

The Sociolinguistic Situation of the Inghiloi of Azerbaijan

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Abstract

This paper presents the results of sociolinguistic research conducted among the Inghiloi people living in northwestern Azerbaijan. Inghiloi is a dialect of Georgian spoken in Azerbaijan. The goals of the research were to investigate patterns of proficiency and language use in the Inghiloi language in the Inghiloi community. Special attention was paid to developing a typology of individuals and families based on patterns of proficiency and language use. Interviews and questionnaires were employed.*

1. Introduction

The speech variety that is often referred to as Inghiloi is a dialect of Georgian (Gambashidze 1947; Giginvshvili 1961; Djangidze 1978). As such it belongs to the Kartvelian branch of the Caucasian language family. There are two subdialects of the language, northern and southern. The northern subdialect is spoken in the northwestern districts of Zaqatala and Balakən. Speakers of this subdialect are primarily Muslim, having converted from Georgian Orthodox in the seventeenth century. The southern subdialect is spoken in the northwestern district of Qax. Speakers of this subdialect are primarily Georgian Orthodox.

In Soviet linguistics it was general practice to refer to the northern subdialect as the Əliabad subdialect and the southern as the Kax subdialect (Molla-zade 1966; Djangidze 1978). These designations were based on the fact that Əliabad is the largest town in which the northern subdialect is spoken, while Qax is the district in which the vast majority of speakers of the southern subdialect live. The designation Inghiloi was used to refer collectively to the two subdialects.

During our research, we were told that not all speakers of the dialect accept the designation Inghiloi. While speakers of the northern subdialect refer to themselves as Inghiloi, a majority of speakers of the southern subdialect refer to their language and ethnicity as Yereti Georgian.¹ Speakers of both subdialects do recognize, however, that they speak a single dialect. For the purposes of this paper, the term Inghiloi will be used only in reference to the northern subdialect. Because there is no single term favored by both groups, we refer to the two groups together as Yereti-Inghiloi.

There are three communities in the district of Zaqatala and one in the district of Balakən where speakers of Inghiloi live. The town of Əliabad in Zaqatala is the largest of these communities and is considered to be the center of the Inghiloi-speaking area. The villages of Mosul in Zaqatala and Ititala in Balakən are the only other homogeneously Inghiloi communities. The village of Yengiyān in Zaqatala is a mixed location where only a small percentage of individuals in the village are Inghiloi. Approximately 15,000 Inghiloi live in these four locations. In addition to these communities, Inghiloi also live in the town of Zaqatala and in the national capital of Baku.

This report presents the results of research conducted among the Inghiloi. The primary purpose of the research was to construct a descriptive sociolinguistic typology of individuals. This typology focuses on four particular aspects of sociolinguistic behavior among the Inghiloi:

1. Levels of language proficiency in the Inghiloi, Georgian, Russian, and Azerbaijani languages,
2. Patterns of language use of the Inghiloi, Georgian, Russian, and Azerbaijani languages in physical, functional, and interpersonal domains,
3. The perceived benefits of the Inghiloi, Georgian, Russian, and Azerbaijani languages, and
4. Attitudes towards the development and use of materials in the Inghiloi language.

The following presuppositions and resulting hypotheses shaped our research.

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¹According to Tolstova, Levintina, and Chebokrasova (1960), the region in which the Inghiloi live was part of the Georgian province of Ereti until 1921 when it became part of the Azerbaijani Soviet Socialist Republic. The term Yereti Georgian originates from the association that individuals make to this historical toponym.

- A. Certain key elements of an individual's environment have the potential to affect levels of proficiency, patterns of language use and the perceived benefits of each language. The following research hypotheses are related to this presupposition.
1. Significant typological differences would be revealed between individuals living in more urban areas such as Zaqatala and those living in villages or towns. Individuals in urban areas would be less oriented towards Inghiloi in their attitudes and patterns of language use.
 2. Individuals who have had or are currently receiving education in a particular language would be more likely than others to (a) have a higher proficiency in the given language, (b) have positive attitudes towards the language, including a high perception of its benefit for a range of purposes, and (c) use it in various domains.
 3. An individual's home language would be expected to be the most important factor in defining their sociolinguistic type. An individual who uses a particular language at home would be more likely than others to (a) have a higher proficiency in the given language, (b) have positive attitudes towards the language, including a high perception of its benefit for a range of purposes, and (c) use it in various domains.
- B. Various aspects of an individual's sociolinguistic context were expected to interact:
4. It would be possible to describe a majority of individuals in any given location as members of one or two types.
 5. Extremes in language proficiency levels would be closely tied to language-use patterns.
 6. Extremes in attitudes towards a language and the perception of its benefits would be closely tied to language use. Those with neutral or negative attitudes towards a language would be less likely to use it. Likewise, those with positive attitudes towards a language would be more likely to use it.
- C. Sociolinguistic characteristics of individuals were also expected to play a role:
7. Older individuals would be much more likely to have high levels of proficiency in Inghiloi, to have positive attitudes towards its use and to actually use it more.
 8. Women would be much more likely to have high levels of proficiency in Inghiloi, to have positive attitudes towards its use and to actually use it more.

2. Methodology

The information presented in this report was gathered from individuals on the basis of a set of four questionnaires. The first questionnaire was used with specialists studying minority groups, while the other three questionnaires were designed for use with individuals in the context of the family.

Specialists were asked to share information concerning minority communities with which they were familiar or had personal contact. They were asked specifically for information on population figures, geography, economics, language use, schooling, migration patterns, social contact, and literacy in these communities.

Individuals in a family were asked to give a linguistic profile of themselves including information on (a) their proficiency in the Azerbaijani, Russian, and Inghiloi languages; (b) their patterns of language use in physical, functional, and interpersonal domains; (c) their perception of the benefits of the Azerbaijani, Russian, and Inghiloi languages; and (d) their experiences and attitudes concerning literacy, media and education as they relate to the Azerbaijani, Russian, and Inghiloi languages.

Once individuals had shared this information, they were asked to identify how typical they felt they were when compared to (a) other Inghiloi individuals of their age and gender, (b) individuals in their immediate family, (c) individuals in the community(s) of which they feel a part, and (d) other Inghiloi individuals in general.

Finally, they were asked, both individually and as a family, to identify how typical they felt their family as a whole was in their linguistic profiles when compared to (a) other families in the community(s) of which they feel a part and (b) families in general within their ethnic group. As a follow up to this last comparison, individuals and families were asked to describe any individuals or families of which they were aware or with whom they had contact who were not typical of (a) the community(s) in which they (the other individual or family) were a part of or (b) their ethnic group in general. They were then asked to comment on the reasons for this nontypicality.

After the family-oriented questionnaires were used to elicit linguistic profiles from individuals and families on themselves, they were also used to elicit linguistic profiles from individuals and families on others. This resulted in secondhand and sometimes thirdhand linguistic profiles. Secondhand linguistic profiles were those given by an individual or family on another individual or family whom they knew. These profiles were on an actual people or

families known by the subject. Thirdhand information, on the other hand, is less concrete. For thirdhand linguistic profiles individuals or families gave information on theoretical individuals or families whom they either imagined to exist or had heard existed. Thirdhand linguistic profiles were most useful in getting the impressions that an individual or family had about certain types of individuals or families in their community or in other communities and situations.

Information on or from a total of over eighty-five individuals and/or their families was gathered. Thirty individuals and families in Baku, and in the towns of Zaqatala and Əliabad were interviewed. From these interviews secondhand information on over forty additional individuals and families and thirdhand information on over fifteen additional individuals and families was gathered.

Once data was gathered, each individual or family was described in terms of four factors: language proficiency, patterns of language use, patterns of perceived benefits, and attitudes concerning the use and development of materials in the Inghiloi language. Each of these four factors had a number of values, as follows:

- ▶ Language proficiency: good active, low active, passive, or zero proficiency in each language.
- ▶ Language use: high, medium, low, or no use of each language.
- ▶ Perceived benefit: placing high, average, low, or no value on each language for the functions of making money, getting news, family life, communication, religion, and gaining prestige.
- ▶ Attitudes concerning materials in Inghiloi: supportive, neutral, or against.

Each potential combination of specific values constitutes a potential “type.” Potentially, a very large number of types could be described in terms of these four factors. In actual fact, however, only a small subset of all the potential types was discovered. These types were used to construct a typology of language behavior that could be used to describe the various communities in which the Inghiloi live.

This methodology is qualitative, as opposed to quantitative, in two ways. First, subjects were not chosen randomly. Instead, they were chosen by informed selection on the basis of an ever-developing hypothesis of variation. That is, we began with a hypothesis as to what types of individuals and families existed and tried to interview representatives from each type. As our research progressed, we were able to refine the typology and determine more specifically what types of individuals and families we still needed to interview. Second, the data that was gathered was analyzed according to consensus rather than statistics. That is, data from one subject was deemed reliable if it agreed with data independently elicited from other subjects. In cases of disagreement, we continued to interview additional subjects until we were able to determine the source of the disagreement.

3. Findings

Our findings are presented in two parts. The first part consists of a brief general description of the main communities in which the Inghiloi live in Azerbaijan: (i) Əliabad, (ii) Mosul and Ititala, (iii) Zaqatala, and (iv) Baku and Yengiyarı.² The second part describes the various types of individuals and families who were identified as existing in one or more of these communities.

3.1 Community Descriptions

3.1.1 Əliabad

Əliabad is a town of approximately 10,000 people. It is 95% Inghiloi in ethnicity and is the largest Inghiloi center of population. It is located southwest of Zaqatala near the Alazan River, which marks the border between Georgia and Azerbaijan. Əliabad has been an Inghiloi population center for as long as the Inghiloi have been in the region. It is considered to be the Inghiloi “cultural capital” and, is home to most of the Inghiloi cultural figures. The one and only Inghiloi Ashuga (bard) in Azerbaijan lives in Əliabad. Various other cultural groups such as dance troupes are also based in Əliabad.

² Two types of Inghiloi communities have been excluded from this list: the one in Tblisi and communities in various towns and cities in Russia in which sizeable numbers of Inghiloi live. It is estimated that over 100 students and over twenty families from the Inghiloi villages of Azerbaijan live in Tblisi, and that as many as ten times this number live in various locations in Russia, including Moscow. Unfortunately, our information on them has been limited. We interviewed a small group of Inghiloi students who have recently studied or are studying in Tblisi and one Inghiloi family who lives in Tblisi. We will make brief mention of the data from these interviews as appropriate, but will not try to present a general picture of the Tblisi community in this paper. We were only able to obtain second- or thirdhand information on the Russian communities.

Əliabad has four schools. Each school has two “sectors.” Azerbaijani is used as the language of instruction in one sector in each school. Georgian is used as the language of instruction in the other sector in two schools, while Russian is the language of instruction in the other sector in the other two schools. Overall, approximately 50% of young people study in Azerbaijani, 34.5% in Georgian, and 15.5% in Russian. Students usually attend the school in their *kvartal*, that is, their section of the town. The town can be divided linguistically into sections which are more Georgian oriented, those which are Azerbaijani oriented and those which are Russian oriented, in relation to patterns of second- (and/or third-) language use. The languages of education in a *kvartal* generally coincide quite closely to the overall patterns of second-language use among the population of the *kvartal*.

The language of instruction has shifted over the years. From 1945 to 1958 Georgian was the only language of instruction. Azerbaijani sectors were gradually developed between 1958 and 1976, while Russian sectors were gradually added between 1976 and 1996. Since 1996, the Azerbaijani sectors have been growing stronger primarily at the expense of the Russian sectors.

Most people in Əliabad speak Inghiloi with each other everywhere in the town. There are individual homes, however, where Azerbaijani, Georgian, and/or Russian may be the dominant languages.

The population of Əliabad is fairly well distributed in relation to age and gender, with no particular age group or gender being significantly larger than another.

Approximately 75% of the overall income comes from agriculture and livestock. An additional 15% comes from small businesses, while most of the remaining income comes from employment at government institutions including schools, hospitals, and post offices.

3.1.2 Mosul and Ititala

In 1997, the population of the villages of Mosul and Ititala was 2,718 and 2,045, respectively. As in Əliabad, Inghiloi is the main language of both villages.

Schools in both villages have two sectors, one of which uses Azerbaijani as the language of instruction and one of which uses Georgian as the language of instruction. As in Əliabad, Georgian was the only language of instruction between 1945 and 1958. Azerbaijani sectors were gradually developed between 1958 and 1976. The Georgian sectors seem to be stronger in Mosul and Ititala than they are in Əliabad.

3.1.3 Zaqatala

Since Zaqatala is a regional center, a wide mix of ethnicities lives within the town. The Inghiloi community in Zaqatala numbers around several hundred. Approximately 25% of the total Inghiloi community in the town of Zaqatala are in the town as individuals, not as part of a family; most of these are men between the ages of 18 and 55. Most of these individuals are in Zaqatala for study or work. The Inghiloi community in the town of Zaqatala has grown in the last ten years; over half of the population moved to the town since 1991. There were very few Inghiloi in the town before World War II.

While some Inghiloi families living in the town of Zaqatala speak Inghiloi at home, a majority, especially those who have lived in the town a while, speak Azerbaijani or Russian. The children all attend schools in which Russian or Azerbaijani is the language of instruction.

3.1.4 Baku

Approximately 150 Inghiloi live in Baku. Almost half of the Inghiloi community are families, most of whom have moved to Baku because one or more individuals in the family found work there. The other half is made up of individuals, most of whom are men between the ages of 18 and 55. Most of these individuals are in Baku for work or study. The Inghiloi community in Baku is almost entirely new, having moved to Baku within the last seven years. A majority of the Inghiloi community in Baku speaks either Azerbaijani or Russian in their homes or with those with whom they live, although most of them know Inghiloi.

3.1.5 Yengıyan

Yengıyan is the only ethnically mixed village in Azerbaijan where Inghiloi speakers live as a compact minority community.³ Azerbaijani is the language of instruction in the one school in the village.

3.2 Typologies

As indicated in section 2, the individuals and families we interviewed were analyzed in terms of the four factors of language proficiency, language use, perceived benefit, and attitudes towards Inghiloi literacy. On the basis of this analysis, we constructed twenty types. In all twenty types, the factors of Inghiloi language proficiency and Inghiloi language use proved to coincide, resulting in four major groups:

- a. Good active proficiency in and high use of Inghiloi,
- b. Low active proficiency in and medium use of Inghiloi,
- c. Passive proficiency in and low use of Inghiloi, and
- d. No proficiency in and no use of Inghiloi.

The typology below is presented in terms of these four groups.

Within these groups, types are defined in terms of proficiency in and use of a second language, whatever that language might be. While it is reported that there were individuals who were essentially monogual in Inghiloi over 100 years ago, all Inghiloi currently speak at least two languages. As with the first language, language proficiency and language use coincide very closely. In general, the less individuals use a given language, the lower their proficiency in it is reported to be.

Types defined in terms of proficiency in and use of the first and second languages leave out some distinctive sociolinguistic elements. Many Inghiloi know and use third or fourth languages. These languages are generally used in specific domains, and these domains will be discussed following the discussion of the basic typology.

3.2.1 Group One (Types 1–8): Good active proficiency in and high use of the Inghiloi language

This is the largest of the groups. Individuals in this group speak Inghiloi as their first language and consider it to be the most important language in their lives for most functions and in most domains. Both men and women of all ages are found in this group. The vast majority of these individuals live in rural areas. They generally perceive Inghiloi to be of high or average benefit, overall, in their lives.

There are eight basic types of individuals in Group One. The first four types have good active language proficiency in a second language and use this second language in a significant number of domains and functions. They differ from one another in (i) their perceptions of the benefit of their second language for themselves and their community and (ii) their attitudes towards the development and use of materials in the Inghiloi language.

The other four types have low active language proficiency in a second language and use this second language in only a few domains and functions. Like the first four types, they differ from one another in (i) their perceptions of the benefit of their second language for themselves and their community and (ii) their attitudes towards the development and use of materials in the Inghiloi language. Types 5–8 are less common than types 1–4.

Type 1 (Good active proficiency in and high use of the second language): Type 1 individuals perceive their second language to be highly beneficial for themselves and their community. They are generally positive towards the idea of the development and use of materials in the Inghiloi language. Type 1 is the most common type in Group One.

Type 2 (Good active proficiency in and high use of the second language): Like type 1 individuals, type 2 individuals perceive their second language to be highly beneficial for themselves and their community. They are neutral towards the idea of the development and use of materials in the Inghiloi language. Type 2 is the second largest type in Group One.

³ Minority communities of Inghiloi also lived in six or seven other villages in northwestern Azerbaijan up to as recently as the 1930s, but over the years these communities have shrunk to the point where Yengıyan is the only such community left in which speakers of Inghiloi still exist. Some individuals in these other communities still refer to themselves as ethnically Inghiloi, however.

Type 3 (Good active proficiency in and high use of the second language): Type 3 individuals perceive their second language to be of average or low benefit for themselves and their community. They are generally positive towards the idea of the development and use of materials in the Inghiloi language.

Type 4 (Good active proficiency in and high use of the second language): Like type 3 individuals, type 4 individuals perceive their second language to be of average or low benefit for themselves and their community. They are neutral towards the idea of the development and use of materials in the Inghiloi language.

Type 5 (Low active proficiency in and low use of the second language): Like type 1 individuals, type 5 individuals perceive their second language to be highly beneficial for themselves and their community and are generally positive towards the idea of the development and use of materials in the Inghiloi language.

Type 6 (Low active proficiency in and low use of the second language): Like type 2 individuals, type 6 individuals perceive their second language to be highly beneficial for themselves and their community and are neutral towards the idea of the development and use of materials in the Inghiloi language.

Type 7 (Low active proficiency in and low use of the second language): Like type 3 individuals, type 7 individuals perceive their second language to be of average or low benefit for themselves and their community and are generally positive towards the idea of the development and use of materials in the Inghiloi language.

Type 8 (Low active proficiency in and low use of the second language): Like type 4 individuals, type 8 individuals perceive their second language to be of average or low benefit for themselves and their community and are neutral towards the idea of the development and use of materials in the Inghiloi language.

3.2.2 Group Two (Types 9–12): Low active of proficiency in and medium use of the Inghiloi language

There are four types of individuals in Group Two. Individuals in these four types speak Inghiloi, if not fluently, almost fluently. They use Inghiloi in many domains and functions of daily life but most often consider it to be their second language. Individuals in these types include: (i) recent immigrants to Baku or Zaqatala from rural Inghiloi communities, (ii) some long-term residents of Zaqatala, (iii) some individuals with certain kinds of employment in rural Inghiloi communities, mainly education or health related, and (iv) a small percentage of young individuals (under 30) in rural communities, particularly those who have non-Inghiloi spouses. Most of the members of this group do not need Inghiloi for work and many of them do not need it for family communication. Most of them have grown up in an Inghiloi-speaking home, and if they live in a rural Inghiloi community, they generally speak Inghiloi with other Inghiloi. Men in this group are likely to have slightly lower Inghiloi proficiency levels than women. Men also tend to make up the greater majority of individuals in this group. This is the second largest group.

Children of individuals in this group do not seem to follow a set pattern regarding their language use. That is, there is no apparent trend for children of individuals in this group to gravitate towards any particular group. Their language behavior is more defined by the path their lives take.

Individuals in types included in Group Two generally perceive their first language as being highly beneficial for themselves and their community. Individuals in the four types included in Group Two differ from one another in terms of their perceived benefit of Inghiloi and their attitudes towards the development and use of materials in the Inghiloi language.

Type 9. Individuals in type 9 perceive Inghiloi to be of high or average benefit for themselves and their community. They have a positive attitude towards the development and use of materials in the Inghiloi language. This is the largest type in Group Two.

Type 10. Individuals in type 10 perceive Inghiloi to be of high or average benefit for themselves and their community. They have a neutral attitude towards the development and use of materials in the Inghiloi language.

Type 11. Individuals in type 11 perceive Inghiloi to be of low or no benefit for themselves and their community. They have a neutral attitude towards the development and use of materials in the Inghiloi language.

Type 12. Individuals in type 12 perceive Inghiloi to be of low or no benefit for themselves and their community. They have a negative attitude towards the development and use of materials in the Inghiloi language.

3.2.3 Group Three (Types 13–16): Passive proficiency in and low use of the Inghiloi language

There are four types of individuals in Group Three. Individuals in these four types have only a passive knowledge of Inghiloi and do not use it as a significant language in any domain or function. They have at least a minimal understanding of Inghiloi, however, and may have had times in their lives (possibly including the present)

when Inghiloi was a language that they encountered being used by others such as family members or friends. Two kinds of individuals fit into this group: (i) some married-in individuals, mostly women and (ii) individuals or families living in urban areas.

Individuals in the types included in Group Three, like those in the types included in Group Two, generally perceive their first language as being highly beneficial for themselves and their community. Individuals in the four types in this group differ from one another in terms of their perceived benefit of Inghiloi and their attitudes towards the development and use of materials in the Inghiloi language.

Type 13. Like individuals in type 9, individuals in type 13 perceive Inghiloi to be of high or average value for themselves and their community and have a positive attitude towards the development and use of materials in the Inghiloi language. This is the largest type in Group Three.

Type 14. Like individuals in type 10, individuals in type 14 perceive Inghiloi to be of high or average value for themselves and their community and have a neutral attitude towards the development and use of materials in the Inghiloi language.

Type 15. Like individuals in type 11, individuals in type 15 perceive Inghiloi to be of low or no value for themselves and their community and have a neutral attitude towards the development and use of materials in the Inghiloi language.

Type 16. Like individuals in type 12, individuals in type 16 perceive Inghiloi to be of low or no value for themselves and their community and have a negative attitude towards the development and use of materials in the Inghiloi language.

3.2.4 Group Four (Types 17–20): No proficiency in and no use of the Inghiloi language

There are four types of individuals in Group Four. Individuals in these four types do not speak Inghiloi or use it in any domain or function. Two kinds of individuals fit into this group: (i) some spouses from non-Inghiloi communities and (ii) non-first generation Inghiloi individuals in ethnically mixed (including urban) communities.

Individuals in the types included in Group Four, like those in the types included in Groups Two and Three, generally perceive their first language as being highly beneficial for themselves and their community. Again like individuals in Groups Two and Three, individuals in the four types in this group differ from one another in terms of their perceived benefit of Inghiloi and their attitudes towards the development and use of materials in the Inghiloi language.

Type 17. Like individuals in types 9 and 13, individuals in type 17 perceive Inghiloi to be of high or average value for themselves and their community and have a positive attitude towards the development and use of materials in the Inghiloi language.

Type 18. Like individuals in types 10 and 14, individuals in type 18 perceive Inghiloi to be of high or average value for themselves and their community and have a neutral attitude towards the development and use of materials in the Inghiloi language.

Type 19. Like individuals in types 11 and 15, individuals in type 19 perceive Inghiloi to be of low or no value for themselves and their community and have a neutral attitude towards the development and use of materials in the Inghiloi language.

Type 20. Like individuals in types 12 and 16, individuals in type 20 perceive Inghiloi to be of low or no value for themselves and their community and have a negative attitude towards the development and use of materials in the Inghiloi language.

3.2.5 Multilingualism

Proficiencies in and patterns of language use of third and fourth languages were reported to be contextually defined. Profiles of various third and fourth languages are less dependent on the individual than they are on the context.

Those who speak Russian as a third or fourth language are generally men who either were in the Soviet army or worked in a place where Russian was the major language of use.

Those who speak Azerbaijani as a third or fourth language generally use it as a language of social contact. Azerbaijani has been a major language of wider communication in northwestern Azerbaijan for a long time, even

during the Soviet period. It is not uncommon for individuals who speak Azerbaijani as a third or fourth language to have begun learning it recently. The last ten years have seen a growing interest in Azerbaijani proficiency and use among the citizens of Azerbaijan in general.

Those who speak Georgian as a third or fourth language generally used it as a language of social contact in the past. For many of these individuals the usefulness of Georgian a language of social contact is decreasing since contact with Georgian speakers has decreased over the last ten years.

The perceived benefit of third and fourth languages is generally average or low.

4. Discussion

4.1 An Analysis of the Typology

As was expected at the outset of this research, not all of the theoretically possible types were reported to exist within any of the Inghiloi communities in Azerbaijan. Two explanations were given for this. First, patterns of language proficiency and language attitudes were closely related to patterns of language use. Many of the nonexistent types, such as “individuals with high proficiency in but low use of the Inghiloi language” or “individuals with negative attitudes towards the Inghiloi language but high use of the Inghiloi language” were not reported as existing.

Second, all Inghiloi live in regions in which they are an overall minority. Because of this, all Inghiloi were said to have at least one language other than Inghiloi as an important part of their lives. No one was said to speak this language poorly. While individuals varied in their levels of proficiency in Inghiloi, their patterns of use of Inghiloi, and their attitudes towards Inghiloi, there was very little variation with regard to the “other” language(s) in their lives. While individuals varied in their levels of proficiency in or use of the Inghiloi language, all individuals had a high level of proficiency in one of the three languages of wider communication, Azerbaijani, Russian, or Georgian.

4.2 Individual Factors (Age and Gender)

We began this research with two hypotheses regarding the role of age and gender in relation to sociolinguistic variation. The first hypothesis was that older individuals would have higher levels of proficiency in Inghiloi, have more positive attitudes towards its use, and actually use it more than others. The second hypothesis was that women would have higher levels of proficiency in Inghiloi, have more positive attitudes towards its use, and actually use it more than men.

In actual fact, gender was not reported to be a significant differentiating factor in the homogenous communities of Əliabad, Mosul, and İtitala. Age, however, was reported to be a minor factor in these communities. A small percentage of individuals under 30 in these communities were said to be Group Two types with low active proficiency in and medium levels of use of the Inghiloi language. Most of these individuals were said to have non-Inghiloi spouses, and this was most commonly assumed to be the reason for their lower levels of Inghiloi. Overall, most individuals of all ages in the communities of Əliabad, Mosul, and İtitala were said to be Group One individuals.

In the three communities where Inghiloi are a minority—Zaqatala, Baku, and Yengiyən—age was reported to be a very significant differentiating factor. In Yengiyən, only the most elderly individuals were said to have more than basic proficiency in the Inghiloi language and to use it in their lives. It was reported that in Zaqatala and Baku, the younger an individual was, the lower their proficiency in Inghiloi was likely to be and the less likely they were to use it. With the decline in proficiency and use, attitudes towards the Inghiloi language in these communities also seem to be declining.

4.3 The Role of Domains of Language Use (Education and the Home)

We began this research with two hypotheses regarding the two key sociolinguistic domains of education and the home. We hypothesized that individuals who were or are currently receiving education in a particular language would be more likely than others to (a) have a higher proficiency in the given language, (b) have positive attitudes towards the language including a high perception of its benefit for a range of purposes, and (c) use it in various domains. We also hypothesized that an individual’s home language would be the most important factor in defining their sociolinguistic type. An individual who uses a particular language at home would be more likely than others to (a) have a higher proficiency in the given language, (b) have positive attitudes towards the language including a high perception of its benefit for a range of purposes, and (c) use it in various domains.

While neither the domain of the home nor education was reported to have much influence on sociolinguistic patterns, some correlations were reported. The language of education does seem to correlate with second-language use and proficiency patterns. The language of the home seems to determine the default for individuals, although after they finish school they seem to make decisions based on factors other than the language of the home.

4.4 Community Types (Urban versus Rural)

We originally hypothesized that significant typological differences would be revealed between populations in urban communities such as Zaqatala and those in village or town communities. We hypothesized that urban individuals would be less oriented towards Inghiloi in their attitudes and patterns of language use. Significant differences were, in fact, reported between urban Inghiloi populations and rural Inghiloi populations in communities where Inghiloi individuals represented a significant majority of the population. The village of Yengiyán, however, exhibited patterns of Inghiloi language use and attitudes towards the Inghiloi language that were similar to those found in urban areas. The crucial factor, then, seems to be that individuals are less oriented towards Inghiloi in heterogenous communities, including urban communities.

4.5 Language Shift Trends

As noted above, age seems to be inversely correlated with levels of proficiency in and use of the Inghiloi language. While the effect of age seems to be much more pronounced in heterogenous communities like Zaqatala, Baku, and Yengiyán, a small number of individuals even in Əliabad, Mosul, and İtitala are not Group One types like the majority. This raises the question as to whether the changes seen in Əliabad, Mosul, and İtitala are the onset of a process of language shift whose ultimate result can be seen in communities such as Zaqatala, Baku, and Yengiyán.

This question is impossible to answer at this time. It is possible that a state of stable bilingualism may be reached in which Inghiloi retains a role in certain domains. Even if there is a complete shift away from Inghiloi, however, a shift will likely take much longer in these communities than it took in the urban communities of Zaqatala and Baku. Yengiyán is more likely to be representative of the kind of shift which Əliabad, Mosul, and İtitala could undergo. It has taken more than a hundred years for the shift to occur in Yengiyán. Furthermore, the context in which the shift occurred in Yengiyán was quite different from the context in which Əliabad, Mosul, and İtitala now find themselves.

The shift in Yengiyán seems to have been spurred by two social changes that are unique to this village. First, the education policies following World War II were different in Yengiyán. While schools in Əliabad, Mosul, and İtitala have had long traditions of using Georgian and, in the case of Əliabad, Russian, as languages of instruction, the school in Yengiyán has used only Azerbaijani as the language of instruction. Second, rates of intermarriage with non-Inghiloi have always been higher in Yengiyán than in Əliabad, Mosul, and İtitala.

The existence of widespread multilingualism in Əliabad, Mosul, and İtitala may be a factor in the maintenance of the Inghiloi language. The fact that Azerbaijani, Georgian, and Russian are all significant languages of use may be counteracting the natural tendency for Azerbaijani to gain overall dominance. In this sense, although the language of education does not seem to be a significant factor in determining sociolinguistic patterns among the Inghiloi, the fact that there are several languages of instruction may be helping to maintain the current patterns of widespread multilingualism.

Marriage patterns may also be supporting this multilingualism. Inghiloi in Əliabad, Mosul, and İtitala are most likely to marry individuals with linguistic orientation similar to their own. That is, individuals for whom Georgian, Azerbaijani, or Russian is an important language will marry other such individuals. Furthermore, most spouses in these communities are Inghiloi. In Yengiyán, Zaqatala, and Baku, Azerbaijani has been the dominant language for some time now, and it is not unusual for spouses to be from the non-Inghiloi community.

The multilingual situation in education seems to be changing. Schools in which the language of instruction is Russian or Georgian are finding it increasingly difficult to obtain instructional materials. At the same time, Azerbaijani's status as the national language gives it additional prestige. It is likely that the use of Azerbaijani in the schools will continue to expand at the expense of Georgian and Russian. This, in turn, may affect the overall levels of multilingualism in the communities of Əliabad, Mosul, and İtitala. Eventually, the Inghiloi of these communities may have to deal with the same language maintenance issues that the communities of Yengiyán, Zaqatala, and Baku have had to deal with. At present, the Əliabad, Mosul, and İtitala communities are strong, viable Inghiloi communities in which the large majority of individuals have good, active proficiency in and high use of the Inghiloi language. Young people are nearly as well represented in this group as older people. It can be expected that these communities will remain viable for at least a few more generations. After that, the sociolinguistic context may determine what the future holds.

5 Conclusion

Inghiloi in communities in Azerbaijan where they are a minority are exhibiting a definite language shift away from Inghiloi, towards Azerbaijani. The shift is more pronounced among men and younger people than among women and older people. In relatively homogenous Inghiloi communities, on the other hand, there is much less evidence of shift. Multilingualism is strong in these communities, with several major languages in addition to Inghiloi playing a significant role in the community. The vitality of Inghiloi seems to be strong in these communities and can be expected to stay strong for the foreseeable future.

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