Linguistic geography of East Caucasian languages

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Linguistic geography of East Caucasian

Linguistic geography studies the geographical distribution of languages and their varieties and or linguistic features and their variants.

In this lecture we will focus on the distribution of languages and dialects.

Which languages are spoken where, and did their territory undergo any major changes?

This implies that we know which East Caucasian languages there are and how we can locate their speech communities.

(See the Typological Atlas of the Languages of Daghestan for the distribution of some linguistic features among the East Caucasian languages and their neighbors.)

Outline of this lecture

- Introduction
- Brief history of settlement
- Classification
- Branching
- Language and ethnic identity
- Census data
- Highlands vs. lowlands
- Changes in language territory in the XIX and XX century
- Language vitality

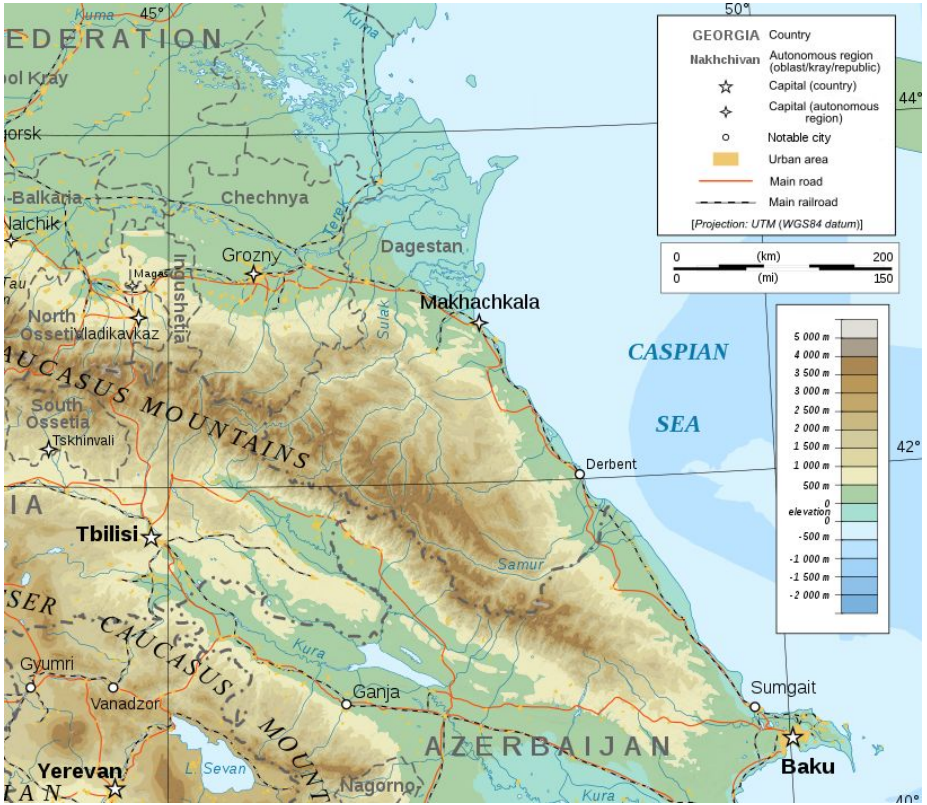
Introduction

Basic facts

East Caucasian languages are spoken mainly in the three North Caucasian republics of Ingushetia, Chechnya and Dagestan.

Relatively small territory largely covered in mountainous terrain.

Population of over 4,5 million.



Fragment of a map by Bourrichon (Wikimedia Commons)

Basic facts

Percentage of mountainous terrain is roughly 48% for Dagestan, 44% for Ingushetia, and 35% for Chechnya.

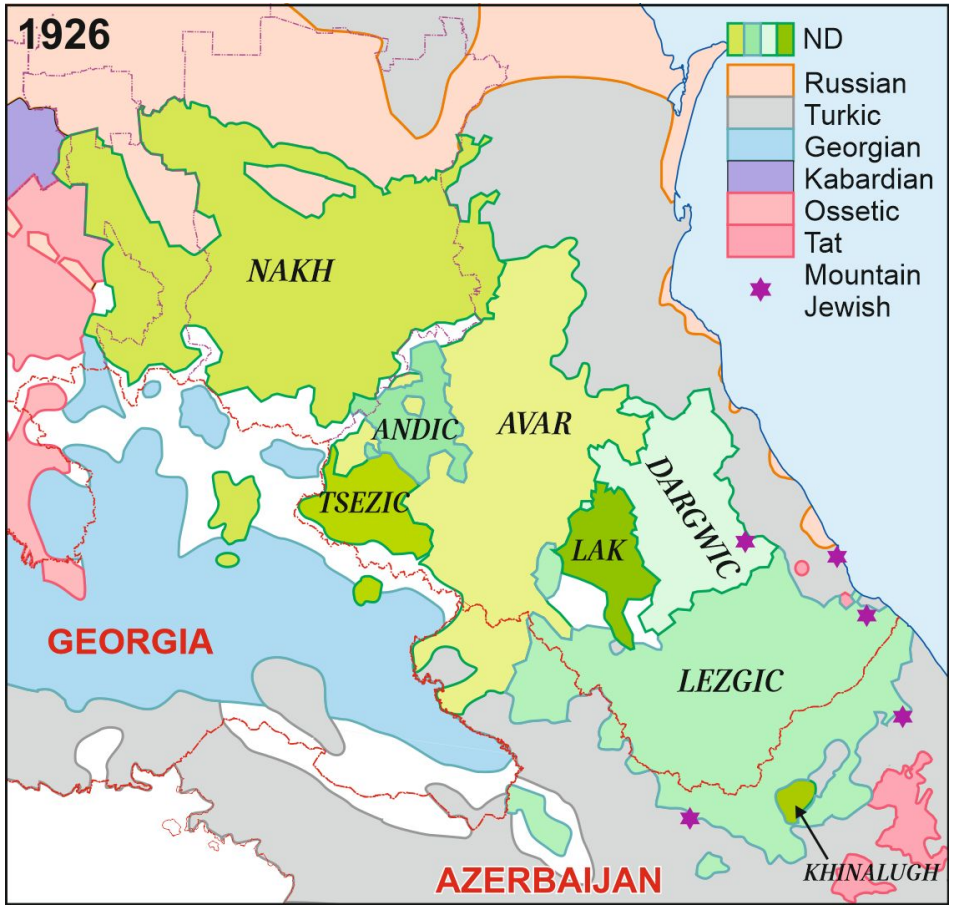
In the case of Chechnya and especially Dagestan, the present territory includes a lot of flat land that was added later. The Dagestan Oblast, which existed until 1921, consisted of about 82% mountainous terrain. For the Chechen Autonomous Oblast (1922-1934) this was 50%.

The vast majority of East Caucasians have inhabited mountainous areas for centuries, more recently they started migrating to the lowlands.

Basic facts

Several East Caucasian communities reside in adjacent areas in Georgia and Azerbaijan (some diasporas in Turkey and Jordan).

Neighbors include Kumyk, Azeri, Nogai (Turkic); Tat, Ossetic, Armenian (Indo-European); Georgian (Kartvelian) and Kabardian (West Caucasian).



Basic facts

The language of administration is Russian, which has some local presence in urban areas (and historically at the northern periphery).

Arabic is the language of liturgy, since people in the area are predominantly Sunni Muslim, but there are no local Arabic-speaking communities.

Brief history of settlement

East Caucasian languages

East Caucasian languages are considered indigenous and endemic to the area where they are spoken.

Evidence for cultural continuity with early Neolithic archaeological sites in Dagestan, see Amirxanov (1987) on Chokh.

Ancient, deep-level family, comparable to Indo-European (Nichols 2003: 125), with an estimated age of ~6000-8000 years.

Historical homeland situated more to the south, in South/Central Transcaucasia (Schulze 2013: 317).

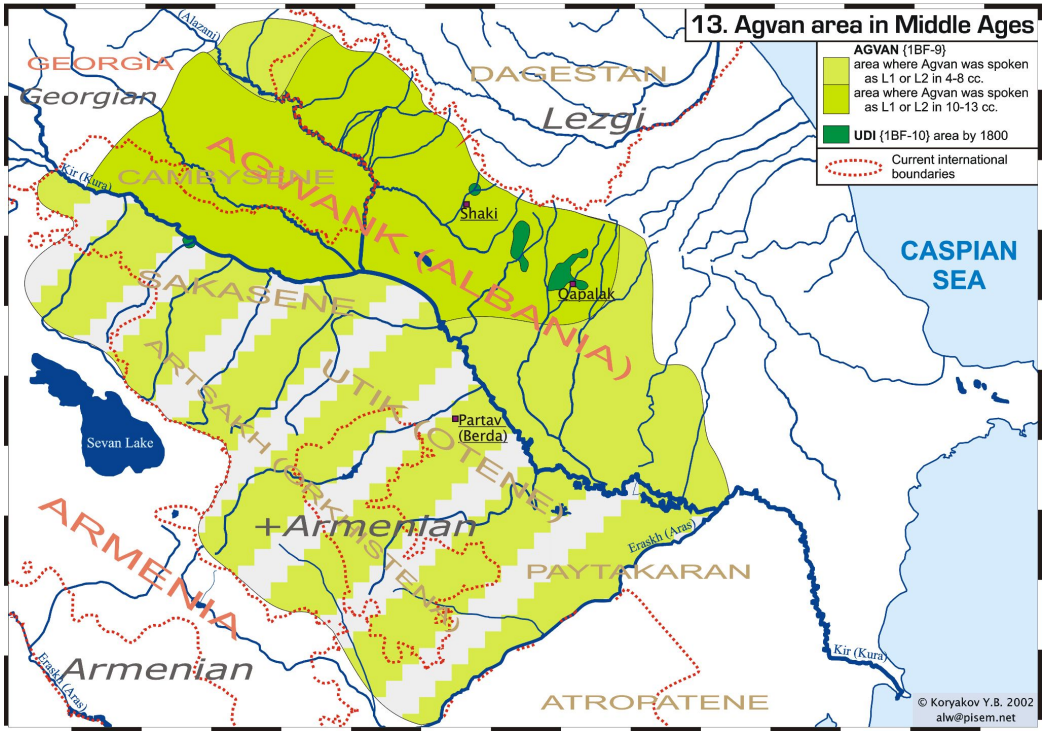
(see also Johanna Nichols' lecture from 2020)

Caucasian Albanian

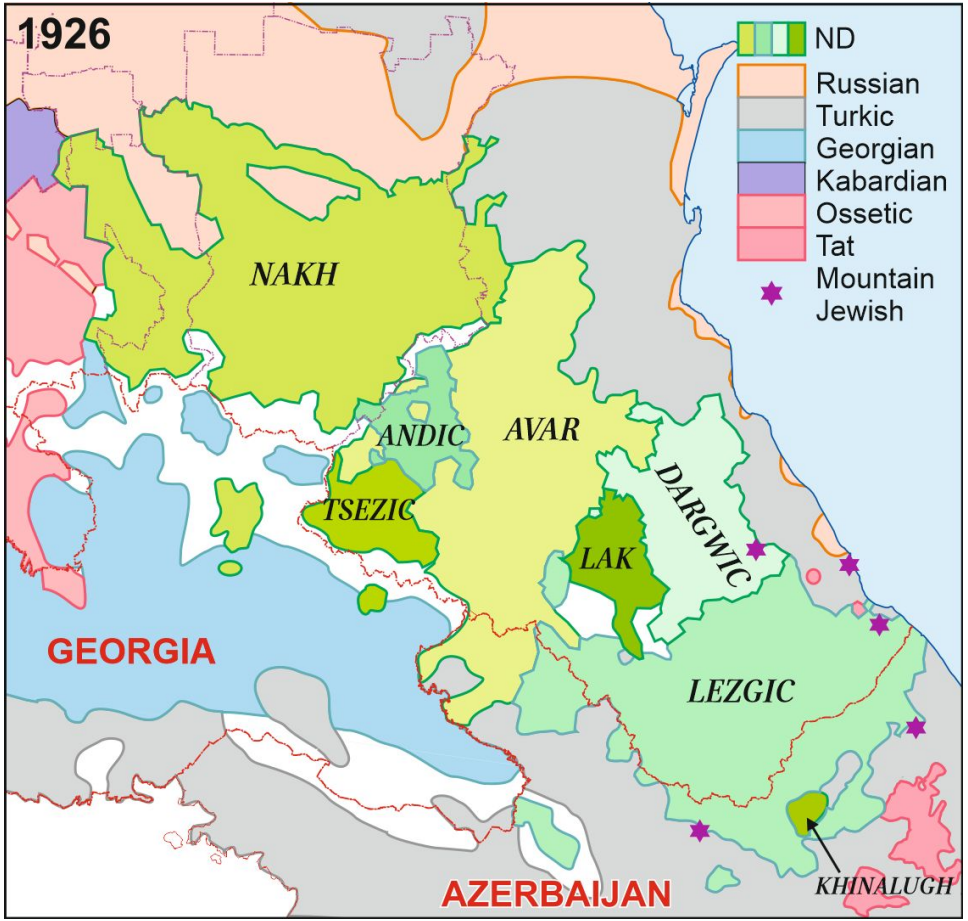
The oldest attested East Caucasian language is Caucasian Albanian (or Agvan).

It was recorded on palimpsests that were found on Mount Sinai, and which date back to the V-VI centuries (Gippert et al. 2008).

It is an ancestor of Udi or its sister language, and it was the language of Caucasian Albania (II BCE - VIII CE).




KALMYKIA
CASPIAN SEA
STAVROPOL KRAI
CHECHNYA
TRADITIONAL AREA by 1800
GEORGIA
DAGESTAN
AREAS LOST in 19-20th cc.
AZERBAIJAN


1926
ND
Russian
Turkic
Georgian
Kabardian
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Tat
Mountain Jewish
NAKH
ANDIC
AVAR
TSEZIC
LAK
DARGWIC
LEZGIC
GEORGIA
AZERBAIJAN
KHINALUGH

Appearance of Iranians in the area

Scythians, Alans (the ancestors of the Ossetians), and Sarmatians appeared in the general area in the first millennium BCE (Gamzatov & Thordarson 1993/2011). Only the Ossetians are still in the area, sharing a border with Ingushetia.

Tats appeared as part of the Sasanian expansion into the Caucasus (III-VII centuries) (Luguev 2002: 535), and live in a number settlements in northern Azerbaijan and a few places in southern Dagestan.

Persian functioned as an important regional language due to its role in the successive empires that controlled part of the region to which the eastern Caucasus belongs.

Turkic tribes

Contemporary Turkic nations in the Caucasus emerged from confederations of nomadic tribes (Golden 1992), who arrived in waves during the Early to Late Middle Ages.

Turkic Khazar Kaganate (VII-IX centuries), polyethnic state, no traces of their language left behind.

Kipchaks appeared in the XI century in the northern steppes, from where they spread to Nakh and Daghestanian territories (Piotrovskij 1988: 148-150).

Oghuz Turks appeared in the area of present-day Azerbaijan around the X century (Johanson 2006: 162-166).

Turkic tribes

Turkic speakers inhabited the lowlands.

Kumyks and Azeris settled in the area along the Caspian coast; Azeris in the south up until Derbent, and Kumyks further up north as well as in Chechnya.

Nogais continued a nomadic lifestyle in the lowlands to the north of Dagestan and Chechnya.

Arabic

Arabs captured Derbent in the late VII century and established a caliphate.

It did not last long and they did not establish a lasting local community, though there is some evidence of Turkified Arabs (Šixsaidov 2016).

The process of Islamization nonetheless continued and was completed only by the XVIII century for the Chechen and Ingush (XV for Daghestan).

Some knowledge of Arabic is widespread, but typically limited to reading prayers.

Russians

Southward expansion of the Russian Empire in the XVIII century.

Colonization of the Caucasus in the XIX century.

Influx of Russians (especially in cities) during the Soviet period.

Expansion of Russian as a lingua franca after the introduction of the Soviet school system (Dobrushina et al. 2019).

Russians now mostly live in cities. Many left after the disintegration of the Soviet Union, though in Daghestan the population is growing.

A local variety of Russian emerged as the language of multiethnic (urban) areas in Dagestan, see Daniel et al. (2010) and Dobrushina et al. (2018).

Armenians and Georgians

Armenia and Georgia are historically important neighboring states.

Migration of large numbers of Armenians to the southern frontier of the Russian Empire in the XVIII century (Magomedxanov & Musaeva 2015), and some Georgians in the same period.

Small communities of Armenians remain in Daghestanian cities.

Classification

Languages of the eastern Caucasus

Ancient sources like Strabo and Ptolemy mention a large number of different tribes inhabiting the eastern Caucasus (Gadžiev 2019).

Their correspondence to contemporary languages or ethnic groups is often not straightforward. One such example is *leg*, which could correspond to Lezgian tribes, Lak, or be used as a catch-all term to refer to East Caucasians.

Medieval Arabic geographers mention the linguistic diversity of the area (estimates range from 70-360 languages), but do not identify specific East Caucasian languages besides Caucasian Albanian (Karaulov 1903).

Languages of the eastern Caucasus

“This mountain range is huge; it is said that 360 languages are spoken there; I rejected this before, until I saw many cities myself, and each city has its own language in addition to Azerbaijani and Persian.”

Ibn Ḥawqal (977-978), via Karaulov’s Russian translation (1903)

The term ‘mountain of tongues’ for the Caucasus as a whole is due to the Arabic geographer Al-Mas’udi (Catford 1977).

Languages of the eastern Caucasus

European sources from the XIII-XVIII considered the eastern Caucasus “Tatar” territory, and referred to the people there as Daghestanian “Tatars” (cover term for Turkic people).

The term “Lezgians” appears as a synonym for “Daghestanian Tatars”.

“Now let us turn to the current inhabitants of this region. They are Tatars. The Persians call them Lezgians (Lesgi), but they call themselves “Daghestanian Tatars”, i.e. “Mountain Tatars”.”

(Olearii 1663: 725)

The eastern Caucasus as montes incogniti

Fragment of the map *Provinciarum persicarum Kilaniae nempe Chirvaniae Dagestaniae* by Johann Baptist Homann, published in 1728.

The East Caucasian family

More detailed information appears only in the XIX century, when the area becomes part of the Russian Empire.

A lot of linguistic and other fieldwork is undertaken in this period, and the first grammatical descriptions of East Caucasian languages appear.

Güldenstädt, Johann Anton (1745-1781) – Description of Southern Russia and the Caucasus and word lists in several languages.

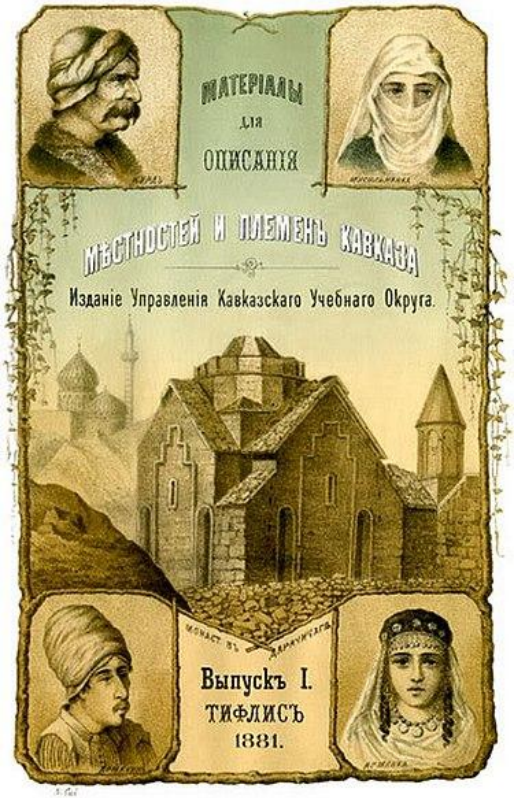
Uslar, Peter Karlovich (1816-1875) – Grammar descriptions of Chechen, Avar, Lak, Khyurkilin (Urakha Dargwa), Kyurin (Lezgian), Tabasaran and general works on Caucasian linguistics.

The East Caucasian family

Сборник материалов для описания и местностей племён Кавказа (СМОМПК) (online)

Journal published by the Board of the Caucasus educational district in Tiflis.

1 or 2 numbers a year in 1881-1915, 1926, 1929, containing grammar sketches, ethnographic data, folklore material.



Nakh and Daghestanian

Initially the Nakh and Daghestanian languages were considered to constitute separate families.

Klaproth (1831) recategorized them as two branches of one family — hence the alternative family name Nakh-Daghestanian.

In spite of the traditional division into two major branches, there are almost no shared innovations common to all Daghestanian languages as opposed to the Nakh languages (cf. Nichols 2003: 241).

Therefore, the Nakh branch is now more commonly considered to be a sister to other branches of EC (Koryakov 2006; Forker 2013; Dobrushina et al. 2020; Ganenkov, Maisak 2020; though see Nichols 2003 for a different conclusion).

The East Caucasian family

An almost complete list of languages and close to modern grouping is found in von Erckert's (1895) collection of short comparative grammar sketches based on linguistic surveys in a large number of idioms.

In von Erckert's account, East Caucasian languages formed the Eastern group of the North Caucasian languages, divided into two main branches (*Hauptgruppe*):

- **North-western**, incl. Chechen, Middle (=Avaro-Ando-Tsez) and Eastern (= Dargwic and Lak) groups;
- **South-eastern**, or Kyurin, including the Lezgic group and Khinalugh.

Many idioms were considered dialects rather than languages, but the list of idioms that are distinguished is very similar to the traditional classification still in use today.

Classification by von Erckert (1895)

Kyurin proper (Lezgian, Axty dialect), Rutul, Tsakhur, Agul (Kosan and Burkikhan dialects), Tabasaran (Northern dialect from Khushni and Southern dialect), Archi, Udi, Dzhek (Kryz), Budukh, Khinalug

Vurkun **Dargwa** (villages Urari, Qunqi, Ashti), Kaitag (close to Vurkun), Kubachi (transitional between Vurkun and Akusha), Akusha Dargwa (Akusha proper, Khyurkilin and Mekegi), Madzhalis-Kaitag (Muiri)

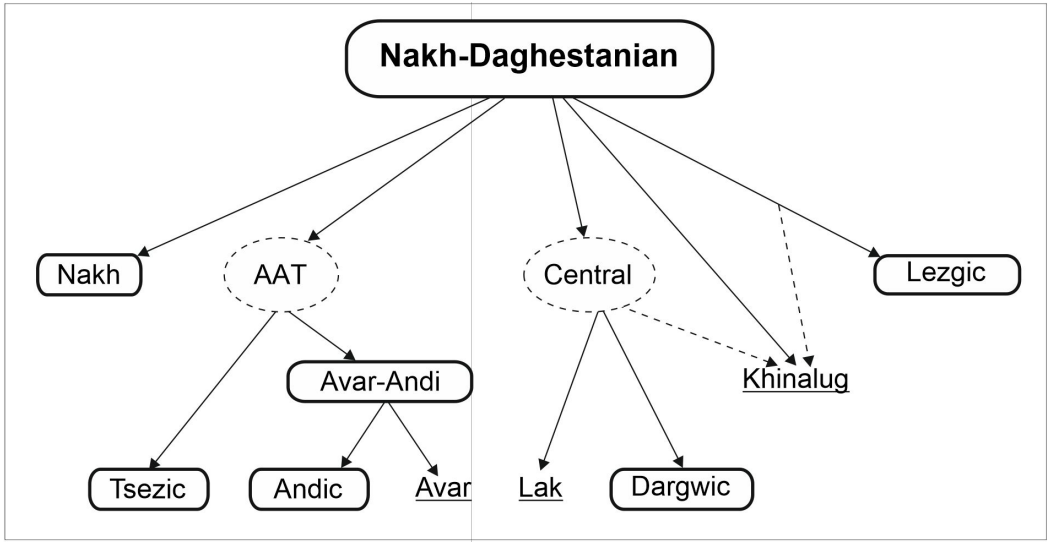
Lak

Avar (Khunzakh, Gunib, Axvak, Chokh, Southern), **Andi** proper, Botlikh, Chamalal (Gigatl'), Tindi, Karata (Archo), Godoberi, Bagvalal, **Dido** proper (Tsez), Khwarshi, Kapuchin (Bezhta)

Chechen with Ingush dialect, Tsova-Tush

Branching

Classification

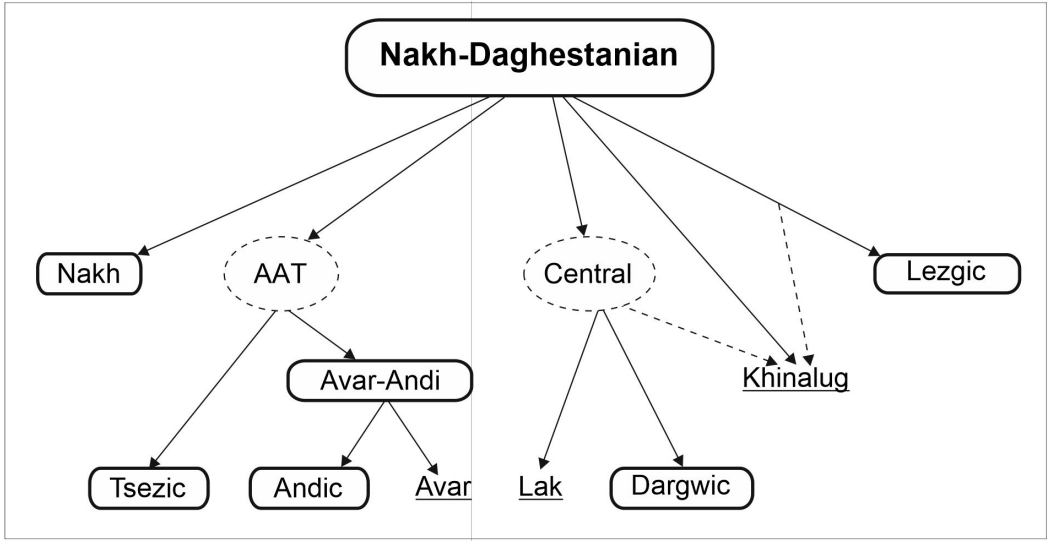


The family consists of 7 generally accepted branches: Nakh, Avar-Andic, Tsezic, Lezgic, Dargwic, Lak and Khinalug.

The latter two comprise only one language each.

The unity of AAT is almost universally accepted but not explicitly shown.

Classification



The unity of Lak and Dargwa and especially Khinalug is rather uncertain.

The position of Khinalug is especially controversial. For a long time it was treated as a Lezgic language, then as a sister branch of Lezgic, and finally as an independent branch that has been influenced by Lezgic.

Number of East Caucasian languages

A persistent issue in the study of East Caucasian is how many languages there are exactly, and what are languages as opposed to dialects.

The generally accepted list was largely established in the 1920s and did not change at all between 1967 (Caucasian volume of “Languages of peoples of USSR”) and the early 21st century.

The only language added in Alekseev (1999) was ancient Caucasian Albanian.

- 1926 census — 29 (incl. Kubachi and Kaitag, but no Ingush and Hinuq)
- 1967 — 29 (added Ingush and Hinuq, but Kubachi and Kaitag → Dargwa)
- Catford 1991 — 29 (the same)
- Alekseev 1999 — 30 (+Caucasian Albanian)

Lexicostatistics

In recent years, some revisions have been proposed based on the lexicostatistical approximation of mutual intelligibility (since actually testing mutual intelligibility in such a diverse area would not be feasible).

This is calculated as the number of shared cognates in the 100-word Swadesh list: lects which share 91% or more are considered dialects of the same language; lects which share 90% or less are considered separate languages (Koryakov 2017).

Even in case of such a simple test, there is not enough data for all of the relevant varieties. Nevertheless, this method has drastically changed the estimated number of languages. For example, in Dobrushina et al. 2020, 45 EC languages are listed.

Case: Andic languages

Initial list: Andi, Akhvakh, Botlikh, Godoberi, Karata, Chamalal, Bagvalal, Tindi.

Getting conventional: split Karata → Karata proper and Tukita, Andi → Upper Andi and Lower Andi (Muni-Kwankhidatli), Akhvakh → Northern Akhvakh and Southern Akhvakh.

Still under question: split Gadyri from the rest of Chamalal; split Southern Akhvakh → Ratlub, Tlyanub and Tsegob.

Case: Tsezic languages

Initial list: Tsez (Dido), Khwarshi, Bezhta, Hunzib.

By 1967: split Hinuq from Tsez.

Getting conventional: split Tsez → Tsez proper and Sagada.

Not confirmed: split Khwarshi → Khwarshi proper and Inkhokvari.

Case: Dargwic languages

1926 list: Dargwa, Kaitag, Kubachi.

By 1967: merge all three into Dargwa.

2002: 11 separate languages (Koryakov 2002).

2007: 18 separate languages (Koryakov & Sumbatova 2007).

2020: 13 separate languages (Dobrushina et al. 2020).

2021: 15 separate languages (Koryakov 2021).

Case: Dargwic languages

The initial large number of Dargwic languages was caused by scarcity and poor quality of data. When more and better data were acquired, the number of languages was decreased.

After that, new data from formerly undocumented lects started to appear and the number of languages again increased.

Case: Lezgic languages

Initial list: Agul, Tabasaran, Lezgian, Tsakhur, Rutul, Budukh, Kryz, Archi, Udi, Caucasian Albanian.

Still under question: split Agul → Agul proper and Qushan; Tabasaran → Northern Tabasaran and Southern Tabasaran; Rutul → Rutul proper and Southern Rutul.

Language and ethnic identity

Ethnic self-identity among Nakh

Among the speakers of Nakh languages there is a relatively straightforward correspondence between ethnic or national identity and language.

Ingushetia and Chechnya are linguistically and ethnically homogeneous republics where the respective languages have official status.

Chechen and Ingush consider themselves to belong to a larger ethnic group - Vaynakh ‘our people’.

Tsova-Tush have been geographically and culturally separated from other Nakh people, and view themselves as ethnic Georgians.

Ethnic self-identity in Dagestan

In Dagestan the picture is more complicated.

Daghestanians typically have a layered identity.

In their own neighborhood they identify themselves by their native village. The village name also functions as the language name for local varieties.

Within Dagestan they associate with a larger ethnic grouping.

Outside of Dagestan they identify as Dagestanians.

Ethnic groups

The larger ethnic groupings currently distinguished in Dagestan date back to the Soviet period (though they have some historical precedent).

Starting from the 1930s, speakers of Andic and Tsezic languages, as well as Archi and Mehweb Dargwa, were ethnically subsumed under Avars → Avar was their main L2.

The Standard Dargwa language was created based on the Akusha dialect for all Dargins. Separate identities within the Dargwic group (such as Kaitag, associated with the former Kaitag state, and Kubachi) were no longer distinguished.

Different ethnicities were distinguished within the Lezgic group, and writing systems were created for some of the respective languages.

Language status

11 East Caucasian languages have official status in the eastern Caucasus next to Russian: Ingush (in Ingushetia); Chechen (in Chechnya and Daghestan); Agul, Avar, Dargwa, Lezgian, Lak, Rutul, Tabasaran, Tat, Tsakhur (in Daghestan).

For some of them, the writing system was developed only recently: Tsakhur (1989; after an abandoned first attempt in the 1930s), Rutul and Agul (1990). For others, a Cyrillic system was introduced in 1938, after a brief experiment with Latin script.

Arabic script was used prior to this.

Kumyk, Nogai, Azerbaijani, and Tat also have official status in Dagestan.

Language status

Languages with an official writing system are taught as “mother tongue” at school in Dagestan.

This means that speakers of unwritten languages are taught a different language as mother tongue, namely the main literary language for the ethnic group that they are subsumed under, e.g. Avar for Andic and Tsezic speakers.

In mixed ethnic villages, “mother tongue” lessons are provided for majorities; others can choose between a local majority language or Russian as mother tongue (which is distinct from regular Russian language lessons).

Self-identity among East Caucasians in Azerbaijan

Budukh consider themselves a separate ethnic group, but this is not strongly connected to language (Clifton 2009)

Khinalug view themselves as Khinalug ethnically and linguistically, but Azerbaijani based on their location (Garibova 2016: 109), similar to the Daghestanian identity based on geography.

Kryz do not have a strong group identity as distinct from Azerbaijani (Clifton et al. 2005a).

In case of other East Caucasian languages spoken in Azerbaijan, linguistic and ethnic identity are aligned.

Census data

Available census data

Russian Empire: 1897

USSR: 1926, 1937, 1939, 1959, 1970, 1979, 1989

RF: 2002, 2010, 2020-2021

Digitized and connected in the Atlas of Multilingualism in Daghestan (Dobrushina et al. 2017) (census):

- Rural registers of 1886 and 1895, censuses of 1926 and 2010 (Daghestan only).

Plans to add 1926 data for neighboring regions (Chechnya, Ingushetia, Northern Azerbaijan, Georgia).

Populations per locality.

Ethnicity per locality

1886, 1895, 1926 ethnicity per locality.

2010 ethnicity and language per locality → we use **language** here, because while Andic and Tsezic people were ethnically subsumed under Avars, in many cases they indicated their actual native language.

Some caveats:

Complex relationships between language, ethnicity, and group identity.

Ethnic labels in census do not necessarily reflect people's self-identification.

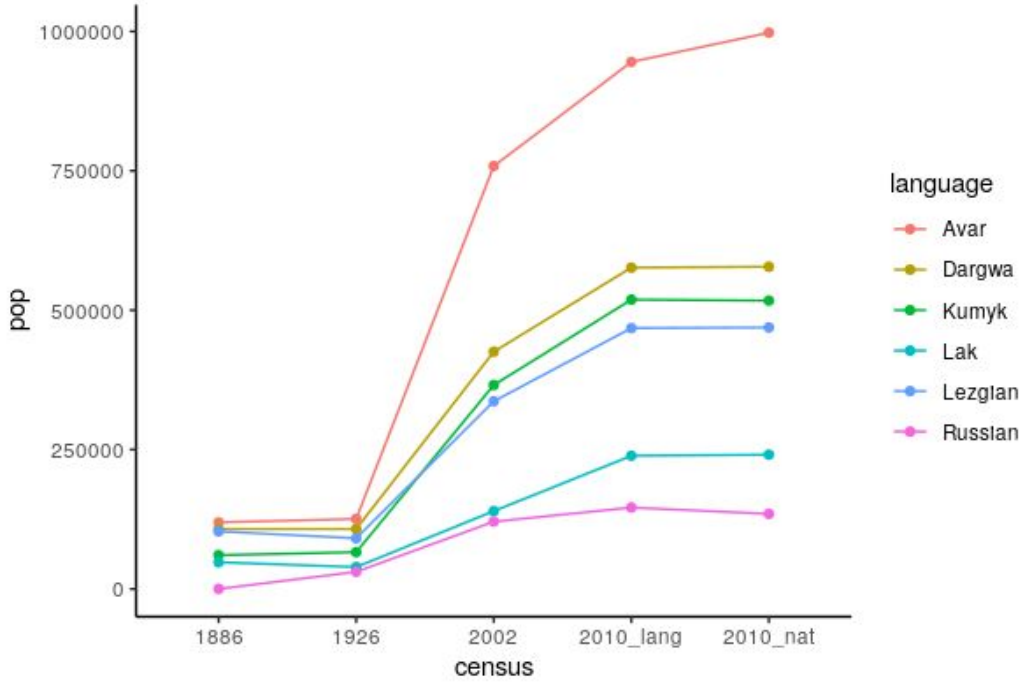
Some grouping and interpretation by census workers evidently did occur, but the extent of this is unknown.

Main ethnic groups

Stable from 1886–1926 (shorter period).

Only Russians had significant growth in this period.

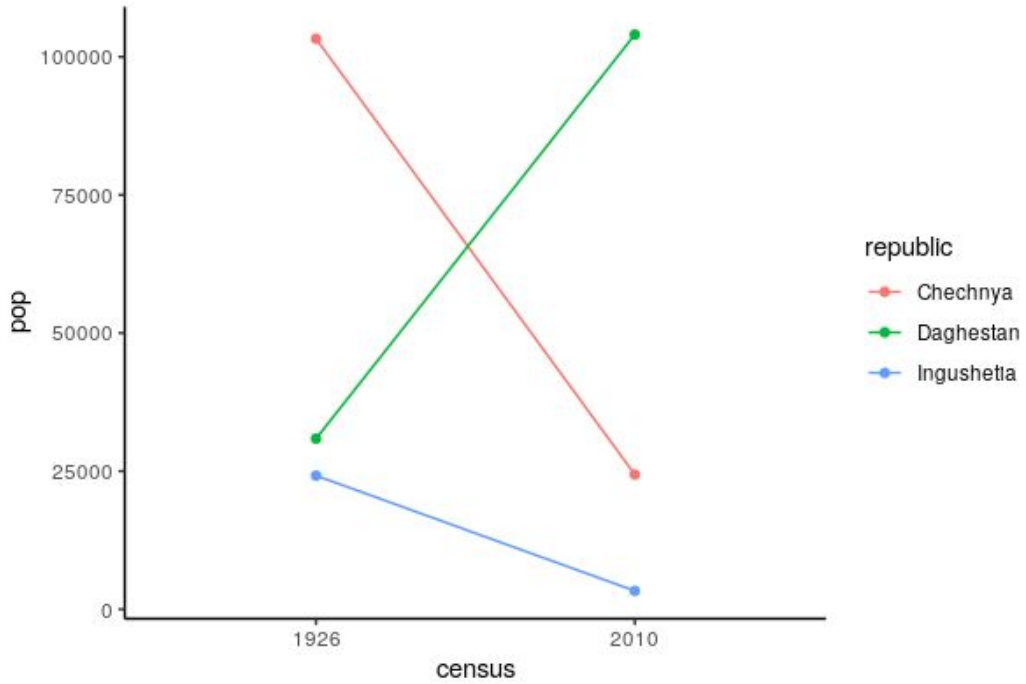
Strong growth between 1926–2010; total population went from 610,317 to 3,463,335.



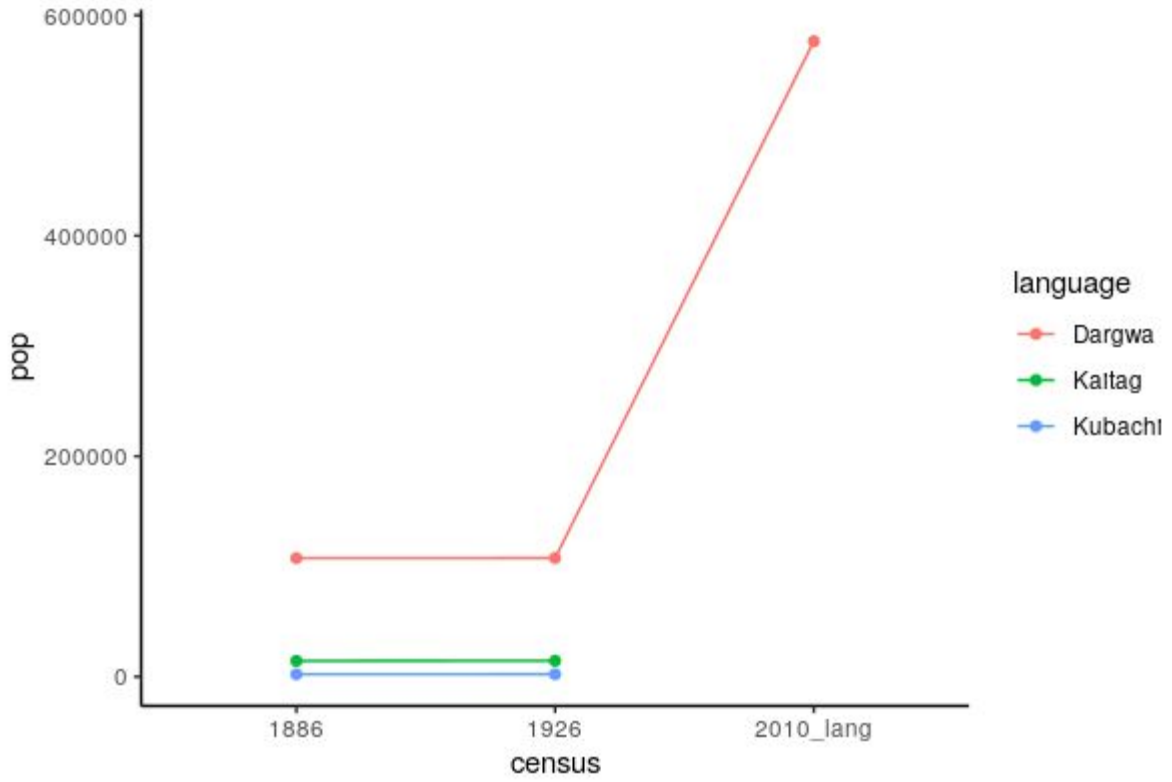
Russians

Russian population in Dagestan is growing, in contrast with Chechnya and Ingushetia.

Most Russians live in urban areas, though they are distributed throughout the entire republic.



Dargwa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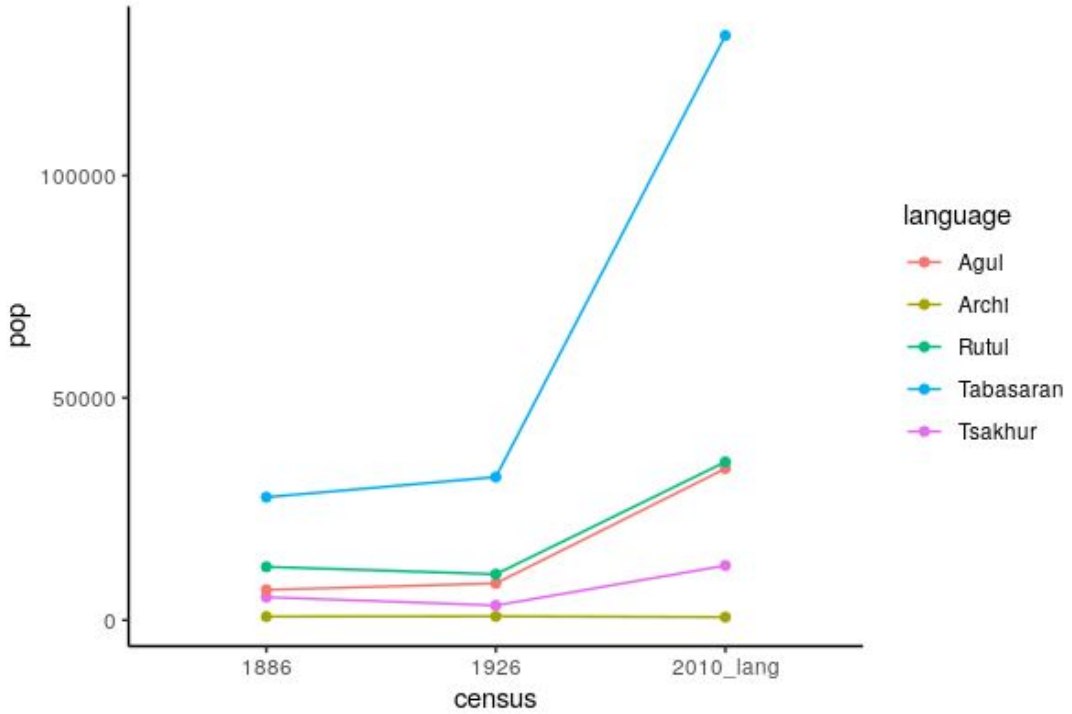
Lezgic

Lezgian is not shown here because it is too large compared to the other languages.

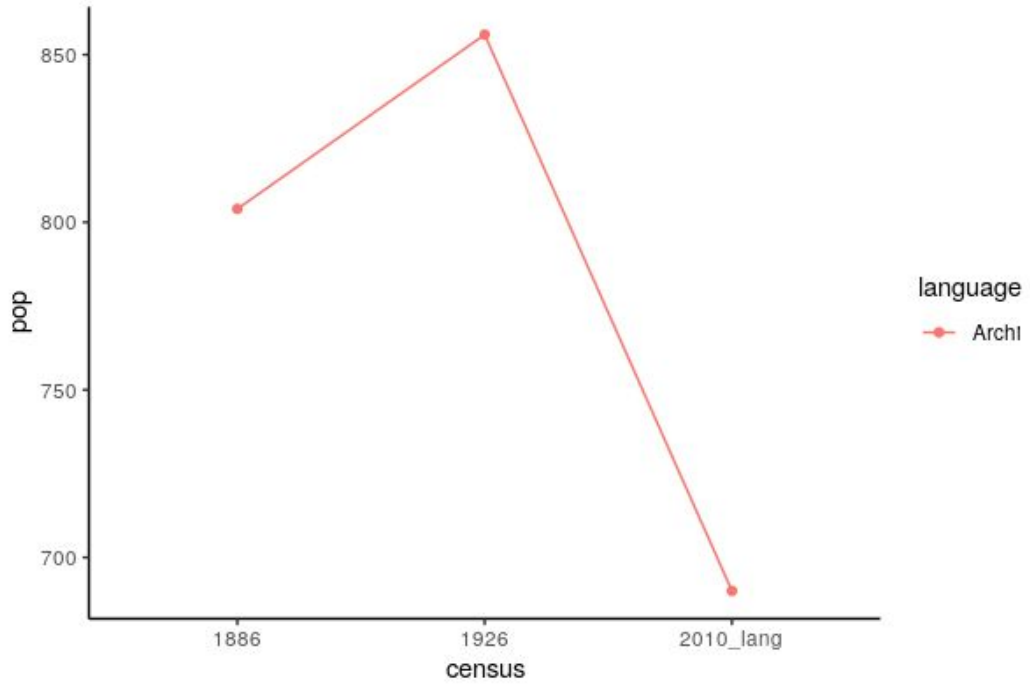
Archi had a steep decline in 2010 (not noticeable here).



Archi

Archi speakers were registered as ethnic Avars after 1926.

Result: 126 Archi in Archib in 1926 became 195 ethnic Avars in 2010, of which 167 had mother tongue Avar and 27 - Archi.

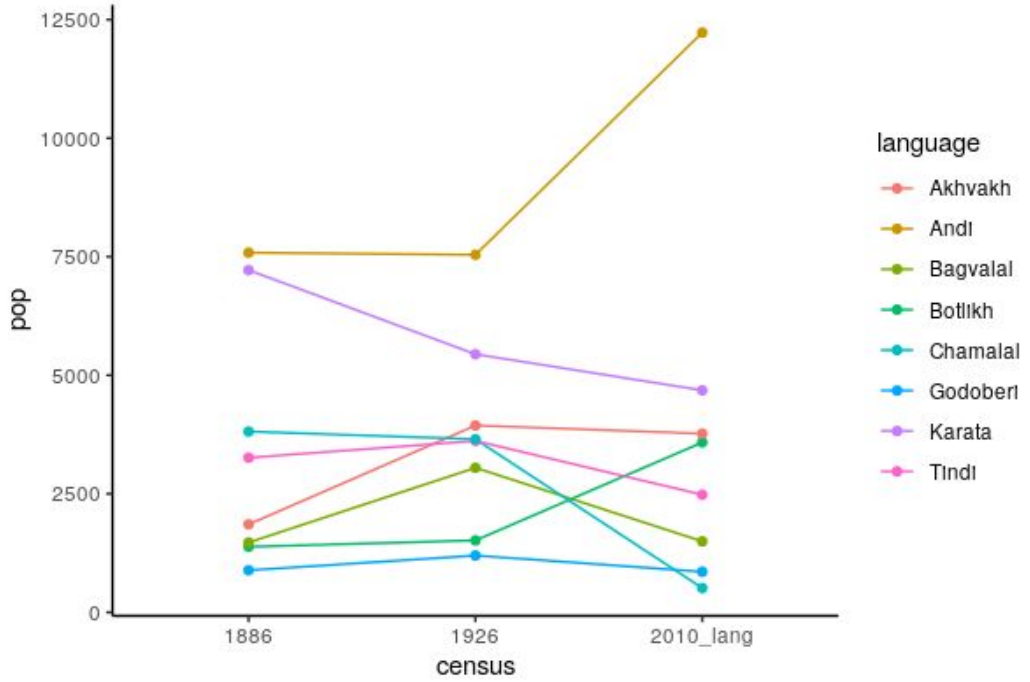


Andic

Steep declines are due to shift in identification.

Chamalal village Nizhnee Gakvari in 1926: 396 Chamalals, in 2010: 492 Avars and 7 persons who did not indicate their nationality + 493 native speakers of Avar.

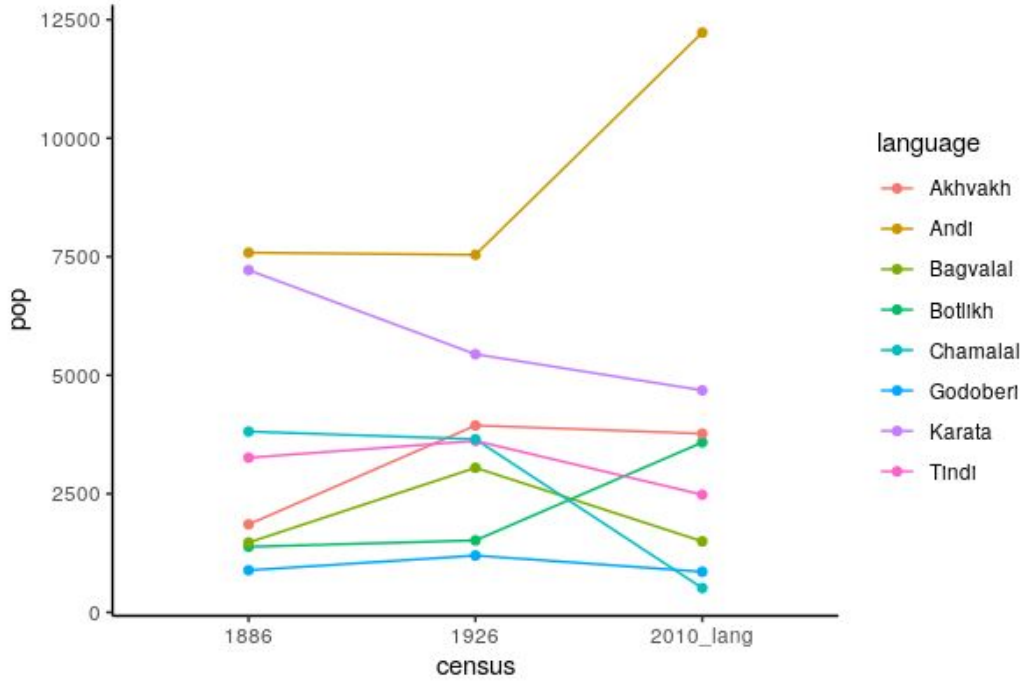
But we know Chamalal is still spoken.



Andic

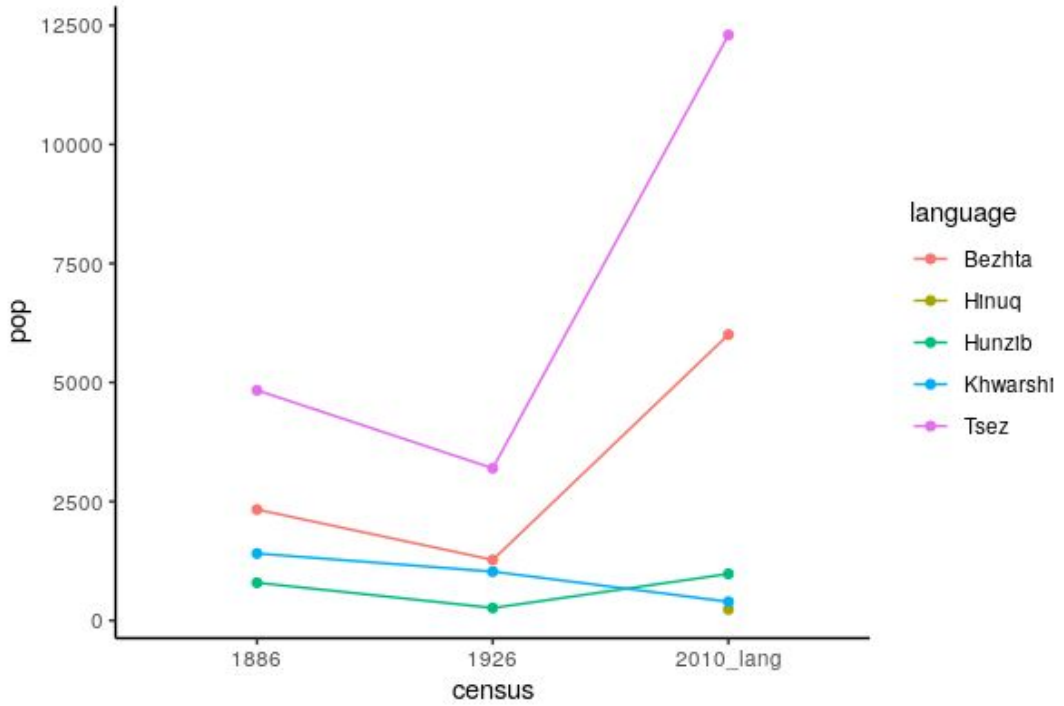
Positive trend lines are likely due to activism of native speakers to raise awareness.

Numbers in 2002 were much worse for all of the Andic languages.



Tsezic

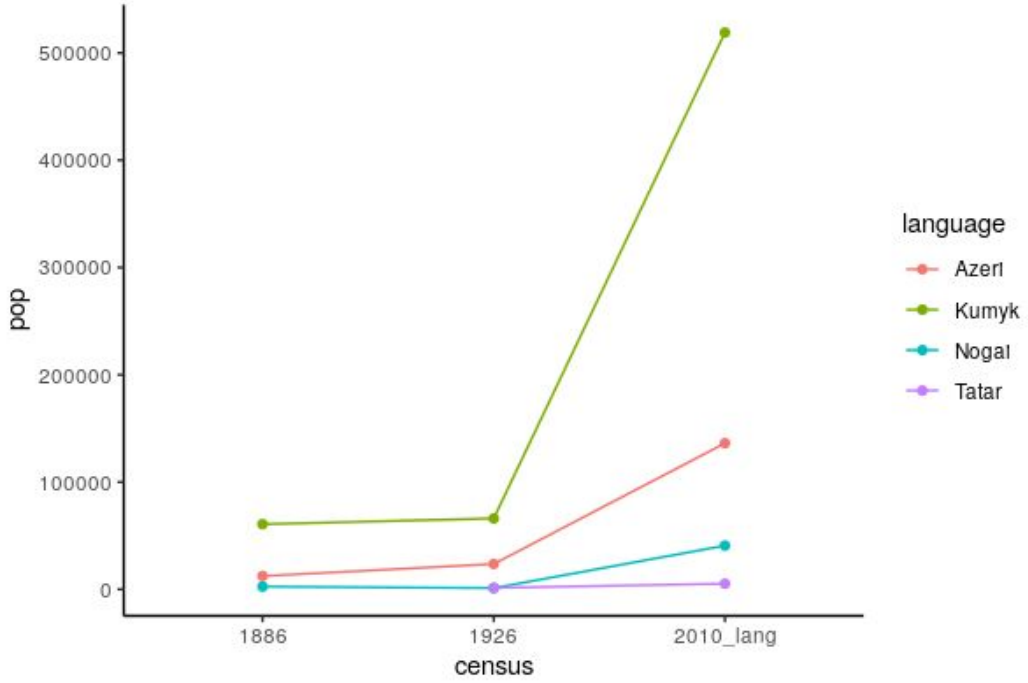
Normal (i.e. positive) trend lines after 1926 are probably due to positive language attitudes, as in the case of Andic languages.



Turkic

Based on mono-ethnic Azeri villages, Azeri were labelled Tatar in 1886, “Turkic” in 1926, and finally Azeri in 2010.

“Real” Tatars (from the Volga area) appeared in towns only in 1926.

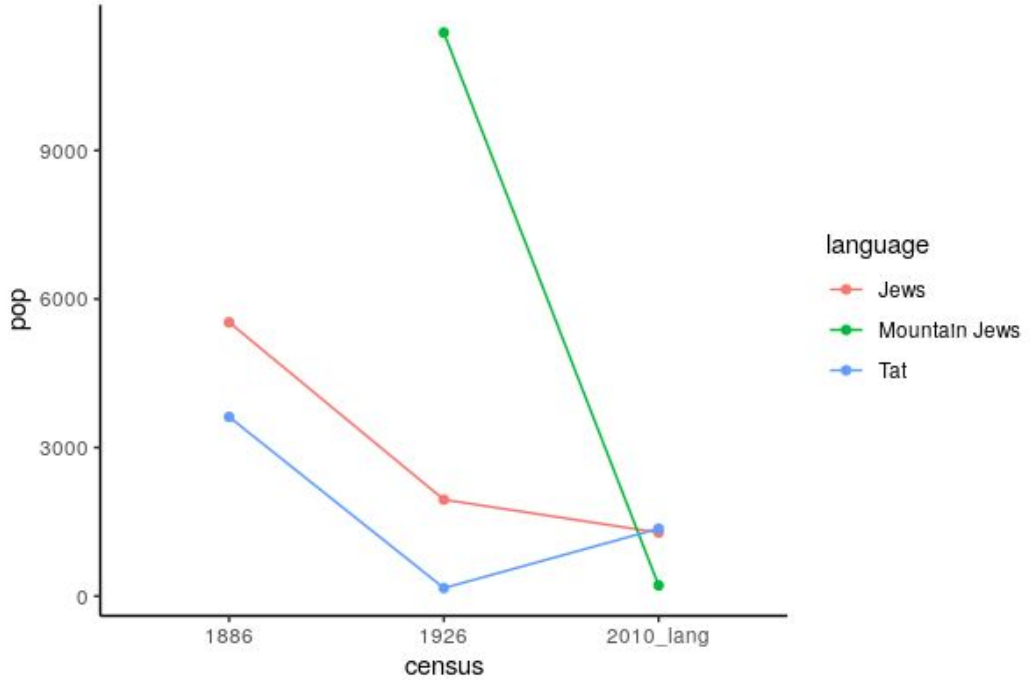


Judeo-Tat

No Mountain Jews in 1886 – counted simply as Jews.

Dramatic decline after 1926. Many relocated to Israel, others started to identify as Tat (Ibragimov 2002: 519).

Village Nyugdi – 1886: 483 Jews and 10 Tatars; 1926: 278 Mountain Jews; 2010: 44 Mountain Jews, 4 Jews + mostly Azeri and Lezgians.

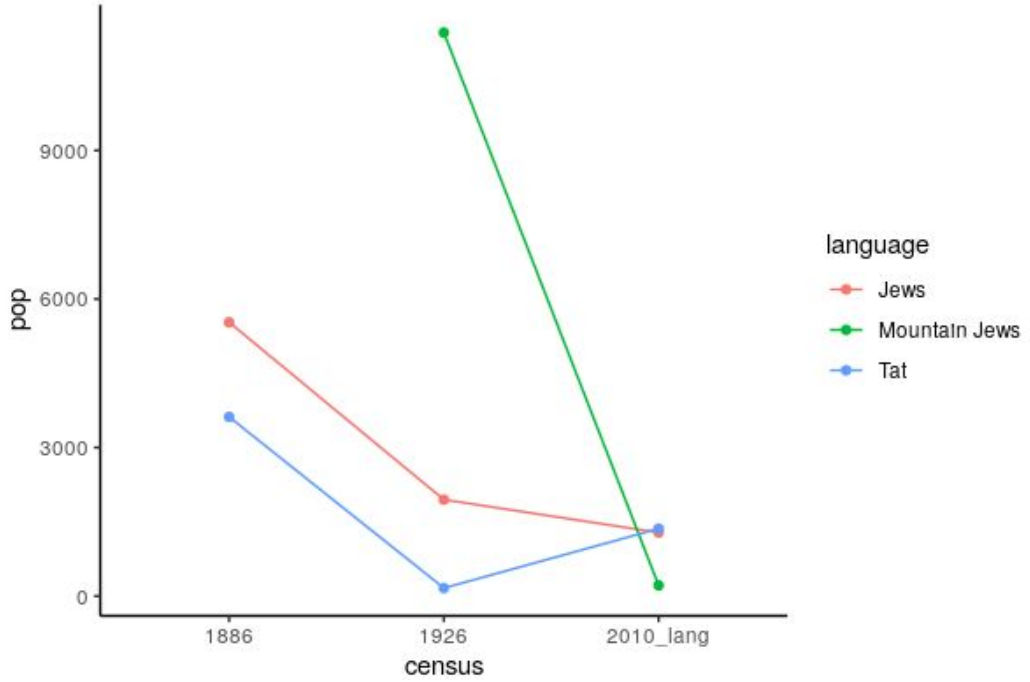


Muslim Tat

Decline in Tat in 1926 is likely due to shift in identification.

For example, the village Mitagi had 769 (Muslim) Tats in 1886, 548 “Turkic” people in 1926, and 644 Azeri in 2010, while Tat is still spoken.

Increase after 1926 likely due to shift in identification of Mountain Jews.



Armeno-Tat

One village in northern Daghestan (Karabagly) shifted from Tat to Armenian (Hakobyan 2009).

These Tat speakers arrived in the area in the XVIII century and ethnically identify as Armenians. This was already the case in the earliest available register data from 1883.

When Soviet schooling was introduced, Armenian was taught as mother tongue.

During a visit to the village in 2021, my consultants did not mention that older generations spoke a different language; the local variety of Armenian reflects possible origins in an area of Northern Azerbaijan where Armeno-Tat was spoken (material on Karabagly).

Persians?

In the 1926 census, 2844 Persians appear, mostly in cities. No Persians were counted in 1885, nor in 1895.

We are not sure how to interpret this.

They are more numerous than immigrants from other countries who appeared for the first time in 1926 (e.g. 1339 Ukrainians); perhaps they were traveling merchants who were there earlier, but were not counted in 1885 due to a different census methodology w.r.t. 1926.

Outside of cities they appear in villages like Tatlyar and Berekei, which were predominantly Azeri both before and after 1926.

Highlands vs. Lowlands

Traditional area

By the time of the Russian conquest of the region, East Caucasian languages occupied the mountainous areas north of the main Caucasus ridge (southern Ingushetia and Chechnya and southwestern Dagestan), and some areas on the southern slope (among Georgians and Azerbaijanis).

Dispersion

East Caucasian languages likely branched out from the historical homeland along rivers and their tributaries and uphill.

(see also Johanna Nichols' 2020 lecture)

Highlands vs. Lowlands

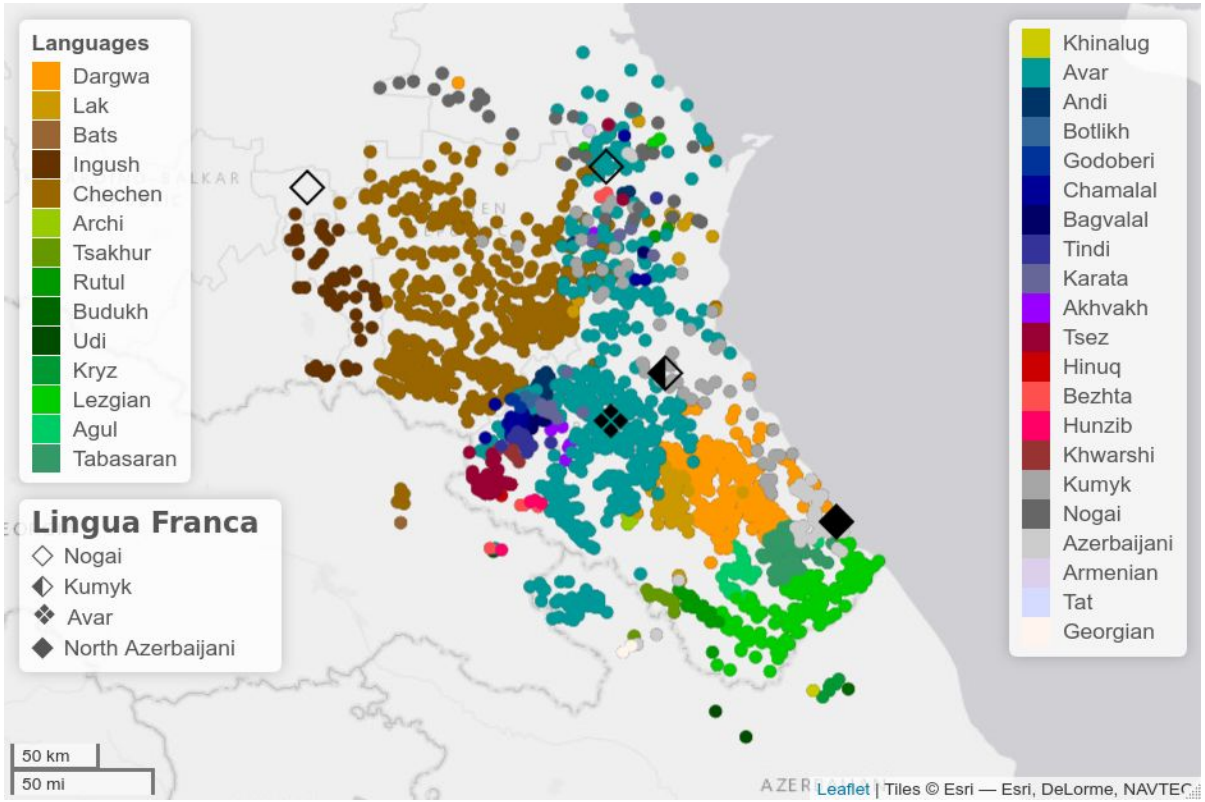
East Caucasians moved uphill despite the more difficult living conditions to stay safe during raids from warring empires.

The lowlands were inhabited later by Turkic people and became economic centers.

Highlanders would temporarily move to the lowlands for trading and seasonal work, and acquire Turkic languages for inter-ethnic communication. In Dagestan it was also common to speak several languages spoken in the more direct neighborhood (see Nina Dobrushina's lecture from 2020).

Market places

Turkic languages were lingua francas in key market places (Wixman 1980: 58-59).



Map created with lingtypology (Moroz 2017) for R.

Language size, altitude, and multilingualism

Mountains are considered retention zones that foster linguistic diversity as well as complexity (Nichols 2013, Urban 2020).

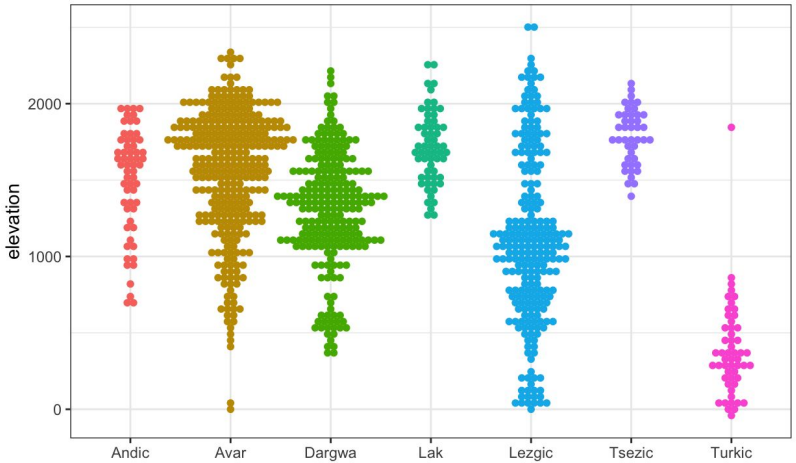
Koshevoy and Daniel (2021) found a correlation between altitude and language size in Dagestan, showing that larger languages in the area are more likely to be spoken in the lowlands, and smaller languages are more likely to be spoken in the highlands.

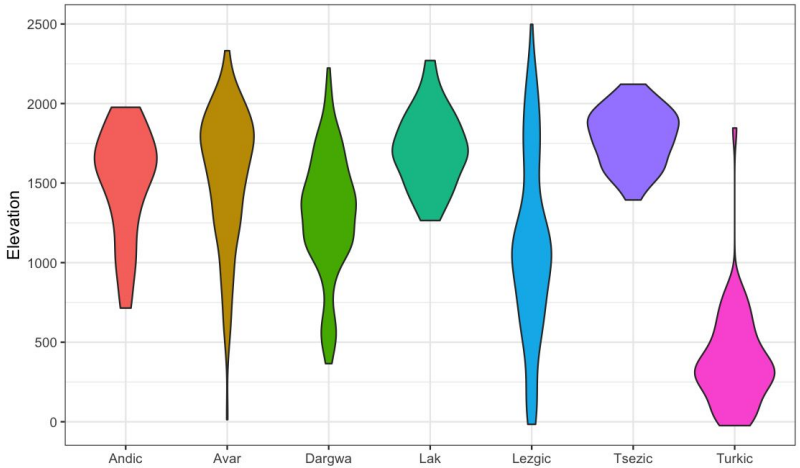
These factors are collinear - both are thought to influence diversity and complexity.

Dobrushina & Moroz (2021) found a correlation between language size and multilingualism: speakers of smaller languages were found to be more multilingual.

Possible implication: larger languages in the area are also more likely to be spoken as L2? Another factor that is known to influence complexity.

Altitude of different genealogical groups





Long tails for East Caucasian groups: downhill migration.

From Koshevoy & Daniel (2021)

Language size, altitude, and multilingualism

Both studies were conducted on Daghestanian data.

Typical of Dagestan is strict village-level endogamy and transhumance of highlanders to the lowlands for seasonal work and trade.

(Nina Dobrushina's 2020 lecture)

Chechen and Ingush practiced strict exogamy and no transhumance.

The respective republics are linguistically homogeneous, and average altitude will be relatively low due to migration to the lowlands.

(Johanna Nichols' 2020 lecture)

Changes in language territory in the XIX and XX century

XIX century

No major shifts occurred in the area during the XIX century.

1. Ingush and Chechen continued to settle the lands to the NW (that had been abandoned by Kabardians) and NE. At the same time some Russian villages appeared in central Ingushetia and adjacent areas of Chechnya.

2. Avar, Dargwa and Lezgi started to slowly settle/move downriver.

XIX century

3. In the 1820s, Tsova-Tush finally resettled from Tusheti to the current area, in Lower Kakheti.

4. The southernmost Lezgic communities (Udi, Rutul, Lezgi) continued to either shift or be displaced by Azerbaijani.

Migration to Turkey

During and right after the Russian conquest of the Caucasus (1850–1870s), many Nakh and some Daghestanians were forced to migrate to the Ottoman Empire (now Turkey). Some of them later returned to Russia.

There are no exact numbers, only estimates:

- Chechen and Ingush – nearly 40,000 (Andrews 1989) –105,000 (Alekseev 2018)
- Daghestanians — c. 7000 (Andrews 1989) — 20,000 (Habichoglu 1993: 93–94)

Among the Daghestanians are speakers of Avar, Andi, Tsez, Lak, Tsudaqar, Kaitag and Lezgi (that we know of).

1900–1944

1. In the 1920s the Chechen and Ingush resettled to some areas previously occupied by Russians (Cossacks), and continued to found new settlements in Northern Dagestan.

2. Other tendencies went on slowly.

3. First Dargwa kutans appeared around Gubden: former Kumyk lands.

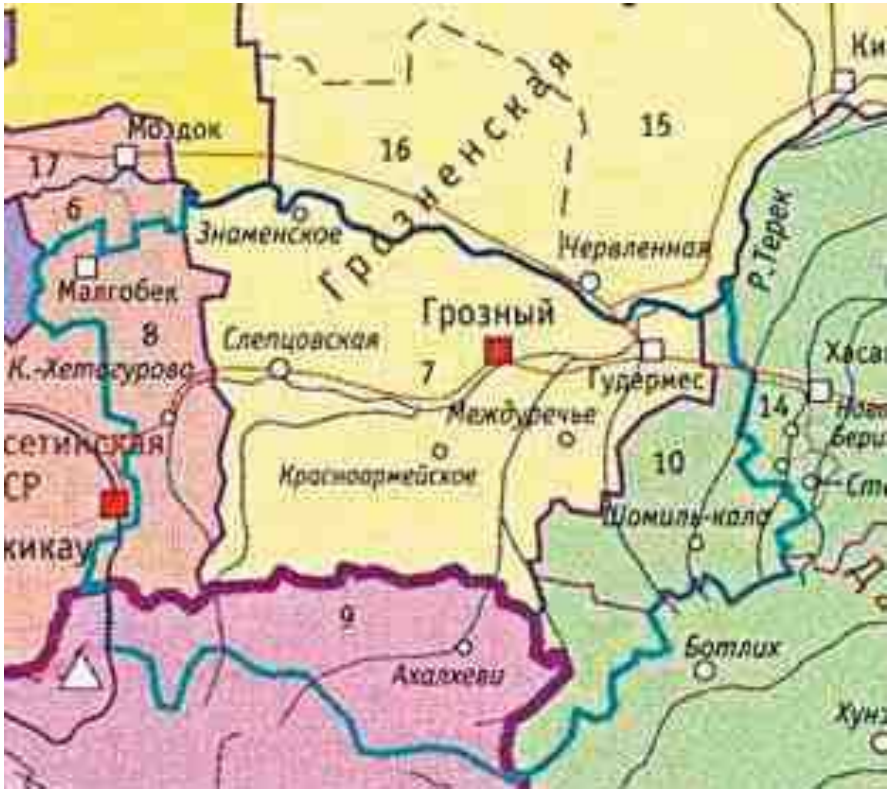
A *kutan* was originally a shepherds' settlement in winter pastures. They were first founded in the 1920s by Avars and Dargins, not far from their original territory.

1944–1957: Deportation of the Chechens and Ingush

In 1944, all **Chechen and Ingush** were deported to Central Asia.

After that the whole population of 114 villages and part of another 110 villages from **Dagestan** were resettled to the Eastern part of Chechnya. More than half of the speakers of Andic and Tsezic and some minor Dargwic languages were moved to these lands.

Different Daghestanian ethnic groups were settled interspersedly. 1/5–1/4 of the new settlers died of malaria and other diseases they were not accustomed to.



Map from Cuciev (1986)

1957-

After 1957, the **Chechen and Ingush** began to return to their lands. This process of gradual return took more than decade.

Southern Ingushetia and southwestern Chechnya were closed for resettlement, so the speakers of local dialects were settled in mixed villages in the plains.

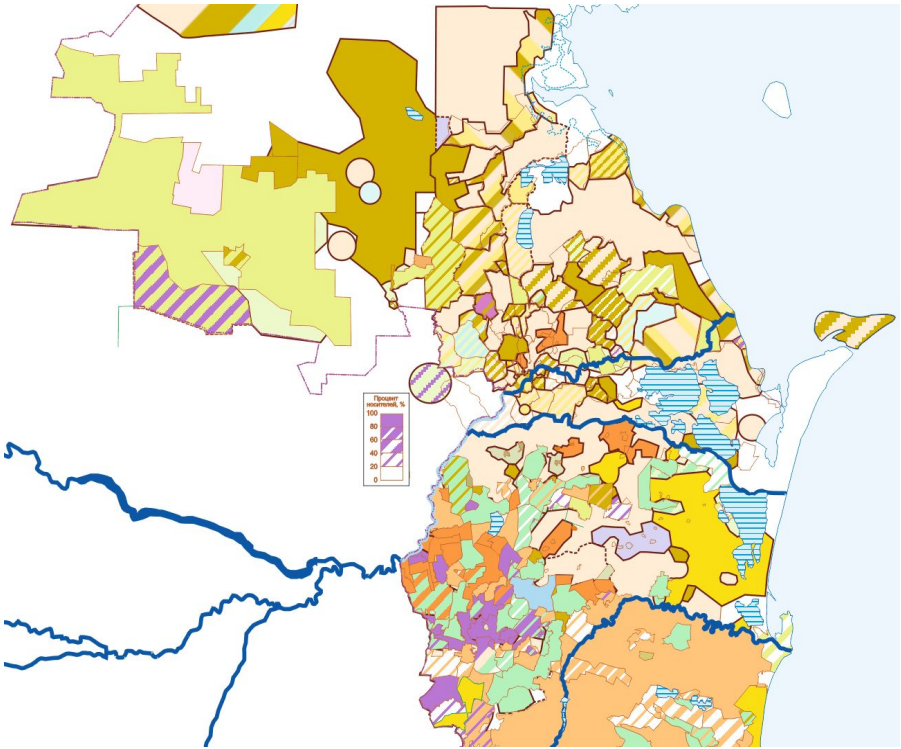
Less than half of the resettled **Dagestanians** returned to their original homes. The rest were resettled once more, this time to Kumyk, Nogai and Russian areas in north-central Dagestan. It was the beginning of a gradual change of the ethno-linguistic profile of Northern Dagestan.

Kutanisation

After WWII, kutan-type settlements appeared further and further to the north, and these new settlements became more permanent.

Some former kutans became officially recognized settlements of the administrative districts from whence their inhabitants resettled.

These former Kumyk and Nogai areas in the north are now populated for the most part by highlanders.

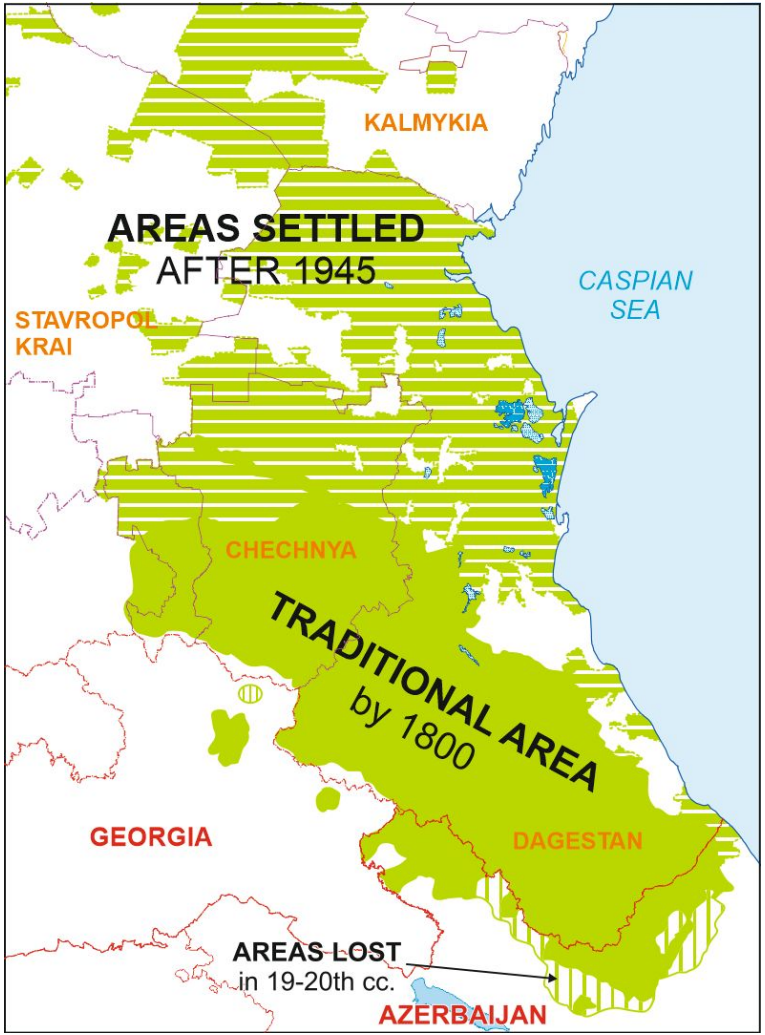


Later expansion

Since the 1970s-1980s Daghestanians (mainly Dargin and Avar) and Chechen started to settle in Stavropolsky krai (former Nogai lands) and Kalmykia.

Northern Chechnya and Ingushetia were largely occupied by Chechen and Ingush in the 1990s, displacing the Russians who lived there.

Since the 1990s many East Caucasians migrated to other regions of Russia: Tyumen, Astrakhan, Rostov oblasts, etc.



The fastest growing family in Russia

East Caucasian is the only language family in Russia which more than doubled its area in the last 100 years.

The number of their speakers increased more than four times. In 1926, they were 867,812 in Russia (948,645 in all USSR), in 2010 – 3,623,124.

Language vitality

Downhill migration

The downhill migration of East Caucasians is altering their distribution and also their language ecologies.

Some villages seem to remain satellites of their original village, but many lowland towns are multiethnic and multilingual, with direct neighbors who are not from the same area.

This facilitates the spread of Russian as a general lingua franca, and the disappearance of traditional patterns of multilingualism.

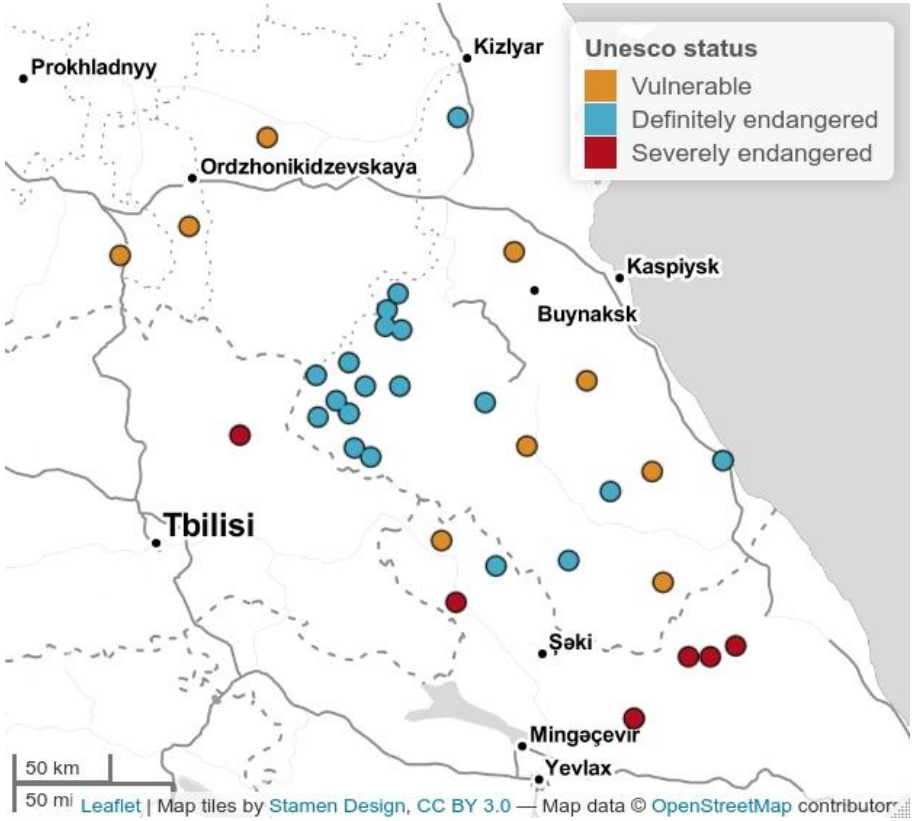
In addition, the area is poorly charted – it is largely unclear who lives where, and to what extent they still speak their original language or dialect.

Vitality

Vulnerable (still spoken by children, but limited domains): all main literary languages.

Definitely endangered (i.e. no longer passed on to children): unwritten and some smaller written languages.

Severely endangered (only grandparents speak it, parents have passive knowledge): single villages at the periphery.

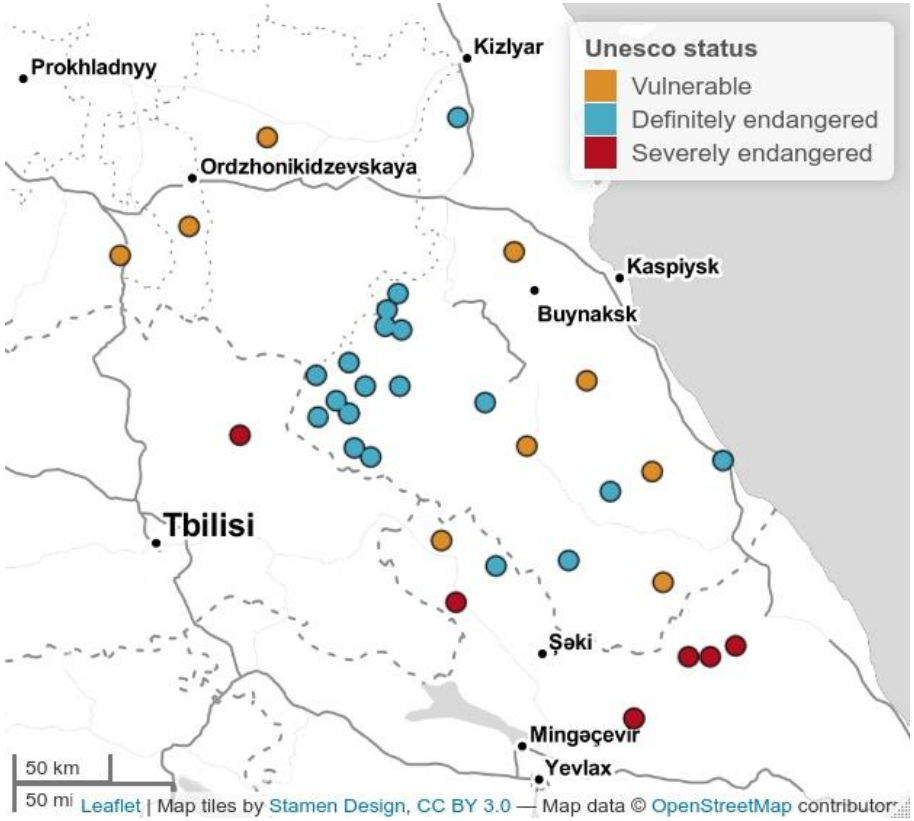


Data from UNESCO Atlas of the world's languages in danger (Moseley 2010); map created with lingtypology (Moroz 2017) for R.

Vitality

30 East Caucasian languages in the Atlas; 1 Dargwa, but Khwarshi and Inkhoqwari.

Some cases might be less dramatic in reality: many children still speak Andic languages, though this is currently changing.



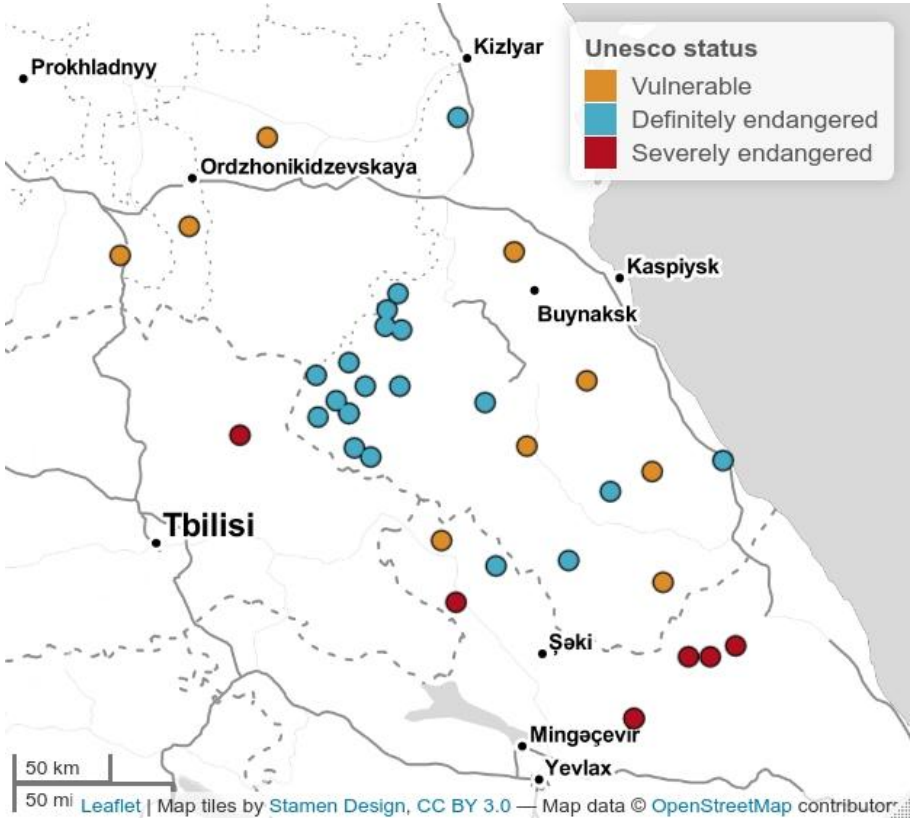
Data from UNESCO Atlas of the world's languages in danger (Moseley 2010); map created with lingtypology (Moroz 2017) for R.

Vitality

Udi is counted twice, one for each republic in which it is threatened, while Lezgian and Avar are counted once.

Communities speaking the same language are not necessarily homogeneous in their attitudes, cf. Clifton et al. (2005b) on Lezgians in Azerbaijan.

Divergent idioms might be disappearing.



Data from UNESCO Atlas of the world's languages in danger (Moseley 2010); map created with lingtypology (Moroz 2017) for R.

Questions

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Unless indicated otherwise, all maps in this presentation were created by Yuri Koryakov.

Graphs and some maps were created with R in R Studio (R Core Team 2018), using the packages lingtypology (Moroz 2017) for creating maps and tidyverse (Wickham 2017) for data manipulation.

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