

A documentation project in Azerbaijan

The language and its speakers

The Khinalug language is only spoken in Khinalug village in Northern Azerbaijan. Khinalug belongs to the North-East Caucasian (Nakh-Daghestanian) language family. There are approximately 2,000 speakers who are mostly bilingual with the national language of Azerbaijan (Azeri). At the village school, all subjects are only taught in Azeri.



Project team working with the language consultants in the village

The project

The project is supervised by Jost Gippert and Wolfgang Schulze. The fieldwork is conducted by Monika Rind-Pawłowski and Tamrika Khvtisiashvili. The target of the project is a comprehensive documentation of the language and its use, including a vast collection of texts through video and audio recordings, the investigation of socio-linguistic issues and cultural characteristics of the speakers, efforts in language revitalization, the grammatical description of the language and the creation of a Khinalug-Azeri-English dictionary.



Khinalug village is mostly subsidized by animal herding.



Khinalug village - the highest, most remote and isolated village in Azerbaijan



Khinalug mother-and-son in their everyday traditional attire

Khinalug way of life

Khinalug is the highest inhabited village in Azerbaijan and arguably the highest one in the Caucasus. Being located at 2,300 m above sea level, the agricultural potential is limited to potatoes, cabbage and wild herbs at its best. People's diet mainly consists of the animals they raise and dairy products. Most families' livelihood is subsidized by animal herding. Due to insufficient vegetation, the animals are taken to the warmer climate of Southern Azerbaijan, thus creating a nomadic lifestyle for most Khinalug residents.



One of the oldest Khinalug speakers alive

Some grammatical features:

- » 40+ consonant phonemes
- » 4 noun classes
- » Ergativity with no split
- » At least 13 cases
- » High number of demonstratives
- » At least 9 past tenses
- » Morphologically integrated directional system



Traditionally homes in Khinalug village are stacked on top of each other, resembling a staircase.

CONTACT ADDRESS

Prof. Dr. Jost Gippert
Monika Rind-Pawłowski
Tamrika Khvtisiashvili
Vergleichende Sprachwissenschaft
Goethe-Universität Frankfurt
gippert@em.uni-frankfurt.de
monikapawłowski@live.de
tamrikak@gmail.com



Khinalug language - North East Caucasian language spoken in one village of Azerbaijan