (ასევე სამხრეთ კავკასიურ ენათა ოჯახი). ქართული ენის დიალექტები გავრცელებულია არა მარტო საქართველოში, არამედ მის ფარგლებს გარეთ (ირანი, აზერბაიჯანი, თურქეთი). მოცემულ სტატიაში აღწერილია ქართული ენის დიალექტების კლასიფიკაცია იზოგლოსური დიალექტოლოგიის მეთოდოლოგიურ ბაზაზე. აქტუალური დიალექტური ლანდშაფტი საქართველოში ევროპულისაგან განსხვავებული გზით ჩამოყალიბდა. საქართველო ისტორიულად გამოირჩეოდა ეთნოგრაფული მრავალფეროვნებით, რამაც მრავალფეროვანი ენობრივი, კულტურული და რელიგიური გარემო განაპირობა. სტატიაში ყურადღება ეთმობა ბოლო ორი ასწლეულის მანძილზე პოლიტიკური ფაქტორებით გამოწვეულ შიდა მიგრაციას, რომელმაც ქართული ენის დიალექტური ლანდშაფტი შეცვალა.

საკვანძო ცნებები: დიალექტური მრავალფეროვნება; მიგრაცია; ენობრივი კუნძულები

1. Introduction

Georgian is the official language throughout the whole territory of Georgia, and, in the Autonomous Republic of Abkhazia, also Abkhazian.^{2,3} Outside Georgia, Georgian is a vernacular and communicative language of the Georgian communities in Fereydunshahr County of Iran, in Azerbaijan's Qakh, Zakatala and Belakani, and in the north-eastern Turkish regions of Tao-Klarjeti and Shavshet-Imerkhevi, which are geographically part of Europe. Apart from historically Georgian areas, Georgian emigrants (so-called *muhāğir* (Arab.) "emigrant") live in compact settlements in many other parts of Turkey (Map 1).

² Abkhazia is currently occupied by regular Russian armed forces.

³ The Constitution of Georgia. Article 2, paragraph 3.



Map 1. Georgia and neighboring countries. Image: ©Caucasus Watch

According to the last population census in 2014, there are 3,713,804 people living in Georgia, 3,409,015 of whom claim the Georgian language as their mother tongue. It is noteworthy that in this survey the native speakers of Georgian identified themselves as ethnic Georgians.

The Georgian language belongs to the southern group of the Kartvelian languages. Svan and Zan (Megrelian-Laz), together Georgian, make up the Kartvelian language family, although Megrelian and Zan are considered in some sources (Kartozia 2004; Kiria et al. 2015) as languages rather than dialects. The reason for this ambiguity is the territorial isolation of both varieties: Megrelian is spoken in western Georgia, whereas Laz is spoken primarily in Turkey. The crucial aspect of this discussion is the fact that both language varieties have existed separately in different countries for a long time, and therefore they have developed different grammatical properties.

Georgia is in the South Caucasus. It has been an independent state since 1991. Prior to that, Georgia had been one of the fifteen republics of the Soviet Union for over 70 years. Before the Soviet era, Georgia was deprived of sovereignty as a result of the 1801 treaty signed with the Russian Tsar. Over the course of history, particularly during the last two hundred years, the borders of Georgia have significantly changed due to various aggressions and invasions. Accordingly, many people became part of those states in which they were an ethnic minority rather than a nation. The conflicts in Abkhazia (1992-1993) and Tskhinvali Region/Samachablo (1991-1992) and the ethnic

cleansing of the Georgian-speaking population, led to the internal displacement of many people in Georgia. These drastic changes significantly modified the linguistic and dialectal landscapes of the Georgian language.

The language policy of Georgia is stipulated in the Constitution of Georgia and in the Law on Official Language. Georgia is a multi-ethnic, multireligious, and multilingual country. The language policy of the country, permanently renewed and updated, follows the strategy of protection and development of the Georgian language and minority languages. Minority languages include Kartvel languages Megrelian, Lazi and Svan (from the Kartvel language family) and Bats language from the Nakh family of Northeast Caucasian languages. There are compact Armenian- and Azerbaijani-speaking settlement areas in Georgia. Thus, Armenian and Azerbaijani have the status of minority languages. Other ethnic minorities in Georgia are Ossetians, Urum-Greeks, Ukrainians, Russians, Assyrians, Kurds, Yezidis, Jews, Udis, Tatis.

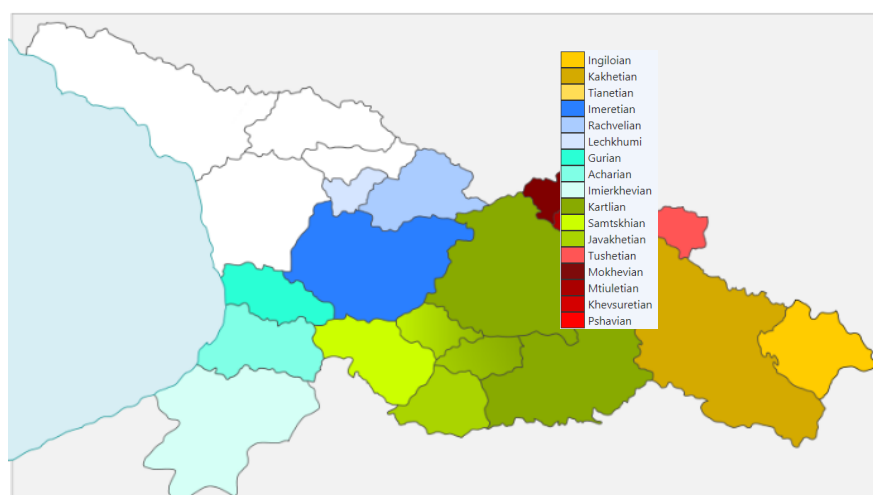
1.1 Ethnography and dialectal landscape

In order to understand the basis of the classification of Georgian dialects, two maps must be contrasted: the ethnographic and the dialectological. On an overall level, the two maps are very similar. The geographical delimitation of historically evolved ethnographic regions provides the basis for mapping isoglosses between the dialects. This leads to the suggestion that, for example, the Imeretian dialect (Map 3, blue) is spoken solely in Imeretia (Map 2, pink) and Kakheti (Map 2, green) is spoken strictly in Kakheti (Map 3, saffron (dark) yellow). The geographical distribution of dialects in Georgian shown in Map 3 is an illusion in the face of internal migrations and border shifts over the last 200 hundred years. From the very beginning of the classification of the dialects on the border between the 19th and 20th centuries, the ethnographic map was already established as a template. The dialects were described within this template regardless of the migrations and considerable language contacts along the borders with neighbouring countries. When we talk about the current classification of Georgian dialects, we mean the ethnological tradition that has been adapted in Georgian dialectology. The classification structure of Georgian dialects is

linked to various ecological, geographical, linguistic, and ethnological aspects. Consequently, there are different interpretations of the dialectal landscape of the Georgian language. From the geographical point of view, Georgian dialects are subdivided into two major groups: (a) West Georgian and (b) East Georgian dialect groups. However, the dialects that exist outside Georgia are described within these two groups.



Map 2. Ethnographic map of Georgia. Image: ®worldatlas.com



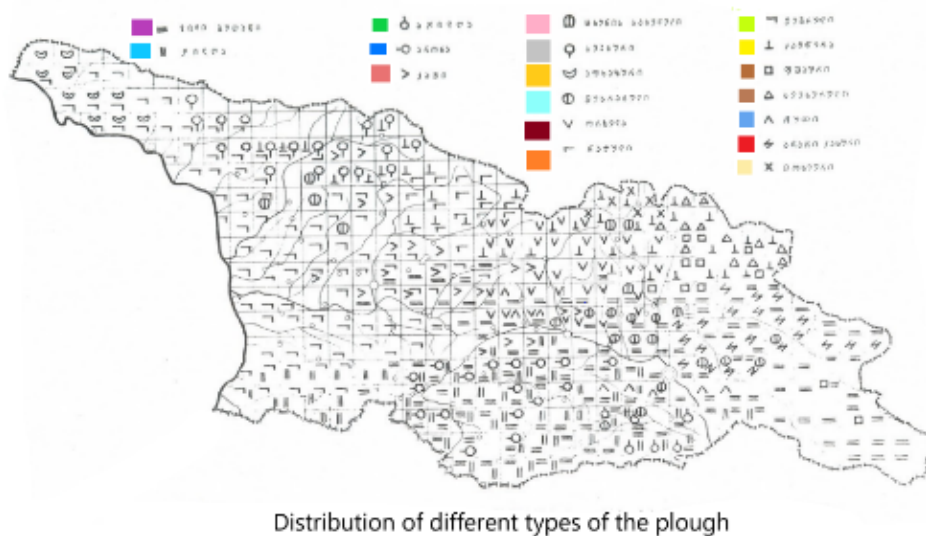
Map 3. An example of the classification of dialects according to Jorbenadze (1989) based on the traditional view of ethnographic regions.⁴ Image: ®Wikimedia.

⁴ The areas with white color indicate other Kartvel languages (Megrelian, Svan) and Northwest Caucasian language of Georgia (Abkhazian).

In order to understand the classifications of Georgian dialects made in the following chapters, it is important to describe the ethnolinguistic prerequisites for the classifications in more detail.

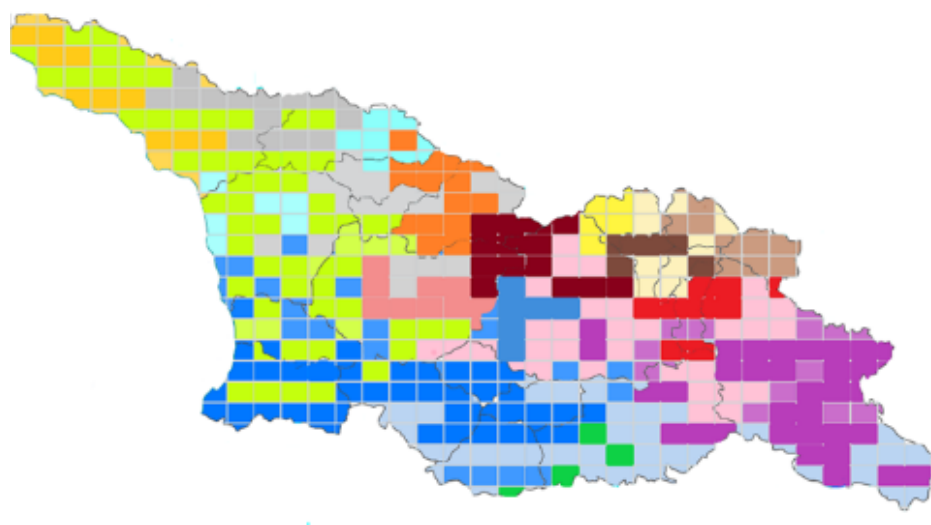
1.2 From ethnography to dialectology

The dialect landscape of Georgian has always been interwoven with the ethnological landscape of the country. The ethnocultural boundaries, which have always been blurred in Georgia, form the basis for the demarcation of Georgian dialects. Thus, the ethnological and dialectal maps are very similar and not far apart. In the following maps show the distribution of different names denoting of “a plough” გუთანო /gutani/ in Georgia (Map 4a).⁵ After illustrating certain symbols from the explanation of abbreviations in different colours, a grouping of colours (Map 4b) emerges. This serves as the basic idea for the country’s ethnolinguistic portrait (Map 4c).



Map 4a. A distribution of designations of “a plough”

⁵ The comprehensive ethnological research of the tools for tilling land is partly due to the ethnonym Georgia γεωργός (“tiller of the land”) which refers to the same type of culture.



Map 4b. A color illustration of the ethnolinguistic map



Map 4c. A general map of Georgian dialects⁶

In this example, several connections are tangible. Agriculture relates to nature and soil composition. Those ecological zones where specific tools of arable farming were developed bear the same or almost similar names. Economic activities shaped by specific ecological processes create specific cultural environments in every sphere of life manifested in language varieties. The classification of Georgian dialects reflects their historically, ecologically, and ethnolinguistically evolved status. The status has

⁶ The map, which was created for this paper, represents the sum of current knowledge of dialectal differences and is shown in this paper for the first time.

changed significantly over the last two centuries due to migration, which in turn was caused by ecological disasters, wars, and Russian colonial policies. The criteria for subdivision at this level are a combination of geographical, ethnological, and linguistic aspects.

2. Classifications of Georgian dialects

Within the unified ethnic, linguistic, historical, and cultural context, various sub-ethnic groups can be identified in Georgia. This diversity manifests itself in specific linguistic and cultural characteristics typical of a particular geographical area. Even though migration processes have significantly changed the historical picture, the traditional territorial ties between dialects remain. These ties are strongly anchored in the cultural memory of individual dialect groups, even though certain dialect areas often no longer exist physically due to migration. It should be stressed that a certain stable image of Georgian dialect areas has been consolidated in the cultural memory for more than a millennium. The two hundred years of migration have changed this image, but not completely revised it. This relationship is reflected in the attempts to classify the dialects in research.

Until now, Georgian dialectology has operated within the framework of traditional isoglotic dialectology. The classification of Georgian dialects is based on two basic and general principles: (1) territorial extent and (2) prototypical linguistic features. Both principles can be considered on one level, with the geographical extent of the characteristic linguistic features defining a dialect area.

In the east Georgian dialect group, Georgian highland dialects form a subgroup, as well as the autochthones (Ingilo Georgian in Azerbaijan) and allochthones (Fereydani Georgian in Iran) dialect islands. These dialects show linguistic proximity to the Kakhian dialect. The overview (Table 1)⁷ of 18 dialects represents the current state

⁷ At different stages of dialectology, different terms were used to refer to Georgian dialects, e.g. Meskhan, Samtskhan and Samtskhur-Javakhetian were used as equivalent terms. The reason for the diversity of terms is that historically Meskheti is a much larger entity than Samtskhe or Javakheti. The

of research. If we go further to the right of the table, the entries tend to be more variable. The number of dialects is strongly influenced by the number of ethnic groups. The further subdivision of dialects into subdialects is based partly on geographical factors and on linguistic factors to a certain extent. As for the varieties, the subdivisions are purely linguistic. Thus, the linguistic justification of the entries is stronger on the right side of the table. The designations of dialects are mainly based on the names of geographical areas, e.g., “Imereti” denotes a geographical area in western Georgia. The suffix “-et-” with a nominative marker “-i” is the typical derivation method for Georgian toponyms.

DIALECT	SUBDIALECTS	VARIETIES
Rachian	Upper Rachian Lower Rachian Rivnistaurian Golian	
Imeretian	Upper Imeretian Lower Imeretian	Ukhutian Okribian/ Vani
Lechkhumian		
Gurian	Upper Gurian Lower Gurian	
Acharian	Upper Acharian Lower Acharian	
	Kobuletian	
Taoian		
Klarjian	Upper Klarjian Lower Klarjian (Livanian)	
Shavshian	Imerkhevian Machakhlian	
Khevsurian	Shatilian Behind Khevian	
Pshavian		
Tushian		
Mokhevian		
Mtiuletian-Gudamakrian		
Kartlian		
Kakhian	Edge Kakhian Kiziqian	

province of Meskheta included Samtskhe, Javakheti, Tori, Kola-Artaani, Erusheti, Achara, Klarjeti, and Speri. Currently, only Samtskhe and Javakheti belong to Georgia. Therefore, the term Meskheian was accordingly corrected. The same applies to the term pair Mtiulian and Mtiulian-Gudamakrian. Herian is also equivalent to Ingilo Georgian.

Ingilo Geo	Kakhian	
	Aliabadian	
Fereyani Georgian	Dashkesani circle	
	Martqopi circle	
Samtskhe-Javakhetian	Samtskhian	Ude-Aralian
	Javakhetian	/Cobarian

Table 1. Georgian dialectal continuum⁸

The adjective “imeruli” is derived from the toponym “Imereti” as the Georgian name of the dialect. The English equivalent of the suffix “-ul-” is “-ian”. Thus, the toponym “Imereti” corresponds to the “Imeretian” dialect.⁹ This principle of formation for this paper is adopted from TITUS.¹⁰ The figure below emphasizes the geographical classification (Figure 1).

⁸ It is important to note that the list is not complete, generally valid, and universally accepted. The experience of dialect classifications has clearly shown that new linguistic data, new methods of contrastive analysis, and the inclusion of flanking disciplines (such as ethnology, geography, digital humanities, etc.) have always changed, expanded or adjusted the structure of the dialectal continuum. Therefore, Figure 2 represents merely an updated version, focusing on some dialect documentations over the last decade.

⁹ Such correspondences are not always valid. The names of some geographical areas are latinized differently than the corresponding dialectal names. For example, “Adjara” is the official name of the geographical area on the Black Sea coast. However, the corresponding dialect is called “Acharian”. The transcription of the consonant ჯ /č/ is /j/ or /ch/. Another exception is the designation of Georgian highland dialects; the toponym suffix “-et-” is ignored when forming the adjective: “Tushian” instead of the expected “Tushetian”, “Khevsurian” instead of “Khevsuretian”.

¹⁰ https://titus.uni-frankfurt.de/ssgg/maps/Dialects_Eng.pdf.

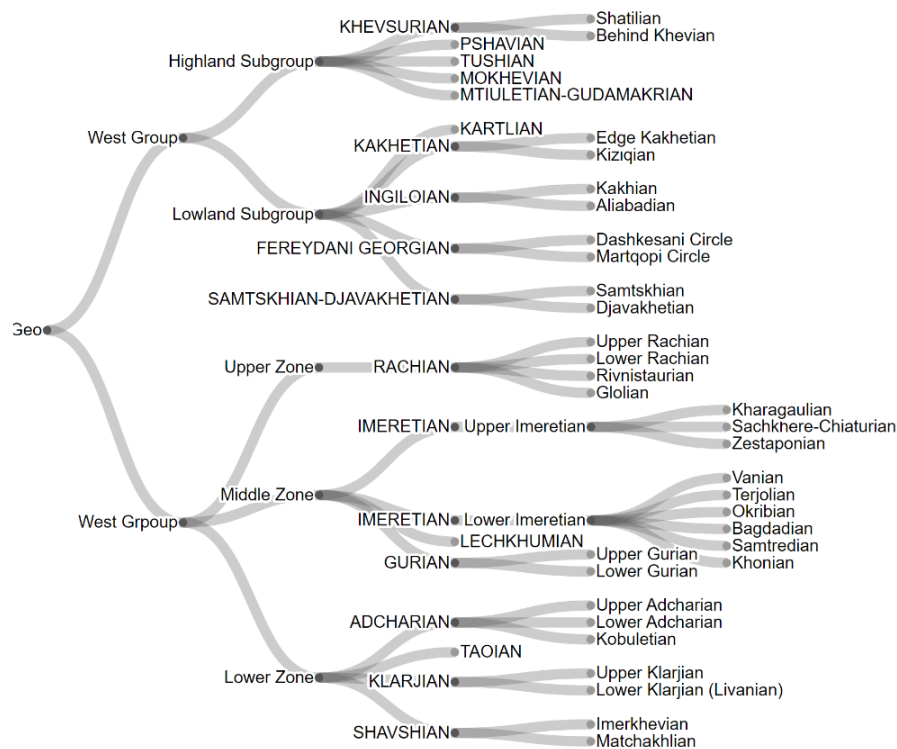


Figure 1. Geographical pre-classification of dialect groups

On the one hand, the geographical features of Georgia create a contrasting picture of mountains and lowlands. On the other hand, the Likhi range divides the country into two equal western and eastern parts. These two canonical geographic settings are employed as two preliminary stages of dialect classification: [East[*Highland*][*Lowland*]][West[*Upper*][*Middle*][*Lower*]]].

2.1 Akaki Shanidze (1920)

Akaki Shanidze (1887-1987) studied at the University of St. Petersburg and was the co-founder of the first Georgian university in 1918. He conducted research into language history, structuralist grammar, Kartvelology, Caucasiology, lexicography and folklore. His work “Fundamentals of Georgian Grammar” is still the main systematic grammatical description of Georgian. As an editor, Shanidze published the first Old Georgian Gospel texts. He wrote several monographs on Georgian dialectology.

2.1.1 Framework: Isoglottic dialectology

The first relatively complete classification of dialects was conducted by Akaki Shanidze in 1920. Prior to that, some parts of his research were published in «Материалы по Яфетическому языкознанию» (*Materials on Japhetic Linguistics*). Shanidze's classification is motivated by two linguistic domains of the Georgian language: the linguistic research of ancient Georgian manuscripts and Georgian dialect diversity. The comparison of grammatical descriptions from the two domains led to the first restructuring of verbal paradigms of Georgian and to the establishment of a completely new perspective on the complex structure of the Georgian verb.

Shanidze (1923) described the marking of grammatical person for the first-person subjects and for the third person objects in Old, Middle and New Georgian as well as in the dialects. The marking enabled him to reconstruct the norms of the historical language stage of Georgian and compare them with current grammatical structures of the dialects. In accordance with this comparison, Shanidze put forward the hypothesis that another marking of grammatical person could have been the basis of the classification of Georgian historical dialects.

If we observe the monuments of Old Georgian, we notice that in relation to the use of prefixes for the third person object, two dialectal directions are fighting with each other: on the one hand, one direction prefers to observe formal rules for verbs in the present tense as required by the corresponding syntactic structure; on the other hand the second direction, ignores the syntactic necessity and tries to apply the same conjugation rules to the verb in the present tense that it had in the past perfect tense. One direction triumphs in case of the conjugation of some verbs, while another direction wins in some verbs, and in other cases these directions are interchangeable. (Shanidze 1923: 18).¹¹

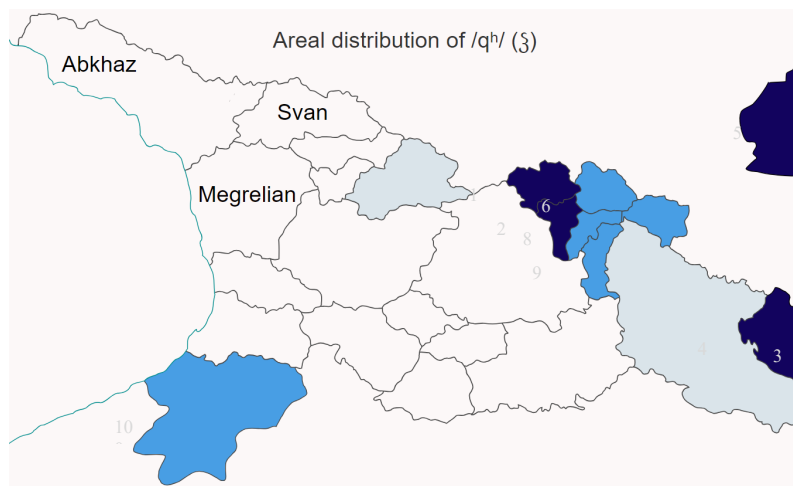
¹¹ Own translation.

2.1.2 Classification of dialects

If the rules for marking grammatical person are applied as a linguistic basis for classifying Georgian contemporary dialects, two main groups emerge: western and eastern dialect groups. This first stage of differentiation of Georgian dialects is fundamental to all his dialectological research, regardless of how complex or simple the overall classification is. Shanidze's hypothesis supports the natural correspondence of linguistic and geographical aspects of the Georgian dialect continuum and outlines a model upon which the classifications of Georgian dialects can be based.

Within the eastern dialect group, Shanidze proposes different rules of marking the second person subject as a subclassification criterion whereby Kartlian takes the position on one side and the rest of the dialects (Kakhian, Kiziqian, Pshavian, Mtiulur-Gudamakrian, Khevsurian, Mokhevian, Tushian) has the opposite position. However, when the criterion of classification is changed to mark the third person object, the eastern dialect group is rearranged in two separate groups, i.e. Khevsurian and its opposite group of dialects (Khartlian, Kiziqian, Pshavian, and Tushian) (Shanidze 1981: 138).

Shanidze points out that it is not only about the rules of marking, but also about the phonetic nature of the prefixes (personal markers). As far as this aspect is concerned, the highland dialects within the Eastern dialect group, such as Chevsurian, Mokhevian and Tushian, are grouped together in a subgroup that Shanidze calls Pkhovian.



Map 5. Areal distribution of the pharyngeal consonant /qʰ/ (ʒ)

Legend:

STRONG APPEARANCE [Dark Blou] WEAK APPEARANCE [Light Blou]

1 - Khevsurian

6 - Mtiulia

2 - Tushian

7 - Gudamakrian

3 - Ingilo Georgian

8 - Mokhevian

4 - Kitiqian

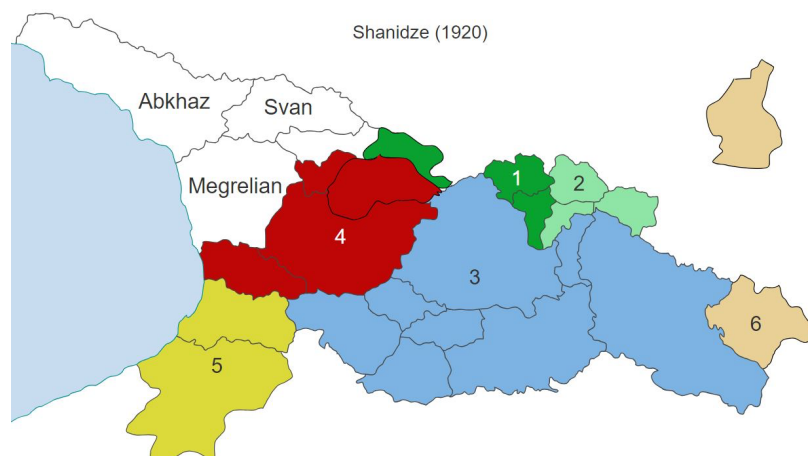
9 - Pshavian

5 - Ferydani Georgian (Iran)

10 - Shavshian/Taoian

The highland dialects differ from other Georgian dialects in the preservation of linguistic features of Old Georgian. One of the most important features of this type is the presence of the pharyngeal consonant /qʰ/ (ʒ) (Map 5).

In Old Georgian, this phoneme had various grammatical functions, including acting as a personal marker and as a prefix for the intensified forms of some adjectives. For Shanidze, this phoneme served as a clear criterion for classifying dialects into two groups: those that possessed it and those that lost it in the course of language history.



Map 6. Six dialect groups according to Shanidze (1920 -1981)

Legend:

1. Phovian - Khevsurian, Mokhebian and Tushian
2. Mtiulian and Pshavian (with particular linguistic proximity to Upper Rakhian)
3. Kartlian-Kakhian (with Meskhatian-Javakhetian, under Kartlian, Kiziqian, under Kakhian)
4. Western dialects: Upper, Middle-, Lower Imeretian, Gurian, Lower Rachian
5. South-Western group: Upper Acharian and Imerkhebian,
6. Ingilo Georgian

In the Pkhovian subgroup of highland dialects, Pshavian takes a peripheral linguistic position, because linguistic influences are easily recognizable due to geographical closeness to Kartlian and Kakhian, Mtiulian occupies a special position in relation to all dialects in the eastern group because in Mtiulian long vowels are phonologically distinctive elements. This phenomenon is generally considered a rare linguistic feature of Georgian.

In the later works of Akaki Shanidze (1957), areal-linguistic aspects became the focus of dialect classifications.

Thus, Shanidze differentiated six dialect areas in Georgia (Map 6): 1. Phovian, i.e., Khevsurian, Mokhebian and Tushian, 2. Mtiulian and Pshavian (with particular linguistic proximity to Upper Rakhian), 3. Kartlian-Kakhian (with Meskhetian-Javakhetian under Kartlian and Kiziqian under Kakhian), 4. western dialects: Upper, Central and lower Imeretian, Gurian and Lower Rachian, 5. south-western group: Upper Acharian and Imerkhebian, 6. Ingilo Georgian.

2.2 Shota Dzidziguri (1935/1970)

Shota Dzidziguri (1911-1994) studied at Tbilisi State University. He was a student of Nikolai Marr. He collected and published many dialectological texts produced by his or other linguists' earlier field research. He researched the regular sound correspondences in the dialects of Georgian and explained the linguistic relations. One of his research areas was Bascolology. He is a co-founder of the Bascolology Department at Tbilisi State University.

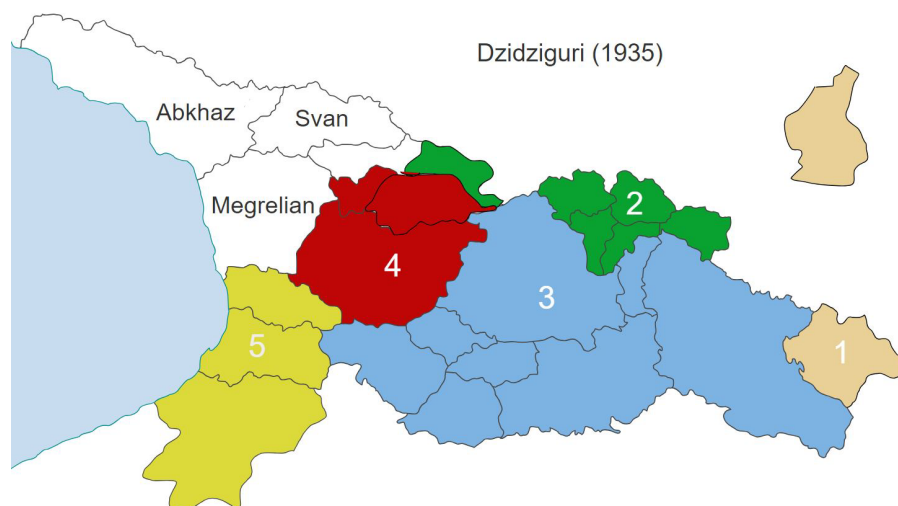
2.2.1 Framework: Isoglottic dialectology

Dzidziguri's theoretical concept is based on the empiricism of lexical material. He considers the collection of lexical data in the individual dialects and dialect varieties as the starting point for classification. In his opinion, the lexical data should fulfil the following criteria: Comprehensiveness, geographical completeness, and comparability. He formulated a research program (Dzidziguri 1941) on how this goal could be achieved. Based on the lexical data, he determined the phonetic changes that appeared regularly in the dialects and used the findings from phonetics to explain the classification.

The theoretical concept for the basis of the classification of dialects was taken up again in the 1980s as a template for the creation of a dialectological atlas of Georgian.¹²

¹² At a dialectological conference in Tbilisi in 1983, Aram Martirosov presented a questionnaire for collecting lexical dialect data. Because of its blue cover, this questionnaire is still known today as the "blue questionnaire" (Martirosov 1983).

2.2.2 Classification of dialects



Map 7. Five dialect groups according to Dzidziguri (1935)

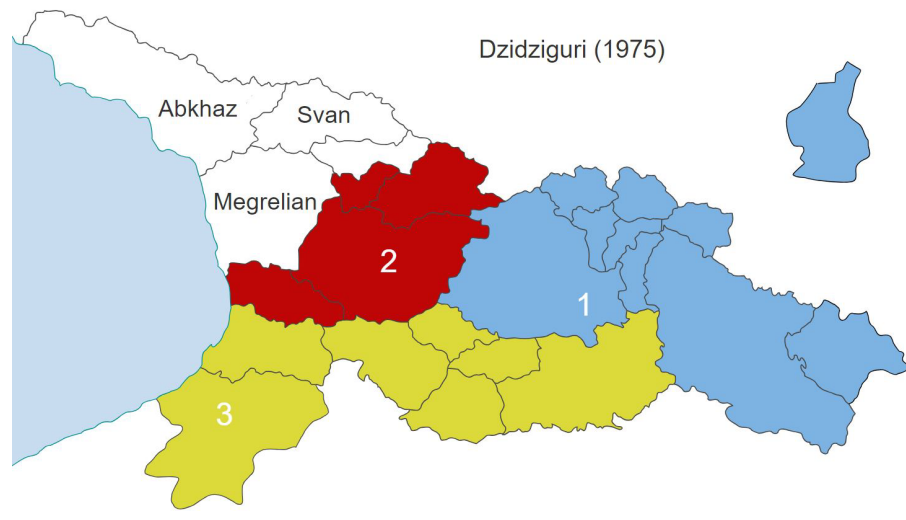
Legend:

1. Ingilo Georgian, Fereydani Georgian;
2. Tushian, Pshavian, Khevsurian, Mokhebian, Mtiulian, Highland Rachian;
3. Kakhian, Kartlian, Meskhetian;
4. Upper Imeretian, Lower Imeretian, Lower Rachian;
5. Gurian, Acharian, Imerkhebian.

In 1935, Shota Tzidziguri divided the Georgian dialects into five main groups (Map 7), primarily based on lexical and phonetic characteristics: 1. Ingilo Georgian, Fereydani Georgian, 2. Tushian, Pshavian, Khevsurian, Mokhebian, Mtiulian, highland Rachian, 3. Kakhian, Kartlian, Meskhetian; 4. Upper Imeretian, Lower Imeretian, Lower Rachian; 5. Gurian, Acharian, and Imerkhebian.

It should be noted that Upper Imeretian and Lower Imeretian are represented as two distinct dialects, and Highland Rachian is included in the traditional group of highland dialects. Dzidziguri proposed another grouping of the dialects according to geographical criteria in 1975. He identified only three main groups (Map 8): 1. east Georgian dialects (Kartlian, Kakhian-Kiziqian, Ingilo Georgian, Khevsurian, Pshavian, Tushian, Mtiul-Gudamakian, and Fereydani Georgian), 2. west Georgian dialects (Rachian, Letchkhumian, Imeretian, and Gurian), 3. south Georgian dialects (Meskhur-Javakhan, Acharian, Imerkhebian) (Dzidziguri 1975: 139).

Already in 1957, Dzidziguri pointed out that the traditional classification of Georgian dialects into western and eastern groups as well as their subclassification is only a portrayal of the ethnological landscape of Georgia in linguistic terms. He stated that if more ethnological regions were singled out, more dialects would be assumed.



Map 8. Three dialect groups according to Dzidziguri (1975)

Legend:

1. East Georgian dialects: Kartlian, Kakhian-Kiziqian, Ingilo Georgian, Khevsurian, Pshavian, Tushian, Mtiul-Gudamakrian, Fereydani Georgian
2. West Georgian dialects: Rachian, Letchkhumian, Imeretian, Gurian
3. South Georgian dialects: Meskhian-Javakhetian, Acharian, Imerkhebian

Dzidziguri criticizes this approach using the example of Rachian. Rachian has an inconsistent linguistic structure. He distinguishes between two linguistically separate areas. One area, which Dzidziguri calls highland Rhaetic, has linguistic similarities with the highland dialects of the eastern group: Tushian, Khevsurian and Pshavian. The second area tends towards Imeretian. Furthermore, Dzidziguri believes that the Imeretic dialect is not a unified entity; the degree of linguistic differentiation between Upper Imeretic and Lower Imeretic proves that they are two separate dialects; Upper Imeretian must have had much in common with Lower Rachian in the past.

Dzidziguri attempts to clarify the interfaces between the dialects and to establish the notion of a dialect continuum corresponding to the geographical ecology, but also reflecting the traditional ethnological regions.

2.3 Varlam Topuria (1963)

Varlam Topuria (1901-1966) distinguished himself in Georgian linguistics through many years of academic activity and numerous students. He researched Kartvel languages, especially Svan. He developed the concept of systematic documentation of dialects through field research in Georgia and supervised several projects implementing his concept. Topuria influenced an entire generation of dialect researchers in Georgia.

2.3.1 Framework: Isoglottic dialectology

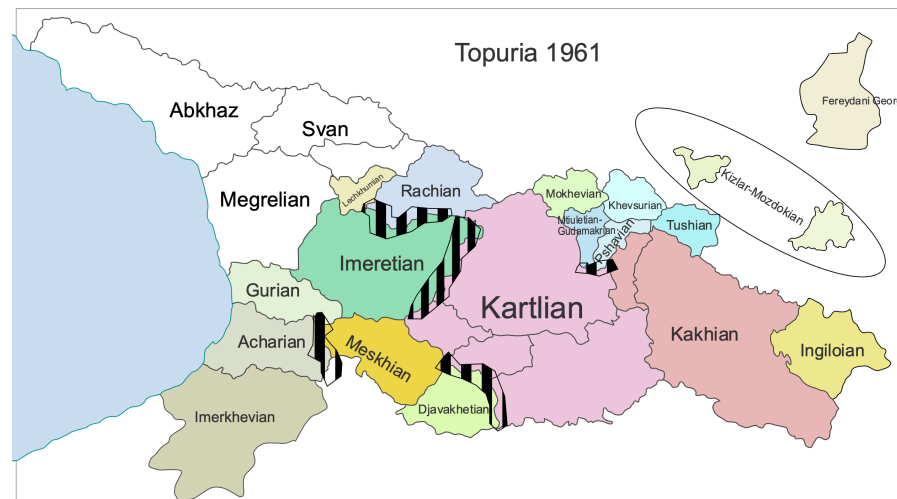
Although Topuria was a student of Chikobava and his classification of dialects into larger dialect clusters was adopted, Topuria is the first researcher to present a template for the systematic empirical study of dialects. His instructions for field research had a decisive influence on Georgian dialectology in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s. He barely addresses the theoretical criteria of dialect research. It is unclear why he took the 17 different dialects as the starting point for his classification and no explanation can be found. Topuria presumably started from the maximum differentiation that dominated the research tradition at his time.

An important theoretical aspect of Topuria's work is the assumption of so-called dialect transition zones along dialect contact areas. Topuria identifies specific places where the overlapping of linguistic characteristics can be expected.

2.3.2 Classification of dialects

In 1961, together with Gigineishvili and Kavtaradze, Topuria published a landmark study *Georgian Dialectology*, a chrestomathy of texts collected during decades, in which he described separate dialects. Topuria wrote the chapters on Khevsurian, Mtiulian, Tushian, Lechkhumian, Fereydani Georgian, Meskhian, Acharian, Kartlian, Imerkhebian, and Imeretian. For the first time, he differentiates four

subdialects in Rachian (Map 9): (1) Rivnistaurian, (2) Gholian, (3) Upper Rachian, and (4) Lower Rachian. Besides, Topuria's classification of Kizlar-Mozdokian was a novelty in Georgian dialectology.



Map 9. Topuria's classification and transition zones of Georgian dialects

In the transition zones, Topuria described the dialect influences on specific root forms of words. Thus, under the influence of Mtiulian, the complex /-o-/ is used instead of /-wa-/ in Kartlian: კვალი /*kwali*/ კოლი / *à* *koli*/ “trace”, განსხვავება /*gansxvaveba*/ *à* განსხოვება /*gansxoveba*/ “difference”. Again, under the influence of Meskhetian, instead of the thematic marker /-eb-/, Meskhetian /-am-/ is used in Kartlian: ვაკეთებ /*vaḱeteb*/ *à* ვაკეთამ /*vaḱetam*/ “I make”.

In the 1960s, Topuria established a unified programme of research of Georgian dialects, according to which the structure and methods of description were presented as a guideline. The collection of original empirical data was at the centre of the program. The research programme was followed by numerous monographs on individual dialects that adhered to Topuria's principles.

2.4 Arnold Chikobava (1966)

Arnold Chokobava (1898-1987) was one of the first students at the university in Tbilisi, which was founded in 2018. He even studied under the supervision of Akaki

Shanidze. He is considered the founder of comparative Kartvelology and Caucasiology in Georgia. He created the theory of the Ibero-Caucasian language family and criticized the element theory of Nikolaj Marr. He founded the bilingual (Russian-Georgian) linguistic journal “Ibero-Caucasian Linguistics”, which is currently published by the research institute named after him.

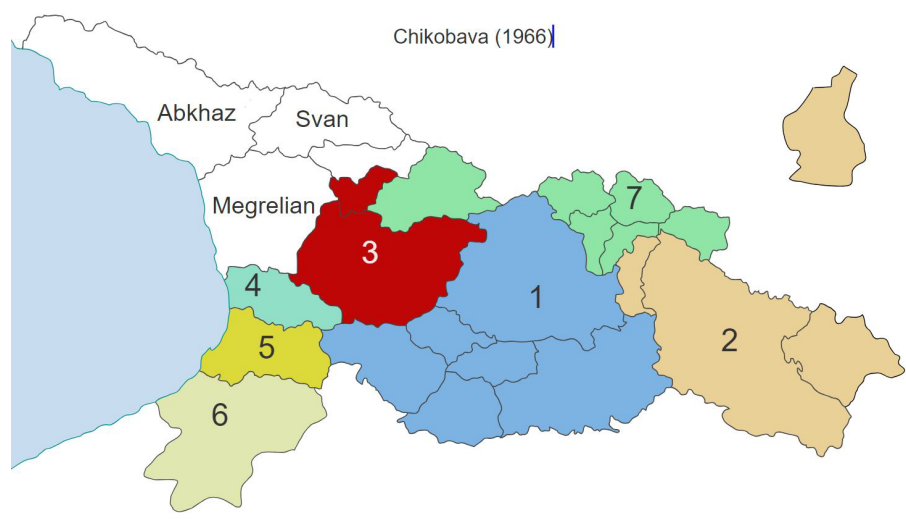
2.4.1 Framework: Isoglottic dialectology

Chikobava's theoretical approach cannot be clearly identified. He bases his classification on the merging of individual dialects into larger dialectal groups. He regards Meskhian and Javakhian as a dialectal unit: Samtskhian-Javakhian, as well as Imeretian and Letshkhumian in a single dialectal structure.

For Chikobava, the main division in the dialectal continuum of Georgian runs along the geographical separation between the highlands and lowlands of Georgia. Thus, he speaks of fundamental linguistic differences between the dialects of the highlands and the dialects of the lowlands.

2.4.2 Classification of dialects

Chikobava examined the development of dialect features at different grammatical levels, including prosody and word stress (without distinguishing the exact position of the stress). According to Chikobava (Jorbenadze 1989: 25), Georgian dialects also differed historically in terms of the position and type of word accent. Chikobava identified intensive, dynamic, and melodic accents in dialects. In later years, Chikobava's classification of accents was supplemented by the difference between the position of the accent in the syllable head (onset) and in the end of the syllable (coda). For example, in the words თაფ-ლ- /táp-l-/ “honey” and ძმა /zmá/ “brother”, two different accent positions (onset/coda) cause the vowel reduction: */táp-al-/ à /táp-l-/ vs. */zma-an-/ à /zm-á/.



Map 10. Chikobava's classification of Georgian dialects into seven dialect groups

Legend:

- | | |
|---|------------------------------|
| 1. Kartlian, Meskhian-Javakhetian | 5. Acharian |
| 2. Kakhian, Ingilo Georgian, Fereydani Georgian | 6. Imerkhebian |
| 3. Imeretian, Lechkhumian | 7. Highland Dialects Rachian |
| 4. Gurian | |

On the one hand, Chikobava's classification of Georgian dialects into seven dialect groups is based on the traditional understanding of the geographical distribution of ethnic subgroups. On the other hand, the classification is founded on the empirically accessible language data and their comparison. Thus, in the case of Rakhan, we see that it belongs to the highland dialects of the eastern group (Map 10).

2.5 Besarion Djorbenadze (1989)

Besariion Jorbenadze (1942-1993) was a student of Varlam Topuria. He was known for his extraordinary productivity in publishing over a hundred research articles and fifteen monographs on the phonetics, morphology, syntax, onomastics, lexicography and ethnolinguistics of Georgian. His work "Georgian Dialectology" consists of three volumes and is regarded as a framework work in this field.

2.5.1 Framework: Isoglottic dialectology

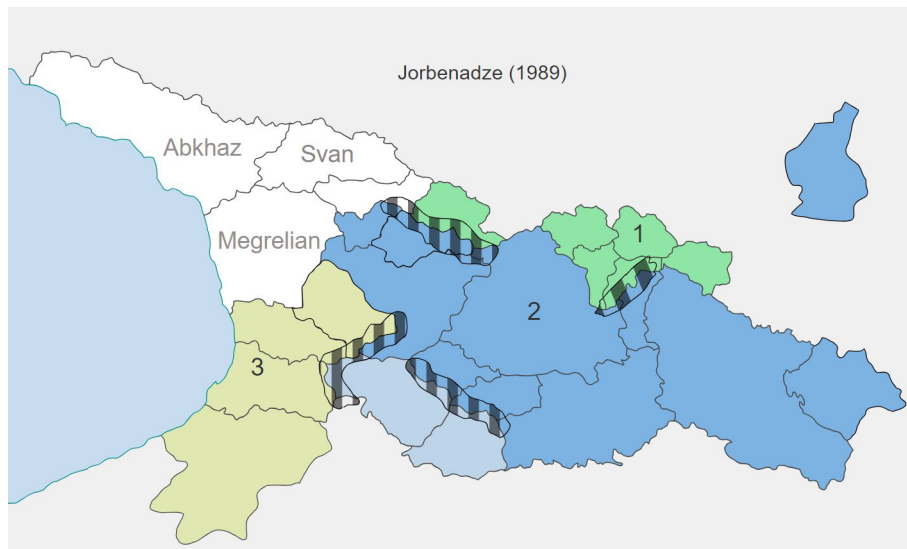
In the 1990s, Jorbenadze summarized the entire tradition of dialectological research in Georgia in three volumes, of which only two have been published. His theoretical approach to the classification of dialects is based on the systematic comparison of grammatical levels. Special attention is paid to the differences in sound system and word formation. These two levels of grammatical description were extensively researched at the time and supported by representative data. Even before Jorbenadze, differences in sound systems dominated local attempts at internal classification of individual dialects. To subdivide a dialect into its varieties, the primary method was to describe the different pronunciations of words. The importance of such differences was largely determined by linguistic distance. Jorbenadze adds to this criterion the morphological differences, mainly in terms of nominal morphology. For example, he summarizes the case paradigms of each dialect and compares the linguistic similarities and differences.

The first volume of his “Dialectology” treats each dialect in the form of a sketch grammar. In the final classification, he refers to the geographical criteria for categorizing the dialect areas.

2.5.2 Classification of dialects

Besarion Jorbenadze published his seminal work *Georgian Dialectology* in 1989, and it became a principle reference work in this domain. He distinguishes three major Georgian dialect areas on the basis of phonetic and grammatical similarities.

The first area is formed by the dialects spoken in the north: Tushian, Khevsurian, Mokhebian, and Upper Rachian. The dialects from the central area to the second group (central or middle dialects) are: Kakhian, Kartlian, Upper Imeretian, Lower Rachian as well as Ingilo Georgian and Fereydani Georgian. Meskhtian-Javakhian forms the transition zone to Gurian and Acharian, which form the third (south-western) area with Imerkhebian and Lower Imeretian (Map 11).



Map 11. Jorbenadze's classification into three areas

Legend:

1. Area North: Tushian, Khevsurian, Mokhevian, Upper Rachan
2. Area Center: Kakhetian, Kartlian, Ingilo Georgian, Fereydani Georgian
3. Area South-West: Lower Imeretian, Gurian, Adjarian, Imerkhevian

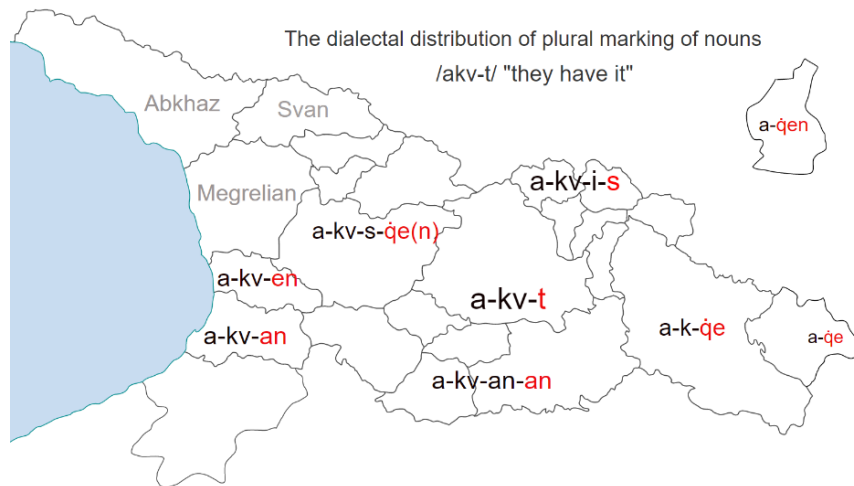
The following table provides a brief overview of the specific grammatical phenomena that most strongly characterize the dialect areas. These features are not to be understood in the sense of an either-or relationship but show different characteristics depending on the area. In some cases, the same phenomena, such as assimilation, can be found in two different areas, whereby the process of implementing assimilation is realized linguistically differently. In some cases, these are phenomena that only occur in one dialect area (Table 2).

	DIALECT AREAS		
	NORTH	CENTRE	SOUTH-WEST
Phonetics	ჴ /q̄/, ჳ /w/	-	-
Phonology			ASSIMILATION
		ONE-STEP	TWO-STEP
		aàe/e_#	(1) aào/u_# (Partial)
			(2) oàu/u_# (Total)
	-	<i>daeca</i> à <i>deeca</i> “ (he/she/it) has fallen”	<i>ga(u)</i> à <i>go(u)</i> à <i>gu(u)</i>
		<i>miutana</i>	<i>ga-u-ket-a</i>
		à <i>muutana</i>	<i>go-u-ket-a</i>
		“ (he/she/it) brought it to (him/her/it) “	<i>gu-u-ket-a</i> “he/she/it has done something to him/her/it”
	-	-	
			PROGRESSIVE
			bàp/t_#
			ṭbaàṭpa “lake”
	APOCOPE	-	-
	METATHESE	-	-
	<i>vtiri</i> à <i>tviri</i> “I cry”		
Morphology	Suffix /-it/, <i>saxl-ši-it</i> “in the house”		
	Thematic suffix ø instead of /-av/ <i>tib-av-s</i> à <i>tibs</i> “he mows it”		
	<i>mal-av-s</i> à <i>mal-ev-s</i> <i>mal-av-s</i> à <i>mal-am-s</i> à <i>mal-an-s</i> “he/she/it hides him/her/it”		
	Thematic suffix /-em/ instead of /-am/ <i>ab-am-s</i> à <i>ab-em-s</i> “he/she/it binds him/her/it”		

Table 2. Linguistic properties of the three Georgian dialect areas (Djorbenadze 1989)

Jorbenadze draws attention to those phenomena that indicate not only the morphological variants having one grammatical function in different dialects, but also emphasize the significant differences in the realization of syntactic rules i. e. the differences in verbal morphology influence different marking of syntactic relations. In the verb /akv-t/ “they have something” the suffix /-t/ marks the plural subject. The

variants of the suffix /-t/ of the same function are /-s-qe(n)/, /-en/, and /-an/. The highland dialects stand out from the rest and mark the plural subject in singular /(-i)-s/ (Map 12).



Map 12. The distribution of plural marking (in red)

3. Discussion

3.1 Development of the classifications

The authors shown in the table (Table 3) are arranged in chronological order (from left to right).

DIALECTS	SCHANIDZE	CHIKOBAVA	TOPURIA	DZIDZIGURI	JORBENADZE
Kartlian	+ (1)	-	-	+ (1)	+ (1)
Kartlian (Meskhian-Javakhetian)	-	+ (1)	-	-	-
Kakhian	+ (2)	-	+ (1)	-	+ (2)
Kakhian-Kiziqian	-	-	-	+ (2)	-
Kakhian (Kiziqian/Ingilo Georgian)		+ (2)	-	-	-
Kiziqian	+ (3)	-	-	-	-
Pshavian	+ (4)	+ (3)	-	+ (3)	+ (3)
Mtiulian	+ (5)	-	+ (2)	+ (4)	
Mtiulian-Gudamakrian	+ (6)	+ (4)	+ (3)	+ (5)	+ (4)
Khevsurian	+ (7)	+ (5)	+ (4)	+ (6)	-
Mokhevian	+ (8)	+ (6)	+ (5)	+ (7)	+ (5)
Tushian	+ (9)	+ (7)	-	+ (8)	+ (6)
Imeretian	-	-	+ (6)	+ (9)	+ (7)
Lechkhumian	-	-	+ (7)	-	+ (8)
Imeretian (incl. Lechkhumian)	-	+ (8)	-	-	-
Upper Imeretian	+ (10)	-	-	-	-
Middle Imeretian	+ (11)	-	-	-	-
Lower Imeretian	+ (12)	-	-	-	-
Acharian	-	+ (9)	+ (8)	+ (10)	+ (9)
Rachian	-	-	+ (9)	-	+ (10)
Highland Rachian	-	+ (10)	-	+ (11)	-
Lower Rachian	+ (13)	-	-		-
Gurian	-	+ (11)	+ (10)	+ (12)	+ (11)
Javakhian	-	-	+ (11)	-	-
Meskhian	-	-	+ (12)	+ (13)	-
Meskhian-Javakhetian	+ (14)			+ (14)	-
Meskhian	-	-	-	-	+ (12)
Samckhe-Javakhetian					
Upper Acharian	+ (15)	-	-	-	
Lower Acharian	+ (16)	-	-	-	
Imerkhevian	+ (17)	+ (12)	+ (13)	+ (15)	+ (13)
Imerchevian	-	-	-	-	+ (14)
Klarjian					
Ingilo Georgian	+ (18)	-	+ (14)	+ (16)	+ (15)
Fereidany Georgian	-	+ (13)	+ (15)	+ (17)	+ (16)
Qizlar-Mozdokian	-	+ (14)	-	-	-

Table 3. Overview of dialect classifications by author

None of these authors provide a complete classification of all Georgian dialects. This fact is an additional indication that it is not really about the classifications, but about the phases of dialectological research. What is meant by this? The aim of the researchers listed in Table 3 was not the classification of Georgian dialects, but the empirical description of the linguistic characteristics of individual dialects. The problem of classifying dialects did not appear to be an issue insofar as the ethnological classification was uncritically adapted in dialectology. According to the findings of the last three decades and the enrichment of dialectological research with modern methods of corpus linguistics and digital humanities, the old concept of using the historical ethnographic regions of Georgia for the isoglossisation of dialects of the same name is in fact no longer valid: An Imeretian can be a person who speaks Imeretian but does not live in Imeretia, just as people from other dialect areas have migrated to Imeretia and formed dense settlements in which dialects from the areas of origin are spoken. Thus, the boundaries of the region do not coincide with the boundaries of the dialect - they are “dialect islands” that are considered new dialect contact areas.

The scientific study of Georgian dialects originated with Niko Marr’s structuralist descriptions of the Imerkhevan dialect in the 20th century r. (Marr 1911). Marr was followed by the scholars Beridze (1912), Janashvili (1906), Shanidze (1920), Chikobava (1923), and Topuria (1963). The peculiarity of their research was that their linguistic analysis was carried out on the basis of primarily linguistic data collected for the study of dialects. The three-month field research throughout the country was an important scientific breakthrough in Georgian dialectology, which took place in 1935 under the guidance of Ivane Javakhishvili. Prior to the expedition, a unified questionnaire on the ethnolinguistic situation in Georgia was prepared and used during the field research. The results of the expedition formed a broad basis for all following linguistic studies and classifications of Georgian dialects. The materials of the expedition are digitized and accessible in the Georgian Dialect Corpus. During the expedition, various dialectal variants were studied for the first time. The results were used for ethnological, geographical, literary, and art studies. The expedition has a significant impact on the development of Kartvelology.

The first phase of linguistic research into Georgian dialects was completed in 1961 with the publication of *A Chrestomathy of Georgian Dialectology* (Gigineishvili et al. 1961). This chrestomathy represents a model according to which dialect data should be collected.

The second phase is linked to Varlam Topuria's research program, in which linguistic geography became the main area of dialectology. The main objective was the development of dialect maps. The data collected in this phase led to the *Lexicon of Grammatical Morphemes and Modal Elements* published in 1988, which contains not only the forms of the standard language but also their dialectal equivalents. In the 1960s Topuria compiled a kind of instruction to which any description of dialects would follow. He gave concrete examples to prove his theses. These examples served as exposés for other authors' monographs on individual dialects. For about half a century, his exposés were applied as models for numerous complex monographs and lexicons on the dialects of Georgian.

The third and current phase of Georgian dialectology relates to the establishment of the Georgian dialect corpus (Beridze 2013). The texts collected with an almost hundred-year tradition of describing dialects were digitized and inserted into a corpus infrastructure. The corpus includes about 20 million tokens, and it is fully annotated. All retrievable tokens are geographically mappable. The corpus contains a rich material of dialect lexicons, it is linked to a digital library of relevant works in dialectology, and it has a special database of migrations. The corpus is an opensource instrument and is freely accessible after registration.¹³

The five classifications presented in Table 3 are a selection based on the three chronologically successive phases. In the left column, those designations, compositions, and groupings are listed that have been circulated in the research. On the one hand, the differences in number of classified dialects (14/15/16/17/18) are caused by different conceptions of linguistic characteristics. On the other hand, they are also related to new fieldwork data obtained at various periods of time (see Section 3.2).

¹³ www.corpora.co.

On the basis of more than 100 years of dialectological research in Georgia, it is of course possible to reconstruct further classifications by other researchers. The central point of the research was the existence and accessibility of dialectal language data. The first empirical data on the Georgian dialect existing in Turkey dates back to 1911, on the basis of which one dialect - Imerkhebian - was identified. Shortly afterwards (from 1921 at the latest), Turkey and the USSR closed their borders and the dialectal area remained isolated or inaccessible to researchers for over seventy years. In the 1990s, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, research intensified, several field studies were carried out and new data justified the classification of Imerkhebian into three independent dialects: Taoian, Klatjian and Shavshian, which were initially regarded as insignificant dialectal deviations (Pagava 2011). The classifications of Georgian dialects should also be considered in terms of dynamics from this example. Following the presentation of the selected classifications, our focus is on the introduction of an additional criterion of internal migration and the associated change in dialectal areas. This kind of research has only been possible to date because the main phases of dialectological research have been devoted mainly to the collection of empirical data. After the digitalisation of the research data and the additional language documentation in the last three decades, the use of modern methods of corpus linguistics and the re-classification of the Georgian dialect material on a new basis have become possible.

3.2 Empirical data and dialect documentation

The classification of dialects was carried out during many decades of the 20th century. To understand dialect classifications properly it is crucial to realize which and especially how many empirical data were available for the scholars. The availability, extent and linguistic nature of the data were often decisive for grouping or identifying certain dialects as independent units: More data justified more linguistically accurate and multi-unit classifications, whereas scarce data led to a rough classification of individual dialects.

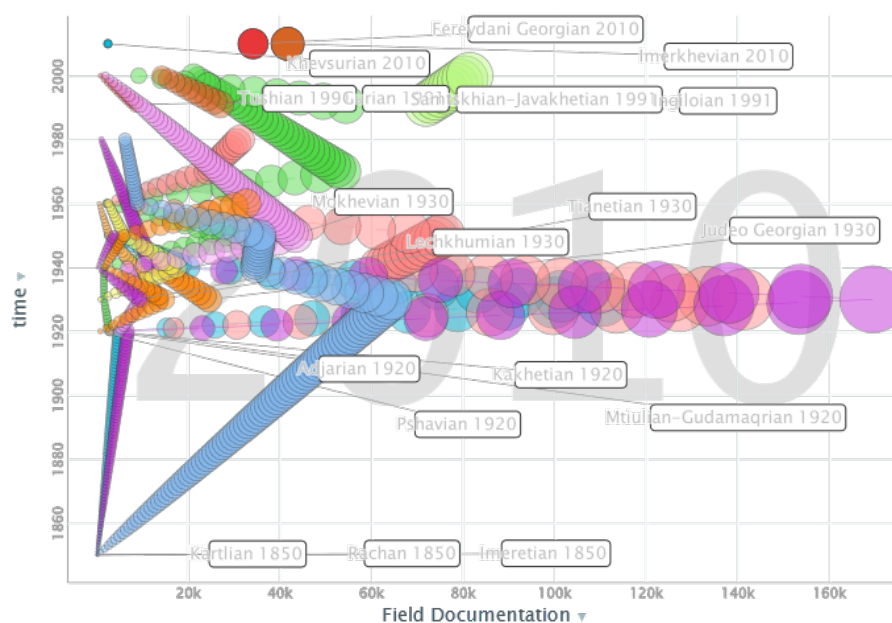


Figure 2. The chronological phases of the dialectal field research and the sizes of the empirical data

Since all dialectological texts that have been ever recorded are digitized and dated by the year of their recording in the Georgian Dialect Corpus, there is a possibility to match the phases of data collection with the most concise classifications.

It is evident that most of the data were collected during the last forty years (Figure 2, magenta circles). Over the past decades, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Georgian dialects in Turkey and Iran have been freely accessible and the communication with those speaking Taoian, Shavshian, Imerkhevan in Turkey as well as Fereydani Georgian in Iran have become easier.

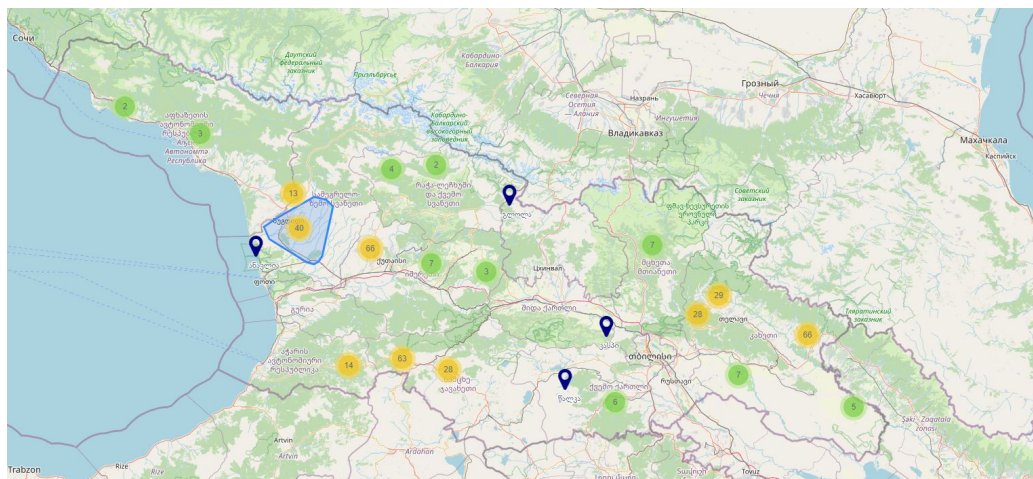
3.3 History of Migration: Sociopolitical Factors and Statistics

The insights presented in this section are mainly based on the the migration database, which was created within the framework of a long-term research project “Linguistic Portrait of Georgia”. The database is based on field work using a complex questionnaire conducted in the focus regions of internal migration in Georgia. The questionnaire is divided into different geographical fields: “Country” > “Region” >

“District” > “Settlement” > “Village” and enumeration of ethnicity “Georgian” / “Russian” / “Chinese”, etc. Thereby under “Georgian” the classification continues “Svane” / “Megreler” / “Kakhetier” / “Imeretier”, etc. The internal migration is recorded due to different meta data:

- Place of origin of migration
- Destination of migration
- Type and intensity of migration
- Time of migration
- Duration of migration
- Reason of migration
- Population arriving at destination
- Migrating population

The data are mapped and can be used interactively (Map 13).



Map 13. The migration data base of Georgian Dialect Corpus: the destinations of migration with the metainformation about the migrants

The other source of data is the archive of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia, which has recently made available the documents from the period relevant to the present investigation. These are, first of all, the documents on activity of the government in the first republic (1918-1921), but also newspapers from the 19th century. The majority of these documents were used for the first time in this study

from the perspective of internal migration. Here we can see the big picture of the social impact of Russia's demographic policy.

Not to be neglected are the data released by the National Statistic Office of Georgian. The migration waves are recorded here geographically and statistically under different social aspects. In addition, there is a rich body of Georgian-language research on internal migration in the last hundred years or so, which has also been incorporated.

Georgia has experienced massive demographic change over the past four hundred years. Historical processes covered by the term migration can be classified in various forms such as prisoner-of-war migration and state-imposed “demographic annexation”. The wars of conquest of the Persian Shah Abbas the First in the first two decades of the 17th century, as well as the permanent invasions from the Ottoman Empire turned large parts of the Georgian Kingdom into deserted places. Shah Abbas continued his war policy with the means of demographic restructuring of Georgia: he resettled about 80.000 families from mainly Kakheti (East Georgia)) in the different locations of Iran and colonized the land thus freed by North Caucasian tribes of Muslim faith in the hope of achieving more loyalty to the Persian Empire. With no less vehemence, the Ottoman Empire tried to set in motion the forced waves of migration in Georgia and thereby secure for itself more favourable demographic position also in the struggle against the Persian Empire. The direct occupation of historical provinces and the forced Islamization of the local population in Ajara, Samtskhe-Javakhia and this influence extended to the easternmost border of Georgia Saingilo.¹⁴ The Shah Abbas attempted to restructure the demographic landscape. Through his settlement policy, the Georgian Christian communities in the Gernz regions became a linguistic and religious minority. A kind of crypto-religious practice emerged in which the normed sacred language played a central role. The strengthening of the Russian Empire from the 18th century and its increasing influence in the Caucasus, accompanied by parallel weakening of the two former competing empires, set the stage for a completely new

¹⁴ The policy of forced Islamization led in many cases to the rapid loss of ethnic self-perception as Georgians. In the case of “Turkish Meskhs”, this policy ended in 1944 with a tragedy of a whole ethnic group with many hundreds of thousands of people.

as well as novel migration policy, the long-term consequences of which significantly determine the current demographic, socio-linguistic and socio-cultural landscape of Georgia.

The state-planned and forcefully implemented “demographic annexation” of Georgia represented a mix of military force, imperialist education policies, and oppressive economic systems. The most recent archival materials¹⁵ demonstrate how deliberate and motivated the ethnic designations in Russian-language state documents were in order to establish a new demographic identity through foreign attribution. The subsequent correction of earlier historical documents with the aim of giving historical weight to the ethnonyms initiated by the Russian state apparatus are also plausible. The successors of this policy of the Russian Empire turned out to be the rulers of the USSR. Georgia became a part of the largest territorial state on earth by annexation in 2021 and the demographic landscape got a completely new context.¹⁶

The long-term migrations were publicly declared to be economically motivated, while the real reasons for the depopulation of the Georgian mountain landscape had clear political objectives. The last thirty years of the third independent republic¹⁷ have brought further waves of migration within Georgia. The cause of the internal migrations during this period was the two ethnic conflicts in Abkhazia and Part of the Inner Kartli (Tskhinvali area), which were fomented and controlled from Russia. These conflicts resulted in almost half a million direct and indirect internal refugees in a country with a total population of about four million.

In the 20th century, Georgia faced mass migration waves that fundamentally changed the historically established distribution of dialects. At the end of the 19th century, there was an overall agreement between the ethno-cultural areas and corresponding dialects. Small internal migrations did not change the big picture of

¹⁵ The archives of the Georgian Ministry of Internal Affairs, which have been accessible to researchers for a few years, were searched for evidence and documents for the present study.

¹⁶ A “Soviet joke” tells about the plans of the party leadership to rotate peoples from all over the Soviet Union to Georgia because of its particularly pleasant climate.

¹⁷ In this paper, we use terms “First, Second and Third Republics” in reference to the three historical phases of the history of the Georgian state. The “First Republic” refers to the 1918 to 1921 Democratic Republic, the “Second Republic” refers to the Soviet occupation from 1921 to 1991, and the “Third Republic” is the current Georgian state since the declaration of independence in 1991.

dialects. But the extent of migrations in the 20th century entailed a completely new picture in terms of areal distribution and restructuring of the dialect continuum.

3.3.1 Internal migration on the timeline

The historiographical view of migration takes into consideration a slightly larger period. The initial period of the Russian policy of the South Caucasus bore several characteristic features of annexation, among which the change of the demographic picture, stands out. The colonization policy envisaged compact settlement of ethnic Russians as well as other ethnic groups in Georgia. At the beginning of Russian rule, the density and ethnic composition of the country was shaped by the conflict with the Persian and Ottoman Empires. The Russian Empire had a different colonial settlement policy. At the end of this policy, a territory full of minorities was to emerge, constantly fighting each other and finding peaceful coexistence only through Russian interference. Under the administrator Tsitsianov, in 1803 about 11 000 Armenians were resettled from Yerevan to Georgia near Tbilisi (Figure 3).

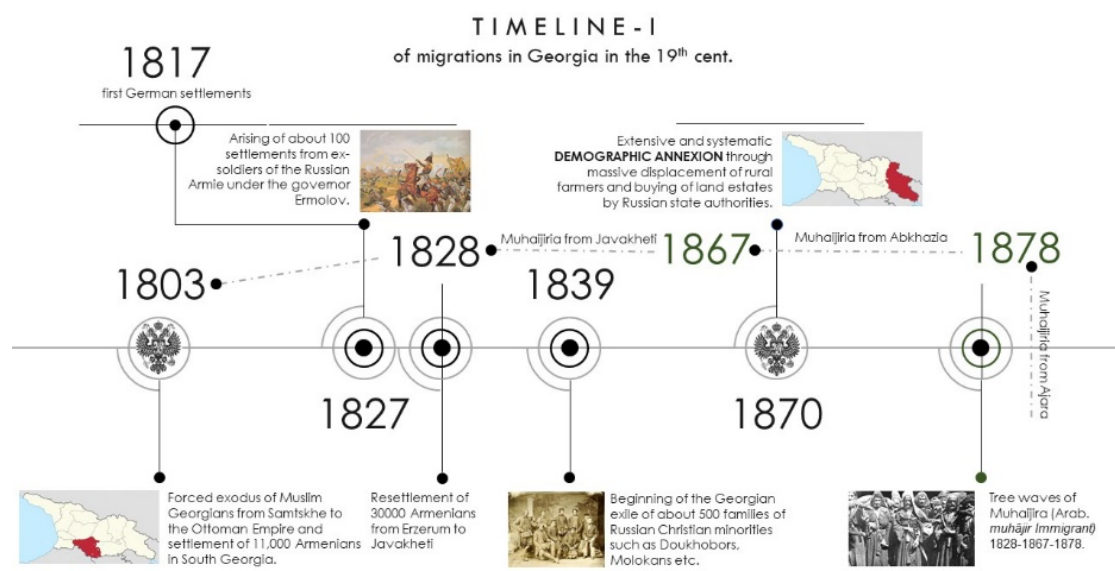


Figure 3. Most important migration flows in the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries

Over time, other compact settlements of Greeks, Polish people, Germans, Ukrainians, Lithuanians, Kurds and Avars were established. From the 1820 the religious groups, which fought each other and the traditional church, are settled in Georgia: Doukhobors, Molokans [Russian “milk drinkers”], self-designation *Duchovnye khristyane* [“spiritual Christians”]. The settlement was usually carried out at the expense of the native settlements in so far as the latter were dispossessed, forced out and oppressed.

Under the administrator Ermolov (1816-1827), the discharged Russian soldiers in Georgia could acquire the land and stay forever. Thus, ex-soldiers of the tsar created new compactly settled colonies. By 1860 there were at least ten such settlements in western Georgia, and twice as many Russian villages can be assumed in the whole country. After the Russian-Ottoman War in 1828-1829, the Russian Empire wrested the South Georgian province of Samtskhe-Javakheti from the Ottoman Empire. The Muslim Georgians there were put under such pressure that they were forced to resettle inside the Ottoman Empire (Figure 4).

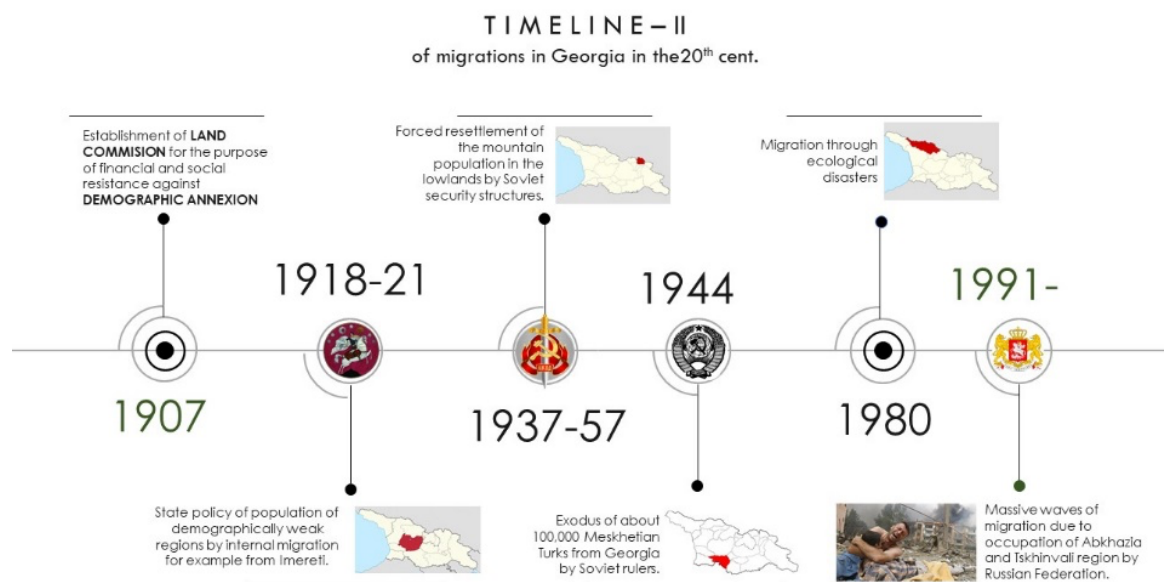


Figure 4. Most important migration flows in the 20th century

The Russian administration did not allow ethnic Georgians from other parts of the country to settle in the almost deserted province. Instead, Russian General Graph

Paskevich brought about 30,000 Armenians from Turkey and settled them in Samtskhe-Javakheti. If before the Russo-Turkish War more than 95% of the population of the province were ethnic Georgians, at the latest from 1832 Armenians represented the majority of the province.

In 1897-1902 about 55,000 Armenians migrated to Georgia. The number of Armenian Tbilisi in this period reached 127,000, of which almost half were new immigrants. The Armenian population in the whole country grew to 79%, whereas the demographic growth of Georgians in the 19th century was only 9%. Compared to the beginning of Russian rule in Georgia (1800), after about a century there was a jump in population growth to two million. This growth is not due to natural growth but is the result of colonization policy. Russians with more than 100,000 settlers formed 5.3% of the total population, while the share of Armenians quadrupled to 10%. According to the 1917 census, 62,000 Georgians, 83,000 Armenians, 70,000 Russians lived in Tbilisi. The first democratic republic (1918-1921) inherited a demographic landscape created by Russian colonialism, which allowed the Bolshevik ruler to continue implementing his own geostrategic goals in the Caucasus.

The migration waves in the Third Republic in the last three decades show abundant parallelism with the political events: Annexation and so-called “ethno-conflicts” in Abkhazia and Samatchablo. A pendulum migration from Svaneti, Adhjera and Ratcha to South Georgia can be observed. The cause is due to the ecological catastrophes of the 1970's and 1980's in the mentioned areas.

At this point, it should be noted that the specific reasons for migration in Georgia over the last two hundred years are the geopolitical plans of the great powers, which artificially set the waves of migration in motion in line with their ideas about the ethnic composition of the spheres of influence. This means that the migration patterns are not spontaneous or economically driven processes. They must be seen as planned “demographic annexation” and the fight against it. Language and linguistic varieties play a central role in this process.

The reasons of migration can be examined on three levels: 1. ecologically induced migration (landslides, dam construction for hydroelectric power plants), 2.

voluntary labour migration, and 3. so-called “planned resettlements” under Tsarist Russia and later the Soviet regime in the context of industrialization (Figure 5).

Migrations 1937-1957

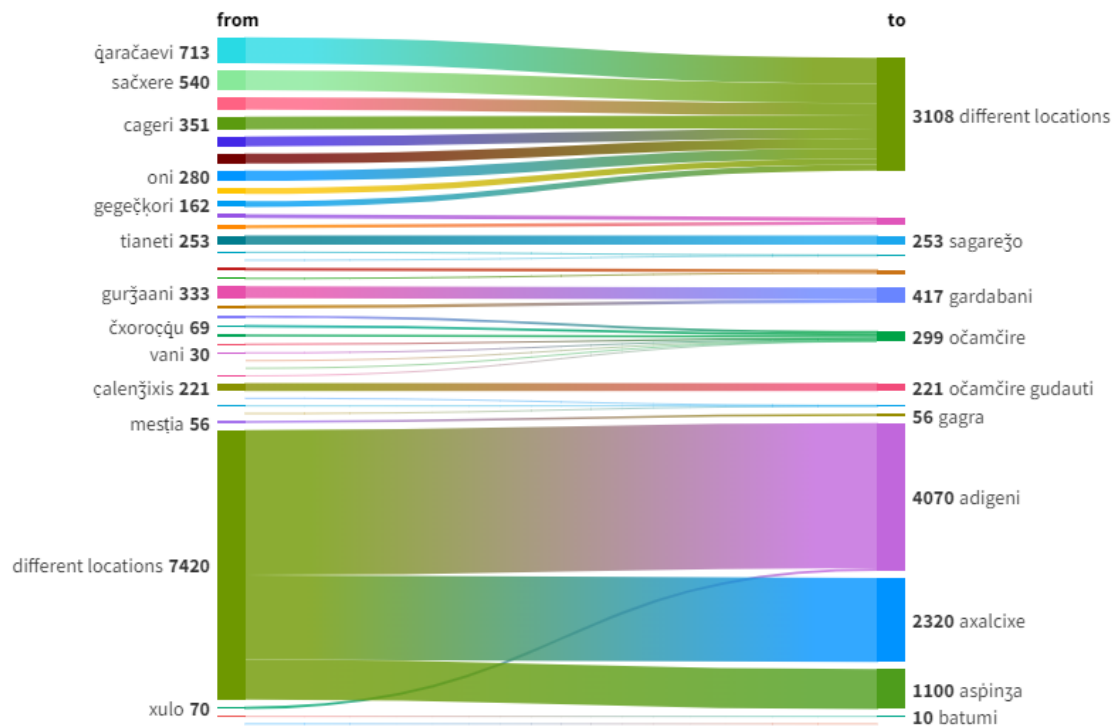


Figure 5. Migration patterns 1937-1957, from origin to destination¹⁸

If we consider the statistics, the degree of level (3) prevails over others. At the beginning of the 19th century, several hundreds of inhabitants from Upper Imereti and Racha were resettled to Kakheti. In 1918-1919 and later in the 1930's, thousands of Muslims emigrated from Samtskhe-Javakheti to different parts of the country, but mostly to Kakheti. People from Imereti and Kartli were massively resettled to the abandoned areas of South Georgia in 1945. After 1950, people from Racha, Mtiuleti, and Gudamakari joined them as new settlers. Between 1946-1950, about 4,200 families from Megrelia, Imereti, Racha, Lechkhumi, and Svaneti were relocated to different regions of Abkhazia. According to various sources, about 60,000 people were

¹⁸ Special thanks to Thekla Khalvashi-Wirth for vizualizing the data.

resettled from their historical dialect environment.¹⁹

In the 1940's, almost the entire population from Khevsureti was resettled to Shiraki and Lower Kartli. Likewise, the Germans from Dmanisi were deported to Russia and the Georgians from Racha, Lechkhumi and Upper Imereti were resettled to 12 German villages instead. In the 1980's, Georgia was affected by large-scale natural disasters. Sometimes even complete villages from most afflicted areas in Svaneti and Adjara were resettled to different parts of the southern regions of Georgia (Figure 6).

შ ე ნ ე ბ ა
1931-57 წ.წ. სსრკ-ში სსსრული საბჭოთაო კავშირის წესით გადასახლება-ჩასახლება
ნაპირობის, სპეციალური საბჭოთა და ჩასახლებაში ჩადგომის ნაპირობის შესახებ.

დასახლება-გაშენებული	გაშენებული	ჩასახლება-გაშენებული	დასახლება-ჩასახლება		დასახლება-გაშენებული	დასახლება-გაშენებული	დასახლება-გაშენებული		დასახლება-გაშენებული
			ნაპირობის	სპეციალური			დასახლება-გაშენებული	დასახლება-გაშენებული	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
კახეთის აბსოლუტური დასახლება	დასახლება-გაშენებული დასახლება-გაშენებული დასახლება-გაშენებული	22 6 11	ნ. ნიკიფორი	ქ. ქველი	42	7	36	36	
დასახლება-გაშენებული დასახლება-გაშენებული დასახლება-გაშენებული	დასახლება-გაშენებული დასახლება-გაშენებული დასახლება-გაშენებული	35 17 31 25	ნ. ნიკიფორი	ქ. ქველი	108	23	110	103	
დასახლება-გაშენებული დასახლება-გაშენებული დასახლება-გაშენებული	დასახლება-გაშენებული დასახლება-გაშენებული დასახლება-გაშენებული	70 5 23	ნ. ნიკიფორი	დასახლება-გაშენებული	98	26	90	90	
დასახლება-გაშენებული დასახლება-გაშენებული დასახლება-გაშენებული	დასახლება-გაშენებული დასახლება-გაშენებული დასახლება-გაშენებული	19 1 18 12 18	ნ. ნიკიფორი	დასახლება-გაშენებული	68	1	100	67	
დასახლება-გაშენებული დასახლება-გაშენებული დასახლება-გაშენებული	დასახლება-გაშენებული დასახლება-გაშენებული დასახლება-გაშენებული	36 35	ნ. ნიკიფორი	დასახლება-გაშენებული	36 36	6 1	36 34	24 -	
სულ		381			381	64	406	320	

Figure 6. Table of forced resettlements in 1931-1957. Source: the archive of the Georgian Ministry of Internal Affairs

The image of domestic migrations in the 20th century was most significantly modified by the refugees from two breakaway provinces of Georgia. Since then, about 300,000 people (almost 10% of the total population) have been categorised as

¹⁹ The figures and statistics were taken from the archives of the Georgian Ministry of the Interior.

internally displaced persons within the urban centres of the country.

4. Discussion

This paper describes the different phases of research and classification of Georgian dialects, as well as the dynamics of changes in dialectal areas due to internal waves of migration. Ethnographic aspects dominate, based on the historically developed image of Georgia's ethno-cultural diversity. This image, which has remained stable for thousands of years, has been fundamentally altered in the last two hundred years as a result of wars, occupation, expulsion, flight and migration. The current challenge for the study of Georgian dialects is precisely this change: the next complex task is to describe it systematically and methodically and to explain it theoretically.

An examination of the background to certain classifications has shown that these were significantly influenced by the amount and quality of the available linguistic data on which the classification was based. Linguistic documentation and field research were not readily available during the Soviet years. Linguistic fieldwork was therefore often part of general ethnological research. Knowledge transfer and exchange with Western linguistics was also difficult. The highly politicised background of linguistic research in the Soviet Union severely limited the methodological possibilities of research and the diversity of theoretical concepts. It was only after the collapse of the Soviet Union and due to the advance of digital humanities methods and the development of electronic dialect databases that the basis for the application of new research and analysis methods was created. It can be assumed that the acquisition of such data will in the future lead to possible corrections of previous classifications or to the establishment of a new classification.

What contours of the dialectal "portrait" can be drawn when internal migration is taken into account? Georgian dialectology has a 100-year history. It developed within the framework of linguistic research and repeated the research pattern of traditional linguistics: describing the linguistic structure of a dialect at all accessible grammatical levels and comparing it with the structures of the standard language. The

description of differences and similarities with the standard language served to outline an overall dialect continuum. Sociolinguistic aspects played a supporting role in explaining dialect change and dialect contact, as well as the mutual influence of dialect varieties and phenomena such as archaisation, standardisation and analogy.

Migration can be identified as one of the sociological factors that significantly influence the linguistic profile of a dialect. The shifting spatial relationships resulting from migration play a crucial role. In the ideal 'language world' without migration, dialectal space can be visualised according to the principle of 'water circles': an undulating alternation of strong and weak linguistic features that define a dialectal continuum within a language. Migration seems to be a crucial sociological factor that corrects this ideal image of a realistic linguistic continuum.

With regard to the dialectal continuum of Georgian, three main models can be established:

1. the dialect exists within historically established geographical boundaries.
2. the dialect exists geographically outside Georgian territory, linguistically isolated in the surroundings of one or more unrelated contact languages. (e.g. Fereydani Georgian, Ingilo Georgian, Turkey Georgian).
3. the dialect does not exist within the historical geographical boundaries due to internal migration.

The first spatial model roughly describes all Georgian dialects within Georgia: Apart from three dialects outside Georgia, all dialects are linked to the historical area. Especially in the highland dialects of Chevsurian and Tuchish, where resettlement was almost complete, the individual families that remained in the mountains were able to shape the language of the area and served as points of reference for returnees until recently.

The second model describes so-called Georgian language islands outside Georgian territory: Fereydani Georgian in the Islamic Republic of Iran, Ingilo Georgian in Azerbaijan and the three varieties spoken in Turkey: Taoian, Shavshian and Klarjian (in the margin: the varieties of the Georgian Mujahirs).

The third model of spatial relationships between Georgian dialects refers to

some small linguistic islands within the country, created by internal migration. The number of such linguistic islands increased at the end of the 20th century because of environmental disasters and the wars of occupation with the Russian Federation.

The geographical distribution of such 'islands' shows a particular concentration in Kakheti and Samtskhe-Javakheti as destinations for internal migration. Internal migrants come from regions with little free arable land and other resources, such as the Imeretian highlands, Khevsureti, Pshavi, Ratcha, Ajara, Mtiuleti, Gudamakhari, Letshkhumi, Svaneti. Analysing the linguistic areas created by internal migration as linguistic islands makes it possible to apply research concepts from classical linguistic island research in this specific context.

What are the similarities and differences between language islands outside the core area and within the core area? The similarity lies in the fact that the language areas created by internal migration are subject to the same linguistic laws as classical language islands: they try to maintain the strong emotional ties to the place of origin of the migration, to construct a specific collective memory and to create a linguistic ecology in the destination as a replica of the place of origin. The main motivation is the same in both cases: Mobilisation against assimilation. The difference is that the "internally migrated dialects", despite their isolation, remain in contact with the standard language. This is not possible in the case of linguistic islands, which exist outside the national territory and represent a fundamental change in the language.

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