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## **Interference Occurrences in the Speech of the Kodorian Gorge's Svans<sup>1</sup>**

### **ABSTRACT**

The representatives of the Upper Bal and Lower Bal dialects who migrated in the Kodori (resp. Dali) Gorge to Upper Svaneti a century and a half ago, before the occupation of their territory they were mixed with each other according to the villages, that caused the resemblance of one dialect to another in their speech. Interference gained a form of adstrat that "*arises due to the equal knowledge of two languages or dialects during their free mutual influence; It is a live process of interference of languages (dialects), and interference always appears in the direct contacts of languages (dialects)*" (B. Jorbenadze). This phenomenon has been observed in the speech of the Kodori's (resp. Dali's) Upper Svan population in the 70s of the last century by M. Kaldani;

Despite the issue, its investigation wasn't proceeded in the last century by the kartvelologists. Only in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century it was renewed, when Iza Chantladze delivered a speech on the topic "*Peculiarities of the Defective Verbs in the Kodori Gorge's Svan*" at the scientific session of the Arnold Chikobava Institute of Linguistics. This initiative was the basis for further thorough study of Svan speech of the Kodori Gorge's population under the supervision of I. Chantladze at Arnold Chikobava Institute of Linguistics. The work was significantly complicated due to the well-known military actions: At certain times, the trip to the Kodori Gorge was associated with great risk. However, a group of scientists interested in the issue to some extent still managed it.

As the result of this devotion (literally!) a large empirical material was obtained and 835-page publication "*Kodorian Chronicles*" was published, where the specifics and properties of the Kodorian speech are discussed. The logical question was raised: Whether Kodorian speech is dialect or not? Proceeding with the investigation to solve the problem failed at that stage, as this area became inaccessible not only for Georgian scientists but it has been completely emptied from Georgians and the local population has been dispersed throughout the regions of Georgia as refugees: Svaneti, Kvemo Kartli, Kakheti, Imereti...Research has become even more significant, since the non-compact life of the population speaking an analytical

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<sup>1</sup>The work was implemented within # 217848 grant project "*Place of Kodorian Speech in Svan Language System*".

speech threatened changes in their speech code. In 2016, the Rustaveli Foundation funded the fundamental research project: "*Place of Kodorian Speech in Svan Language System*" (Principal investigator I. Chantladze), which opened the way for the long-term observation on the speech of Kodorian population dispersed throughout Georgia and for new results. Working on the project is not over yet, but preliminary observations demonstrate a noteworthy picture that includes phonetics, grammar and vocabulary. Since analytical topic is very extensive, I will bring only some of the most common and noteworthy interference occurrences in the work.

**Key words:** *Svan language; Dialect; Interference*

The Kodori (resp. Dali) Gorge is that historic area which was always in the interest of scientists and which was called "*Mivssianeti (Mivssianot) in the ancient as well as Middle ages*" [1, 83]. Today, this part of Georgia is occupied and is emptied from Georgian (Svan) inhabitants.

The representatives of the Upper Bal and Lower Bal dialects who migrated in the Kodori (resp. Dali) Gorge to Upper Svaneti a century and a half ago, before the occupation of their territory they were mixed with each other according to the villages, that caused the resemblance of one dialect to another in their speech. Interference gained a form of adstrat that "*arises due to the equal knowledge of two languages or dialects during their free mutual influence; It is a live process of interference of languages (dialects), and interference always appears in the direct contacts of languages (dialects)*" [2, 68]. This phenomenon has been observed in the speech of the Kodori's (resp. Dali's) Upper Svan population in the 70s of the last century by M. Kaldani: "*The present Svans residing in the*

*Kodori Gorge are upper Svans. Their speech is in formation process into one of new, more complex and noteworthy dialects of Svan*". The scholar considers that the basis of the "*peculiar, rapidly development*" process in the language is due to the mixing of phonetic and grammatical occurrences of two Svan dialects - Upper Bal and Lower Bal in the speech of the Gorge's Svans [1,83].

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noteworthy interference occurrences in the work:

### Phonetics

As it is known, in Svan the dialectal demarcating criteria are phonetic features: length of the vowels, umlaut and reduction. Of traditionally distinguished four dialects (Upper Bal, Lower Bal, Lashkhian, Lentekhian) all these three features in Svan are characteristic only of Upper Bal. Of the second Upper Svan dialect - Lower Bal the length of the vowel isn't characteristic. In the speech of Kodorian Upper Bal population, the fluctuation of the use of long vowels (which is completely excluded in the speech of Enguri Gorge's Svans) is observable, and, on the contrary, rarely but occasionally there occur the cases when the Lower Bal population pronounces long vowels (which is even more excluded in the speech of the Mestia region's Lower Bal population!). Only a few examples from the large material are represented:

ზექ ი ჰემ ჭჷედიახან ხარხ ლეღღე *zek i čem čwedixän xarx leqde*[4, 362] – “Sbhas to bring firewood and hay from afar”. In this sentence two phonetic processes characteristic of Upper Bal are violated three times: a lexeme *ჭჷედია* *čwedia* “afar” is the result of an umlaut of a root *o-* and is basically characteristic of Lower Bal, in Upper Bal an initial *ō* is preserved – in Upper Bal a correct form is *ჭოდიახან* *čōdixän*; also, in *ხარხ*

*xarx* lexeme **a** vowel should be long: *ხარხ* *xār̄x* "They have".

The ending of the Svan surnames (-*iani* /-*ani*) in Upper Bal is usually with a long vowel, and a root vowel (**a, e, i**) is umlauted due to the influence of a suffixali-vowel: მარგიან *mārgiān*, ბარლიან *bārliān*... Principles are not kept in the samples of Kodorian Upper Bal speech: იშგენ დარ იზგე ამჩუ *maṛgiaṇ* *išgen dār izge amčū margian* – "No one other Margiani is living here" [4, 363]; მიხუი ზაური ჯაჭულიან, ორმოცდაცხრა ლგზა *mi xwi zauri žačvlian, ormocdaxra ləzäj* – "I am Zauri Jachvliani, forty-nine years-old" [4, 326].

I note that the length of the vowels has a distinct (word-distinguishing) function in Upper Bal Svan; for example, მარე *māre* "man", cf. *mare* "but". However, because of the interference with Lower Bal, there is neither such obstacle for originally Upper Bal Kodorian population, and in similar cases they often use only short vowels, that result homonimia: ბეკა ლგმარ ლგნთირ მორეუ *maṛe* *bekāj ləmār ləntir mōrew mare* – "Beka was a well-known mediator *man*" [4, 363]; ლოხსგი, შომა ნამბაუს შომა იმბუა *maṛe!* *loxsgi, šomā nambaws šoma imbwāl mare!* – "Look! When sb narrates the narration of what time!" [4, 301]; ორაშირ-სემაშირ *maṛe* *eši sgaxonqerda* – "Sb was accompanied

by two-three hundred *men*" [4, 307]. (In this example as the result of elision at the vowel-boundary it was expected one more long vowel *მარ'ეში*, but a narrator didn't keep either this rule), cf. ლმარალს ესერ ჩუხუაძარიდად, მარე მამ ესერ აზიზდას ნიშგუე *lājrałs eser čuxwājrdad, mare mam eser azidax nišgwej lājrałs* – "We wrote letters *but* they did not send our letters" ... [4, 308];

### Morphology

Upper Bal Perfect forms are historically often used by the representatives of Lower Bal Svaneti in analyzing speech and vice versa. It should also be explained to be the result of interference: *-ēn/-en* element which occurs in the superessive version of Past Perfect forms and which is usually neglected in the Upper Bal Plusquamperfect [5]: ხალტენს "If they had had", ხახლენს "If they had known"... In the speech of Kodorian Upper Bal population it is often confirmed: დარალბეკუეს ბზათ ხალტენ-ენ-ხ *jaräy xekwes bzat xaywēn-ēn-x* – "They should have had ready the weapon" [4, 318]; ამის ესერმა ფასნა, ეჭ'ესერბეკუეს ჩუ ხახლ-ენ-ენ-ხ *amis eser māj päs xāz, ež' eser xekwes čuxaxl-ēn-ēn-x* – "You should have had to know its price" [4, 382].

A preverbal **a-** which usually occurs in the Lower Bal as **o-**, often occurs in the speech of the representatives of Kodorian Upper Bal dialect and instead of Upper Bal **ამჰკეჟელიხ** **ämçkeželix** “ They have been destroyed/wiped out”, **ჩუალშიხელი** **čwalšixeli**“ It has been burned” verbs there occur Perfect Lower Bal forms with long vowels: **ომჰკეჟელიხ** **omçkeželix**, **ჩუოლშიხელი** **čwolšixeli**...

A declension system isn't exception in terms of interference. Lower Bal population use two-stemmed declension forms characteristic of Upper Bal one: **მარემიშ** **maremiš**, **ჟელმიშ** **žeymiš** ("man's", "of a dog") ... instead of **marem**, **žaywem** forms and so forth.

Thus, mixing of speech codes of the representatives of two dialects in the speech of Kodorian Svans is absolutely clear, but besides the mentioned one more tendency was outlined as well, that cannot be explained by the mixing of subdialects. It is known that in Svan there is a morphological category of inclusive and exclusive, which is reflected not only in a verb, but also in a pronoun, as well.

Morphological expression of this category is different in modern Svan dialects: in Lower Svan the opposition according to inclusiveness-exclusivity occurs only in

subjective personal forms, in the Upper Svan dialects – both in the subjective and objective personal forms.

In the Kodori Gorge there wasn't expected the interference changes in terms of the use of inclusive and exclusive forms of a verb because it was inhabited only by the representatives of those subdialects who survived this category alive. It appeared that unlike the Enguri Gorge Svan (where the inclusive and exclusive forms are still strictly demarcated), an analytical category is instable in the speech of Kodorian Svans - they frequently mix the inclusive and exclusive forms of a verb with each other, which I consider to be a weakening of the position of the category (and not idiolect)<sup>2</sup>.

Mixing of the inclusive and exclusive forms in the speech of Kodorian Svans looks like an innovation and resembles the unification process of forms a contributing factor of which is likely the analogy with Georgian (till the 2008 events the Gorge's population had daily and business relations with Apkhazia's Georgian population, but now they compactly reside in different places). This assertion is supported by the material similarity of Georgian **gv-** Oi and Svan **gw-** Oi prefixes: In the case of anomaly, just the inclusive form of object with

<sup>2</sup>This case was attested in the samples of by-us recorded speech of the Kodorian Svans resided in their own dwelling places till 2008 and who at present are

refuges. So far the tendency is related only to a verb and exclusive of objective structure.

**gw-** prefix occupies the place of exclusive form with **n-** prefix.

In my opinion, I can say that we are witnesses to the ongoing process in the speech of Kodorian Svans that began in ancient Georgian.

I believe that the research finalization and systematization of material will finally resolve

the issue of occurring of another dialect in Svan. However, in my view, before coming to final conclusion it is necessary to carry out the statistic analysis of interference forms on the one hand and on the other hand to determine systemic nature of interference events.

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