

Lazuri Nena - The Language of the Laz

(Silvia Kutscher, University of Cologne)

[Draft, comments welcome.]

To appear in Rüdiger Benninghaus (ed.) *The Laz people*

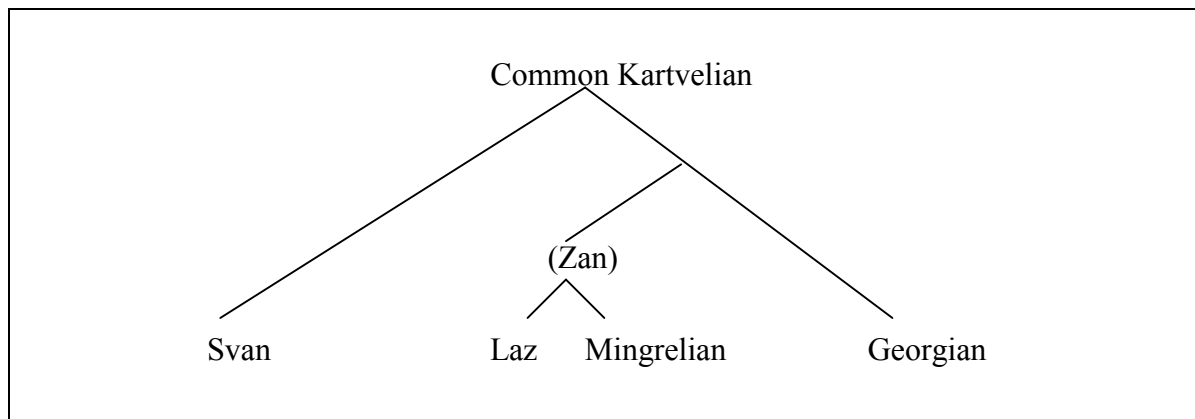
This chapter presents a short overview of the Laz language and its affiliation. The presentation focuses on some main characteristics of the language system and its dialectal variation. In addition, the status of Laz being an endangered language is discussed in some detail.

.1 Affiliation

Laz is a member of the South Caucasian (also: Kartvelian) language family that consists of only four members: Svan, Georgian, Mingrelian, and Laz. As can be seen from the following figure (1), Laz is most closely related to Mingrelian, and for some scholars both are dialects of one language, called Zan. This opinion, however, can only be accepted from a mere historical point of view. Given the fact that for more than 500 years Laz and Mingrels have lived under different religious and political surroundings, are submitted to different literal cultures, and have severe difficulties in communicating with each other in their own varieties of language, today, one has to account for two closely related, but autonomous languages¹.

¹ This claim is supported by Klimov (1994:88): „Wendet man jedoch Kriterien an, die in der theoretischen Sprachwissenschaft zur Unterscheidung von Sprachen und Dialekten herausgearbeitet wurden (...), so ist man jedoch gezwungen, die Gruppe der Kartvelsprachen in vier Glieder aufzuteilen, wobei das Mingrelische und das Lazische als eigenständige Einheiten zu gelten haben; (...).“

Figure (1): The genetic affiliation of Laz



With the exception of Laz, all South Caucasian languages are primarily spoken in the Republic of Georgia. Laz, on the other hand, is primarily spoken in the Republic of Turkey². The exact number of Laz speakers in Turkey is difficult to estimate, since census data do not include information on ethnic and linguistic affiliation. Estimates range from 50.000 to 500.000 speakers.³ Turkish towns in which the Laz community is in the majority include Hopa, Arhavi, Fındıklı, Ardeşen and Pazar.

.2 The particularities of the language structure

The South Caucasian languages, including Laz, show some particularities which cannot be found in Indo-European languages such as English, French or Russian. The main phonological and morphological characteristics are described in the following paragraphs.

.2.1 Phonology

Laz, as most of the Caucasian languages, shows a richness of consonants (see table (1)) as opposed to only a small amount of vowels (*a, e, i, o, u*). The paramount characteristic of the Laz consonantal system, shared by many Caucasian languages, is a series of glottalised consonants (ejectives)⁴. Compared to other members of its language family, some dialects of Laz lack the

² With the exception of appr. 3,000 Laz living in the small town of Sarp'i, Georgia.

³ Andrews (1989) estimates 45.000 and Feurstein (1983) 250.000 speakers. According to Holisky (1991) estimates vary between 50.000 and 500.000.

⁴ Ejectives are consonants which are co-articulated with a glottal closure simultaneously to a

glottalized uvular consonant /q'/; also Laz shows two phonemes, /f/ and /h/, which are not part of the sound system of the other Kartvelian languages. Therefore, in sum, Laz shows the highest amount of consonants in the South Caucasian family.

Table (1): The consonant system of Laz

	Bilabial			Labio-dental			Alveolar			Platal-alveolar			Velar			Uvular			Glottal		
	Vl	Vd	Ej	Vl	Vd	Ej	Vl	Vd	Ej	Vl	Vd	Ej	Vl	Vd	Ej	Vl	Vd	Ej	Vl	Vd	Ej
Stop	p	b	p'				t	d	t'				k	g	k'				(q')		
Affricate							c	j	c'	č	ĵ	č'									
Fricative				f			s	z		š	ž		x	ɣ							h
Nasal		m						n													
Liquid								l, r													
Glide					v						y										

Vl = voiceless, Vd = voiced, Ej = ejective

A particularity of the phonological system of all South Caucasian languages are the so called harmonic complexes. Those are pairs of consonants which share certain phonological features. Each harmonic complex contains one velar or uvular consonant and both consonants are either voiced, voiceless or glottalized and are paired either ascendant (i.e. a velar or uvular consonant is followed by one that is articulated more in front: *gd*, *gz*, *kt*, *ks* etc.) or descendant (i.e. the velar or uvular consonant follows one formed further in front: *dg*, *dɣ*, *tk*, *tx*, *čk*, *čx*, *č'k'* etc.), such as Laz: *gza* 'path', *dgun* 'it [= inanimate] stands', *ndya* 'day'.

consonantal closure or constriction in the oral tract. After blocking the airstream between the glottal closure and the closure or constriction in the oral tract, the larynx is raised to the effect that the airstream is highly compressed between both closures. In case of consonant stops, after releasing the blocking of the oral tract, the airstream bursts out vigorously. In case of fricative consonants, the compressed airstream hisses out through the constricted passage of the oral tract.

.2.2 The various writing systems available for Laz

As can be seen from table (1), the Laz consonant system is rather different from the average European language. This fact leads to some difficulties in creating and propagating a writing system for this language. Since most of the speakers of Laz live in Turkey and are not acquainted with the Georgian alphabet, which would suit the Laz language perfectly, the adoption of the Georgian alphabet for Laz is out of the question for the vast majority of the Laz population. For scientific purposes a transliteration system is in use, which is based on the Latin alphabet supplied by diacritics symbolizing glottalization (dot above/under the consonant letter or apostrophe, resp.) and palatalization ('haček' above the consonant letter (see table (2a)). This alphabet is widely spread among linguists who do research on Caucasian languages and is therefore internationally decodable in the scientific community. The Laz themselves, however, have developed their own writing system (Lazoğlu/Feurstein 1984), based on the Turkish alphabet, which most of the Laz (except those living in Georgia) are familiar with. This alphabet is widely accepted within the Laz community and publications of Laz in their native language (the Laz-Turkish dictionary of Uzunhasanoğlu/Buçaklışı and the magazines *Ogni süani nena* and *Mjora*) are written in it. The diacritics needed for this modified Turkish alphabet were basically the symbolization of glottalization by 'haček' above the consonant letter and some newly designed letters for the dental affricates ([ts, ts', dz]), see table (2b). The orthography preferred by the editor of this volume is a mix of the Caucasian transliteration system as demonstrated in table (2a), the Turkish alphabet, and the IPA (International Phonetic Alphabet), see table (2c). Since the Caucasian transliteration system as shown in table (2a) is the most widely spread alphabet, I have considered it best to be used in this article. In order to mediate the Laz language to people unacquainted with it, I find it the most effective way.

The following table (2a-c) illustrates the various writing systems now at hand for Laz. It concentrates on the differences between the systems and does not show the letters that are shared in all of the alphabets:

Table (2): Various writing systems in use for Laz

IPA (Phonetic): (2a)	p'	t'	k'	ts	ts'	dz	š	tš	tš'	dž	γ
Caucasian: (2b)	p'	t'	k'	c	c'	j	š	č	č'	ĵ	γ
Lazoğlu:						ž	ş	ç		c	ğ

.2.3 Morphology

Laz, as all South Caucasian languages, shows a rich morphological system and a distinct differentiation among the major parts of speech, namely nouns and verbs. Nouns, as opposed to Georgian, do all end in a word final vowel (compare Georg. *k'ac* vs. Laz *k'oči* 'man, person'). Nominal morphology is always agglutinative and suffixal. Nouns inflect for case (depending on dialectal variation there are 4 to 7 caseforms) and number (singular and plural), whereas gender is an unknown category to Laz as it is to all South Caucasian languages. The morphology on the verb is considerably more complex in having both rich suffixation and prefixation. It inflects for person and number, for tense, aspect, mood, and, depending on dialectal variation, for evidentiality. It also has an extensive system of verbal prefixes (depending on dialectal variation approx. 40 - 50 prefixes can be found), expressing spatial orientation of the activity denoted by the verb, such as: *amo-* 'into' *gamo-* 'out of', *e-* 'up', *je-* 'down', *dolo-* 'inside down', *ešk'e-* 'up inside of', *mešk'e-* 'through', *go-* 'around sth.' *goo-* 'onto', *ece-* 'under', *ek'e-* 'behind', *ok'o-* 'together, apart, in half', etc.

One of the basic verbal categories in all South Caucasian languages can be found in the category of person. The predicate in Laz and its sister languages is not only inflected for the subject (2.a), as in Indo-European languages, but also shows markers⁵ for the object (2.b), or, in case of

⁵ The Laz system of marking subject and objects on the predicate is somewhat complex. Although each predicate only shows one personal affix - either subject or object marker – the form of the predicate codes the other participants of the verbal action as well. Those are coded via the form of the so called version vowel, a vowel directly preceding the verbal root. The system cannot be explained here in detail, for further information, see Holisky (1991) for Xopa-Laz, Lüders (1992) for Pazar(=Atina)-Laz, and Mattissen (1995) for Ardesheh-Laz.

trivalent verbs, for two objects involved in the action described (2.c). Therefore, the fully inflected verb builds an autonomous sentence of its own:

- (2.a) *moxtu* ‘S/he came here.’
 (2.b) *meoxuman* ‘They unroof it (the house).’
 (2.c) *gimpulam* ‘I hide it from you.’ (Ardeshenian)

.2.4 Language Contact

Comparing South Caucasian (Sc.) to Indo-European (Ie.) reconstructions of lexical material, one can find a fast amount of coincidence which leads to the conclusion that there has been a close cultural contact between South Caucasian and Indo-European peoples in former times (e.g. Ie. **ueino-* and Sc. **gwino-* ‘vine’; Ie. **ueb^h-* and Sc. **-gweb-* ‘weave’; Ie. **gudo-m-* ‘viscera’ and Sc. **guda-* ‘hose’)⁶.

Among later contacts with Indo-European languages Greek, due to its dominant role in the Black Sea region in the ancient times, has been a particular influential source for extending the Laz lexicon (e.g. *dulia* ‘work’, *troni* ‘chair’, *pot’e* ‘never’, *ora* ‘time’, *raxna* ‘spider’, (g)*nosi* ‘mind’⁷).

Since the middle ages, many structural and lexical loans of the Osmanic and Turkish language have found their way into the Laz language, due to its long standing contact to the dominating Osmanic/Turkish culture. Thus, for example, the names for the days of the week, the months, the seasons, but also words for objects of every day use (*tabaği* ‘plate made of china’ (< trk. *tabak*), *sağani* ‘plate made of metal’ (< trk. *sahan*), *laci* ‘medicine’ (< trk. *ilaçi*) and those concerning planting, harvesting and processing tea are of Turkish origin. Even some of the Turkish kinship terms (*xala* < trk. *hala*, *abeyi* < trk. *ağabey*,) are integrated into the Laz phonological system and hence can clearly be identified as loans into the Laz language.

⁶ See Klimov (1994:298ff).

⁷ See footnote 9 in: Brendemoen, Bernt 1989. “Laz influence on Black Sea Turkish dialects?” in: *Altaica Osloensia. Proceedings from the 32nd meeting of the Permanent Altaistic Conference. Oslo June 12th – 16th 1989*. Ed. by Bernt Brendemoen. Oslo: University.

.3 The Dialects of Laz

According to most scholars of the South Caucasian philology (Kartvelology) and based on Marr (1910) and Chikobava (1936), Laz consists of three main dialects: Hopan (spoken in Hopa), Vitse-Arkabian (spoken in Arhavi and Fındıklı) and Atinan, whereby Atinan is subdivided into Atinan (spoken in Pazar) and Ardeshenian (spoken in Ardeşen)⁸. This fairly rough division is based exclusively on phonological features, the main characteristics of which are explained to the reader in the following section. Despite the fact that Holisky (1991:397) asserts that “the dialects do not differ greatly from one another”, all Laz speakers I have interviewed in Turkey claim that the mutual intelligibility of the dialects is rather restricted. Furthermore, no standard variety exists which would allow for straightforward interdialectal communication⁹. Instead, as I could observe personally, speakers of different dialects prefer to communicate with each other in Turkish.

.3.1 The main distinctive features of the Laz dialects

The main distinctive phonological feature is the distribution of the present-day reflexes of the common Kartvelian phoneme */q’/ among the various dialects (in consonant clusters: in Hopan and Vitse-Arkabian: /k’/, in Atina the consonant is lost; outside consonant clusters: in Hopan: /q’/, in Vitse-Arkabian and Atinan the consonant is replaced by /y/ or is lost). In Hopan as opposed to all other dialects, weakening or loss of the phoneme /r/ is characteristic, whereas Atinan shows a tendency for palatalization of the consonants /g, k, k’, c/ and simplification of affricates in harmonic clusters¹⁰. For examples, see table (3) below:

⁸ On the ground of the grammatical and lexical differences between Atinan and Ardeshenian (see e.g. table (4)), the author of this article prefers not to speak of Ardeshenian as a subdialect of Atinan but rather of a dialectal variant of its own, thus establishing four main dialects for Laz. In the following, however, the illustration of the dialectal variance will be oriented at the kartvelological research literature and hence the tripartite division of Laz dialects will be retained.

⁹ This claim seems to be supported by Marr (1910), who also mentions difficulties in mutual understanding between speakers of different Laz dialects.

¹⁰ i.e. affricates are simplified to fricatives, e.g. [tʃ’] → [ʃ] in the example in table (3). To be more accurate, this feature only shows in Ardeshenian (Atina: č’k’imi vs. Ardeshenian: sk’imi ‘my’), see section below table (4).

Table (3): the main distinctive phonological features

	Hopan	Vitse-Arkabian	Atinan
*/q'/ in consant clusters	<i>c'k'ari</i> 'water'	<i>c'k'ari</i> 'water'	<i>c'ari</i> 'water'
*/q'/ outside clusters	<i>q'ona</i> 'field'	<i>yona/ona</i> 'field'	<i>yona/ona</i> 'field'
/r/	<i>oxoi</i> 'house'	<i>oxori</i> 'house'	<i>oxori</i> 'house'
/g/, /k/, /k'/, /c/	<i>tok'i</i> 'rope'	<i>tok'i</i> 'rope'	<i>t'oč'i</i> 'rope'
harmonic complexes	<i>č'k'imi</i> 'my'	<i>č'k'imi</i> 'my'	<i>šk'imi</i> 'my'

With respect to morphology, the main distinctive features of verbal inflection are found concerning the formation of the future tense and the present stem formants (e.g. *-up-* vs. *-um-*). Concerning the nominal morphology the main difference lies in the varying size of the case system (Hopan, Vitse-Arkabian and Atinan: three core cases (Narrative, Nominative, Dative) vs. Ardeshenian: one core case (Nominative) taking over the functions of Narrative and Dative) and differences in the amount of oblique cases. Table (4) gives a short overview of this phenomenon:

Table (4): main differences in the case system

		Atinan	Vitse-Arkabian,
		Ardeshenian	Pazarian
			Hopan
Nominative	Nominative	noun stem	noun stem
Narrative	Nominative	noun stem	<i>-k</i>
Dative	Nominative	noun stem	<i>-s</i>
Genitive		<i>-ši</i>	<i>-š(i)</i>
Allative			<i>-ša</i>
Ablative	Motative	<i>-ša</i>	<i>-šen</i>
Instrumental		<i>-te</i>	<i>-te</i>

Given the grammatical differences concerning e.g. the size of the case system as shown in table (4) and in addition to some differences in the phonological systems of Pazarian and Ardeshenian (e.g. the non-existence of the phoneme /dz/ in Ardeshenian as opposed to Pazarian (cf. Ardeshenian: *maziren* 'I see it' vs. Pazarian: *majirmas* 'I see it'), or the simplification of affricates to fricatives in harmonic clusters, e.g. *č'k* -> *šk*' for Ardeshenian (cf. Ardeshenian: *lemšk'va* vs. Pazarian: *lemčk'va* 'saliva')) lead to the conclusion that the dialectal variety is fourfold, leaving Ardeshenian to be classified as a Laz dialect of its own.

3.2 A Hoĵa narrative told in diverse varieties of Laz

The following example illustrates the dialectal variation of Laz. It shows a short story originally told in the Laz variety of Ardeşen (Ard.), being reproduced afterwards in the varieties of Arhavi (Arh.) and of Hopa (Hop.). The texts are from Dumezil (1972:34-35). Glosses and translation were given by me.

Hodsha's Rope

Ard.:	<i>a ndya</i>	<i>xoĵa Nusrettiniši</i>	<i>k'omši</i>	<i>xoĵaši</i>	<i>oxoriša</i>	<i>mulun</i>
Arh.:	<i>a ndyas</i>	<i>xoĵa Nusrettiniši</i>	<i>malte</i>	<i>xoĵaši</i>	<i>oxoriše</i>	<i>mulun</i>
Hop.:	<i>ar nayas</i>	<i>xoĵa Nusrettiniši</i>	<i>manzageyi</i>	<i>xoĵaši</i>	<i>oxoyiša</i>	<i>mulun</i>

gloss: one day Hodsha N's neighbour Hodsha's house comes.to

Ard.:	<i>do</i>	<i>t'oč'i</i>	<i>goruy.</i>	<i>Xoĵa:</i>	<i>"t'oč'i</i>	<i>mč'veri</i>	<i>koĵebobyi,</i>
Arh.:	<i>do</i>	<i>tok'i</i>	<i>gorums.</i>	<i>Xoĵak:</i>	<i>"tok'is</i>	<i>mkvey</i>	<i>kogebobyi,</i>
Hop.:	<i>do</i>	<i>tok'i</i>	<i>ak'vandeys.</i>	<i>Xoĵak:</i>	<i>"tok'is</i>	<i>mkiyi</i>	<i>geobyi,</i>

gloss: and rope asks.for Hodsha rope flour I.have.put.into.it

Ard.:	<i>himušeni</i>	<i>va memačasen"</i>	<i>t'k'u.</i>
Arh.:	<i>hemušeni</i>	<i>var memačasen"</i>	<i>ya.</i>
Hop.:	<i>emušeni</i>	<i>va memačasion"</i>	<i>ya tku.</i>

gloss: therefore not I.will.be.able.to.give.you he.said

Ard.:	<i>"Xoĵa</i>	<i>goišaši-i?</i>	<i>t'oči</i>	<i>mč'veri</i>	<i>jibyeni-i?"</i>
Arh.:	<i>"Xoĵa,</i>	<i>goyšaši-yi?</i>	<i>tok'is</i>	<i>mkvey</i>	<i>kogeybyeni-i?" ya</i>
Hop.:	<i>"Xoĵa,</i>	<i>koguišaši-yi?</i>	<i>tok'is</i>	<i>mkiyi</i>	<i>gyibyeni-i?" ya</i>

gloss: Hodsha you.have.gone.crazy-QU rope flour it.is.put.into-QU

Ard.:	<i>xoĵa</i>	<i>himdora</i>	<i>t'k'u</i>	<i>či:</i>	<i>"mečamu</i>	<i>guri var giyurt'a-si</i>
Arh.:	<i>xoĵak</i>	<i>hemindoras:</i>			<i>"mečamu</i>	<i>guyis var giyut'a-ši</i>
Hop.:	<i>xoĵak</i>	<i>emzemanis:</i>			<i>"mečamu</i>	<i>va gint'a-ši</i>

gloss: Hodsha then he.has.said that to.give you.do.not.want-if

Ard.:	<i>mč'veri</i>	<i>ti</i>	<i>jibyeni</i>	<i>irituli</i>	<i>ti</i>	<i>jibyeni."</i>	<i>t'k'u</i>
Arh.:	<i>mkvey</i>	<i>ti</i>	<i>gebyeni</i>	<i>mutxani yen</i>	<i>ti</i>	<i>gebyeni."</i>	<i>ya tku</i>
Hop.:	<i>mkiyi</i>	<i>ti</i>	<i>gyibyeni</i>	<i>k'at'a şeyi</i>	<i>ti</i>	<i>gyibyeni"</i>	<i>ya tku</i>

gloss: flour EMP it.is.put.into anything EMP it.is.put.into he.said

translation:

‘One day, Hodsha Nusrettin’s neighbour came to the Hodsha’s house and asked for a rope. Hodsha (said): “I have put flour into the rope (like in a container), therefore, I cannot give it to you”, he said. “Hosha, have you gone crazy? How can you put flour into a rope?” Hodsha then said: “If you don’t want to give (your rope), you can put flour into it indeed, you can put anything into it.”’

.4 Laz as an Endangered Language

Although approximately 6500 languages are spoken on our planet today, experts estimate that up to two-thirds of them will be extinct in the middle of the 21st century. Since all languages are intimately interlinked with the culture and social identity of its speakers, and since all languages represent each a unique repertoire of human knowledge of the world and a richness of social and cultural achievements, this endangerment of the majority of this world’s languages is both a threat to the human community to lose priceless intellectual values forever, and the violation of basic human rights for the peoples concerned.

Laz clearly is an endangered language, as it is no longer fully acquired by children. A number of factors contribute to this state of affairs. The Laz people are not officially recognized as an ethnic minority in Turkey. Turkish is the only language of education, administration, and public discourse for the Laz. Turkish mass media are available even in the more remote villages. The population of the towns mainly consists of Laz (of various dialects), Hemshin, and Turks. Their common medium of communication is Turkish. Village populations are shrinking as ever more families migrate to the towns.¹¹ Thus, practically all Laz are either monolingual in Turkish or bilingual in Laz and Turkish. Even in villages where the whole population is Laz it is common to hear every day conversations in Turkish.

Given this general socio-economic scenario, it does not come as a surprise that Laz enjoys little prestige even among the Laz themselves. Many Laz doubt that Laz is a ‘real’ language and claim that it does not have a grammar. Some tend to view themselves as Turks rather than as Laz and generally attempt to hide their ethnic roots.

¹¹ The town population in 1997 was much higher relative to the village population, when compared to the 1990 census (for Ardeşen: 1990 17.340 town dwellers and 22.421 village inhabitants vs. 33.727 town dwellers and 17.554 village inhabitants in 1997, the general population growth for the region being 2.33%).

A consequence of this lack of prestige is the fact that even in those families where Laz is still spoken on an everyday basis, use of Laz is generally confined to informal communication among the elder generations. Most parents nowadays only talk Turkish to their children who then acquire at most a passive knowledge of Laz. The recency of this shift is witnessed by the fact that the knowledge of Laz varies dramatically even among siblings: older siblings (over twenty years old) often have a good command of Laz while their younger siblings appear to have grown up speaking exclusively Turkish.

The only attempt to date to counter the rapid decline of the language has been the proposal by Lazoğlu & Feurstein in 1984 of Laz becoming a written language by creating a new orthography (see also paragraph 2.2 and table (2b)). The fact that, as known by the author, all Laz publications which have been published ever since have been written in the ‘Lazoğlu-alphabet’ shows that it has been widely accepted among the Laz community.

However, so far all attempts to make Laz a widely used and accepted medium of written communication have failed. In the early 1990s, for example, there was an attempt to publish a journal in Laz (*Ogni sk’ani nena!* ‘Listen to your language’), but only a few issues appeared. In fact, visiting the Laz community in Ardeşen, the author noted that many Laz appeared to be confused by the idea that Laz could or should be written down. For them, Laz is exclusively a medium of spoken verbal interaction.

In sum it has to be stated that although Laz is still a fully functional medium of spoken verbal interaction among the adult Laz population, it is rapidly losing ground among children and young adults below twenty years of age. Because of its decline in the younger generations it is clearly an endangered language. In order to keep Laz alive one has to revitalize the use of the language as a means of every day communication among the youth. Spreading publications in the Laz language can only be one small step among many others. There are first attempts of some Laz to vitalize their native tongue in a ‘modern’ way by playing pop music and singing Laz lyrics (cf. rock band *Zuğaşi Berepe*) or even creating web sites about Laz culture (e.g. <http://members.xoom.com/mjora>; <http://members.xoom.com/lazurisayfar>; <http://www.geocities.tokyo/8160/Language/Lstudies.htm>; <http://www.laz-tr.com>). But in order to reach a broader audience of young Laz more general activities have to be taken.

.5 Research Activities

The only Laz dialect for which a number of published sources exist is the Hopan dialect, spoken by approx. 30,000 Laz living in Georgia and the Turkish town of Hopa. For this dialect, there are Marr's (1910) and Chikobava's (1936) grammatical sketches. Chikobava's sketch is written in Georgian, Marr's in Russian (but the Laz data are rendered partly in the Georgian partly in the Latin alphabet). Holisky (1991) presents a short grammatical sketch in English which is based on Georgian sources.

Except from Marr (1910), who also gives the main characteristic differences of other varieties compared to Hopan, all other dialects have received much less attention. For the dialect of Pazar there is a grammatical sketch by Rosen (1844) and a text collection by K'art'ozia (1974, written in Georgian). Regarding the dialect of Fındıklı, Anderson (1963) presents a structuralist grammar with very little exemplification, including a single short sample text. The dialect of Arhavi is known only from a number of published texts (Zhghenti 1938, written in Georgian, and Dumezil 1967, written in French).

As for the dialect of Ardeşen, some aspects of grammar have been described by the research group on Laz at the University of Cologne. Kutscher et al. (1995) present some basic phonological and morphosyntactic information, Kutscher (2001) presents a more in-depth analysis of the morphosyntax of nouns and nominal expressions. In addition to the grammatical analyses, there are three small collections of narrative texts for Ardeshenian (Dumezil & Essenc (1972), an appendix to Kutscher et al. (1995), and Kutscher & Genç (1998)).

In addition, K'art'ozia (1993) offers a collection of texts from all varieties of Laz, which are, however, published in the Georgian writing system.

A final and very recent addition to the published sources is the Laz-Turkish dictionary by İsmail Avcı Bucaklışı & Hasan Uzunhasanoğlu, two Laz speakers living in Turkey. This is the first dictionary of the Laz language, containing lexical entries from all Laz dialects (for each lexical entry it is indicated in which dialect it occurs and whether or not it has the same meaning in differing dialects). The meaning definitions, however, are very short, typically consisting of a single Turkish gloss and there are no examples illustrating the actual use of the Laz items.

Apart from the above mentioned publications on Laz there are some research activities at universities in Georgia (Tbilisi and Kutaisi) and Germany (Cologne (see http://www.uni-koeln.de/phil-fak/ifs/d_index.htm -> "Projekte")). In Turkey, so far there has been done no research on the language of its own, except some work on Laz-Turkish code-switching at the University of Ankara.