

The South Caucasian Republics (1918-1920/1)

- Transcaucasian republics organized on ethnonational principle.
- Georgians and Armenians: especially high level of national consciousness
- 1. long history of statehood
- 2. distinctive confessional-linguistic identity (Georgian Orthodoxy, Armenian monophysite, with national liturgical language)
- 3. long history of literacy & unique alphabets



Language status in the independent republics

- Georgian, Armenian and Azeri proclaimed as official languages — a status they retained after the Soviet invasion
- New Latin-based script promulgated for Azeri in 1919 — foreshadowing shift to Latin script in early Soviet years

The Soviet period, I: 1917-1937

- 1. The RSFSR/USSR as anti-colonial multi-ethnic state: Lenin and Stalin's nationalities policy
- 2. Written languages for each titular nationality: alphabetization, promotion of Latin-based scripts
- 3. Reformed scripts and new alphabets

Why Lenin & Stalin supported national self-determination

- 1. National consciousness was a necessary phase in the historical path from capitalism to socialist internationalism
- 2. The non-Russian peoples were the victims of Great-Russian colonialism and chauvinism. Minority nationalism is understandable, and less dangerous than Russian nationalism
- 3. Nationalism was an ideological illusion, but a useful one; better that we use it than let them use it against us

Political-territorial categories of the USSR compared to Russian Empire

- multi-layered geopolitical structure
- innovation: creation of ethnically-based territories, as well as purely regional ones
- RSFSR maintained concept of Rossiiskij supra-ethnic identity, as in Russian Empire
- At USSR level, Russian (*Russkij*) became "unmarked" nationality, without titular territory.
- Lenin's inversion of relation between Russians and minorities: "affirmative action empire" (Terry Martin)

The multilayered territorial structure of the USSR

- 1. USSR as a union of republics
- 2. RSFSR ("super-ethnic": Rossijskaja) & Union Republics (ethnic, with constitution)
- 3a. Autonomous SSRs (ethnic, with constitution)
- 3b. Kraj (non-ethnic)
- 3c. Oblast' (within Union Republic or Kraj): Autonomous Ob (ethnic), Ob (non-ethnic)
- 4. Autonomous Okrug (ethnic; within Krai or AObl; mostly in Siberia)
- 5. Rajon (local units, like Tsarist *uezd*)

Orthographic reform in early Soviet period (1917-1928)

- “Lunacharskij Phase I”: revision and upgrading of existing writing systems
- Cyrillic reform of Dec 1917
- For East Caucasian languages sporadically written in Arabic characters: development of “new adjam” — improved Arabic orthography (1920)

scripts for Avar

- 1 & 2: Georgian and Latin transcriptions used by Chikobava and colleagues
- 3. Peter Uslar’s Cyrillic script
- 4. Anton Schiefner’s script
- 5. Arabic “adjam” script, used until 1928
- 6. Official Latin script (1928-1938)
- 7. Official Cyrillic script (from 1938)

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MAN	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
17	ⵏ	ⵏ	ⵏ	ⵏ	ⵏ	ⵏ	ⵏ
18	ⵏ	ⵏ	ⵏ	ⵏ	ⵏ	ⵏ	ⵏ
19	ⵏ	ⵏ	ⵏ	ⵏ	ⵏ	ⵏ	ⵏ
20	ⵏ	ⵏ	ⵏ	ⵏ	ⵏ	ⵏ	ⵏ
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28	ⵏ	ⵏ	ⵏ	ⵏ	ⵏ	ⵏ	ⵏ
29	ⵏ	ⵏ	ⵏ	ⵏ	ⵏ	ⵏ	ⵏ
30	ⵏ	ⵏ	ⵏ	ⵏ	ⵏ	ⵏ	ⵏ
31	ⵏ	ⵏ	ⵏ	ⵏ	ⵏ	ⵏ	ⵏ
32	ⵏ	ⵏ	ⵏ	ⵏ	ⵏ	ⵏ	ⵏ

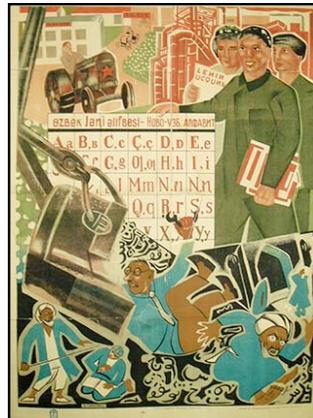
“Lunacharskij Phase II”: Latinization

- Latin script as universal writing system, to make all languages accessible to international socialist community
- 1921-1932: new Latin-based alphabets for non-literary languages of Central Asia & Caucasus
- 1928: Arabic scripts — too associated with Islam — replaced with Latin
- 1930: Lunacharskij proposes that even Russian itself should be Latinized

Another motivation for Latinization

By supporting [alphabet movements in Azerbaijan and the Caucasus], the party appeared to promote nativization policy, giving peoples new or revised alphabets designed for mass literacy and education. Yet Latinization also offered Moscow the perfect opportunity to begin to undermine the power of the Muslim clerical establishment ... forcing Latin as the new medium of script literacy, the party would mount an impassable barrier between traditional Islamic print culture and the masses of the new “Soviet” literates. Since the vast majorities of the Turkic and indigenous populations of the east were still illiterate, control over alphabet politics meant control over them. (Michael G. Smith, quoted in Clement 2005:

- Note that more Azeri speakers live in Iran than in Azerbaijan. They have always written their language in Arabic script
- In 1925, the Soviets forbade the importation of documents written in Arabic script. In 1928 an attempt was made to confiscate & destroys books in Arabic script.



Latin scripts replacing Arabic for languages of Muslim peoples of USSR

- Poster promoting new Latin script for Uzbek
- Contrast between workers holding new alphabet & waste-heap of mullahs, medresseh teachers and old generation of intellectuals mixed with Arabic letters [Bobrovnikov]

The Brezhnev period: 1964-1982

- Brezhnev clients named to post of First Party Secretary; remained in power for most of the Brezhnev years.
- Period of stagnation and relative prosperity, maintained by widespread clientalism and corruption, collusion of government in defense of national language & culture
- Azerbaijan: Heydar Aliev, 1969-1982
- Georgia: Eduard Shevardnadze, 1972-1985
- Armenia: Karen Demirchian, 1974-1988
- All three politicians reemerged as post-Soviet leaders: Shevardnadze (1995-2003) and Aliev (1993-2003) as presidents, Demirchian as Armenian parliament speaker (1998-99)

Dissident activity in Georgia

- 1960s: emergence of patriotic manifestations, mostly at Georgian Orthodox feastdays such as Easter
- 1970s: alliance of Georgian intellectual dissidents with colleagues in Russia, such as Sakharov. Zviad Gamsakhurdia and Merab Kostava emerge as leaders.
- Samizdat publications circulate. Key themes: defense of Georgian culture & language; calls for autonomy or independence; the issue of Abkhazia.

Official languages in the constitutions of the union republics of the USSR

- The three Transcaucasian republics retained the official declaration of their respective languages as state languages in their Soviet constitutions.
- In the other republics, no mention was made of official languages
- With regard to the increasing presence of Russian in the schools and the public sphere, Brezhnev continued on the path begun under Khrushchev (and prefigured by the new prominence of Russian and Russians in late Stalinism)

Georgian as state language in the 1926, 1937 and 1978 Georgian SSR constitutions

10. The state language of the Soviet Socialist Republic of Georgia shall be Georgian.
 17. National minorities, residing on the territory of the Soviet Socialist Republic of Georgia shall have the right to free development and application of their native language in national-cultural life, as well as at the state organizations.
 Article 156. Georgian is the state language of the Georgian SSR.
 The national minorities residing on the territory of the Georgian SSR shall have the right to the free development and application of their mother tongues in cultural, as well as in state institutions.
 Article 157. The laws, as well as the Decrees and Resolutions of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Georgian SSR, the Decisions and orders of the Council of people's Commissariats of the Georgian SSR shall be published in Georgian language, and for the Autonomous Republics and Autonomous oblasts – in Georgian and in the language of autonomous Republic or oblast.
 Article 158. The laws, as well as decrees and ordinances of the Presidiums of the Supreme Soviet of the Autonomous Republics, orders and decisions of the Council of People's Commissars of the Autonomous Republics, decisions of the executive committees of the autonomous oblast shall be published in the language of respective autonomous republic or autonomous oblast and in Georgian.
 Article 75. The State language of the Georgian Soviet Socialist Republic shall be Georgian.
 The Georgian SSR shall secure the comprehensive development of Georgian language and safeguards its application in the state and public organs, as well as in the cultural, educational and other institutions.
 Free application of Russian and other languages, used by the population, shall be secured in the above mentioned organs of the Georgian SSR. Any privileges for or restriction of any language is inadmissible.

The teaching of languages in Soviet Georgian schools

Patterns of language-teaching in Georgia's late-Soviet schools

Teaching in Georgian-Language Schools (periods per week)

Year	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	X
Geo Lang	11	9	9	4	4	4	3	2	-	-
Geo Lit	-	-	-	2	3	2	2	3	4	3
Russ Lg/Lit	4	5	6	6	5	4	5/4	3	3	3

Teaching in Russian-Language Schools (periods per week)

Year	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	X
Russ Lang	12	11	10	6	6	4	3	2	-	-
Russ Lit	-	-	-	2	2	2	2	3	4	3
Geo Lg/Lit	-	-	3	3	3	3	3/2	3	3	3

Trilingual programs in Azeri & Armenian schools within Georgia (Georgian as third language)

Year	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	X
Arm Lang	11	10	10	4	4	3	3	2	-	-
Arm Lit	-	-	-	3	2	2/3	2	3	3	3
Russ Lg	4	5	5	4	5	4/5	4/3	1	1	1
Russ Lit	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	3	2	7
Geo Lang	-	-	-	2	2	2	-	-	-	-

Teaching in Azeri-Language Schools (periods per week)

Year	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	X
Azeri Lang	12	10	9	5/4	3/4	3	3	2	-	-
Azeri Lit	-	-	-	2	2	2	2	2	3	3
Russ Lg/Lit	4	6/5	6	4/5	6/5	4	4/3	3	4	3
Geo Lang	-	-	-	2	2	2	1	-	-	-

Georgian not taught at all in Abkhazian and (South) Ossetian schools, whereas more hours of Russian than native language

Teaching in Abkhaz-Language Schools (periods per week)

Year	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	X
Abkh Lang	7	6	6	3	3	3	4	2	-	-
Russ Lg	8	9	9	6	6	4	4/3	2	1	1
Abkh Lit	-	-	-	2	2	2	2	2	3	3
Russ Lit	-	-	-	2	2	2	2	3	3	2

Teaching in Ossetic-Language Schools (periods per week)

Year	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	X
Oss Lang	8	6	6	2	2	2	2	1/2	-	-
Russ Lg	7	9	9	6	6	5	3	2	2	2
Oss Lit	-	-	-	2	2	1	2/1	2/1	2	2
Russ Lit	-	-	-	2	2	2	2	3	3	2

March 1978: proposed change to Georgian SSR constitution

Непосредственным поводом для выступления было предложение внести изменение в статью 75 в проекте новой конституции Грузии. Прежняя соответствующая статья гласила, что грузинский язык является государственным языком Грузинской ССР. Новая статья звучала так:
«Грузинская ССР обеспечивает употребление в государственных и общественных органах, культурных и других учреждениях русского языка и осуществляет всемерную заботу о его развитии. В Грузинской ССР на основе равноправия обеспечивается свободное употребление во всех органах и учреждениях русского, а также других языков, которыми пользуется население. Какие-либо привилегии или ограничения в употреблении тех или иных языков не допускаются».

24 марта республиканская газета «Заря Востока» напечатала проект ст. 75 в новой конституции.

Сессия Верховного Совета Грузинской ССР для утверждения новой конституции была назначена на 14 апреля. Перед этим состоялось «всенародное обсуждение» проекта. Газеты были завалены предложениями оставить статью 75 без изменений, сохранить грузинский язык в качестве государственного. Среди выдвинувших это предложение был 80-летний академик-языковед Шанидзе. В Тбилисском университете и во многих других учебных заведениях стали собирать подписи под его предложением. За несколько дней до открытия сессии Верховного Совета в университете и других местах появились листовки, призывающие выйти 14 апреля на демонстрацию с требованием оставить в новой конституции положение о грузинском языке как государственном языке Грузии.

- The removal of the provision for Georgian as state language would have brought the constitution of Georgia (also Armenia and Azerbaijan) into conformity with the other union republics, none of which had such a provision

14 April 1978: Mass protests in Tbilisi in defense of the status of the special status of the Georgian language



- Despite Shevardnadze's warnings of another massacre as in 1956, over 10000 protestors massed in front of the government building, where the parliament was meeting to vote on the constitutional changes
- Although many Tbilisi militia officers were ethnic Ossetians, only Georgian officers were present, not bearing weapons. Rumors spread that behind the last line of militiamen were armed Soviet soldiers
- Loudspeakers broadcast the parliament session to the crowd. Finally, the Georgian Supreme Soviet voted to retain the status of Georgian as state language
- To avoid similar protests in Armenia or Azerbaijan, the Soviet leadership agreed to the same provision for those republics

Georgian-Abkhazian relations

- 1938: Imposition of Georgian script
- 1946: Closure of Abkhazian-language schools, replaced with Georgian
- 1951: Georgian literary historian Pavle Ingorova argued that medieval population of Abkhazia was Georgians, and that Abkhazians migrated from Northwest Caucasus in 17th century.
- 1954: Cyrillic script for Abkhazian, reopening of schools
- 1978: After Moscow agreed to Georgian language demands in April 1978, a group of 130 Abkhaz intellectuals send a letter to Brezhnev asking that the Abkhaz ASSR be incorporated into the RSFSR. In response, large investments are made on behalf of Abkhazian culture, including a university in Sukhumi with an Abkhazian-language sector, Abkhazian TV programs, etc.

Gorbachev years: Glasnost and increasingly visible ethnic tensions

- February 1988: protests in Nagorno Karabakh, demanding annexation to Armenia; some weeks later, violence breaks out in Sumgait, dozens of Armenians killed, hundreds leave. Further violence and emigration in 1988
- Autumn 1988: public demonstrations in Georgia
- 18 March 1989: Lykhny Assembly in Abkhazia, calling for secession from Georgia, restoration of Union Republic status (as in 1921-31)
- 9 April 1989: Mass protests and hunger strikes in Tbilisi, demanding Georgian independence, as well as opposition to Abkhazian separatism. Protestors attacked by Soviet troops. 21 killed.
- 1989-1990: Other union republics elevate their national languages to official status, as in Georgia
- 20 January 1990: 120 killed by Soviet troops in Baku.
- 31 March and 21 September 1991: Georgia and Armenian hold referendums on independence; the vote is 99% in favor in both. Although voters in Azerbaijan had earlier voted in favor of maintaining the USSR, the country declared its independence as the Soviet Union dissolved in December 1991

Language in the three South Caucasian republics

I. Azerbaijan

- Re-Latinization of Azeri promulgated four days after independence, 25 December 1991. (Partially motivated by anti-Russian sentiment after January 1990 massacre?)
- New alphabet based on Turkish, except for the "schwa" [ə], which at the time was not available in most character sets. It was promoted as a distinctive feature of both Cyrillic and Latin Azeri scripts since the 1920s.
- President Abulfaz Elchibay adopted a strongly pan-Turkic orientation. Language renamed "Turkish", then "Azerbaijani Turkish". The next president Heydar Aliiev returned to the original name "Azerbaijani".
- Aliiev père & fils have not impeded use of Russian in broadcasting or press, but its use is declining in favor of English. Linguistic minorities — meaning Lezgins, Talysh (the Armenians having fled) — are officially protected.

Re-Latinization of Azeri in 1992: New school primers; Latin-script signs



Support for conversion to Latin (Lynley Hatcher 2008)

To support the Latin script and a Turkic identity, Turkey soon began sending in Latin script typewriters (Cornell 1999: 68). It directed television programming to Azerbaijan with subtitles in Latin script (Robins 1993: 607), as well as working to increase its influence by a variety of foreign aid, including trade and the opening of schools in Azerbaijan (Aras 2000). Heydar Aliyev, the next president of Azerbaijan, greatly supported the Latin script initiative in terms of nation building and the creation of a distinct Azerbaijani identity. Aliyev, a former member of the Politburo, was often complimented for having better Russian than that of his Russian colleagues. Nevertheless, he was a strong advocate for the transition to the Latin script and of moving away from Russian language usage throughout his presidency. In early 2001, Aliyev declared 1 August 2001 the deadline for a mandatory shift from the Cyrillic to the Latin alphabet. This decree included newspapers, books, government documents, and government correspondence switching to the Latin script (Blair 2001: 17).

Some older writers accept that their works in Cyrillic will one day be unreadable

Even writers who support the shift to the Latin script recognize that within several years of the shift, many of their own works published in the Cyrillic script will be inaccessible to young people taught to read in the Latin script. Kamal Talibzade (2000: 66) has faced this and made a clear choice for the Latin-related identity:

Within five years or so, the younger generation won't be able to read my books. Sometimes I think: "What a pity! I've been serving this society as a scholar for 55 years. But none of my books will even be readable in the future." I'm still convinced, however, that we made the right decision to embrace Latin. Our future is the main issue . . . I'm among the happiest people in the world because I've seen the collapse of the Soviet Union . . . It's important for us to adopt the Latin alphabet.

Country	Bilingualism ^a	Bilingualism in Azerbaijan
Kazakhstan	TR: 79.6 RT: 3.6	
Estonia	TR: 44.6 RT: 6.5	
Latvia	TR: 69.0 RT: 20.1	
Ukraine	TR: 94.4 RT: 26.5	
Moldova	TR: 86.9 RT: 12.4	
Dniestria	TR: 90.5 ^b RT: 7.4	
Azerbaijan	TAr: 1.5 TR: 46.2 RT: 36.9	
Refugees in Armenia from Azerbaijan	ArAz: 27.8 ArR: 96.3	

II. Armenia

- Ease of transition: language already official, no script change needed, nearly homogenous populations
- Below: protest against Soviet rule in 1988



The special importance of the Armenian script



- The Armenian script is intimately connected to the history and culture of the Armenians since their adoption of Christianity in the 4th c.
- The unique script, like the distinctive monophysite Christianity of the national church, is a highly significant, almost fetishized, symbol of Armenian identity

Alphabet monument near Artashavan commemorating 1600th anniversary of invention



- Another alphabet monument, at Oshakan, the place of birth of St Mesrop Mashtots, the inventor of the Armenian alphabet



The situation of Russian in Armenia

Во-вторых, образовательная система нацеливает каждого ученика армянских школ на обязательное знание еще как минимум двух других языков - русского и одного из европейских. Их статус неравнозначен. О ведущей роли русского языка в системе преподавания языков в армянской школе свидетельствуют последние статистические данные о количестве учителей:

- русский язык - 1500 (51%)
- английский - 930 (30%)
- французский - 350 (10%)
- немецкий - 320 (9%)

Русский язык преподается в школе со второго класса по десятый, в то время как иностранные языки - только с пятого. В вузах русский язык является обязательным как минимум на первом-втором курсах. За последние 2-3 года количество часов, отводимых русскому языку и в школах и в вузах, значительно увеличилось.

- Russian remains the second language of most adults, and the language most taught in Armenian schools, but use is declining among young people

Bilingual signs: English replacing Russian



- Old Armenian-Russian signs still around, but new signage (as above in Yerevan, 2010) favors English as second language

Nagorno-Karabakh: erasure of Azeri language



- road signs in Karabakh: Armenian only, or Armenian-Russian bilingual

III. Georgia

- Renaming of toponyms and street names (often restoration of pre-Soviet names)
- Erasure of Russian/Cyrillic from signage, replacement with English
- Influx of English loans into Georgian language (including written use)
- Active promotion of English in Georgian schools; TLG program

Restoring old toponyms

- *Senak'i* (Mingrelia): renamed after Bolshevik *Mixa Cxak'aia* (1933-1976), then only *Cxak'aia* (1976-1989)
- *Dedoplis-c'q'aro* ("Queen's Spring", Kakheti): renamed *C'itel-c'q'aro* ("Red Spring") from 1963-1991

Besides restoring old names, Georgian authorities name streets after recent political figures

Tbilisi Sakrebulo to consider renaming street in honor of Richard Holbrooke

27.12.10 11:57

Georgia, Tbilisi, Dec. 27 / Trend N.Kirtzkhalia /

The Tbilisi City Assembly, Sakrebulo, will on Monday consider renaming the Bagdati Street after the late American diplomat, Richard Holbrooke.

Earlier, Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili appealed to the Tbilisi Sakrebulo with this initiative and expressed hope that it will be understood and supported. Saakashvili also issued a decision to posthumously award Holbrooke with the Saint George Victory Order for promoting peace and democracy throughout the world.

The Bagdati Street located near the Isani metro station was selected as the street to be named after Holbrooke.

Holbrooke died at the age of 70 in Washington this week from aortic rupture. He is best known for his part in signing the Dayton Agreements in 1995, which ended the civil war in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Today the Tbilisi Sakrebulo also intends to rename the Stalin Street in Takneti to Prince Amilkhvari Street.

Sometimes Georgian citizens take the initiative in street renaming



Rename Pushkin street into Lech Kaczyński street in Tbilisi

Wall Info Discussions Photos Video Events

Basic Info

Name: Rename Pushkin street into Lech Kaczyński street in Tbilisi
 Category: Common Interest - Politics
 Description: Appeal to the Georgian Government and Mayor of Tbilisi to rename central avenue in Tbilisi currently called "Pushkin street" to the name of Georgia's National Hero Lech Kaczyński who never abandoned us in hardship and horror of August 2008. Pushkin has given nothing to Georgia while Lech Kaczyński contribution is enormous for our country.

- Facebook page with petition to name street after late Polish president who supported Georgia in August 2008 war

Sometimes Georgians disagree with new street names

Protesters in Tbilisi demand 'Bush Street' be renamed

Protesters install a banner over the sign marking a street named after former US President George W. Bush, in Tbilisi, as they demand the street be renamed. Tbilisi, Georgia. 2003/02/10



- The highway leading to Tbilisi airport was renamed "George Bush Street" when Bush visited in 2005.
- Street named after living person: not practiced in most countries; harks back to Stalin years

Signage in Georgia: English supplants Russian as international language



- English in both official and private signage
- In road signs, English lettering often painted over earlier Cyrillic
- "Integration into NATO": signs addressed to foreigners sometimes in English only

Traces of the earlier presence of Russian



- The occasional Georgian-Russian street sign (that hasn't been redone in English)
- Pirosmari's famous advertisements from late-Tsarist Tbilisi

Saakashvilian trilingualism?



- Billboard in central Tbilisi (2005), with three messages in three languages, intended for three audiences (P. Manning)
- 1. Georgian: "strength in unity"
- 2. English: "celebrating Georgia's diversity"
- 3. Russian: "Georgia is my homeland"
- strength for Georgians, celebration & diversity for Americans, *rodina* for Russians

Loanwords in Georgian

- In the Tsarist period, numerous Russian words entered Georgian, especially for concepts with which the Georgian became familiar through Russian
- These words were accepted in written use and included in dictionaries
- Many Russianisms also appear in Georgian literature of the time (e.g. the writer Vazha-Pshavela referred to Germans as *nemcebi* < Russian *nemec*)

Some Russianisms in Chubinashvili's *Georgian-Russian Dictionary*, pub. 1890 (all of them now excluded from normative literary Georgian)

GEORGIAN	RUSSIAN SOURCE	GLOSS
morozhina	morozhenoe	"ice cream"
st'oli	stol	"table"
k' resla	kreslo	"armchair"
p' odnosi	podnos	"tray"
shlap' a	shlyapa	"Russian hat"
st' akami	stakan	"cup, drinking glass"
p' ap' irosi	papirosa	"cigarette"

Russian loanwords in Soviet Georgian

- At the end of the Tsarist and beginning of Soviet periods, Georgian lexicographers and linguists adopted the policy of banning Russianisms, unless they were either "international words" — lexemes based on Greek, Latin or West European roots, such as *philarmonia*, *p'omada*, *k'abinet'i*, *huligani*, *valdhorni* (< Waldhorn) — or terms specific to Russian culture (*samovari*, *borschchi*)
- At the same time, Georgian (especially Tbilisi) slang was full of Russianisms, which were regularly denounced by language purists

Some Russianisms in L. Bregadze's *Georgian Slang Dictionary*, published 1999 (all of them now excluded from normative literary Georgian)

GEORGIAN	RUSSIAN SOURCE	GLOSS
grimi' -obs	გრემი' -ობს "blunder, ruin"	parties, has a wild time in sun, in the final analysis
p' og-shi	პოგ-ში "sum, total"	woman
t' ip' sha	ტიპ' შა <i>feminine suffix</i> -sha	venomous remarks, criticism
shp' ilk' -ebi	შპი' ლკ' -ები "pins, pegs" - in context podpaskai' shpi' ki' "make nasty, caustic remarks to sb."	naive, ignorant villager
geche [now obsolete]	გეჩე Cyrillic letters ГЧ [GCh] on license plates of cars used by rural gov' t officials	careless, unthinking person, goof
praieri	პრაიერი (< German <i>Freier</i>), in Russian slang: dupe, easy mark (esp. sb. from intelligentsia)	

English loanwords in post-Soviet Georgian

- Occasional English loans began appearing in late-Soviet Georgian slang (*visiksaot* "let's have sex")
- After independence, the flood-gates opened. Numerous expressions entered the language from:
 1. US popular culture (*rep'i* < rap, *hevi-met'ali*)
 2. Business, finance, journalism, marketing (*p' iari* < PR = Public Relations, *int' egirebuli mark' et' inguli k' omunik' aciebi* "integrated marketing communications")
 3. Technology, media (*masmedia* < mass media; *vebsait' i* < website)
 4. The jargon of grant agencies, NGOs, sociologists, conflict studies, etc. (*identoba* "identity", *genderi*, *t'reningi* "training")
- Many Anglicisms appear regularly in Georgian print and broadcast journalism, as well in the language of politicians and the younger generation of social scientists and intellectuals

Teach and Learn with Georgia program

- Program launched by Saakashvili administration with the goal of recruiting 1000 native English speakers to teach in primary and secondary schools throughout Georgia
- Teachers are placed in villages and small towns as well as large cities like Tbilisi or Batumi
- Results so far are mixed: Some cases of culture-shock and misunderstandings; complaints about poor infrastructure in rural schools, lack of textbooks and supplies, low level of preparation of students and Georgian teachers



Mingrelian: language or dialect?

- Mingrelian spoken by over half a million Georgians, concentrated in province of Mingrelia/Samegrelo
- Distinct identity in Middle Ages? "Egros" < Egrisi (ancient name of Mingrelia) as one of the sons of Targamos
- Mingrelian speech described by 17th c. Italian missionaries, Çelebi
- Vaxushti & Saba Orbeliani described Mingrelian as "distorted Georgian"
- Intelligibility: Mingrelian (unlike Svan) sounds Georgian, but cannot be understood by other Georgians



