

Caucasian Studies

Sektionsleitung / Section Supervision: Mananda Tandaschwili

Raum / Room: Tokyo (1.2001)

Keynote

The Development of Literacy in the Caucasian Territories

Jost Gippert (Universität Hamburg)

The development of specific alphabetic scripts in the context of Christianisation in the early 5th century CE meant the beginning of literacy and, by consequence, a decisive step towards independent statehood for three distinct ethnic groups in the Caucasus: Armenians, Georgians, and the so-called "Caucasian Albanians". While the former two developed their written heritage steadily until today, the literacy of the "Albanians" ended with the Arab conquest in about the 8th century, and only a few specimens of their language have survived, mostly in palimpsests detected in St Catherine's Monastery on Mt Sinai. For Armenian and Georgian, too, only a limited number of original written texts have been preserved from the "early" centuries, i.e., the period between the 5th and 10th centuries CE, and most of these, too, are palimpsest materials.

Over the last 20 years, considerable progress has been made in the analysis of the oldest written materials of the three languages preserved in palimpsest form, and the results have provided substantial new insights into their historical development. The ERC project "DeLiCaTe" ("The Development of Literacy in the Caucasian Territories"), which has started in April 2022, aims at a cross-language synthesis of these insights, thus yielding a new view on the emergence and spread of writing in the region which takes into account the interrelations between the three languages and the Christian cultures represented by them as well as the influence of external religious and linguistic factors. The present paper illustrates this approach with a number of relevant cases.

Presentations

The Tradition of the Saints' Feast Days in Early Georgian Hagiographic Collections (Ivir.georg-8)

Khatuna Gaprindashvili (Korneli Kekelidze Georgian National Centre of Manuscripts, Georgia)

Tao-Klarjeti Literary Centre made a great contribution to the development of Georgian culture. One of the best examples of Georgian treasures copied in Tao is the collection of hagiographical works kept in the collection of Georgian manuscripts at the Ivron Monastery on Mount Athos (Ivir.georg-8). The manuscript consists of 380 pages; it is written in two columns, with calligraphic Nusxuri and by paleographic features is dated back to the 10th century. Ivir.georg-8 collection contains 64 hagiographic texts. The collection preserves both translated (from Greek, Armenian, etc.) and original works. Despite the fact that the Ivir.georg-8 manuscript is dated to the 10th century, the translated works preserved in this collection show translations of an early period.

The readings of Ivir.georg-8 collection are arranged according to the ecclesiastical calendar year – starts on December 27 ('Passion of St. Stephen') and lasts on June 27 ('The Martyrs of Trachus, Probus and Andronicus').

In the presentation there will be discussed the similarities and differences of the calendar cycle between Ivir.georg-8 and other collections and calendars of this time.

The translation of "horse" from Georgian into Turkish, Kyrgyz and Azeri on the basis of multilingual parallel corpus "Rustaveli goes digital"

Mariam Kamarauli (Johann Wolfgang Goethe-Universität, Deutschland)

Shota Rustaveli's immortal epic "The Knight in the Panther's Skin" (Georg. Vepkhistkaosani), created in the 12th century, is not only the pinnacle of Georgian literature but also a unique monument of all-human heritage, having been translated into 56 languages and represents a salient resource for creating a multilingual, parallel corpus. This project, "Rustaveli goes digital", which was started at the Frankfurt University, includes this epic's translation into 20 languages, i.a. Turkic languages. The corpus not only enables linguistic but also interdisciplinary researches. The presentation will focus on translational strategies of one lexical unit and its equivalents in the mentioned Turkic languages in order to compare them on grammatical, semantic and pragmatic levels. In the source text, the lexical unit "cxeni" (horse) is displayed three-way: "cxeni", "ṭaiči" and "merani". The first one, "cxeni", contains generic semantics and refers to "horse" abstractly, the second, "ṭaiči", refers specifically to thoroughbred, swift steeds and the last one, "merani", is a metaphor and refers to a fast, black horse, which can be compared to the mythological creature Pegasus. In European languages (e.g. English, Spanish, French), the latter is either translated as Pegasus or directly loaned as "merani" into the language, whereas for "cxeni" and "ṭaiči", different translational strategies are used: the specific reference often substitutes abstract reference, e.g. in French "cxeni" is translated as "coursier" (battle or tournament horse), as "destrier" (war horse) or even as "chameaux" (camel), depending on the context. The same topic of equivalence in Turkic languages will be presented in the talk.

Linguistic Analysis of Georgian Argumentative Structures

Mariam Matiashvili (Iv. Javakhishvili Tbilis State Unoversity, Georgia)

Argumentation is an integral part of our daily lives. Argumentative reasoning, techniques, and language tools are used in personal conversations and the business environment. The study of argumentative structures allows us to identify the linguistic features that make the text argumentative. Knowing what elements make up an argumentative text in a particular language helps the language users improve their skills. Also, natural language processing (NLP) has become especially relevant recently.

The research deals with the linguistic analysis of the argumentative structures of Georgian political speeches. The goals of the research are to describe the linguistic cues that

- Give the sentence a judgmental/controversial character;
- Helps to identify reasoning parts;

The empirical data comes from the Georgian Political Corpus, particularly TV debates. Consequently, the texts are dialogical, representing a discussion between two or more people.

We have two main approaches to identifying and analyzing argumentative structure. Such as:

- Creating an argument lexicon - presents groups of words gathered from a semantic point of view.
- Grammatical Analysis and Classification - means grammatical analysis of the words and phrases identified based on the arguing lexicon.

As a result, we created the lexicon with the words that play a significant role in creating Georgian argumentative structures. Also, Linguistic analysis has shown that verbs play a crucial role in creating argumentative structures.

The problem of equivalence in the Turkish translation of "The Knight in the Panther's Skin"

Nona Nikabadze (Batumi Shota Rustaveli State University, Georgia)

The article presents the difficulties caused by cultural-specific factors or other cases of the Turkish translation of "The Knight in the Panther's Skin". We will pay special attention to the theoretical basis of the equivalence paradigm and the empirical material corresponding to it, which will allow us to speak in more detail about the adequacy of the Turkish translation of "The Knight in the Panther's Skin". Based on the comparison of texts, we empirically determine the proximity and degree of metaphorical nature of the source text to the translated text.

We will compare the original text of Shota Rustaveli's poem "The Knight in the Panther's Skin" with a Turkish translation by prof. Bilal Dindar. In particular, using empirical material to describe the problem of equivalence in translation, cases of equivalence and typify them. As previous studies have shown, the translated text confirms the use of both denotative and connotative-contextual equivalents of individual lexical units. Our goal is to study the principle of selection of equivalents and evaluate the strategies of translators.

Our research has identified cases where both comparative and metaphorical examples are not conveyed. The methodological basis of the study is a corpus-linguistic analysis of the original text and the translation of "The Knight in the Panther's Skin". In the process of work, the corpus-linguistic method is used, which is relevant in modern humanitarian studies. Using this method allows us to quickly and efficiently process large volumes of empirical material.

«My day has collapsed!»: the common heritage in Ossetic and Karachay-Balkar ritual funeral laments

Davide Procaccino (University of Leiden)

The Iranian-speaking Ossetians and the Turkic-speaking Karachay-Balkars are two peoples living in the highland region of the Central and Northern Caucasus, linked not only by their centuries-old geographical proximity, but even more deeply by their partly shared ethnogenetic history. In addition to a common autochthonous Caucasian substrate, the Ās-Alanic component played a major role in the formation of both ethnicities, acting as the language-giving superstrate in the case of the Ossetians and as a persistent substrate in the case of the Karachay-Balkars, a people that itself developed in the very geographic core of Medieval Alania. Such closeness and interrelation can be seen reflected in the most diverse aspects of material and nonmaterial culture, including oral folklore in many of its genres. While this comparative approach has so far only been adopted in the study of the Nart epic of ultimate Alanic derivation, the present talk will focus on a ritual genre such as funeral lament, which, consisting in improvisation woven on a frame of stable traditional modules and patterns, stands out for its archaicity and conservatism. An overview of the most relevant shared features of Ossetic (qarġytæ | ġarængitæ) and Karachay-Balkar (sarīnla) funeral laments will be presented with regard to their ritual, linguistic and textual aspects (their structure, motifs and imagery, phraseology and formulaic poetic diction), providing examples and specimens from the relative corpora. At the same time, a diachronic point of view will be adopted in discussing the possibility of reconstructing the oldest strata of this common tradition.