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Kartvelian Lexical Correspondences with Uralic and Altaic Languages

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ABSTRACT

Kartvelian is often considered as isolated group of languages, spoken in Georgia. However, its incorporation in the Eurasiatic or Nostratic macro-family is based on some rather conclusive evidences of non-hazardous correspondences between Kartvelian and other neighbor languages, especially Indo-European. Here we will point out that some correspondences between Kartvelian and non-Indo-European Nostratic languages put them lexically closer to Turkic and Finno-Volgaic languages. Neither Ugric nor Mongolic languages does not seem to have some significant correspondences with Kartvelian languages. Lexical correspondences prove to have much more areal than hierarchical proximity.

MATERIAL AND METHOD

We analyze one half of 100-words Swadesh word-list in Chuvash, Yakut, Tuvan, Uzbek, Mongol, Buryat, Finnish, Estonian, Erzya, Udmurt, Mansi, Kurdish, Ossetic, Armenian, Russian and Proto-Indo-Iranian-Reconstruction, comparing them with Georgian one. In some cases, we provides data for Mingrelian list too.

Iranian languages (Kurdish and Ossetic), Russian and Armenian were taken as languages of nearest Indo-European geographical neighbors, Uralic and Altaic languages were chosen in such a way that as many as possible subgroups were represented.

Swadesh list especially in its very beginning accumulates very abstract and mainly morpho-syntactically than lexically induced entities, we are mostly interested in strictly lexical entities.

Here 50 (one half) of 100-word list that we are analyzing: *worm, tree, forest, stick, fruit, seed, leaf, root, bark, flower, grass, rope, skin, meat, blood, bone, fat, egg, horn, tail, feather, hair, head, ear, eye, nose, mouth, tooth, tongue, fingernail, foot, leg, knee, hand, wing, belly, guts, neck, back, breast, heart, liver, drink, eat, bite, suck, spit, blow, breathe, laugh.*

All data are collected from open-access sources:

https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/Appendix:Turkic_Swadesh_lists

https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/Appendix:Armenian_Swadesh_list

https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/Appendix:Indo-Iranian_Swadesh_lists

https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/Appendix:Uralic_Swadesh_lists

<https://ru.wiktionary.org/wiki/%D0%9F%D1%80%D0%B8%D0%BB%D0%BE%D0%B6%D0%B5%D0%BD%D0%B8%D0%B5:%D0%A1%D0%BF%D0%B8%D1%81%D0%BA%D0%B>

[8_%D0%A1%D0%B2%D0%BE%D0%B4%D0%B5%D1%88%D0%B0_%D0%B4%D0%BB%D1%8F_%D0%BA%D0%B0%D1%80%D1%82%D0%B2%D0%B5%D0%BB%D1%8C%D1%81%D0%BA%D0%B8%D1%85_%D1%8F%D0%B7%D1%8B%D0%BA%D0%BE%D0%B2](https://ru.wiktionary.org/wiki/%D0%9F%D1%80%D0%B8%D0%BB%D0%BE%D0%B6%D0%B5%D0%BD%D0%B8%D0%B5:%D0%A1%D0%BF%D0%B8%D1%81%D0%BA%D0%B8%D0%A1%D0%B2%D0%BE%D0%B4%D0%B5%D1%88%D0%B0_%D0%B4%D0%BB%D1%8F_%D0%BA%D0%B0%D1%80%D1%82%D0%B2%D0%B5%D0%BB%D1%8C%D1%81%D0%BA%D0%B8%D1%85_%D1%8F%D0%B7%D1%8B%D0%BA%D0%BE%D0%B2)

https://ru.wiktionary.org/wiki/%D0%9F%D1%80%D0%B8%D0%BB%D0%BE%D0%B6%D0%B5%D0%BD%D0%B8%D0%B5:%D0%A1%D0%BF%D0%B8%D1%81%D0%BA%D0%B8%D0%A1%D0%B2%D0%BE%D0%B4%D0%B5%D1%88%D0%B0_%D0%B4%D0%BB%D1%8F_%D0%BC%D0%BE%D0%BD%D0%B3%D0%BE%D0%BB%D1%8C%D1%81%D0%BA%D0%B8%D1%85_%D1%8F%D0%B7%D1%8B%D0%BA%D0%BE%D0%B2

Few words can be believed to have common Nostratic root, however many of them have evident or possible correspondences with *some* of Nostratic languages.

In many cases, we do not insist on strict genetically induced relationships. We classify possible correspondences in three categories:

- evident repetitive correspondence
- highly likely correspondence (phonetical similarity/quasi-similarity)
- possible correspondence (phonetical analogy)

RESULTS

‘*Pexi*’ (foot), ‘*maḷli*’ (worm), ‘*kerki*’ (bark) are rather likely to have correspondence with common Indo-European roots. They are largely represented in Uralic languages too. ‘*Pexi*’ has correspondence in nearly all Indo-European languages and in different groups of Uralic. ‘*Maḷli*’ has correspondence in Mansi as well as in Finnish. Indo-Europeans knows it with certain lexical shift - ‘moth’ or ‘louse’ [1]. Neither ‘*pexi*’ nor ‘*matli*’ can be found in Altaic languages from the sample. However, there are more than half of Kartvelian roots from our sample that can be compared with at least one of languages under study.

All found correspondences cover only partly languages under study. It does not prove that each word from sample is a late innovation. Semantic shifts (like ‘*worm*’ vs ‘*moth*’) and drastic phonetical mutations can make evident cognates very difficult to find and to prove. It is also rather likely that some of possible correspondences are not cognate at all.

No evident correspondences with Mongolian languages were found, however especially numerous were correspondences with Turkic languages, first of all with the most archaic ones (Chuvash and Yakut) and with Finno-Volgaic languages (especially with Finnish and Estonian). Correspondences with Ugric languages are also much rarer than with Finno-Volgaic ones. Russian and Armenian has more correspondences than Indo-Iranian languages. Long

neighborhood with Armenians make rather understandable all possible mutual borrowing but scarcity of Iranian cognates in presence of Slavic ones is rather suspicious.

To group evidences found we shall draw a table below:

Table 1 Correspondences with Kartvelian Swadeh roots*

English	Georgian	Armenian	Russian	Finnish	Estonian	Erzya	Chuvash	Yakut	Uzbek
worm	maṭli			mato					
forest	tḡe							<i>tya</i>	to'qay
fruit	xili			hedelmä	vili				
root	ziri			juuri	juur				
bark	kerki	kefew	kəra	kaarna	koor	ker'			
flower	q̄vavili		<i>cvetok</i>	<i>kukka</i>		<i>cec'a</i>	<i>čeček</i>		<i>čečak</i>
horn	rka		rog						
tail	ḡudi							kuturuk	
feather	sua**			<i>sulka</i>	<i>sulg</i>	<i>tolga</i>		<i>tuu</i>	
head	tavi							<i>taba</i>	
ear	q̄uri			korva	kōrv		xəlxə	kulgaah	quloq
nose	cxviri	<i>k'it'</i>							
mouth	ḡiri	beran							
tooth	ḡbili		zub						
foot	pexi								
leg	pexi					<i>pil'ge</i>	<i>pəsa</i>		
hand	xeli					<i>ked'</i>	<i>alə</i>	<i>ilii</i>	<i>qo'l</i>
belly	kora**						<i>xyrəm</i>		<i>qorin</i>
back	çeli			<i>selkä</i>	<i>selg</i>		<i>surəm</i>	<i>kəlin</i>	
breast	mḡerdi	kurck'	grud'				kəkər		
eat	çama			<i>syödä</i>	<i>sööma</i>		<i>sime</i>	<i>sie</i>	
breathe	suntkva			<i>hengittää</i>	<i>hingama</i>		<i>syvlama</i>		
laugh	sicili	<i>cicafel</i>							

* - evident correspondence – in bold, possible (not proven) – in italic

** - mingrelian version

We can see that Russian and Armenian have five correspondences but Finnish, Chuvash and Yakut are likely to have them twice more. Correspondences with Armenian are either very common ('bark' and 'breast') either very specific (for example, '*ḡiri*' – mouth and '*sicili*' – laugh). The word '*ḡiri*' is suspected to be of common Caucasian origin (having correspondences with North Caucasian languages) [2].

DISCUSSION

It is widely known that culturally induced lexical correspondences can be easily understood as a result of borrowing (for example, correspondences between 'vardan' – 'rose' in Georgian and

Armenian is just an element of relatively recent cultural borrowing). However, if we speak about Swadesh list, cultural borrowings are very unlikely or at least they are much rarer.

Kartvelian family is often considered to be very isolated branch of common 'Nostratic' trunk. Estimates of separation date are sometimes about 13 KY BP [4] either completely absent in Eurasiatic ramification [3]. According to Swadesh formulae [5, 6] it is completely impossible to have 13 KY of chronological distance from Finnish and possess one-half of common vocabulary. Certainly, proven correspondences are much less numerous, but they are also nearly comparable with correspondences inside families and of course we cannot consider Kartvelian languages as part of Turkic or Finno-Volgaic branch, hence the problem with chronology is still there. The solution of problem is on our opinion in rescue from hierarchical logic of ramification of languages. Kartvelian languages have certainly something in common with Turkic and Finno-Volgaic ones, some traces of relatively recent contacts (3-4 KY) but of course their first separation should be dated by much more remote times. Was it influence of completely dissimilated tribe-X, of contacts inside some type of Sprachbund, Finno-Volgaic invasion in Transcaucasian region or Kartvelian invasion in Volga region – we don't know and it will probably be unknown for a long time.

CONCLUSION

It is highly likely that Kartvelian family as well as Indo-European, Uralic and Altaic ones are originated from the same very remoted source. However, this common source if it was one cannot explain all correspondences between Euroasiatic languages. Probable interfamily contacts put some languages closer to other families. It is very likely that it was the case of Kartvelian and Finno-Volgaic languages. Strictly hierarchical logic of ramification here does not work.

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