

GEORGIAN CLASSICS

INTRODUCTION TO IBERIAN-CAUCASIAN LINGUISTICS

ARNOLD CHIKOBAVA

NOVA

Georgian Classics

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The translation of Introduction to Iberian-Caucasian Linguistics is funded by the Ministry of Culture, Sport and Youth of Georgia.



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Georgian Classics

Nation and Mankind: Analysed from the Sociological Point of View

Mikheil Tsereteli (Author)

2020. ISBN: 978-1-53618-126-5 (Hardcover)

2020. ISBN: 978-1-53618-127-2 (eBook)

More information about this series can be found at

<https://novapublishers.com/product-category/series/georgian-classics/>

Arnold Chikobava

Introduction to Iberian-Caucasian Linguistics



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<https://doi.org/10.52305/FTUG5583>

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

ISBN: 979-8-88697-844-5

Published by Nova Science Publishers, Inc. † New York

Avtandil Arabuli

Editor

Manana Rusieshvili

Translator

Trevor Cartledge

Nana Kavtaradze

Translation Editors

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Foreword

Arnold Chikobava is one of the distinguished first graduates of Tbilisi State University (founded in 1918). Together with the founders of the university and their teachers, Chikobava laid the foundation for practically all the main directions of modern science in 20th-century Georgia. While contemplating certain events of the recent era, it must be taken into account that in Georgia, at that time at the Georgian National University these positive processes were developed in the utterly unfavorable conditions created by imperial Russia and then the Soviet system.

Arnold Chikobava was born in 1898 into a poor peasant family in the small village of Sachikobao (then Senaki District), situated in one of the most important historical regions of Georgia, Megrelia. Chikobava received his primary education at the old Senaki two-grade school and from 1911 he continued his studies at the Georgian Gymnasium in Kutaisi. Coming from a poor family, Chikobava, when still a boy, taught students with low grades and in this way, collected tuition fees.

It is a remarkable coincidence that Arnold Chikobava was one of the first graduates of the Department of Linguistics at Tbilisi State University, the Faculty of Philosophy. His outstanding talent did not go unnoticed by the university professors and on the recommendation of Professor Akaki Shanidze Chikobava became a professor at the university.

Arnold Chikobava graduated from the university in 1922 and obtained his doctorate in 1929. His thesis “The Problem of a Simple Sentence in Georgian” was published the year before the defence (1928). This fundamental work represents the scientific standards of the university practised then and is not inferior to similar European works in structural syntax chronologically or theoretically.

It became Arnold Chikobava’s mission to comprehend the latest theoretical problems of descriptive and comparative linguistics. Based on this he defined, organized and led the main directions in the development of Kartvelian and Caucasian studies. Chikobava authored fundamental works

exploring the structure and history of Kartvelian and Georgian languages, descriptive grammar or historical-comparative and theoretical linguistics, lexicology and lexicography. He led a large-scale project of compiling an 8-volume explanatory dictionary of the Georgian language and successfully finished this work, thereby preparing a completely new stage regarding the development of the Kartvelian studies.

The objectives set out by Chikobava required active participation in many changes, laying the foundation for many initiatives. For example, he was the founder of the Academic Institute of Linguistics in 1941. It was in this year that the Academy of Sciences of Georgia was established and Chikobava was one of the founders and the first member of this Academy. Under his initiative and leadership, the Department of Caucasian Languages was established at the University in 1933. In 1936, the Department of Mountain Caucasian Languages was opened in ILHMC (Institute of Language, History and Material Culture), which became the fundamental structural unit of the Institute of Linguistics in 1941.

Chikobava's attention was focused on the development of Caucasian studies. In the first years of the establishment of the Institute of Linguistics, he founded the fundamental journal of the Institute "Iberian-Caucasian Linguistics." More than 40 volumes of this journal have been published to date. Together with the Presidium of the Academy of Sciences, he created a regional (for the period) annual journal – "Annual of Iberian-Caucasian Linguistics".

Chikobava founded the Soviet Union Caucasological Scientific Forum, which was held alternately in the educational and scientific centers of the Caucasian republics and made the unified scientific space in the Caucasus. In addition to developing scientific relations between scholars, the Forum enhanced unique friendly contacts. All this was unacceptable to official Moscow (and to the scientific circles of Russia) and many precise calculations, well-thought-out strategies and tactics were required for this unique heritage to withstand serious ideological pressures. Even in the conditions of today's permanent war state, the major findings of the Forum are still preserved.

Most importantly, A. Chikobava created his linguistic theory and established a scientific school commonly known as The School of Iberian-

Caucasian Linguistics. In this term, “*Iberian*” refers to the *Kartvelian languages* (the name *Iberia/Iveria* is confirmed in ancient Greek sources to denote Georgia). On the other hand, “Caucasian” refers to the three small groups of languages present along the Caucasus Range, in its mountains and valleys: Abkhaz-Adyghean, Chechen-Ingush and Dagestanian.

As the founder of the new scientific school, A. Chikobava wrote fundamental textbooks employed as a theoretical basis for descriptive or comparative studies of the indigenous languages of the Caucasus. The first of these books was “History of the Study of the Iberian-Caucasian Languages”, which provides a detailed overview of qualitative stages and results of the research of these languages. The second book “Introduction to Iberian-Caucasian Linguistics”, presented in the translation, aims to discuss and analyze profoundly the fundamental problems regarding the historical relationships of the languages explored in the new theory.

One of the fundamental ideas that Ivane Javakhishvili, the founder of Tbilisi State University, connected with the development of the National University was the idea of the historical-cultural unity of the Caucasus. A. Chikobava – his loyal follower – enhanced and transformed this idea into a large-scale scientific theory. It can be claimed that this theory became a reliable response to the scientific and strategic challenges set by the era. The results of the profuse, significant research conducted by Chikobava himself, under his direct supervision or after his life, are recognized even by the most severe critics.

Chikobava, as the protagonist of the scientific idea and school, was an ardent and meticulous follower of comparative research methods when analyzing linguistic data. The book presented here is proof of this.

At the same time, the content of the historical-comparative studies (since the 19th century) turned out to be connected with tangible political attitudes. In particular, the idea of the kinship of languages defended the interests of both large and small nations. At that time, it was vital to scientifically and precisely determine the historical roots that would allow small nations to find “blood relatives”, that is, a reliable basis to protect national interests.

This aspect of the scientific idea gained specific weight in such a geopolitical space as represented by the countries and peoples conquered by

the Russian empire. In particular, Georgian scientists were presented with the opportunity to oppose the unconsolidated idea of the kinship of languages to the imperial “disconnecting” policy implemented by Russia. Georgian scientists used this opportunity effectively. They formulated the theory of kinship of the Kartvelian languages and, more broadly, Iberian-Caucasian languages and nations. The historically meritorious but politically and economically oppressed nations used this objective weapon as frequently as possible for self-defence and rectification of distorted history, and sometimes for the return of the “stolen” past.

It can be claimed that the Georgian Linguistic School handled this challenge set by the time perfectly. In particular, relying on the pan-Caucasian heritage of history and culture, Georgian academic circles and Chikobava developed a theory which served as the basis for raising the awareness of the pan-Caucasian identity, a unique phenomenon to be formed in time and the space of one generation.

Thus, it is not unexpected that the center of the empire fought the unifying idea (even ideology) of the Caucasians and its protagonist in every possible way.

As documented, A. Chikobava, the leader of one of the strategic directions of the national idea, was always the target of politically motivated aggression. The reason for this attitude was obvious. Moscow could not allow the consolidation of the Caucasus, even around the regional scientific center (i.e., Tbilisi).

It was obvious from the beginning of the foundation of Tbilisi State University that the Pan-Caucasian idea could not be accommodated only in scientific frameworks and that it acquired a far-reaching political influence. At the same time, while the central government of the empire tried to hinder the existence of the national university, they used every possible method and means to block the scientific idea and the strategy of Tbilisi that embraced the whole Caucasian region.

In 3 years, a well-known Moscow Linguistic Discussion (1950) was initiated by Chikobava's paper which formally aimed to overcome "Marrism"¹ in "Soviet" linguistics. This discussion proved to be an act of serious organized revenge prepared from the center of the empire against the Tbilisi School of Caucasian Studies and, above all, its leader, Arnold Chikobava. The revenge was orchestrated using the central scientific journal "Вопросы языкознания" (The Issues of Linguistics). In 1954, Evgeny Bokarev's article "Objectives of the Comparative-Historical Study of the Caucasian Languages", published in 1954 started the discussion of the Iberian-Caucasian languages and the theory regarding the kinship of these languages.

Given that the Soviet leader had died in 1953 and the "overcoming the personality cult" had already begun, it is easy to imagine the content (and the subtext) of the discussion against the so-called Iberian-Caucasian idea (that is, against the Tbilisi School). At that time, E. Bokarev was a reputable researcher of Dagestanian languages. Also, he was the responsible secretary of the journal that sparked the discussion. It is significant to mention that E. Bokarev was awarded the "Order of the Red Banner of Labor" in 1954. Other no less authoritative scientists of Soviet Russia were also involved in the new discussion. However this revanchist discussion revealed, even more forcibly, the solidity of Arnold Chikobava's scientific positions, postulated not on conjecture but on genuine scientific interests. Soon after (in 1955), in the same journal, Chikobava published a weighty academic response to the "flicks" suitably made by the political circumstances and showed everyone that the initiators of the discussion did not achieve the desired "political effect".

Later, in the response to the article presented as an Appendix to this book, Chikobava wrote:

"In our response, we discuss the views of the authors who rejected the kinship of the Iberian-Caucasian languages and we considered the question of the kinship of these languages with the ancient languages of Asia Anterior and Asia Minor to be harmful."

¹ Niko Marr's "New Linguistic Doctrine". At the beginning of the 20th century, Marr developed the theory of the stadial development of world languages. Marr considered language a superstructural class phenomenon and claimed that this was the only Marxist theory hence the arrival of aggressive, ideological followers of this theory.

Chikobava ironically replied to his opponent, E. Bokarev's accusation concerning the assumption that the study of the kinship of the Iberian-Caucasian languages with the ancient non-Indo-European and non-Semitic languages of Asia Anterior caused "disorientation of Caucasian language specialists":

"Caucasologists cannot be disoriented by the objective, the solution of which requires a comprehensive study of the Iberian-Caucasian languages, both descriptive and historical-comparative. The rejection of this scientifically relevant issue can only lead to the fact that Soviet linguistics will not clarify its position on this issue and therefore, will lag in the same way as the Soviet historical-comparative science fell behind by the followers of Marr referring to the historical-comparative method as "bourgeois comparativism" (Chikobava 1955: 91).

The publications by Chikobava do not only remain within the framework of discussion. With his usual thoroughness, the scientist reviews the experience of researching Caucasian languages and the issues that accompany this research.

In addition to political-ideological critics, the Iberian-Caucasian theory had other scientific opponents (the previously mentioned monograph by Chikobava "History of the Study of the Iberian-Caucasian Languages", a critical analysis of the theory can also be found in the book by Micheil Kurdiani "Grundlagen der iberisch-kaukasischen Sprachwissenschaft", Tbilisi, 2007). In 1955, the famous German linguist Gerhard Deeters published a paper "Did the nominal classes exist in all Caucasian languages?" ("Gab es Nominalklassen in allen kaukasischen Sprachen?" "Corolla Linguistica", Wiesbaden, 1955). This is a critical response of Deeters addressed to the Georgian Caucasologists, whose search for common structural and functional regularities of the specific morphological inventory of the languages of the Caucasus can be considered one of the achievements. Such research prepared the basis for the idea of the kinship of these languages, considering that the establishment of regular sound correspondences between them did not seem feasible soon.

Deeters evaluates critically both the typological unity of the Caucasian languages from the point of view of the class-marking system and most

importantly, the idea of the “Iberian-Caucasian” linguistic unity: “The question of the genetic kinship of the three Caucasian language groups is undoubtedly one of the most acute in Caucasiology. Are these languages kindred or are they only a group of languages to which Iranian Ossetian and Turkic Karachay-Balkar belong? The answer to this question depends on what right we have to talk about the “Iberian-Caucasian languages”, as accepted in Georgian linguistics” (the above-mentioned paper, p. 148).

Thus, Deeters’ emphasis on “structural similarities” during the search for the kinship of languages is considered to indicate a lack of real arguments (systematic and regular sound correspondences) confirming this kinship or an underestimation of their true scientific importance.

Such a comprehensive and generalizing survey, as presented by this textbook, is rare in comparative linguistics. Moreover, Chikobava, as the leader of the Iberian-Caucasian School of Linguistics, describes the current situation in this field for the last two decades of the 20th century as only a stage of the development of the presented theory.

First of all, Chikobava notes with complete objectivity that a structural-typological study of language systems cannot replace historical-comparative research (“Introduction”, p. 1).

He evaluates the current situation in the field of comparative research on the Iberian-Caucasian languages as follows:

“To fully explore the scientific history of the Iberian-Caucasian languages, it is necessary first, to explore scientifically all the Iberian-Caucasian languages notwithstanding whether they have writing systems or not. Secondly, it is necessary to explore historical-comparative grammars and lexicons of all four groups of languages (Kartvelian, Abkhaz-Adyghean, Nakh-Kist and Dagestanian); and finally, to compile a comprehensive historical-comparative grammar of the Iberian-Caucasian languages and a historical dictionary of common roots.

The first objective is now essentially solved: descriptive analyses of almost all languages (some of them complete and others briefer) are already available. However, the second objective has not been solved yet (later we will talk about what is being done in this regard, “Introduction”, p. 10).

This assessment clearly shows the responsibility that the leader of the school saw and assigned its burden to the faithful followers of the theory of the Iberian-Caucasian language kinship. At the same time, Chikobava took into account the probable antiquity of the kinship of the languages of the Iberian-Caucasian group (in any case, this unity presupposes a much earlier period)² than the differentiation of the Kartvelian languages). As well as this, only one of the thirty languages of these four groups (Georgian) possesses ancient written sources, while historical, lexical (fundamental) similarities can only be based on the internal reconstruction data.

To dispel certain doubts, Chikobava adds a note in the footnote: “A *thorough, complete* study of individual languages and language groups does not mean that *until this work has been done*, it is inappropriate and unjustified to explore *separate issues* taking into account the data of two, three or all four groups. One does not exclude the other. Research by N. Trubetzkoy shows that the research on individual issues based on the materials from several language groups can yield valuable results” (“Introduction to Iberian-Caucasian Linguistics”, p. 5).

Arnold Chikobava, as one of the most faithful followers of historical-comparative linguistics, in the introduction of the book, presents the role of the historical-comparative method in the genealogical study of languages in an innovative way, taking into account all linguistic processes: “The employment of the historical-comparative method while exploring historical and genetic issues *is crucial but not sufficient*. The historical-comparative method is an effective means for the study of *differentiative (divergent)* processes regarding the development of related kindred languages. However, the development of languages does not depend only on the process of divergence. At the same time, another process, *the process of language integration (convergence)* operates in the opposite direction; the development of language is a result of these two opposing directions. The stronger the contacts between languages and therefore, the greater the specific weight of the process of convergence (as, for example, in our

² It is presumed that the differentiation of the Kartvelian languages must have started in the 2nd millennium BC.

languages), the more limited the effectiveness of the historical-comparative method” (“Introduction”, p. 2).

Thus, the strict demands for high standards set by Chikobava and his followers toward his scientific idea are manifested by the fact that he considers the presentation of probable phonetic correspondences as an objective of the next stage, although several significant regularities had already been found (for example K. Lomtadze, T. Gudava...).

The author of the Introduction offers the results of the complex systemic analysis of the data of the explored languages as several generalizing conclusions, the unity of which creates a definite typological picture to represent the ancient situation concerning the Iberian-Caucasian languages:

- It seems that the phonemic system, namely *consonantism*, is best preserved in Georgian. Consequently, complex consonantism is secondary for Abkhaz-Adyghean and Dagestanian languages.
- *Abrupt occlusives* are shared by all Iberian-Caucasian languages.
- In contrast to the old system of Kartvelian consonantism, considerable changes have been made to their morphology.
- The categories of human (*Who?*) and /thing (*What?*) as *semantic categories* are similar in all Iberian-Caucasian languages even now.
- Grammatical classes were distinguished in all Iberian-Caucasian languages. The category of grammatical classes permeated the entire morphology of these languages.
- *Verb conjugation systems* were originally *class-based*: the intransitive verb denoted the classes of subjects, and the transitive verb denoted only object classes.
- The grammatical category of voice was not distinguished in the verb conjugation. There existed the categories of transitivity and intransitivity but not the category of the grammatical voice.
- The *voiceless* transitive verb predisposes the absence of the *accusative* case in the declension system and *the ergative* construction in syntax.

All this gives Chikobava a reason to see the general regularity of the relationship between the Iberian-Caucasian languages:

“*Similarities* revealed by phonetics, morphology, and syntax belong *to the ancient period*, while *differences are acquired later*. The Iberian-Caucasian languages are *kindred languages* united by their origin.

This implies an ancient situation (probably three thousand years ago and presumably the oldest dwelling territory in the south of the Caucasus)” (Introduction, p. 261).

Finally, the author concludes:

“This solves the *fundamental issue* regarding the historical and genetic relationship of the Iberian-Caucasian languages: *the farther we look into the past, the more common features are discovered*.

Thus, the issue of a comparison of the lexical system and the question of regular correspondence arises.

A historical-comparative dictionary naturally follows historical-comparative grammar (Introduction, p. 265) (The author remarks in the footnote: “The kinship of Indo-European languages became obvious in the work by Fr. Bopp who compared verb forms in his work in 1816 when no phonetic correspondences were established”).

We can conclude that the present book by Arnold Chikobava fully presents the scientific atmosphere of the last century regarding the study of Caucasian languages, the thinking style and the research culture of the author. I am pleased that English-speaking readers are presented with an opportunity to get acquainted and evaluate the results of the long scientific research of the leader of the school of Georgian Caucasiology.

Additional transcription symbols employed in the text:

| | | |
|---------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Long vowel - \tilde{a} | Abruptive - ḱ | Intensive /hard - s_0 |
| Short vowel - \tilde{a} | Preruptive - t^p | Palatalized - g^j |
| Nasalized - a^n | Labialized - c_0 | Laterals - $l^j \text{ } l_0^j$ |
| Pharyngealized - a_1 | Pharyngealized - x^c | |
| Palatalized- \tilde{a} | Laryngealized- b^c | |

Avtandil Arabuli

Editor

Abbreviations

| | |
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| AICL | Annual of Iberian-Caucasian Linguistics (Journal of the Institute of Linguistics at the Academy of Sciences at GSSR, Tbilisi) |
| BIRGS | Bulletin of the Imperial Russian Geographic Society, Tiflis |
| BDLLAS | Bulletin of the Department of Literature and Language of the Academy of Sciences of USSR |
| BILHMC | Bulletin of the Institute of Language, History and Material Culture |
| CMDATC | Collection of Materials for Describing the Areas and Tribes of the Caucasus, Educational District, Tiflis |
| ICLang | Iberian-Caucasian Languages (Languages of the peoples of USSR, Vol. IV. Iberian Caucasian Languages, Moscow, 1967) |
| ICL | Iberian-Caucasus Linguistics (Journal of the Institute of Linguistics at the Academy of Sciences of the GSSR) |
| IL | Issues of Linguistics (Journal of the Russian Academy of Sciences) |
| IF | Issues of Philosophy |

Introduction

Modern theoretical linguistics is characterized by a great diversity regarding the understanding of essential issues. Scholars press their views and do this so vaguely that the issues are largely unclear even to the authors. Therefore, uncertainty in these matters has done considerable damage to the scientific study of the Iberian-Caucasian languages in the past.

It seems urgent to say a few words regarding the following general issues below.³

1. Towards the Relationship between Theoretical and Applied Linguistics

During the past 30 years (Wiener Cybernetics, 1948), the study of language has been of great practical importance: Engineering Linguistics, also referred to as “Cybernetic Linguistics”, is being developed and formally associated with *the formalized* language (and not with the natural language!). For this branch of linguistics, the history of language is neither necessary nor is it concerned with the relationship between language and thought.

Despite its great practical importance and applicability, “Engineering Linguistics” (as well as Engineering Psychology) cannot replace Theoretical Linguistics (cf. Therapy and Physiology).

³ For more information concerning these issues, see our articles: *Language and Theory of Language in Philosophy and Linguistic*, BDLLAS, 1976, N3 and *Towards the Philosophical Issue in Linguistics*, BDLLAS, 1974, N 4. The Georgian text of this article is available in *Iberian-Caucasian Linguistics*, vol. 20, p. 5-21; also, *The Annual of Iberian-Caucasian Linguistics, its Purpose and General Linguistic Foundations*, I (1974), pp. 9-22.

2. Description of the Language System and Structure (Synchronous Analysis) and the History of the Language System and Structure (Diachronic Analysis)

From the nineteen thirties onwards, the attention of scholars was focused on the *description* of the system and structure of the language and the identification of the patterns and regularities employed by it (synchronous analysis).

Descriptive analysis of the language system and structure is scientifically *relevant* (we have given a special justification of this issue in the monograph “The Problem of a Simple Sentence in Georgian”, I, 1928, Second edition, 1968).

In our country, at that time and for the next few decades, the study of the grammatical structure was considered to be formalism and rejected as ideologically unacceptable by the followers of the “New Linguistic Doctrine” introduced by N. Marr.

Nowadays, synchronous analysis is the focus of attention not only abroad, and the terms “structure” and “concept” are currently being universalized (former Marr followers now do not utter a word without including the terms “structure” and “structural”). It is claimed that the terms “structure”, “synchronous plane” and “typological comparison” are all-inclusive. Due to this, the history of language is neglected.

3. Linguistics and the History of Language

The scientific study of language requires *descriptive analysis* of a language *system and structure* on the one hand and the study of the history of the structure and system on the other. In both cases, learning a language implies a relationship to *culture and thought*, a relationship of the *history of language* to the *history* of culture and the *history* of thought.

The importance of the history of language for the history of culture is well known. Its importance for the history of thought and thinking is demonstrated by the psychology of thought (in particular, by Wundt, Cassirer, and Kainz).

4. Most Essential *Achievements* of Linguistics Are Related to the History of Language

Linguistics was created as an independent branch of science. Based on the history of language, in the first quarter of the 19th century, historical-comparative grammar replaced rational afterwards, philosophical grammar.

Language is a changeable phenomenon. The changeable object is the principal justification for the need for historicism.

The anti-historicism prevalent in modern linguistics has not been caused by any internal issues. Anti-historicism is nurtured by philosophy (namely, logical positivism).

The theory of any specific science should be based on the achievements of the study of the relevant subject and should represent an understanding of these achievements. This theory will then be used to improve further research regarding the relevant subject.

5. “Introduction to Iberian-Caucasian Linguistics”

“Introduction to Iberian-Caucasian Linguistics” is internally related to the “History of the Study of Iberian-Caucasian Linguistics” (published in 1965). The latter (“History of the study....”) prepares the foundation for the analysis of the issues discussed in “Introduction to Iberian-Caucasian Linguistics”.

The “History of the Study of Iberian-Caucasian Linguistics” is delivered to third-year students of the Faculty of Philology whereas the “Introduction to Iberian-Caucasian Linguistics” is delivered in the fourth year of studies. Both courses were created and elaborated at our university (seven languages from the mountain Iberian-Caucasian languages have also become the subject of teaching first at Tbilisi State University).

“Introduction to Iberian-Caucasian Linguistics” is aimed at the analysis of fundamental issues concerning the *sound system, and morphological and syntactic structures* of Iberian-Caucasian languages. What is more important, it is aimed at providing us with a *historical interpretation of the relevant data*.

Clearly, the “Introduction” could not be limited to expressing already stated facts. The author did not shy away from controversial issues. On the contrary, he tried to make disputable points clear, find out their origin, and outline ways to resolve them.

This approach is demanded by the interests of the scientific exploration of Iberian-Caucasian languages.

Without this, the student cannot learn to think/thinking critically within his/her specialism. The *main task* of higher education is to teach the student to think critically. No university can provide *complete information on the subject* (the volume of issues to be explored is infinite). Even a young individual can greatly enhance his/her knowledge if he/she knows the *fundamentals* and has mastered the skills of critical *thinking* in his/her field.

The entire text of this book was critically read by Doctor of Philological Sciences, Professor Bidzina Pochkhua, Candidate of Philological Sciences, Docent Gennady Burtchuladze and Candidate of Philological Sciences, Senior Researcher Vazha Shengelia

The author thanks them for the comments they provided.

Chapter 1

Preliminary Notes

§1. The Goals and Objectives of Iberian-Caucasian Linguistics

Iberian-Caucasian Linguistics is the doctrine regarding the *structure, system*⁴, and *history* of the Iberian-Caucasian Languages.⁵

The study of a system implies the *descriptive analysis* (and the determination of descriptive patterns) of a language (its phonetics, morphology, syntax, and vocabulary). This kind of analysis is *an auxiliary tool of analysis*.

The main aspect is the history – analysis of the origin and development of language using the historical-comparative method. The *method* by which this object must be studied arises from a certain understanding of the object under study, through internal necessity. The concept (the Iberian-Caucasian languages) is *historical-genetic* and corresponds to the historical-comparative method. Therefore, the *object* of the study determines the *method*.

In historical-comparative research, the *comparison is the means* (and not *the end in itself*) for history. This distinguishes the comparison in the

⁴ All that is structural, is also systemic. On the other hand, systemic is not always structural. Therefore, below we use the term “*system*” as a more general concept.

⁵ The Iberian-Caucasian languages make up four groups. These groups are:

1. Kartvelian languages (Georgian, Zan, Svan);
2. Abkhaz-Adyghean languages (Abkhazian, Abaza, Adyghean, Kabardian, Ubykh);
3. Nakh languages (Chechen, Ingush, Batsb);
4. Dagestanian languages (the Avar-Andi-Dido subgroup, the Lak-Dargwa subgroup, the Lezgian subgroup). There are 32 languages in all four groups (20 of them are languages of the Dagestanian language group). 12 languages use writing systems. Georgian has the oldest alphabet (from the 5th century). New languages with writing systems are as follows: Abkhazian, Abaza, Adyghe, Kabardian, Chechen, Ingush, Avar, Lak, Dargwa, Lezgian, Tabasaran.

historical-comparative science from that in the pre-scientific period (ancient, medieval), and also from the comparison in *typological* research (see below).

The employment of the historical-comparative method while exploring historical and genetic issues is crucial but not *sufficient*. The historical-comparative method is an effective means for the study of *differentiative* (*divergent*) processes regarding the development of kindred languages. However, the development of languages does not only depend on the process of divergence. At the same time, another process, the process of *language integration* (*convergence*) operates in the opposite direction: the development of language is a result of these two *opposing* directions.

The stronger the contacts between languages and therefore the greater the specific weight of the process of convergence (as in our languages for example), the more limited is the effectiveness of the historical-comparative method. Yet there exists no better way of research (though there has been a lot of effort expended in this direction: Geography of Dialects, Areal Linguistics....).

The exploration of the language begins with a *descriptive* analysis. The descriptive analysis does not *preclude or oppose* historical-comparative analysis. We may have different views regarding the understanding of the significance of historical-comparative and descriptive analysis for the scientific study of language but unquestionably one does not rule out the other.

In addition to the historical-comparative analysis, the *language groups* can also be studied in terms of *structural-typological analysis*. In this case, although the comparison is employed, this method of analysis is not intended to study the history of languages. For structural-typological analysis, it does not matter whether we compare kindred languages or languages of a completely different origin: some facts about the Abkhazian language can be compared to the facts from the languages of American Indians (Milevsky) or Chechen, or Bantu languages in Africa (Nemirovsky).

Structural-typological comparison is based on the descriptive analysis of the systems of languages to be compared and aims to establish general patterns – *universal* features (for example, if there are affricates in the phonetic system of the language, there will also be spirants [R. Jakobson]).

Structural-typological linguistics relies on essentially the same viewpoint characteristic of general or rational grammar (17th c) and its continuation of philosophical grammar (18th c). It aims to single out *general, common* features as all the languages express the same logical categories. It is believed that the principal factor in languages is what is general and common and not what is peculiar or different.

General or rational (philosophical) grammar did not require the history of language nor does modern structural-typological linguistics.

If in the 19th century historical-comparative grammar (linguistics) was opposed to non-historical (philosophical) grammar, in the 20th century, non-historical (achronic) structural-typological linguistics is opposed to historical linguistics.

The scientific study of a language fact cannot bypass the study of its history. The essential factor is the study of the *history of language*, in connection with the *history of culture* and the *history of thought*. There is no other, more important, goal regarding the scientific study of language in linguistics.

This does not preclude the study of language without history. A descriptive study of the language system, as was already mentioned above, is necessary from the point of view of the history of language (as far as it can reveal the regularities of the language system). This means that the description of the language system does not end with the classification or systematic presentation of facts. The classification of linguistic facts (sounds, words, word combinations or sentences) is necessary for the comprehensive review of events and conveys certain practical significance.

The relationship between the descriptive and historical-comparative research or rather, their cognitive value, is determined by one essential circumstance: *language is a dynamic (changeable) system* and *each part* of a linguistic system is *changeable*. However, different parts (composition and system of sounds, word forms, the structure of the syntagm, the composition of the lexis, and the meaning of words) *change unequally*.

It is because of this that the facts of different historical periods are presented simultaneously in the language system. That is why the linguistic system cannot be “free from history” at any period of its existence. To

understand a linguistic fact, we need the help of history. A system of a language depends on its history.

Does language systematicity affect history? Such a possibility is not ruled out: the systematicity of language can be reflected, in some way, in its history (for example, in Svan affricates *ʃ*, *č*, *ć* were replaced by spirants. Affricates form triplets whereas spirants make up pairs. Consequently, there are the following pairs: *ʃ* - *ž*; *č* - *š*; *ć* - *θ*, there is no correspondence found for *č*. (Topuria, V.).⁶

However, this is only a *possibility*. The fact that the system is conditioned by history (the dependence of the system on history!) is an *inevitability* concerning the principal basis.

Similarly, the structural-typological study of the language system cannot replace historical-comparative research.

Structural-typological comparisons, as well as regularities of descriptive nature, can assist historical-comparative research.

To fully explore the scientific history of the Iberian-Caucasian languages, it is necessary first, to explore scientifically all the Iberian-Caucasian languages notwithstanding whether they do or do not have writing systems. Next, it is necessary to explore historical-comparative grammars and dictionaries of all four groups of languages (Kartvelian, Abkhaz-Adyghean, Nakh-Kist and Dagestanian) and finally, to compile a comprehensive historical-comparative grammar of the Iberian-Caucasian languages and a historical dictionary of common roots.

The first objective is now essentially solved- the descriptive analyses of almost all languages (some of them complete and others briefer) are already available. However, the second objective has not been solved yet (below we will talk about what is being done in this regard).

The main task is the third one. As there are no conditions to solve this task at the moment, it is a matter for the future.⁷ With all this in mind, the “Introduction to the Iberian-Caucasian Linguistics” currently aims to:

⁶ Chikobava, A. (1960). *Some Issues Concerning Comparative Phonetics of the Kartvelian Languages*. ICL, XII, A. Chikobava. Institute of Linguistics, Tbilisi.

⁷ A thorough, *complete* study of individual languages and language groups does not mean that until this work has *been done*, it is inappropriate and unjustified to explore *separate issues*

- single out key issues that emerge while exploring the scientific history of the Iberian-Caucasian languages;
- present the main conclusions that can be drawn at this stage from the research on these key issues.

§2. The Situation Regarding the Current State of the Study of the Iberian-Caucasian Languages

During the past hundred years, much has been done to study the Iberian-Caucasian languages. Comprehensive overviews of almost all unwritten languages are already available. The least amount of information was available on the Ubykh language (from Abkhaz-Adyghean languages) and the languages of the Andi and Dido groups and the Shah-Dagh circle (Budukh, Khinalug, and Kritz languages). During the last two decades, the situation in this respect has improved. However, the results of monographic studies of some languages have not yet been published.

Many works have been published in which certain groups of the Iberian-Caucasian languages have become the subject of discussion and, if not yet systematically, some aspects of these languages have already been explored.

There are already complete, brief reviews of certain groups of languages⁸. The following works are fully dedicated to the research of the Iberian-Caucasian languages:

taking into account the data of two, three (or all four) groups. One does not exclude the others. Research by Trubetzkoy shows that research on individual issues based on the materials from several language groups can yield valuable results. The following works by Trubetzkoy are relevant: *Die Konsonanten systeme der ostkaukasischen Sprachen* (1931); Trubetzkoy, N.S. *Les consonnes latérales des langues Caucasiques Septentrionales* (1922); *Lateral Consonants in the North Caucasus Languages*, (1922); *Lexical correlations in the North Caucasian Languages* (1930); *Notes on the verb-endings in the East Caucasus (Chechen-Dagestanian) Language*, (1929); See also: G. Dumézil's *Introduction to Comparative Grammar of the North Caucasian Languages*, (1933); Iv. Javakhishvili's *The Original Nature and Relationship of the Georgian and Caucasian Languages*, (1937).

⁸ Many specific issues will be disputable in such investigations. However, disputes do not preclude doing the preliminary work.

1. “Die Sprachen des kaukasischen Stammes” by Richard Erckert. The work by Richard Erckert⁹ consists of two parts. The first part (204 pages) contains the lexical material: 545 words (mostly nouns, pronouns, adjectives, numerals, adjectives and about twenty verbs) translated into 30 languages and subdialects. The second part (391 pages) contains expressions (169 phrases in German translated into the same language and subdialects to which the vocabulary in the first part belonged). At the end of the work, the grammatical notes are provided. Attached to this work there is a classification of Caucasian languages and the discussion of their origins.

2. “Einführung in das Studium der kaukasischen Sprachen” (Introduction to the Study of the Caucasian Languages), by A. Dirr was released in 1928. The book describes the key issues of the grammar of all Caucasian languages separately (some of them are very briefly described, for example, the Chamalal language is described on one page whereas the Kvanad language is allotted two and a half pages. The most extensive is the review of Georgian, comprising 33 pages). Grammatical references to individual languages are followed by a general description of a separate group of languages (the most extensive of which is the description of Chechen and Dagestanian languages comprising 12 pages).

The contents of the book by Dirr are preceded by “A General Overview of Caucasian Languages” (pp. 1-12); Do Caucasian Languages stand alone? (pp. 24-29) and “The Phonetic System of the Caucasian Languages” (pp. 29-37).

Introduction to the Study of the Caucasian Languages by Dirr¹⁰ thus does not provide a systemic analysis of key issues in all language groups (with one exception being the phonetic system).

3. A fundamental monograph by Iv. Javakhishvili “The Original Nature and kinship of the Georgian and Caucasian Languages” (1937)¹¹ is the second book of the Introduction to the History of the Georgian Nation series. This

⁹ Erckert, R., *Die Sprachen des kaukasischen Stammes*, Wien, (1895), VI (p204); XII (p.391).

¹⁰ Dirr, A. (1928). *Einführung in das Studium der kaukasischen Sprachen*, Leipzig, (1928), p 380.

¹¹ Publication of ILHMC (Institute of Language, History and Material Culture) of the Georgian Branch of the USSR Academy of Sciences, 625 p. + indexes (names of persons, geographical names, tribal names, language names, index of terms), (754 pages).