

## DIRECTIONS OF DIACHRONIC DEVELOPMENTS OF THE KARTVELIAN LANGUAGES

ASATIANI, Rusudan  
GÜRCİSTAN/GEORGIA/ГРУЗИЯ

### ABSTRACT

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

**I stage:** The Pre-Kartvelian level showing three series of sibilants;

**II stage:** 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);

**III stage:** 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 also vowels;

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

**V stage:** 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 confirmation with all other linguistic data. The stages clarify the direction of Kartvelians migration. Such an interpretation creates a background for the explanation of Kartvelians cultural ‘diversity’ and/or historical changes.

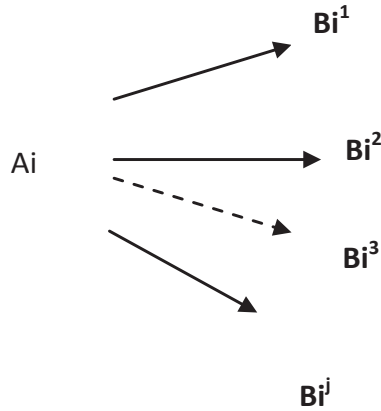
**Key Words:** Historical-Comparative Linguistics; The Kartvelian Languages; Migration process and diachronic changes.

### INTRODUCTION: THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Language is one of a means of structuring ‘Reality’. Reality is a whole unity which is structuralized according to the specific linguistic structures. During the

process of conceptualization various linguistic entities are defined as linguistic categories. This is a way of creating specific linguistic picture of a ‘world vision’.

Any ‘Object’ of reality (Ai) is structuralized and reflecting by specific collective human consciousness, and as a result corresponding concept (Bi) 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, respectively,  $B_i^1, B_i^2 \dots B_i^m$  concepts would not be radically different. We suppose that a set of  $B_i$ -entities represent universal and specific features simultaneously:  $R(B_i) \cup P(B_iUn) \cup Q(B_iSp)$ .

Reality can be regarded as a set of  $A_i$  objects which represent a union of universal and specific features as well:  $R(A_i) \cup P(A_iUn) \cup Q(A_iSp)$ . An ‘icon’ mirrored concepts could be various for any  $A_i$  object:

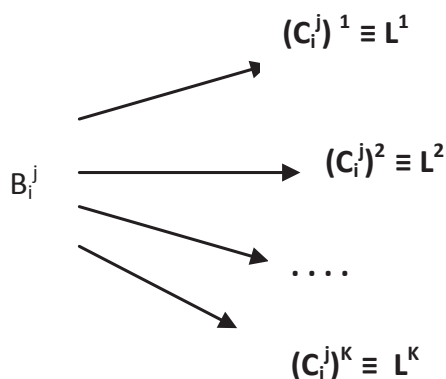
$$A_1 \rightarrow B_1^1, B_1^2, B_1^3 \dots B_1^m$$

$$A_2 \rightarrow B_2^1, B_2^2, B_2^3 \dots B_2^m$$

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$$A_n \rightarrow B_n^1, B_n^2, B_n^3 \dots B_n^m$$

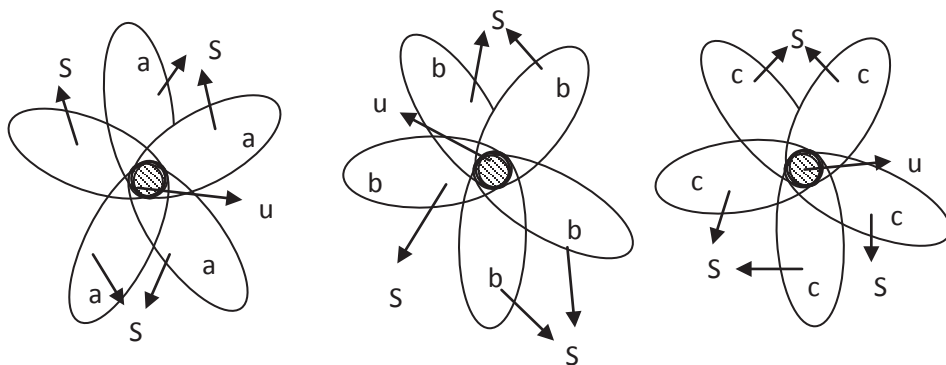
The concepts are represented in various linguistic structures ( $C_i$ ) and they could be cross-linguistically diverse:



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

Languages are characterized by universal and specific structures as well as objects or concepts:  $R(C_i) \cup P(C_i \cup n) \cup Q(C_i \cup Sp)$ . Relations between Objects, Concepts and Languages are bilateral: they define each other in both directions: REALITY  $\equiv$  CONSCIOUSNESS  $\equiv$  LANGUAGE; and in any stage of mirroring there is a union of universal and specific entities. The complicated relations can be represented by the following figure:

REALITY- $R(A_i)$   $\equiv$  CONSCIOUSNESS- $C(B_i)$   $\equiv$  LANGUAGE- $L(C_i)$



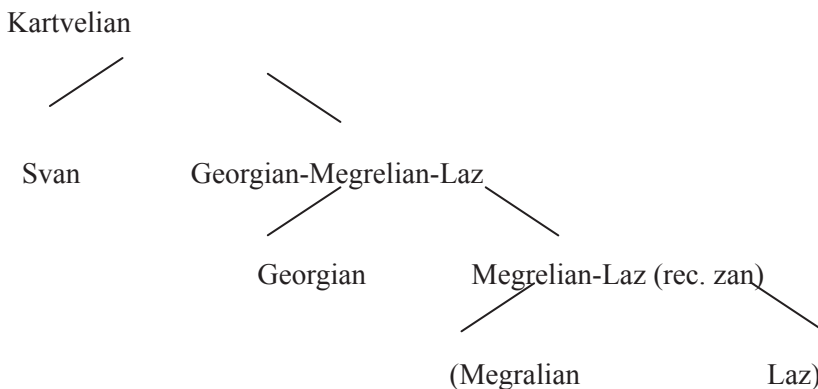
The main goal of linguistic studies is to 'discover' such universal and specific features that is possible within a general linguistic theoretical approach and on the basis of an analysis of concrete languages. The goal can be achieved by the typological, cross-linguistic investigations based on the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

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

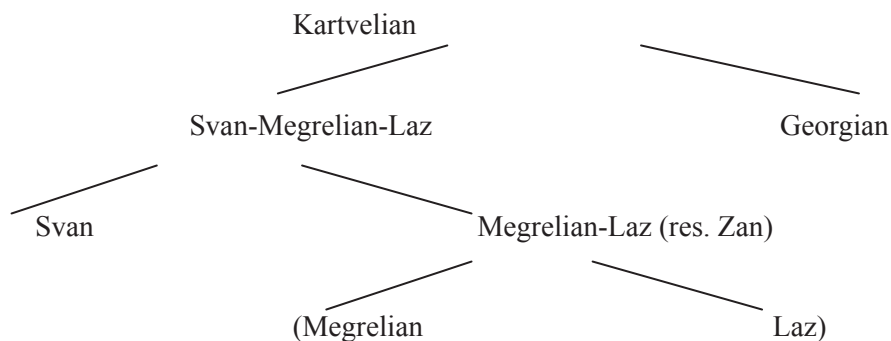
Comparative-historical linguistics makes it possible to represent diachronic changes of conceptualization and linguistic structuring of reality. Changes of a language system mirror changes within various social-cultural spheres of human being such as art, religion, ethnic traditions, economy, civilization, culture and so on. On the basis of the comparative-historical methodology, reconstructed proto-language and its diachronic development help us to get the 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).

### 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 on 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:

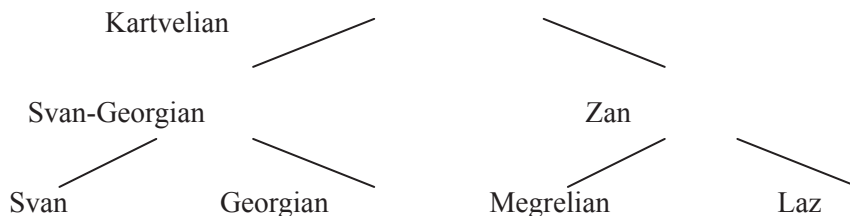


Main arguments for the first interpretation are lexical correspondences: According to up today data common lexical entities are more usual and characteristic for Georgian-Laz unity than for Georgian-Svan union. The second scheme is based on the consonants (sibilants) correspondences.

In general, on the basis of manifested consonants-correspondences there are the following regularities: According to sibilants, Svan and Zan show similarities (so called, *š-sibilants* dialect) and they build an opposition with Georgian (so called, *s-sibilants* dialect). But vowel-correspondences represent different matter of fact: Georgian-Svan union makes an opposition to Zan – vowel phoneme: *a* corresponds to 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 realistic:

	<b>sibilants</b>	<b>vowels</b>
Georgian	<i>s</i>	<i>a</i>
Svan	<i>š</i>	<i>a</i>
Zan	<i>š</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 into account as well:



The schemes of development of the Kartvelian languages based on correspondences are oppose 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 for 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 reconstructed language, itself, has various stages of internal development. T. Gamkrelidze suggests two different levels of internal development of the Kartvelian language: Pre-Kartvelian and Proto-Kartvelian. Presumably, vowels and sibilants correspondences are characteristic for these various dialectic entities and on the basis of the lexical data the following stages of development could be possibly suggested:

**I stage:** The Pre-Kartvelian level showing three series of sibilants: *s -s/š - š* ;

**II stage:** 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);

**III stage:** The Proto-Kartvelian-II level showing the continuing of PbD process. In the North-West 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 rises. In the South-West, which is still in close relation with the East, PbD process continues and involves vowels as well;

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

**V stage:** 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 confirmation 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. (**See:** Map, p. 563)

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