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SOME CHARACTERISTIC FEATURES AND DIRECTIONS OF THE CHAN-MEGRELIAN LANGUAGE CHANGE

1. The differences between Chan and Megrelian in phonetics, morphology and syntax do not go beyond dialectal changes; striking difference is only marked in the vocabulary of Chan dialect affected by the abundance of Greek and Turkish borrowings.

2. Further analysis of the few seemingly structural differences featured in the specialist literature reveals certain sameness of forms. Namely:

a) stem suffixation of Chan intransitive verbs as the first and second person markers is also sporadically traced in the elderly people's speech of the mountainous region of Megrelia which can be qualified as archaism.

b) The same mountainous speech reveals the formation of *Turmeobiti* of intransitive verb by means of *-er* suffix copying the Chan pattern. Originally *-er* suffix is identical to *-er* suffix of the present tense stem suffix and the latter also looks archaic.

c) It has been attested that in Chan dialect the verb similar to Megrelian patterns shows difference in the formation of potentialis and passive - although Chan maintains initial state and the change has taken place only in causative stems.

3. In case of differences attested between Chan and Megrelian the former is likely to preserve older variants and the latter merely presents the changed version of the basic form. Different tendencies in the developments are conditioned by different factors.

4. Changes in Chan is rather superficial, affected by borrowings, by extra-linguistic factors, by the influence of the foreign linguistic environment that constrained natural development of the Chan dialect and made it less liable to alternation. This also explains the tendency of the Chan dialect towards unification.

Unlike Chan, Megrelian enjoys complete freedom of change characteristic to the development inherent to Kartvelian languages. This also explains archaic nature of the Chan dialect. That is why Chan vocabulary, and particularly the verb, reveals the stems which have disappeared in Megrelian but are still survived in Chan.