

An Introduction to the *Atlas of the Araxes Linguistic Area*

The Araxes River (Azeri: *araz*; Persian: *æræs*; Turkish; *aras*) originates in eastern Turkey and borders on Armenia, Iran and Azerbaijan, flows into the Kura and from there into the Caspian Sea. The *Atlas* will in fact cover the linguistic features of a somewhat wider area extending in all directions from the actual Araxes to include the South Caucasus, eastern Turkey, Northern Iraq and Northern Iran. The Linguistic Area involves heavy contact phenomena with shared isoglosses among five different language families, including two genera of Indo-European. The following languages and dialects will be covered in the *Atlas*:

- *KARTVELIAN*: Georgian, Georgian dialects; Laz; Mingrelian;
- *INDO-EUROPEAN*, Armenian: including widely variant dialects with low interintelligibility, e.g., Vaneci, Karabagh, Agulis, Salmas, Tbilisi, colloquial Yerevan, etc.;
- *ALTAIC*: Azerbaijani dialects of Azerbaijan and Iran; peripheral Azerbaijani dialects of west central Iran; Iraqi Turkmen; eastern Turkish dialects, e.g., Erzerum, Van, etc.;
- *SEMITIC*: Neo-Aramaic (a wide range of highly divergent dialects of different Christian and Jewish communities, Kurdistan; multilingual contact situations); Arabic dialects of Turkey, Iraqi Kurdistan;
- *INDO-EUROPEAN*, Iranian: (Northwestern Iranian) N., C., S. Tati, N., C., S. Talyshi, N. Kurdish/Kurmanji (Erzerum, Zakho, Mush, Van, North Azerbaijan, etc.); various C. Kurdish/Sorani-Mukri (Iraq-Iran), Zazaki/Dimli (E. Turkey), Gurani (Iran-Iraq); (Southwestern Iranian) Caucasian Tat, spoken in Muslim and Jewish communities in N. Azerbaijan/Daghestan; colloquial Tehran Persian;
- *NORTHEAST CAUCASIAN*: Udi (outlier with unclear position within the Lezgian group). North Caucasian as well as languages of the above families that are outside the designated areas (e.g., Svan, Ossetic) are excluded for now but may be added in later stages of the project. All data come from published sources but may be supplemented by fieldwork by Stilo in poorly documented languages or on rare features.

The project was initiated in October, 2005 with the ultimate goal of producing a linguistic atlas of shared phonological, grammatical and lexical features in the languages of the designated area in the form of isoglosses drawn onto geographic maps of the area, produced from a Filemaker database designed by Hans-Jörg Bibiko (MPI EVA). Grammatical features will be divided into the domains of morphology and syntax with a separate section also devoted to word order phenomena. To date, I have isolated over 260 features to include in the *Atlas*, but as time progresses this number may be edited down or some features may be replaced by others not listed as yet. The current status of the project is that of a Work-in-Progress and the projected date of completion is 2011.

The maps consist of data points color-coded according to family where value responses (+, ±, -, N/A, etc.) for each of the 260+ features in each language or dialect are entered. Each point is then linked to the database of examples which will be provided in the CD-ROM to accompany the *Atlas*. The hard-copy *Atlas* will show each isogloss map along with an accompanying descriptive text explaining the more general issues of each linguistic feature, providing typical examples of the

typological variety within that particular isogloss or isogloss bundle. The database on the planned CD-ROM will provide additional discussion and multiple examples of each feature for each individual dialect included on the map. Most of these multiple examples will not be furnished with interlinear glossing. However, a certain number of core examples under each category will be specially marked indicating that the user may click on those examples to open a link to pdf files where these examples are given with interlinear glosses and further discussion, where necessary.

During my presentation at the Languages of the Caucasus Conference, I will demonstrate, as a sample, the specific phonological, grammatical and lexical isoglosses listed below. I will present the basic plan of organization of the *Atlas* and accompanying CD-ROM, show sample isogloss maps for the features listed below, and will address some of the results I hope to obtain from the investigation. The talk should be of interest to typologists, to specialists in areal/contact linguistics as well as to linguists working in Altaic, Semitic, Iranian, Caucasian, and Armenian languages.

A List of the Features to be presented at the conference:

Phonological Isoglosses

1. č/c (= ts) distinction (+ phonemic; ± non-phonemic)
2. Three-way distinction in stop series (incl. glottalized or similar: b, pʔ, ph; d, tʔ, th; j, čʔ, čh; etc.)
3. Status of /f/ (+ has /f/ throughout; ± has /f/ in loanwords; - lacks /f/)
4. Initial consonant clusters (no transition vowels)
5. At least one front rounded vowel (ü, ö)
6. Back unrounded vowel (i/ɯ)
7. Final stress (in bare stems devoid of inflectional morphology)

Grammatical Isoglosses

8. Singular after numbers and quantifiers
9. Classifiers occur between numeral and noun ("3 books" = "3 seed book")
10. Possessive pronoun is an oblique form encliticized to noun
11. Possessive pronoun is an independent form that precedes head noun
(including discussion of Buffer Zone phenomena where both #10 and #11 are in effect simultaneously)
12. Periphrastic present/progressive formed with copula
13. "Want" requires subjunctive of subordinate verb (- implies use of infinitive)
14. "Want" precedes subordinate verb (want-go)
15. Passive formed: + morphologically/synthetically; - with light verb)
16. Differential Accusative Marking: only specific (± animate) objects marked
17. (TEMP)-X-Onon-specific-V (+ this order most common; - other order)
18. (TEMP)-Ospecific-X-V (+ this order most common; - other order)

Lexical Domain (Calques, Wanderwörter, Iosemies, corresponding Polysemies, etc.)

19. "Girl/daughter" are distinguished
20. "Boy/son" are distinguished
21. "Cat" is the same root as English "cat" (qatu, kʔatʔa, kalégæ, etc.)
22. "Want" and "must" are the same verb (maybe different case marking on noun)
23. "Very" = "very (adj)", "much/many (noun)", "(verb) much" (same word for three environments)
24. Of a list of 50 verbs, how many are simplex roots, how many are light verb constructions?