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PHONETIC PROCESSES IN THE IMERKHEVIAN DIALECT

Being separated from the literary language for centuries the Imerkhebian dialect of the Georgian language appears to have undergone the phonetic changes according to the common innate laws of the mother tongue. Live phonetic changes of the modern day Imerkhebian reveal common Kartvelian nature. Namely, phonetic changes are analogous to those sound transformations occurring to other Georgian dialects. These are: typical sound loss and emergence, substitution, reduction, assimilation and dissimilation, voiced consonant shift into voiceless ones, metathesis, loss of fricativity, and other examples. In addition to these there are specific phonetic alternations characteristic to the Imerkhebian dialect proper.

The observation on phonetic changes made it clear that not only the Imerkhebian Georgian had undergone the Turkish language influence but also the Turkish of Imerkhebian imported Georgian language elements. The latter influence is most vividly traced in Artvin dialects of the Turkish language, particularly in Shavshetian, which is attested by Turkish linguists as well.

Georgian and Turkish language contacts provides interesting picture in the adjacent regions of the state borders. In this respect Imerkhebian Georgian can serve an example that deserves further comprehensive investigation.