
Kalistavi Constructed Language

CONTENTS

1. Introduction
2. Phonetics and phonology
3. Morphology
4. Syntax
5. Semantics / Lexicon
6. Sociolinguistic Context
7. Conclusion
8. Appendix

1. Introduction

This grammar provides an overview of the *Kalistavi* constructed language. *All of the following work is entirely fictional.*

1.1 Name of the Language

Kalistavi ([kaliʃtavi]) has some relation to the word 'rock' in Georgian. The sound symbolism is meant to symbolize rocks and tough objects.

1.2 Location

The *Kalistavi* tribe is located in Stone Mountain in Georgia. Deep within the rugged peaks of an ancient mountain range lies a community of people who have carved out their existence in the heart of the earth. The Cave Dwellers live in a network of interconnected caves and tunnels, each one carefully constructed and fortified against the elements. These caves serve as their homes, their shelters, and their gathering places. Lit by torches and warmed by fires, the caverns echo with the sounds of life.

1.3 Speaker Population

Linguists hypothesize that *Kalistavi* may slowly die out, as speakers of this language have gradually shifted to Georgian due to its similarity to *Kalistavi* and its popularity. There are approximately 500 elderly speakers remaining. Many linguists have taken an interest

in Kalistavi due to its rarity and are spreading awareness about the dying language.

1.3.1 Culture

The main gods in the culture (*Litsa*) are a loose hierarchy of superhuman beings that inhabit the sky, rivers and water holes, caves, and dense bushlands. They control the climate and the land and affect fertility in both soil and livestock. They can cause a variety of illnesses and misfortunes in humans, including death, and are constantly and capriciously active in human affairs. The originating *litsa* of the Kalistavi and their neighbors are generally less malevolent than others, and all *litsa* can to some extent be placated and persuaded to desist from causing harm. Sometimes they can be tricked or warded off, and it is even possible to manipulate some of them and harness the powers that they possess. The *Litsada* are less powerful than *litsa*, but still more powerful than humans. The *litsada* are commonly referred to as the ghosts of the dead. These, too, are active in human affairs, male ghosts being benevolent and protective towards their descendants, while female ghosts are invariably spiteful and malevolent to all except their offspring.

1.3.2 Language use

Speakers of Kalistavi are first introduced to Kalistavi before Georgian; therefore children most often speak Kalistavi. However, later in their life, inhabitants have tasks to complete which involves them leaving their homes. Outside of their home, speakers transition to Georgian to make communication with outsiders more efficient. Inhabitants are fluent in both Kalistavi and Georgian.

1.4 Language Genealogy

1.4.1 Language Family

Georgian is Kartvelian. Kalistavi is believed to be a distant relative.

1.4.2 Borrowings

Kalistavi shares many cognates with the the Georgian language, as seen in Table 1.

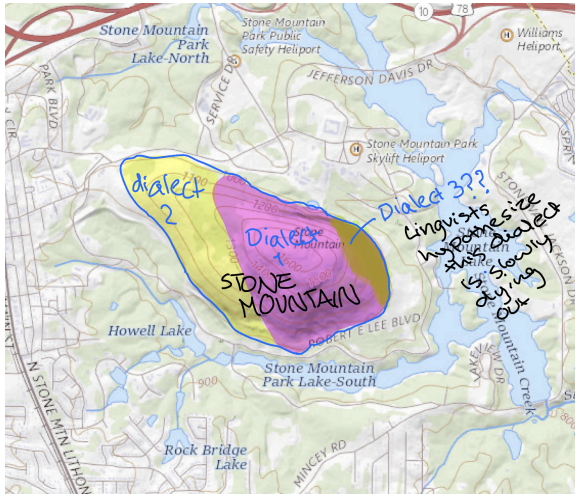
Table 1: Cognates between Georgian and Kalistavi

| | | |
|---------|--|---------------------|
| Meaning | Georgian | Kalistavi |
| Rock | 'კლდე' [k'ldɛ] | 'keli' [kali] |
| Wear | 'აცვიათ' [ats ^h viat ^h] | 'brasvia' [brʌsvia] |
| House | 'სახლი' [saxli] | 'salik' [salix] |

1.5 Dialects

Linguists have observed two main dialects of Kalistavi: a Northern Dialect and a Southern dialect. Speakers of the Southern Dialects occasionally replace the 'l' sound with a 'd', while the Northern Dialect tends to have a little bit of trouble pronouncing the 'dz' affricate. Occasionally the tone varies unpredictably, however, the meaning can still be derived from context. The Northern Dialect has significantly more speakers than the Southern Dialect. The speakers located at the intersection of the two dialects have varying interpretations. Linguists have observed that some speakers in a concentrated location of Stone Mountain have an antepenultimate stress pattern for longer words and initials for disyllables. Linguists hypothesize that this was borrowed from Georgian and this supposed dialect may slowly die out due to its unfrequented use.

Figure 1: Map of Northern and Southern Kalistavi dialects



2. Phonetics and Phonology

2.1 Consonant Inventory

The phonemic consonants of Kalistavi are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Consonant Inventory of Kalistavi

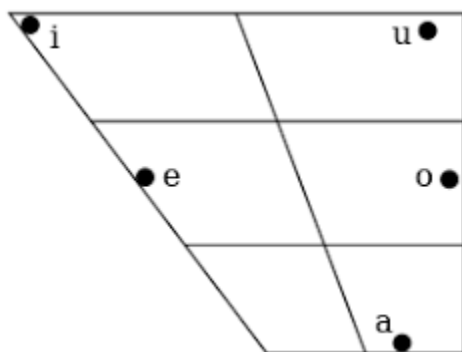
| | Bilabial | Labiodental | alveolar | Palatal | Postalveolar | Velar |
|----------------------------|----------------|-------------|----------------|---------|--------------|-------|
| Plosive | b | | d t | | | k |
| Affricate | | | ts dz | | | |
| Nasal (palatalize d) | m ^j | | n ^j | | | |
| Trill | | | r | | | |
| Fricative | | v | s | | ʃ ʒ | x |
| Lateral Approximant | | | l | | | |

Notable are gaps in voicing for stops and fricatives. For stops, there are gaps in voicing at the bilabial and velar places of articulation. For fricatives, gaps in voicing are observed at the velar, alveolar, and labiodental places of articulation. Gaps in voicing of this type are cross-linguistically rare and are observed in only 3 other languages, Ket, Efik, and Una (Maddieson, 2013).

2.2 Vowel Inventory

Kalistavi has 5 phonemic vowels [a, e, i, u, o]. Systems of this type are cross-linguistically common. Sounds θ , and ϵ are derived from phonological rules. (See 2.5)

Figure 2: Vowel Inventory of Kalistavi



2.3 Other Features

2.3.1 Tone

Kalistavi is a very heavily tonal language.

Examples of tone contrasts include:

mountain = [vi`nɔ̃ɛ] (low tone on [i])

sun= [vi' nɔ̃ɛ] (high tone on [i])

2.3.2 Stress

Kalistavi has predictable penultimate stress, regardless of affixation. This pattern is found in other languages like Polish, Irish and Swahili. Kalistavi also has Secondary stress on the first syllable. For monosyllabic words, however, stress is nonexistent.

Examples of this stress pattern include:

`mountain' [ˈvi`nɔ̃ɛ]

cave = [kɑ.li.ˈdu.vɑ]

2.4 Syllable structure

Allowable syllables in Kalistavi are CV, CVC, CCV, CCVC, CCCC. Kalistavi prefers no V beginnings.

2.5 Phonotactic Constraints

Kalistavi disallows several structures. Kalistavi prohibits two adjacent affricates. In situations where there are two adjacent affricates underlyingly, a schwa is inserted between them. Kalistavi prohibits a set of two or more vowels when any vowel within that set is a 'u'. When this is the case, the first available set of two vowels that contains a 'u' is converted to an ɛ.

Examples of these constraints include:

shadzd -> [ʃdzədz]

jabeu -> [ʒɑbɛ]

2.6 Phonological Rules

Kalistavi has several segmental allophonic variations, seen in Table 3. The following are obligatory phonological rules.

Table 3

| Rule | Example |
|---|--------------------------|
| /r/ becomes [r̥] after [b] | Walk = brada[bɾ̥ada] |
| /j/ becomes [ʒ] | Sleepwalk = javra[ʒavɾa] |
| [ʃ] is added when word ends with a /u/ | Boat = miuu[mjuʃ] |
| /k/ at the end of a sentence becomes an [x] | House = salik[salix] |

3. Morphology

3.1 Introduction

Kalistavi is a fusional language where several grammatical features may be represented in one morpheme.

3.2 Verb Morphology

3.2.1 Person

Person is marked using verb suffixes as seen below. Second and third-person use overt markings for both singular and plural, while the first-person singular is marked with a null morpheme.

I (1sg) = ∅
 You (2sg) = + du
 You all (2pl) = + vɔl
 He/she/it (3sg) = + lu
 We (1pl) = + bɔl
 they (3pl) = + stɔl

3.2.2 Number

In Kalistavi, plural verbs do not exist as they can be derived from context.

3.2.3 Tense

Basic tenses are formed using prefixes.

nʝɛ (prefix) = Past Tense
 mʝɛ (prefix) = Future Tense
 use verb root/infinitive = Present Tense

3.2.4 Aspect

In Kalistavi, the progressive form is denoted by adding a -in immediately after the verb.

The perfective form is often marked using the -ib suffixes on verbs.

| | Progressive | Perfective |
|----------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Walk = brada[bɭada] | bradain[bɭadain] | bradaib[bɭadaib] |
| Talk = lej[lɛʝ] | lejin[lɛʝin] | lejib[lɛʝib] |
| Sleep = jabra[ʒabɭa] | jabrain[ʒabɭain] | jabraib[ʒabɭaib] |

3.2.5 Mood

In Kalistavi, the indicative form is often inferred.

In Kalistavi, the subjunctive form is denoted through if - then statements meaning the prepositions if and then will be inserted in their appropriate positions.

3.2.6 Passivization

Passive marker - 'ixi' after all other affixes

3.2.7 Negation

Kalistavi has two negation morphemes, [-bɛk] which negates the verb and [-bɛʃk] which negates a noun (See 3.3.4)

Word meaning "negation" = (to appear after the verb)

| | |
|------|----------|
| Word | Negation |
|------|----------|

| | |
|-----------------|------------------------|
| lej[lɛʒ] | lejbeuk[lejbɛk] |
| shadzdz[ʃdzədz] | shadzdzbeuk[ʃdzədzbɛk] |

3.2.8 Affix Ordering

verbs = (TENSE)+ROOT+(negation)+(PERSON/NUMBER)

| Phrase | Translation |
|-------------|----------------------|
| To not play | ∅+shadzdz+beuk |
| Ran | n ^ɨ ɛ+bra |

3.3 Noun Morphology

3.3.1 Pluralization

In Kalistavi, pluralization is denoted by the be[bɛ] suffix. This rule has no conditions to change

3.3.2 Adpositions

Kalistavi's adpositions are prepositions.

[ix-] = with

[ax-] = of/by

[ox-] = at/in/on

[əx-] = to

| Prepositional Phrase | Translation |
|----------------------|---------------------|
| To the house | ex[əx]+salik[salix] |
| With the baby | ix[ix]+jada[ʒada] |

3.3.3 Possessives

Kalistavi denotes possessives by adding the suffix -va onto a pronoun. For example: You (2sg) = + du will become + duva

Noun + plural marker + possessive pronoun

3.3.4 Negation

In Kalistavi the suffix [-bɛʃk] denotes not + noun

| Word | Not + Word |
|-----------------------|------------|
| Water = duvra[duvrɑ] | besjkduvra |
| symbol = lenie[lɛnʲɛ] | besjklenie |

3.3.5 Articles

Kalistavi has no articles. Linguists suggest this feature was borrowed from Georgian

3.3.6 Conjunctions

Kalistavi has only three main conjunctions. All other conjunctions are displayed in other forms.

skɑl[skal] = but

Tal[tal] = and

Lai[lai] = or

3.3.4 Diminutive

Kalistavi expresses diminutives using the + da suffix.

3.3.5 Affix Ordering

Kalistavi uses the following affix orders:

Nouns = NOUN +(PLURALIZATION)+(POSSESSIVE)

Noun Phrases = (NUMERALS)+ (ADJ) + NOUN +(PLURALIZATION)+(POSSESSIVE)

Prepositional Phrases = PREPOSITION + NOUN PHRASE

Kalistavi is more forgiving with affix rearrangement, however this is the most commonly used arrangement.

5. Syntax

5.1 Basic word order

Kalistavi uses a VSO word order.

5.3 Questions

Kesjta[keʃta] - where

Kejta[keʒta] - why

Kesja[keʃa] - When

Keja[keʒa] - What

Sesja[seʃa] - Who

In Kalistavi, questions always go at the very beginning of the sentence

5.4 Commands

Commands are expressed by adding - dux at the end of a sentence.

6. Semantics/lexicon

6.1 Wordlist of Basic Vocabulary

Person = ʒa

house/home = rinie[riɲe]

light (N) = vranie[vranje]

dark (N) = vranieda[vranjeda]

boat = miuu[mjuʃ]

Raft = miiuuda[mjeuda]

family = jabeu [ʒabɛ]

Walk = brada[bɫada]

Run = bra[bɫa]

Sleep = jabra[ʒabɫa]

Sleepwalk = javra[ʒavɫa]

Eat = vatsdz[vatsɔdz]

Talk/speak = lej[lɛʒ]

Play = shadzdz[ʃdzɔdz]

Give = ʒvox

Have = ʃvox

Come = ʃvəx
Bring = ʒvəx
understand = nʲestav
fall = ʒub
climb= ʒub bɛʃk
investigate= vɔluv
teach
live

Nouns:

language = mʲenʲxɛk
Hill = vinʲɛda
Food = dubɾɑ
Water = duvɾɑ
Baby= ʒɑɑɑ
village/tribe = ɾinʲebɛ
heart/center = kɔlistɑ
symbol = lɛnʲɛ
cave = kɔliduvɑ

6.2 Loanwords

foreign = nix
nonforeign = ∅

6.3 Numerals

0 = dox[dox]
1 = kotox[kotox]
2 = deu[dɛ]
3 = leu[lɛ]
4 = mieu[mʲɛ]
5 = nieu[nʲɛ]
6 = sjeu[ʃɛ]
7 = jeu[ʒɛ]
8 = keu[kɛ]
9 = kox[kox]
10 = sox[sox]

For numbers greater than 10 you would start with the number first place to the right and list it then you would write the number one place to the left (except 0) then go one more place to the left and put the number followed by a "sox" after it to symbolize 10. The number the next place to the left would have the number followed by a "soxi" and then the number after that would be the number followed by a "soxe" and so on.

Any number in the (blank) place would be...
10s place - nothing

100s place - soxi
1000s place - soxE
10000s place - soxo

Kalistavi does not use any numbers after this and generally only uses numbers with one-digit

Example: 1029 - kotoxdesoxkoxsoxi

Example: 11 - kotoxkotoxsox

Example: 12 - dekotoxsox

6.4 Kinship terms

Mother - bErs

Father -

6.5 Metaphors, idioms, expressions, etc.

7.0 Sociolinguistic context

Appendix A

I sleep in your houses

ʒabrɑ+Ø ox+rɪnʝe+bE+duva
sleep.1sg in.HOUSE.PL.2sgPOSS

I slept in your houses

nʝe+ʒabrɑ+Ø ox+rɪnʝe+bE+duva
PAST.SLEEP.1sg in.HOUSE.PL.2sgPOSS

I walked on the tall mountain.

nʝe+brɑdɑ+Ø ox stɑbrɑ vɪnʝe
PAST.walk.1sg on tall mountain

I found a cave with symbols.

nʝe+baluvə+Ø kotox kɑlɪduvɑ ux+ lɛnʝe+bE
PAST.find.1sg one cave with.symbol.PL

I investigated the symbols in the cave.

nʝe+valuv+Ø lɛnʝe+bE ox+kɑlɪduvɑ
PAST.investigate.1sg symbol.PL in the cave4.

I fell into the heart of the mountain.

nʝe+ʒub+Ø ox+kɑlɪstɑ ɑx+vɪnʝe
PAST.fall.1sg in the heart of the mountain.

I was greeted by a friendly tribe.

ixi nʝe+koixtə+Ø ax vitə rɪnʝebe
PASS PAST.greet.1sg by friendly tribe

I will sleep in your houses

mʲɛ+ʒabra+Ø ox+ʃinʲe+bɛ+duva
FUTURE.SLEEP.1sg in.HOUSE.PL.2sgPOSS

Small babies played with food.

nʲɛ+ʃbə+stal stɑbrɑɑ ʒɑɑ+bɛ ux+dubrɑ
past.play.3pl small baby.pl with food

Three small babies played with food.

nʲɛ+ʃbə+stal THREE stɑbrɑɑ ʒɑɑ+bɛ ux+dubrɑ
past.play.3pl THREE small baby.pl with food

I walked on the tall mountain.

nʲɛ+brɑɑ+Ø ox stɑbrɑ vinʲe
PAST.walk.1sg on tall mountain

I found a cave with symbols.

nʲɛ+baluvə+Ø kotox kɑliduvɑ ux+ lɛnʲe+bɛ
PAST.find.1sg one cave with.symbol.PL

I investigated the symbols in the cave.

nʲɛ+valuv+Ø lɛnʲe+bɛ ox+kɑliduvɑ
PAST.investigate.1sg symbol.PL in the cave

I fell into the heart of the mountain.

nʲɛ+ʒub+Ø ox+kɑlistɑ ɑx+vinʲe
PAST.fall.1sg in the heart of the mountain.

I was greeted by a friendly tribe.

ixi nʲɛ+koixtə+Ø ax vitə ʃinʲebe
PASS PAST.greet.1sg by friendly tribe