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**LINGUISTIC POLICY
OF RUSSIAN EMPIRE AND GEORGIA
ACCORDING TO TARIEL PUTKARADZE'S BOOK –
*CONTEMPORARY CHALLENGES OF KARTVELOLOGY***

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ABSTRACT

Tarel Putkaradze was a versatile public figure and state-minded scholar, who never abandoned patriotic as well as common human values. The proposed article examines one of the poignant problems, which is the legal state of the Georgian language during the period of Georgia's annexation by the Russian Empire, explored in Tarel Putkaradze's monograph entitled *Contemporary Challenges of Kartvelology* (2019).

Through well-substantiated discussion and by providing the relevant documents, the scholar demonstrates with clarity the purpose of the Russian Empire, to ban the Georgian language from the Georgian church and, first of all, from churches of Megrelia and Svaneti.

In a few lines, Tarel Putkaradze offered a clear and precise description and assessment of the hostile imperial politics of Russia: "At the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th, following the military conquest of the Caucasus, the officials of the Russian empire launched a meticulously elaborated language policy, pursuing the "divide and conquer" plan. By declaring some of the regional idioms of Georgians as independent languages, they tried to accomplish the linguistic and ethnic fragmentation of Georgians. The very path was maintained by the Bolsheviks. Today, the same is being accomplished by the Kremlin" (p. 26).

An insidious language policy of Russia which was often accompanied by the demonstration of force and repressions against the defenders of rights of the Georgian language met appropriate resistance and confrontation on the part of the outstanding representative of the Georgian people.

Many of the national problems, those of utmost importance dealt with in the book, are extremely urgent and substantial for the development of Georgia and the Georgian nation.

Keywords: Russian language policy in Georgia, Kartvelology, Tarel Putkaradze.