

Linguistic Peculiarities of Georgian Periodicals Issued in Israel in the 1970s

LALI GULEDANI

Ilia State University (Georgia)

Abstract: This paper focuses on the uses of written and spoken Judeo-Georgian in Georgian printed products published in Israel in the 1970s and in the speech of Georgian Jews after their immigration to Israel. There are no particularly significant linguistic changes to be observed except for the considerably increased usage of Hebraisms under the influence of modern Hebrew (Ivrit). Even though Georgian Jews did use Hebrew words before their repatriation to Israel, after immigrating, they started to use modern Hebrew vocabulary much more. While linguistic features peculiar to Judeo-Georgian spoken in Georgia were preserved, some lexical changes occurred. However, no major language shift can be observed: Georgian Jewry did not abandon their original vernacular language. Their writings remained distinct from their new social environment while maintaining the tendency of linguistic integration with the old one. Despite the geographic distance between Georgia and Israel, their language preserves characteristics of Judeo-Georgian spoken in Georgia.

Keywords: Georgian Jewry; Judeo-Georgian; linguistic peculiarities; periodicals; 1970s.

Résumé : Cet article décrit les changements observés dans la langue judéo-géorgienne après le rapatriement des Juifs géorgiens en Israël. Le corpus est constitué de productions écrites en géorgien et publiées en Israël dans les années 1970. Nous étudions la langue des périodiques en parallèle avec les particularités observées dans la langue parlée et écrite. Pendant les années 1970, les auteurs juifs géorgiens ont continué à écrire dans la langue qu'ils avaient parlé et dans laquelle ils avaient écrit tout au long de leur vie. Il y a peu d'innovations linguistiques particulières dans leurs articles ou leurs œuvres littéraires, si ce n'est que l'utilisation excessive d'hébraïsmes sous l'influence de l'hébreu moderne. Malgré la distance territoriale, leur langue conserve les particularités caractéristiques du judéo-géorgien parlé en Géorgie.

Mots-clés : judéo-géorgien ; Juifs géorgiens ; particularités linguistiques ; périodiques ; années 1970.

Introduction

Jews have been living in peaceful and friendly co-existence with indigenous Georgian people for twenty-six centuries. It is commonly acknowledged that Georgian Jewry is one of the oldest ethnic communities in Georgia. Its origin dates as far back as the destruction of the First Temple of Jerusalem and the Babylonian exile.¹ The second wave of Jews arrived after the conquest of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar.² Like Jewry from all over the world, in the last century, they moved to their historical homeland – Israel. The first wave left Georgia in 1970 when the Jews numbered as many as 55,400, the largest Jewish population ever in Georgia. This was followed later by a large-scale Aliyah.

Georgian Jews have been speaking Georgian for many centuries. Their language is linguistically distinct from standard Georgian but these distinctive linguistic features are gradually disappearing due to the migration of Jews to their historical homeland. Therefore, the significance of the study of printed products (literature, periodicals, etc.) published by Georgian Jews in Israel can hardly be overestimated.

In the 1970s, the Georgian language was very important for Georgian Jews. They had been speaking and writing in this language for centuries and, consequently, it had become their native language. They anticipated that Hebrew would also become their native language after their repatriation. However, this proved to be a challenging task due to the diverse sociolinguistic and cultural characteristics of the multilingual and multicultural environment that they found in Israel. The development of their language was affected by political, socio-economic, and geographical differences, among many others.³

¹ Eldar Mamistvalashvili, *The History of the Georgian Jews (Antiquity and Feudal Era)*, Tbilisi, Metsniereba, 1995; Jlephiep Kote, *Jews in Georgia: From Hellenic Period to Late Feudalism*, Jerusalem, 2008.

² Zaqaria Tchitchinadze, *Georgian Jews in Georgia*, Tbilisi, V. Chikovani, 1904; Baqar Gigineishvili, *The Conversion of Kartli: The Shatberdi Codex of X Century*, Tbilisi, Metsniereba, 1979; Simon Kaukhchishvili, *The Life of Kartli*, Vol. 1, Tbilisi, Ed. Simon Kaukhchishvili, 1955.

³ This paper was supported by Shota Rustaveli National Science Foundation (SRNSF) and was conducted within the framework of the following scientific project: “Georgia Seen Through the Eyes of the Jews: Archiving and Literary-

1. Economic, political, and geographical influences

As mentioned above, in the 1970s, tens of thousands of Georgian Jews emigrated to Israel. The Georgian-speaking Jewry faced many obstacles while adapting to the living conditions of their new country. During this period, the Ministry of Absorption was responsible for granting suitable housing and overseeing living conditions. However, the Ministry did not recognize the challenges that Georgian Jews faced in adapting to their new environment, and tried to inform them through the Russian-language media. The majority of Georgian Jews were settled in the peripheries. Most of them could not speak Hebrew and some had little competency in the Russian language and therefore could not understand the regulations without help. As a result, they had limited knowledge of their rights and responsibilities, the state system of Israel, the system of governing bodies, etc. Hard economic conditions and lack of information affected the way they lived and their well-being, and made it difficult for them to adapt to their new life. In addition, they felt extremely nostalgic – their homesickness found its expression in recorded interviews as well as in periodicals and literature published in the 1970s. In these circumstances, their protest took many different forms which influenced the government to begin addressing the situation and facilitating the successful absorption of the repatriates⁴.

As for the geographical factor, Judeo-Georgian speech varies from one region in Georgia to another. Along the borders of Samegrelo, it was influenced by different factors than in Adjara, Samtskhe-Javakheti, Shida Kartli, or urban zones. Consequently, in addition to specific forms peculiar to Judeo-Georgian as a whole, the language is also characterized by local dialectic forms. This linguistic feature is still noticeable in Judeo-Georgian spoken in Israel – one can easily identify the regional variety of the repatriates' speech.

Linguistic Analysis of Georgian Printed Products Issued in Israel" (Grant number: FR-21 19474).

⁴ Abraham Sapir (Sepiashvili), *Founding the Newspaper "Aliyah"*, 1978, # 350, 30XI.

2. Social factors

In addition to political, economic, and geographical factors, social background significantly influenced the development of the language. The speech of the Georgian Jews living in Israel varies depending on their social status. Judeo-Georgian spoken by the intellectual elite is not as “rich” in commonly-used distinctive features and, vice versa, such distinctive forms are used more frequently by lower-class speakers. The majority of the Georgian Jews who repatriated in the 1970s belonged to the lower classes. They exercised less power and had lower social standing than the intellectual and economic elite. Their vocabulary was relatively poor, they made frequent grammatical mistakes, their reasoning and argumentation did not always follow a logical sequence, etc. The influence of internal factors on language development is reflected in ethnolinguistic changes, including the ways in which Georgian Jews perceive their native language. Those who repatriated in the 1970s regarded Georgian as their native language.

The study of the social factors that influence languages provides an opportunity to make a functional classification of the language in question, identifying its real condition and prospects of development. The special domain of language functioning is education. However, this aspect of language functioning is not relevant for the Georgian Jewry in Israel. The only function of Judeo-Georgian in Israel is the communicative one. The descendants of Georgian Jews are educated in Hebrew first in high schools and then in universities. There are no educational institutions that offer courses in the Georgian language. Although the Georgian Jewish community is actively involved in scientific and scholarly activities, especially in technical and medical sciences, those who are successful in their areas of expertise speak Hebrew and English. Generally speaking, the sharply negative attitude towards the Georgian Jews in the 1970s because of their low level of education later changed radically because of their growing social integration with the Jewish milieu and the creation of Georgian TV and radio broadcasting, the launch of Georgian periodicals, and the opening of Georgian

national dance classes, etc. The written language developed through the abundance of literary production and a large number of authors. In addition to the numerous literary works written in Georgian, Georgian-language religious pamphlets also circulate among the religious circles of the community.⁵

3. Periodicals of the 1970s and the newspaper *Aliyah*

Israel's political, economic, and social situation in the 1970s raised the question of the establishment of a Georgian-language newspaper that could provide Georgian-speaking Jewry with information relating to the ongoing situation in the country and the problems facing Georgian Jews as well as strengthen their sense of community. The newspaper was intended to be an independent body, free from government and partisan influences, that would unite the Georgian Jews in Israel who had taken the path of disintegration and mutual enmity. Its purpose was to provide Georgian Jews with reliable information, explore the challenges facing them, and help them find ways to resolve them.

In the 1970s, the newspaper *Aliyah* was founded by Abraham Sapir (Abraham Sepiashvili) who informs us that before the creation of *Aliyah*, several aperiodic magazines that served different purposes were issued by various political parties in Israel. The only fortnightly periodical publication that was not associated with any political party was *Israel*. Not very long before that, the Georgian-language newspaper *Samshoblo* ("Homeland") was established. It was issued together with the Russian newspaper and had a very small circulation. Its publication was canceled after 22 issues. Hence, *Aliyah* still remains the most important Georgian-language newspaper in terms of its scope and duration. It is very popular, not only among Georgian Jewry of Israel but also with Georgian-speaking Jewry all over the world.⁶

⁵ Lali Guledani, "Social Aspect of Judeo-Georgian Speech in Israel", in Lali Guledani *et al* (eds.), *The Speech of Georgian Jews in Israel*, Tbilisi, Ivane Javakhishvili TSU Press, 2022, p. 112-120.

⁶ Abraham Sapir (Sepiashvili), *op. cit.*

From the printed materials issued in Israel in the 1970s, we selected periodicals as the primary type for literary and linguistic research. We concentrated on the newspaper *Aliyah* because it contained different types of material ranging from dry news reports to literary works of various genres written by Georgian Jews. It allowed us to study in diverse ways Judeo-Georgian as practiced in the 1970s. However, for such a study, it is necessary to consider the linguistic resources with which Georgian Jews came to Israel. One should not expect significant changes in their speech because a very short time has passed since their repatriation and it takes much longer for such changes to occur. Overall, the speech of Georgian Jews in Israel in the 1970s was characterized by the same linguistic features as in Georgia.

4. Scholarly works related to the Georgian-Jewish language

There are a few scholarly works relating to the varieties of Judeo-Georgian spoken in Georgia⁷ and the language and identity of Georgian Jews in Israel have been studied and a relevant database has been built based on several research projects. Two recent projects concerned with Judeo-Georgian are especially worth noting (see footnote).⁸ The research has been summarized and

⁷ Gershon Ben-Oren, *הדיבור של יהודי גרוזיה - תכונות מיוחדות של שפת* : *Special Characteristics of the Spoken Language of Georgian Jews*, Ph.D. dissertation, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1993; Tamari Lomtadze. "Georgian Jews: Language and Identity," *Proceedings of the Arnold Chikobava Institute of Linguistics 36th Conference on Dialect Studies*, Kutaisi, 2016; Reuven Enoch, and Tamari Lomtadze. "Hebraisms in the Speech of Kutaisi Jews," *Proceedings of the 3rd International Conference Dedicated to Jacob Gogebashvili*. Gori, Geoprint, 2016, p. 30-33; Reuven Enoch, and Tamari Lomtadze. "About the Speech of Georgian Jews", *Proceedings of the 2nd International Conference Dedicated to Jacob Gogebashvili*, Gori, Geoprint, 2015, p. 20-24; Tamari Lomtadze, and Reuven Enoch. "Judeo-Georgian Language as an Identity Marker of Georgian Jews (The Jews Living in Georgia)," *Journal of Jewish Languages*, Vol. 7, Issue 1, June 2019, p. 1-26.

⁸ International project "The Jewish Identity in Georgia at the Dawn of Globalization" (2013-2016), funded by Volkswagen Foundation: <https://portal.volkswagenstiftung.de/search/projectDetails.do?siteLanguage=en&ref=86869>, and "The Speech of Georgian Jews in Israel" (2016-2019), Grant No DI – 2016-32 funded by Shota Rustaveli National Science Foundation.

extended into a monograph that includes a relevant database.⁹ To study Judeo-Georgian as spoken in Israel, numerous interviews with repatriates have been recorded. The monograph explores Judeo-Georgian taking into account extra-linguistic factors that shaped the development of the language.

As a result of the database research, findings relating to the phonetic, morphological, and syntactic peculiarities of Judeo-Georgian have been made. The juxtaposition of illustrative materials shows that a slight difference exists between the spoken and written varieties of Judeo-Georgian used by Georgian Jews who emigrated from Georgia to Israel in the 1970s. Written texts use standard language with very few *lapsus linguae* but an extensive use of Hebraisms occurs in both oral and written language.

5. Religion

For Georgian Jewry as well as for the Jewish diaspora dispersed all over the world, religion is one of the primary identity markers. Religious identity is also reflected in their language. Jewish traditions and religion have shaped a unique social milieu and environment for communication. In particular, in such cases, they used Hebrew words with Georgian grammatical markers. However, generally speaking, their everyday speech was based on the local dialect of the region they inhabited (as shown in the illustrative materials provided below). In official-formal and often even informal communication, the upper-middle class would use standard Georgian.

6. Linguistic characteristics of Judeo-Georgian in Israel

6.1. *Phonetic and morphological features*

As previously mentioned, the correct usage of the standard Georgian language by Georgian Jews, whether oral or written, largely depends on the user's social status. Intellectuals speak and

⁹ Lali Guledani *et al* (eds.), *The Speech of Georgian Jews in Israel*, *op. cit.*

write in a fluent Georgian language, while representatives of the lower stratum show dialectal (territorial) peculiarities in their speech and writing. From among these, we highlight the following linguistic peculiarities, that can be classified into the following groups:¹⁰

- a. Frequent disagreement in number between nouns and verbs; the use of the noun in a peculiar case (in relation to the verb) or the verb in a peculiar person by deviating from the norms of the Georgian literary language: „შვილიშვილებმა იცის“ (“The grandchildren knows”), „ხალხი არიან“ (“people is”), „ჩემი ბიჭებიც იციან“ (“my boys knows too”), „ჩემ შვილებს უყვარს“ (“my children loves”), „ჩემი ქალი იცის“ (“my woman know”), „უფროსმა ჩვეულებრივად ლაპარაკობს“ (“the eldest one speak well”), „ენასთან დაუფლება“ (“to master over language”), „ქართველები დაიფანტება“ (“Georgians shall disperse”), „ყველა იფიქრებენ“ (“everyone thinks” “everyone shall think”), etc.
- b. Disagreement in a case between adjectives and nouns: „უფროს შვილიშვილმა იცის“ (“the eldest grandchild knows”), „დიდი სალოცავში“ (“in the big shrine”), etc.
- c. Peculiar use of the verb’s person markers (the first-person prefix -ვ- and the third-person -ს- are often lost): „დაოჯახდი“ (“got married”) (instead of დავოჯახდი), „არი“ (“is”) (instead of არის), „აქვ“ (“[he/she/it] has”) (instead of აქვს), „მაქს“ (“[I] have”), „აქს“ (“[he/she/it has”) (instead of მაქვს, აქვს), „შეაგდენ“ (“[they] threw onto/into”) (instead of შეაგდეს), „დამირეკენ“ (“they called me”) (instead of დამირეკეს), „ხარჯამდა“ (“[he/she] used to spent”) (instead of ხარჯავდა), „გამდა“ (“[he/she/is] was alike”) (instead of გავდა), „იჟდა“ (“[he/she] was sitting”) (instead of იჯდა), „ორივეს ესმით“

¹⁰ It should be noted that in a number of cases, grammatical errors and inconsistencies between grammatical categories that occur in the Judeo-Georgian material provided in the present article for illustrative purposes cannot be preserved meaningfully in English translation.

(“Both of them understand”) (instead of *ორივეს ესმის*), „ქართველები ცხოვრობდენ“ (“Georgians lived”) (instead of *ქართველები ცხოვრობდნენ*), etc.

The following dialectal peculiarities can also be observed:

- d. The use of inaccurate verb forms: „ქვიოდა“ (“[his/her] name were”) (instead of *ერქვა*), „მიედრება“ (“can be compared”) (instead of *შეედრება*), „გააცნობილეს“ (“[they] realized”) (instead of *გააცნობიერეს*), „ვცადობ“ (“I am trying”) (instead of *ვცდილობ*), „მოხვედრია“ (“It happened”) (instead of *მომხდარა*), „გვაქვთ“ (“we has”) (instead of *გვაქვს*), „დაფართულია“ (“is broaden/widen”) (instead of *გაფართოვებულია*), „ჩანაგონი“ (“is heard”) (instead of *გაგონილი*), „მომკებული“ (“decorated”) (instead of *შემკული*).
- e. The use of peculiar case markers that deviate from the norms of the Georgian literary language: „ქართულათ“ (“on Georgian”), „ივრითულათ“ (“on Ivrit”), „კითხულობ ქართულ“ (“reading in Georgian”), „უაქცენტოთ“ (“without accent”), „ოჯახათ“ (“as a family”), etc.
- f. The use of correct words in an irrelevant context. This happens when speakers try to use bookish words to show their education and language competence. Of course, this looks artificial – as a rule, a native speaker would not use such words. For instance, “in parallel,” “factor,” “sector,” etc. are used in an irrelevant context in the following examples: „პარალელურად ჰყავდა მამამთილი“ (“In parallel, she had a father-in-law”), „ებრაული ფაქტორის მიმდინარეობების გავლენა იგრძნობოდა“ (“One could feel the influence of the Jewish factor trends/movements”), „ქალი გადაიქცა ერთ-ერთ დამფინანსებელ ფაქტორად ოჯახში, მას გაუჩნდა უფლებები. იგი ემანსიპაცირებული გახდა, უფრო უფლებამოსილი საზოგადოებაში“ (“The woman became one of the financial factors in the family. She got emancipated with more power in the society” [i.e. acquired equal rights]).

- g. In many cases the choice of the word is correct but its stem/root is used inaccurately: „ჩვენ თაობას მოუხდა ეს გარდატეხილი მხარე, ეს გარდატეხილი ეპოქა“ (“Our generation benefited from this transit [instead of “transitive”] age”), „დაბალ ფენებში, რომელიც ყველა დისკრიმინებულიად არის აღქმული“ (“Lower classes are being discriminate [instead of “discriminated”]), „იმის შემოტანილი მუშა ნამუშევრული კაპიკები (გუსლიხმოხდა გაჭირვებით ნამოვსნს)“ (“the pennies he earn [instead of “earned”]).
- h. The confusion of adjectives and derivational suffixes: „ირაკელი“ (ანუ ერაყული კერძი) (“Iraqian [instead of “Iraq” or “Iraqi”] dishes”); „ქართული მოცეკვავე“ (“Georgia [instead of “Georgian”] dancer”); „ებრაელური“ (“Jewy [instead of “Jewish”]).
- i. The use of specific international terms and personal nouns. Such words acquire forms and endings peculiar to the language they are adopted into. Georgian Jews used such words with Hebrew endings in their speech as well as in newspaper statements, considering that the same forms were used in standard Georgian: „აუდიტორიუმი“ - Hebr. *אודיטוריום* (“auditorium”); „თეატრონი“ - Hebr. *תאטרון* (თეატრი “theatre”); „ამფითეატრონი“ - Hebr. *אמפיתיאטרון* (“amphitheatre”). „იერუსალიმი“ – Hebr. *ירושלים* (“Jerusalem”), etc.¹¹
- j. Deviations from linguistic norms caused by the influence of Hebrew. For instance, disagreement between nouns and numerals and between nouns and pronouns: „ყველა ქალაქებში“ (“in all city”), „რამდენიმე მაღაზიები“ (“several shop”), „ყველა გვარები“ (“all surname”), „ყველა თემებზე“ (“on all topic”), „სამი ძმები“ (“three brother”), etc. Nouns following “many,” “all,” and “nume-

¹¹ Ana Kvirikashvili, “The Speech of Georgian Jews Living in Khaifa”, in Lali Guledani *et al* (eds.), *The Speech of Georgian Jews in Israel*, Tbilisi, Ivane Javakhishvili TSU Press, 2022, p. 140-144.

rous” are used in the plural due to the influence of Hebrew since, unlike Georgian, in Hebrew the noun is used in the plural with quantifiers.

6.2. *The use of diverse types of Hebraisms*

- a. Work/technical terminology in Hebrew: „ტექნიონი“ (Technical University), „თარ რიშონი“ (BA degree), „მიშმერეთ“ (“shift”), etc.
- b. With varying degrees, Hebraisms can be found in the speech of any social class. Georgian Jews from Jerusalem who are believers use mainly Hebrew religious and holiday terminology such as: תודה לאל - Toda Lael (“Thanks God”), בעזרת האל - Beezrat Hael (“with the help of God”), השם ברוך - Barukh Hashem (“Thanks God”), השנה ראש (Rosh Hashana, “The New Year Celebrations,” “The New Year Holiday”), חג פסח (Passover “Pesach celebrations”), etc.
- c. Everyday vocabulary is used frequently: כן - ken (“yes”), לא - lo (“no”), איפה - eifo (“where”), רפוא - refua (“polyclinic”), בטח - betakh (“of course”), כאן יש - iesh kaan (“[he/she/it] is here”), איך - eikh (“how”), etc.
- d. One can find words denoting ethnic origin that are derived by adding a Georgian plural ending: „ფარსები“ (“Parsis,” “Persians,” “Iranians”), „ჰოდუელები“ (“Indians”).
- e. Under the influence of Hebrew, sentences are uttered in a way that is not characteristic of Georgian: „ტრადიცია შეინახეს“ (instead of „ტრადიცია დაიცვეს,” “They preserved their tradition”). The reason for this inaccuracy is that the verb שמר – “shamar” in Hebrew – means both preservation and protection. „კიდევ ვუბრუნდები“ “I return to it” (meaning that “I repeat it”). This kind of expression comes from the Hebrew in which the verb חזר – “khazar” means both “to return” and “to repeat”. „ადამიანი იმ მიწაში უნდა საქმიანობდეს და იმ მიწასთან უნდა ჰქონდეს ურთიერთობა, რომელსაც თავისად

მიიზნევს“ (“The man should work on and interact with the soil/land that he regards as his own”). This expression makes sense if we consider its Hebrew version in which *אֶרֶץ* – „მიწა“ (“the land/soil”) implies “country” since in Hebrew it means both “land/soil” and “country”. „დავიწყებაში წავა“ (“will fall into forgetfulness/oblivion”) (instead of *daivitskebs*: “will forget”). This phrase is also the result of Hebrew influence since the verb *הלך* – “halakh” is typical for this type of construction.

- f. Hebrew words with Georgian grammatical markers are also frequently used: „შეეფახადა“ [*sheefakhada*] (“was frightened,” “got scared”) stems from the Hebrew root *פחד* meaning “got scared”; „დალახდი“ [*dalekhdi*] (“go, go away”) from the root *לך* meaning “went, left, went away”; „დააგანაბეს“ [*daaganabes*] (“was robbed”) from *גנב* meaning “thief,” etc.

6.3. *Lexical features*

Apart from phonetic and morphological peculiarities, the vocabulary recorded in the speech of Georgian Jews creates a very interesting picture. Judeo-Georgian vocabulary includes Georgian lexical units used peculiarly. This group can be further subdivided into several subgroups:

- a. Semantic change/difference: Georgian words used by Georgian Jews with different meanings. For instance, „ჯამაათი“ [*jamaati*] is borrowed from Arabic and means “the gathering of people,” “people.” In Judeo-Georgian, in addition to this meaning, it also means the number of men necessary for prayer. For example: „შეიკრიბება ჯამაათი ლოცვაში მალე. ათი კაცი თუ არ იქნა, ჯამაათი ვერ შედგება“ (“Ten men will gather for a prayer soon. If they are less than ten, there will be no jamaati”).
- b. Georgian words used more frequently by Georgian Jews than by Georgians: „დანატრებულია“ [*danatrebulia*] (*moenatra* “has missed”), „მონაობს“ [*monaobs*] (“is

enslaved”), „გედროვა“ [gedrova] (“take your time”), „დამდღევნებულია“ [damdghevnebulia] (“is very old”).

- c. Terminology related to the Jews, including Jewish toponyms: „ურიათუბანი“ [Uriatubani], „ურიაკარი“ [Uriakari], „ლაილაში“ [Lailashi], „ლოცვისკარი“ [Lotsviskari], etc.¹²

It is particularly significant to study the Hebrew vocabulary that is common in Judeo-Georgian. It primarily consists of theological terminology from the *Bible*. It was commonly used by Georgian Jews regardless of region, age, or social status. If the regional varieties of Judeo-Georgian had much in common with local dialects due to geographical factors, Hebraisms were common in Judeo-Georgian in all parts of the country, and the linguistic identity of Georgian Jews was closely linked with the use of these words. Georgian Jews distinguished themselves from the rest of the population of Georgia not only through distinctive Georgian phonetic, grammatical, prosodic, and lexical forms but also through Hebraisms. The use of Hebraisms is one of the important markers of the identity of Georgian Jews. Hebraisms can also be found in the language of periodicals and written literature. This segment of Judeo-Georgian vocabulary can be divided into two large groups:

- a. Hebrew or Aramaic lexical units used with original, unaltered form and meaning: *khakham*, *khufa*...
- b. Phonetically, grammatically, and semantically transformed units. This group can be further subdivided into several subgroups:
 - Phonetic transformations: *ziughi/dziughi* ← *zivugi*.
 - Transformations related to the Hebrew pronunciation of Georgian Jews: *ketuba* ← *ktuva*, *shelomo* ← *shlomo*.
 - Morphological transformations: for instance, *koanim-bi*: the plural form of the Ivrit/Hebrew word *koen* is

¹² Tamari Lomtadze, and Reuven Enoch, “Judeo-Georgian Language as an Identity Marker...”, *op. cit.*, p. 18-19.

koanim but Georgian Jews use a double plural – the Georgian plural derivational suffix ‘eb’ is added to the Ivrit/Hebrew plural form. Similarly, the plural form of *Agora*, a small fractional currency unit in Hebrew, is *Agorot* but Georgian Jews use double plural Jewish-Georgian endings: *Agorotebi*. Interestingly, sometimes a new singular form *Agoroti* is derived from it.

- Semantic transformations: the word *zakeni* means “bad” in the speech of Georgian Jews while *zaken* primarily means “old” in Hebrew.¹³

6.4. *The intonation issue*

Alongside phonetic, morphological, and lexical peculiarities, the intonation of Judeo-Georgian is also an important area of study. Georgian Jews living in Israel can be distinguished from Jews from different regions of Georgia by their intonation, which varies depending on geographical location (e.g., one can easily distinguish between Jewish inhabitants of Tbilisi, Kutaisi, or Gori).¹⁴ However, they have something peculiarly Jewish in common. In scholarship, special attention has been paid to the study of the intonation of the Georgian Jews who emigrated to their historical homeland in the 1970s-80s, especially from Kulashi and Kutaisi (in a broader sense, Jewry from Western Georgia). The intonation of Judeo-Georgian uses elements of standard Georgian, on the one hand, and those of local dialects, on the other, and at the same time differs from both depending on the situation and social milieu. The intonation of Judeo-Georgian differs from that of standard Georgian in terms of parts of speech and the modality and structure of a sentence. The study of the intonation of Judeo-Georgian takes into account the

¹³ Tamari Lomtadze, and Reuven Enoch, “Judeo-Georgian Language as One of the Identity Markers of Georgian Jews, in Lali Guledani *et al* (eds.), *The Speech of Georgian Jews in Israel*, Tbilisi, Ivane Javakhishvili TSU Press, 2022, p. 56-87.

¹⁴ Tamar Lomtadze, and Tsira Janjghava, “Intonation of Judeo-Georgian”, *IKE*, 46, Tbilisi, 2017.

sentence type (interrogative, affirmative, imperative), the identification of the main parts of a sentence, and the emotional coloring of the expression (endearment, threat, encouragement, etc.). Emphasis is placed on the tone, tonal melody, and length of vowels and relatively less on the pause. It should be noted that all the phonological, grammatical, and lexical processes that characterized Judeo-Georgian speech took place against this specific intonational background.¹⁵ However, these intonational peculiarities of Judeo-Georgian lose their relevance in relation to the language of periodicals and written literature, since intonation is relatively unexpressed in written language. The rare exception is the use of doubled vowels in an interrogative sentence. The last vowel of the verb predicate is lengthened in such a way that two vowels can be heard. Consequently, the stress is also strengthened. For instance, „შენ მასწავლებელი ხარ?“ (“Are you a teacher?”); „ხომ არ გააქვს?“ (“Do you have it?”).¹⁶ It can be argued that intonational peculiarities of Judeo-Georgian speech are most clearly expressed in sentences such as these which can also be found, though only rarely, in periodicals. In the same way, the usage of local dialectic forms is also minimized in the written language.

For the most part, however, based on all the illustrative material discussed above, one can argue that the majority of the peculiarities of Judeo-Georgian speech can also be found in the written language of periodicals and literature.

7. Directions of linguistic studies of the periodicals published in Israel

As we have already mentioned, Georgian-language periodicals issued in Israel, especially the newspaper *Aliyah* (meaning “going up” or “immigration to Israel” in Hebrew), were instrumental in the development of Judeo-Georgian in the 1970s. The newspaper

¹⁵ Reuven Enoch, “The Intonation of Georgian Jews”, in Lali Guledani *et al* (eds.), *The Speech of Georgian Jews in Israel*, Tbilisi, Ivane Javakhishvili TSU Press, 2022, p. 88-100.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 95.

was primarily concerned with news relating to the Jewish-Georgian community including their achievements and cultural events as well as Israeli and international news and with providing useful guidelines and instructions for the new repatriates. Statements and guidelines/instructions from the Ministry of Absorption were regularly translated from Hebrew into Georgian, and congratulatory messages, obituaries, advertising announcements, and so on were regularly published. Over time, the literary section became more and more rich and versatile. Unlike all other periodicals issued in Israel, *Aliyah* published a broad range of works by Jewish-Georgian authors. Many poets and fiction writers first appeared in its pages and gradually became more famous and refined in their craftsmanship. Literary research on this material has revealed authors who systematically published their works in the newspaper. This work is a valuable source for literary studies.

As for the linguistic study of *Aliyah*, it was carried out in two directions: 1) linguistic analysis of the literary works published by Georgian Jews; and 2) linguistic analysis of the newspaper's informational publications (news, guidelines, statements, announcements, congratulatory messages, obituaries, etc.).

It should be noted that in both cases the written language differs from the spoken one, the former being more refined and devoid of the dialectical variants and inaccuracies characteristic of the spoken language. This is not surprising since the authors who submitted materials for publication belonged to higher, more educated classes and the material was strictly revised and edited. Only the Hebraisms found in the spoken language are common in the written language as well. Along with the features listed above, the distinctiveness of Judeo-Georgian spoken in Georgia was reflected primarily in the use of Hebraisms and this remained the case after the repatriation of Georgian Jews in the 1970s. Moreover, the repatriates rapidly adopted Hebrew vocabulary in the new linguistic environment where Hebrew was the dominant language.

Hebraisms can be divided into two large groups: 1) the words of old Hebrew origin that were commonly used by all Jews, whether they could speak Hebrew or not, while living in Georgia as well as after repatriation, and 2) the words that originated from modern Hebrew under the influence of Israeli Hebrew. The first group includes widely used Hebraisms as well as specific religious terminology used only by a narrow circle of believers. The words that are included in the second group originated from modern Hebrew (Ivrit) and can be found in both oral and written language (periodicals, written literature, etc.).

8. Hebraisms in everyday vocabulary and their content categories presented in context

Hebraisms can be divided into several subgroups, but we will consider only those that are used in everyday communication. We think it is necessary to focus on modern vocabulary since Georgian Jews did use Hebrew words (mainly religious and biblical terms) before their repatriation to Israel, but, after immigration, they started to use modern Hebrew (Ivrit) vocabulary much more extensively in both spoken and written language.

Georgian Jews who emigrated to Israel in the 1970s faced many challenges including the study of modern Hebrew. Because the capitalist economy of their new country required skills different from those of Soviet Georgia, Georgian Jews frequently had to engage in petty trade to support their families and had little opportunity to study modern Hebrew. However, modern Hebrew words of common usage, mostly nouns, penetrated everyday speech and informal communication as well as the language of periodicals alongside old Hebrew religious terms. In this regard, the vocabulary of modern Hebrew can be classified into several categories:

- a. Terms used in advertising/commercials including banking terminology for which the Georgian equivalent did not exist in Soviet Georgia:

hamkhaat adoari - Hebr. *ראוו תאחמ*, postal cheque. For example, „განცხადება შეგიძლიათ გამოგზავნოთ ფოსტით ფულის, ჩეკის ან ჰამხაათ ადოარის თანდართვით“ (“You can send the statement/announcement by post. Please enclose money, cheque, or hamkhaat adoari”);

makholeti - Hebr. *מכולת*, private grocery. For example, „სამაჯურის შეძენა შეგიძლიათ აფორციმის ქუჩაზე მაქოლეთში“ (“you can purchase the bracelet in makholeti on Aforcimi street”);

mashkanta - Hebr. *מחשק*, mortgage. For example, „ჩვენ ჩვეულებრივი ოჯახი გვაქვს, ძველი მანქანა და გრძელვადიანი სესხი მაშქანთა“ (“We are an ordinary family, we have an old car and a long-term mashqanta”).

- b. Names related to geographical locations and addresses that were used frequently enough after the migration to Israel whether the migrants could speak modern Hebrew or not and notwithstanding that these terms were not proper nouns and could be translated into Georgian:

merkaz taasia - Hebr. *מרכז תעשייה*, industrial centre. For instance, „მისამართი: აშდოდი, მერქაზ თაასია, ამალის ქუჩა“ (“Address: Ashdod, merkaz taasia, Amali street”);

merkaz beti - Hebr. *ב מרכז*, the center of the second district. Bet is the second letter of the Hebrew alphabet and is also used as an ordinal numeral to denote the ordinal number 2nd. For example, „მისამართი: აშდოდი, მერქაზ ბეთი მაღაზია 33“ (“Address: Ashdod, merkaz beti shop 33”);

kikar atsmauti - Hebr. *כיכר העצמאות*, The Square of Independence. For example, „შლომო ჰამელეხის ქუჩა, ქიქარ აცმაუთთთან“ (“Shlomo Hamelech street, by kikar atsmauti”).

- c. Vocabulary related to the everyday life of Israeli society and Zionism:

miluimi - Hebr. מילואים, military reserve forces. For example, „თუკი მოსწავლის ქმარი იმყოფება სამხედრო სამსახურში, არა მილუიმში“ (“If the student’s husband is in the military service and not in the milium”);

itron lekhal - Hebr. לייחלות, advantages/benefits for soldiers. For example, „პროგრამა ითრონ ლეხაიאל ინდექსზე მიმაგრებით სამი წლის შემდეგ“ (“To benefit from the itron lekhal program index after three years”);

iordim/ierida - Hebr. לייחול / יורד, one who has left Israel/ to leave Israel. It has the opposite meaning of Aliyah (repatriation to Israel) – if Aliyah can be literally translated as “going up” or “ascending,” Yerida means “descending/ descent from above.” For example, „ამერიკიდან ათასობით ისრაელს და იორდიმს საშუალება ექნება მშობლიურ ენაზე ნახოს გადაცემები“ (“Thousands of Israelis and Yordim will be able to watch programs in America in their native language”).

- d. Particles, words, and congratulations used in simple everyday communication. For example:

shalom - Hebr. שלום, hello, peace. „გამარჯობა, მშვიდობა. “For example, „ისე, შალომ ხანდახან ვისაც ძალიან ახლოს მივეჩვიე, ვეტყვი, სხვა არაფერი მეზობლობა აქ არ არის“ (“Just so, I would say shalom to those I got accustomed to, otherwise there is no such thing as an interaction between neighbours here”);

mazal tov - Hebr. מזל טוב, კარგი ბედი (congratulations);

beseder – Hebr. בסדר Its dictionary meaning is identical with its meaning in Judeo-Georgian – “confirmation,” “deal”. Literally, it can be translated as “Everything is all

right,” “Deal,” or “Okay.” For example, „ბესედერ... კიდევ რა გაინტერესებთ“ (“Beseder... Anything else?”).

- e. Changes in expressions and terminology under the influence of Hebrew. For those who learned modern Hebrew, some Georgian expressions changed under the influence of Hebrew. For example:

kibeebis jikhuri - Hebr. מְדִינָה, its Georgian equivalent is sadarbazo (entrance), while in Hebrew it is *khadar madregot*, literally meaning “a room of the staircase.” For example, „კიბეების ჯიხურიც თქვენს ბინას ეკუთვნის“ (“The room of the staircase belongs to your flat too”);

davitsvat silamaze - Hebr. לְשַׁמֹּר עַל הַיּוֹפִי, which means to preserve beauty. In Hebrew, protection and preservation are denoted by one and the same verb “lishmor” (לשמור)¹⁷.

As for the language of literary works published in *Aliyah*, it is of a mixed nature. Most of the writers used standard Georgian. However, the language of works in different genres, even written by the same author, varies depending on the character of the work. The following kinds of examples can be found among the majority of writers. For instance, most of the stories by Judah Shalelashvili, Georgian-Jewish writer of the first pleiad of the 1970s generation, are written in standard Georgian; however, they are marked by an abundance of Hebraisms,¹⁸ such as “Aliyah, Olimebi” (“repatriat-sia” - repatriation, “repatrianti” - repatriate), “ma shaa?” (What time is it?) [p. 106]; „khevrá“ (society) [p. 107]; „dati“ (believer), „asifa“ (gathering, council) [p. 113]; „tefilini“ (inseparable attribute of morning prayer, they wrap it on the left arm) [p. 114]; „ole khadashi“ (new repatriate), „rakevet“ (train), „ba ‘al bait“ (owner of the house) [p. 116]; „sokhnuti“ (Jewish agency of Israel), „kufat

¹⁷ Ana Kvirikashvili, and Tsira Janighava, “Hebraisms in the Speech of Georgian Jews Repatriated to Israel,” *Proceedings of 8th International Conference “Language and Culture,”* vol. I, Kutaisi, 2023, p. 230-231.

¹⁸ Iehuda Shalelashvili, *The Kiss of a Woman* (Short Story Collection), Tel Aviv, 1977.

kholimi“ (polyclinic), „agorotebi“ (Israeli currency unit), „vatikebi“ (veterans), „melukhlakhebi“ (the dirty) [p. 17]; „titsit“ (white robe with blue stripe to be used during prayer) [p. 125]; „ra kamtsanebi khart“ (How stingy/ungenerous you are!) [p. 74]; „savlanut“ (patience) [p. 92]; „ekhad, shtaim, shalom“ (one, two, three), „khatan-kala“ (bride and bridegroom), „ketubis tsakitkhva“ (to read the wedding contract) [p. 93]; „ulami“ (hall) [p. 96]; „misrad aklita“ (The Ministry of Absorption) [p. 97]; „gan kedeni“ (The Garden of Eden) [p. 99]; „sefer tora“ (five sacred books), „khazani“ (cantor) [p. 101]; „iediot akharonot“ (latest news)[p.106], etc.

Conclusion

The Georgian language of the Jews repatriated in the 1970s is characterized by economic, political, and geographical influences and its classification takes into account social factors. This article has reviewed the results of earlier important scholarly research related to the Georgian-Jewish language as well as the databases developed through more recent projects. The multi-profile newspaper *Aliyah* has been used as the main research focus and source of illustrative data. The illustrative material was discussed according to phonetic-morphological and lexical features. Based on the analysis of the linguistic material, it can be concluded that the colloquial language of Georgian Jews in Israel has dialectal variants derived from Georgia; it is still based on the speech of co-territorial Georgians but differs from them with the frequent use of Hebraisms. However, it should be emphasized that the usage of local dialectal forms due to geographical factors is also minimized in the written language.

Thus, the study of the databases of Judeo-Georgian shows that the written language of literary works by Georgian Jews in Israel preserves the linguistic traditions that characterized it in Georgia with the difference that religious terminology prevailed among Hebraisms in Georgia, while in Israel, due to the influence of modern Hebrew (Ivrit), words of everyday usage penetrated written language as well as informal communication as evidenced by the texts published in periodicals and literary works.

The linguistic dilemma of Georgian Jews in the 1970s was resolved as follows: Georgian-Jewish authors kept writing in the language they had been speaking and writing all their lives. No major language shift can be observed: Georgian Jewry, including Georgian-Jewish authors, did not abandon their original vernacular language in favor of the dominant one. The writings of Georgian-Jewish authors are distinct from their new social environment while maintaining the tendency of linguistic integration with the old one. Despite the geographic distance between Georgia and Israel, their language preserves the peculiarities that were characteristic of Judeo-Georgian as spoken in Georgia. Linguistic and literary study of the works published by Jewish-Georgian authors in the 1970s demonstrates that with a change of place of residence and language model, a writer does not always turn into a representative of another national literature.

References

- Ben-Oren, Gershon, *הדיבור של יהודי גרוזיה - תכונות מיוחדות של שפת* : *Special Characteristics of the Spoken Language of Georgian Jews*, Ph.D. dissertation, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1993. [in Hebrew]
- Enoch, Reuven, "The Intonation of Georgian Jews", in Lali Guledani, Reuven Enoch, Ana Kvirikashvili, and Tamari Lomtadze (eds.), *The Speech of Georgian Jews in Israel*, Tbilisi, Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University Press, 2022, p. 88-100. [in Georgian]
- Enoch, Reuven, and Tamari Lomtadze, "About the Speech of Georgian Jews", *Proceedings of the 2nd International Conference Dedicated to Jacob Gogebashvili*, Gori, Geoprint, 2015, p. 20-24. [in Georgian]
- Enoch, Reuven, and Tamari Lomtadze, "Hebraisms in the Speech of Kutaisi Jews", *Proceedings of the 3rd International Conference Dedicated to Jacob Gogebashvili*, Gori, Geoprint, 2016, p. 30-33. [in Georgian]
- Gigineishvili, Baqar. *The Conversion of Kartli: The Shatberdi Codex of X Century*, Tbilisi, Metsniereba, 1979. [in Georgian]
- Guledani, Lali, "Social Aspect of Judeo-Georgian Speech in Israel", in Lali Guledani, Reuven Enoch, Ana Kvirikashvili, and Tamara Lomtadze (eds.), *The Speech of Georgian Jews in Israel*, Tbilisi, Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University Press, 2022, p. 112-120. [in Georgian]
- Kaukhchishvili, Simon, *The Life of Kartli*, Vol I. Tbilisi, Ed. Simon Kaukhchishvili, 1955. [in Georgian]
- Kote, Jlephep, *Jews in Georgia: From Hellenic Period to Late Feudalism*, Jerusalem, 2008.
- Kvirikashvili, Ana, "The Speech of Georgian Jews Living in Khaifa", in Lali Guledani, Reuven Enoch, Ana Kvirikashvili, and Tamara Lomtadze (eds.), *The Speech of Georgian Jews in Israel*, Tbilisi, Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University Press, 2022, p. 140-144. [in Georgian]
- Kvirikashvili, Ana, and Tsira Janjghava, "Hebraisms in the Speech of Georgian Jews Repatriated to Israel", *Proceedings of the 8th International Conference "Language and Culture"*, vol. I, Kutaisi, 2023, p. 230-231. [in Georgian]
- Lomtadze, Tamari, "Georgian Jews: Language and Identity", *Proceedings of the Arnold Chikobava Institute of Linguistics 36th Conference on Dialect Studies*, Kutaisi, 2016. [in Georgian]
- Lomtadze, Tamari, and Reuven Enoch, "Judeo-Georgian Language as an Identity Marker of Georgian Jews (The Jews Living in Georgia)", *Journal of Jewish Languages*, Vol. 7, Issue 1, June 2019, p. 1-26.

- Lomtadze, Tamari, and Reuven Enoch, "Judeo-Georgian Language as One of the Identity Markers of Georgian Jews", in Lali Guledani, Reuven Enoch, Ana Kvirikashvili, and Tamari Lomtadze (eds.), *The Speech of Georgian Jews in Israel*, Tbilisi, Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University Press, 2022, p. 56-87. [in Georgian]
- Lomtadze, Tamari, and Tsira Janjghava, "Intonation of Judeo-Georgian", *IKE*, 46, Tbilisi, 2017. [in Georgian]
- Mamistvalashvili, Eldar, *The History of the Georgian Jews (Antiquity and Feudal Era)*, Tbilisi, Metsniereba, 1995. [in Georgian]
- Sapir (Sepiashvili), Abraham, *Founding the Newspaper "Aliyah"*, 1978, #350, 30XI. [in Georgian]
- Shalelashvili, Iehuda, *The Kiss of a Woman* (Short Story Collection), Tel Aviv, 1977. [in Georgian]
- Tchitchinadze, Zaqaria, *Georgian Jews in Georgia*, Tbilisi, V. Chikovani, 1904. [in Georgian]