

LEXICAL AND COMPOSITIONAL FACTORS IN THE ASPECTUAL SYSTEM OF ADYGHE

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1. Introduction

❶ Adyghe (West Circassian) < Circassian < North-West Caucasian, Russian Federation

Existing sources: Paris 1989 (in French), Smeets 1984 (in English), Rogava & Kerasheva 1962, Kumakhov 1971 (in Russian).

Outstanding typological features:

- ♣ (almost) no distinction between nouns and verbs (Lander & Testelets 2006);
- ♣ polysynthesis (pronominal affixes expressing all syntactic arguments of the predicate, rich system of valency increasing operations);
- ♣ ergativity in both dependent marking (case on NPs) and head marking (pronominal affixes on verbs);
- ♣ rich system of locational preverbs;
- ♣ complex mechanisms of clause combining and sentential complementation (cf. Gerasimov 2006; cf. also Kumakhov & Vamling 1998 for the closely related Kabardian).

The data comes mainly from the fieldwork materials collected during field-trips to village Hakurinohabl, Republic Adygheya, organized by the Russian State University for Humanities in 2004–2005.

❷ Layered theory of aspectuality (Bache 1982, Klein 1994, Smith 1997/1991, de Swart 1998, Filip 1999, Bertinetto & Delfitto 2000 etc.):

- ♣ **actionality** (≈ lexical aspect): aspectual classification of predicates into **states, processes, events** etc.;
- ♣ **aspectual composition** (Verkuyl 1989, 1993, Krifka 1989, 1992, 1998, Tenny 1994, Filip 1999): interaction of the predicate's actionality with semantic/referential properties of its arguments;
- ♣ **aspectual operators** (Klein 1994, Smith 1995, Depraetere 1995, de Swart 1998): temporal adverbials;
- ♣ **viewpoint aspect**: perfective vs. imperfective (Comrie 1976, Dahl 1985, Smith 1997/1991).

❸ Non-aprioristic typologically-oriented theory of actionality (Tatevosov 2002):

- ♣ **universal actional meanings**: state (S), process (P), multiplicative process (M), entry-into-a-state (ES), entry-into-a-process (EP), quantum-of-a-multiplicative-process (Q);
- ♣ **actional characteristic** of a TA-form: the set of actional meanings a TA-form of a given verb may have;
- ♣ **empirical procedure** for the discovery of actional classes in a particular language: two verbs belong to one actional class iff their combinations with the universal aspectual viewpoints (perfective and imperfective) show identical actional characteristics;
- ♣ **cross-linguistic actional classes**: classes which recur in different languages; **NB** the set of cross-linguistic actional classes does not coincide with the set of classes proposed for English by Vendler (1967).

❹ Outline of the talk:

2. The tense-aspect system of Adyghe.
3. Actional classes in Adyghe.
4. Interaction of predicates of different classes with adverbials of temporal duration and temporal extent: Lexical vs. compositional analysis.
5. Morphosyntactic evidence for the compositional analysis.

2. Tense and aspect in Adyghe

❶ ‘Static’ vs. ‘dynamic’ predicates (a general North-West-Caucasian feature, Hewitt 2005): more a morphological distinction rather than a semantic one (all morphologically ‘static’ verbs are semantically stative, but not all semantically stative verbs are morphologically ‘static’).

The difference between ‘static’ and ‘dynamic’ predicates is observed in the Present tense:

- | | |
|---|--|
| (1) a. <i>čʼale-r šʼə-t.</i>
boy-ABS LOC-stand
‘The boy is standing.’ (static) | b. <i>čʼale-r txæpəç.</i>
boy-ABS cunning
‘The boy is cunning.’ (static) |
| (2) a. <i>čʼale-r ma-k_we.</i>
boy-ABS DYN-go
‘The boy is walking.’ (dynamic) | b. <i>čʼale-m pjəsm¹ j-e-txə.</i>
boy-OBL letter 3SG.A-DYN-write
‘The boy is writing a letter.’ (dynamic) |

Some predicates allow both ‘static’ and ‘dynamic’ morphology (with a semantic difference):

- | | |
|--|---|
| (3) a. <i>čʼale-r bzažʼe.</i>
boy-ABS rascal
‘The boy is a rascal.’ (static) | b. <i>čʼale-r me-bzažʼe.</i>
boy-ABS DYN-rascal
‘The boy is being naughty (now).’ (dynamic) |
|--|---|

❷ A ‘classical’ European tripartite tense system:

♣ **Present** (unmarked with ‘static’ predicates, ‘dynamic’ prefix *-e/-me-* with ‘dynamic’ predicates): allows both Progressive (4a) and Habitual (4b) interpretation.

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|--|--|
| (4) a. <i>pšəše-r žʼədede txələ-m j-e-žʼe.</i>
girl-ABS now book-OBL 3SG.IO-DYN-read
‘The girl is now reading the book.’ | b. <i>pšəše-r mafe qes txələ-m j-e-žʼe.</i>
girl-ABS day every book-OBL 3SG.IO-DYN-read
‘The girl every day reads the book.’ |
|--|--|

♣ **Preterite** (suffix *-kə*): Perfective viewpoint in the past, with both Terminative (5a) and Delimitative (5b) interpretations.

- | | |
|--|--|
| (5) a. <i>pšəše-r txələ-m je-žʼa-k.</i>
girl-ABS book-OBL 3SG.IO-read-PST
‘The girl read the book (to the end).’ | b. <i>čʼale-r telewizorə-m je-plə-k.</i>
boy-ABS television-OBL 3SG.IO-watch-PST
‘The boy watched television (for some time).’ |
|--|--|

♣ **Imperfect** (suffix *-šʼtəbə*): Progressive-in-the-Past (6a) and Habitual-in-the-Past (6b) interpretations.

- | | |
|---|---|
| (6) a. <i>wəne-m sə-z-je-he-m čʼale-r pšəše-m de-g_wəšʼəʼe-šʼtəb.</i>
room-OBL 1SG.S-SBD-LOC-go-OBL boy-ABS girl-OBL SOC-talk-IPF
‘When I entered the room, the boy was talking with the girl.’ | b. <i>čʼale-r səhat-jə-ble čəje-šʼtəbə.</i>
boy-ABS hour-INF-seven sleep-IPF
‘The boy used to sleep for seven hours.’ |
|---|---|

3. Aspectual classes in Adyghe

Aspectual classes were determined on the basis of the actional meanings of (Progressive) Present and Preterite forms of predicates from a representative sample, see Table 1.

♣ Stative:

- | | |
|--|---|
| (7) a. <i>rasul ə-šhe me-wəzə.</i>
Rasul 3SG.POSS-head ² DYN-ache
‘Rasul has headache.’ | b. <i>rasul ə-šhe wəzə-kə.</i>
Rasul 3SG.POSS-head ache-PST
‘Rasul had headache (for some time).’ |
|--|---|

¹ Indefinite nouns lack overt case marking.

² Possessed nouns, proper names and personal pronouns do not (usually) inflect for case.

Table 1. Actional classes in Adyghe

Class	Actional characteristic of the Present	Actional characteristic of the Preterite	Number of predicates	Examples
Stative	S	S	33	<i>š'əlan</i> 'to lie', <i>psəwən</i> 'to live'
Strong Inceptive-Stative	S	ES	10	<i>šen</i> 'to know', <i>ləb_wən</i> 'to see'
Weak Inceptive-Stative	S	ES,S	1	<i>čəjen</i> 'to sleep'
Processual	P	P	15	<i>ž'eg_wən</i> 'to play', <i>txen</i> 'to write' (intransitive)
Strong Ingressive-Processual	P	EP	4	<i>k_wən</i> 'to go', <i>bəbən</i> 'to fly'
Strong Multiplicative	M	Q	10	<i>k_wəwen</i> 'to shout', <i>wəž_wəntxen</i> 'to spit'
Weak Multiplicative	M	Q,M	1	<i>psken</i> 'cough'
Punctual	—	ES	8	<i>žən</i> 'to throw', <i>qewen</i> 'to explode'
Strong Telic	P	ES	49	<i>lən</i> 'to die', <i>jetən</i> 'to give', <i>ʔən</i> 'to dig', <i>qebegən</i> 'to swell'

♣ Strong Inceptive-Stative:

- (8) a. *č'ale-m pšaše-r š_wə j-e-ləb_wə.* boy-OBL girl-ABS good 3SG.A-DYN-see
 'The boy loves the girl.'
 b. *č'ale-m pšaše-r š_wə ə-ləb_wə-β.* boy-OBL girl-ABS good 3SG.A-DYN-see-PST
 'The boy fell in love with the girl || *loved the girl (for some time).'

♣ Weak Inceptive-Stative:

- (9) a. *č'ale-r me-čəje.* boy-ABS DYN-sleep
 'The boy is sleeping.'
 b. *č'ale-r čəja-βe.* boy-ABS sleep-PST
 'The boy slept (for some time) || fell asleep.'

♣ Processual:

- (10) a. *č'ale-xe-r me-ž'eg_wə-x.* boy-PL-ABS DYN-play
 'The children are playing.'
 b. *č'ale-xe-r ž'er_wə-βe-x.* boy-PL-ABS play-PST-PL
 'The children played (for some time).'

♣ Strong Ingressive-Processual³:

- (11) a. *č'ale-r wəne-m ma-čə.* boy-ABS house-OBL DYN-run
 'The boy is running to the house.'
 b. *č'ale-r wəne-m ča-βe.* boy-ABS house-OBL run-PST
 'The boy started running to the house || *came to the house running || *ran to the house for some time.'

♣ Strong Multiplicative:

- (12) a. *č'ale-r me-wež_wəntxe.* boy-ABS DYN-spit
 'The boy is spitting.'
 b. *č'ale-r wež_wəntxa-β.* boy-ABS spit-PST
 'The boy spat (once || *for some time).'

♣ Weak Multiplicative:

- (13) a. *č'ale-r ma-pske.* boy-ABS DYN-cough
 'The boy is coughing.'
 b. *č'ale-r pska-βe.* boy-ABS cough-PST
 'The boy coughed (once || for some time).'

♣ Punctual:

- (14) a. *pšaše-m ʔ_wənč'əbzə q-e-β_wetə.* girl-OBL keys DIR-DYN-find
 'The girl (always) finds the keys || *is finding the keys now.'
 b. *pšaše-m ʔ_wənč'əbzə q-ə-β_wetə-β.* girl-OBL keys DIR-3SG.A-find-PST
 'The girl found the keys.'

³ To this class, to my knowledge, belong only the predicates of manner of motion.

♣ Strong Telic:

(15) a. *thamate-m zeʔ_wəç'e-r r-j-e-ka-ž'e.*
 director-OBL meeting-ABS 3SG.IO-3SG.A-DYN-CAUS-begin
 'The director is opening the meeting.'

b. *txamate-m zeʔ_wəç'e-r r-jə-ke-ž'a-β.*
 director-OBL meeting-ABS 3SG.IO-3SG.A-CAUS-begin-PST
 'The director opened the meeting || *tried to open the meeting but failed.'

(16) a. *mələ-r me-tk_wə.* b. *mələ-r tk_wə-βe.*
 ice-ABS DYN-melt ice-ABS melt-PST
 'The ice is melting.' 'The ice melted (completely || ??partly).'

☞ All actional classes observed in Adyghe are cross-linguistic actional classes.

☞ The fact that the 'weak' (actionally ambivalent) predicates are almost absent in Adyghe is typologically peculiar (but see next section).

4. The interaction with temporal adverbials

❶ Two cross-linguistic types of temporal adverbials:

- ♣ adverbials of temporal duration: *səhatnəq_we* 'for half an hour', *taqjəqjət_we* 'for two minutes' etc.;
- ♣ adverbials of temporal extent: 'Instrumental' suffix *-ç'e*: *səhatnəq_we-ç'e* 'in half an hour', *taqjəqjət_we-ç'e* 'in two minutes'.

❷ The data

➤ Adverbials of temporal extent more or less freely combine with all predicates whose Preterite has an 'entry-into' actional meaning, viz. with Strong Inceptive-Stative (17a), Weak Inceptive-Stative (17b), Strong Ingressive-Processual (17c), Strong Multiplicative (17d), Punctual (17e) and Strong Telic (17f), (17g):

(17) a. *ç'ale-m pšəše-r taqjəq-jə-t_wə-ç'e ə-ləβ_wə-β.*
 boy-OBL girl-ABS minute-INF-two-INS 3SG.A-see-PST
 'The boy saw the girl in two minutes.'

b. *ç'ale-r səhat-nəq_we-ç'e čəja-βe.*
 boy-ABS hour-half-INS sleep-PST
 'The boy fell asleep in half an hour.'

c. *ç'ale-r taqjəq-jə-s'ə-ç'e ča-βe.*
 boy-ABS minute-INF-three-INS run-PST
 'The boy started running in three minutes.'

d. *ç'ale-r taqjəq-jə-t_wə-ç'e wəž_wəntxa-β.*
 boy-ABS minute-INF-two-INS spit-PST
 'The boy spat (again) in two minutes.'

e. *ʔeg_wawe-r taqjəq-jə-t_wə-ç'e qe-wa-β.*
 balloon-ABS minute-INF-two-INS DIR-explode-PST
 'The balloon exploded in two minutes.'

f. *mašine-r taqjəq-jə-tfə-ç'e qe-wəc_wə-β.*
 car-ABS minute-INF-five-INS DIR-stop-PST
 'The car stopped in five minutes.'

g. *pšəše-m səhat-nəq_we-ç'e pjəsmə-r ə-txə-β.*
 girl-OBL hour-half-INS letter-ABS 3SG.A-write-PST
 'The girl wrote the letter in half an hour.'

➤ Adverbials of temporal extent never combine with Stative predicates (18a) and are usually not felicitous with Processual predicates (18b):

(18) a. **mə çəfə-r jəles-jə-tfə-ç'e žə-βe.*
 this man-ABS year-INF-five-INS old-PST
 Intended meaning: 'This man grew old in five years.'

b. *ʔç'ale-r taqjəq-jə-tfə-ç'e qe-š_wa-β.*
 boy-ABS minute-INF-five-INS DIR-dance-PST
 'The boy started dancing in five minutes.'

➤ Adverbials of temporal duration freely combine with Stative (19a), Weak Inceptive-Stative (19b), Processual (19c), and Weak Multiplicative (19d) predicates:

- (19) a. *λəʒə-r jəles-jə-t_we λeš'a-κ.* b. *pšāše-r səhat-jə-ble čəja-κe.*
 old.man-ABS year-INF-two lame-PST girl-ABS hour-INF-seven sleep-PST
 ‘The old man was lame for two years.’ ‘The girl slept for seven hours.’
- c. *çəfə-r səhat-nəq_we g_wəš'ə'a-κe.* d. *səmaž'e-r taqjəq-jə-t_we pska-κe.*
 man-ABS hour-half talk-PST ill-ABS minute-INF-two cough-PST
 ‘The man talked for half an hour.’ ‘The patient coughed for two minutes.’

➤ However, adverbials of temporal duration no less freely combine with Strong Inceptive-Stative (20a), Strong Ingressive-Processual (20b), Strong Multiplicative (20c) and some Strong Telic (20d), (20e) vs. (20f) predicates:

- (20) a. *č'ale-m pšāše-r jəles-jə-tfē š_wə ə-λeκ_wə-κ.*
 boy-OBL girl-ABS year-INF-five good 3SG.A-see-PST
 ‘The boy was in love with the girl for five years.’
- b. *samoljwetə-r səhat-jə-t_wə krasnwedar bəbə-κe.*
 airplane-ABS hour-INF-two Krasnodar fly-PST
 ‘The airplane flew in the direction of Krasnodar for two hours.’
- c. *çəfə-m čəgə-r taqjəq-jə-š'e ə-κe-səsə-κ.*
 man-OBL tree-ABS minute-INF-three 3SG.A-CAUS-shake-PST
 ‘The man shook the tree for three minutes.’
- d. *č'ale-m səhat-nəq_we pjəsmə-r ə-txə-κ.* e. *mələ-r mef-jə-tfē t_kwə-κe.*
 boy-OBL hour-half letter-ABS 3SG.A-write-PST ice-ABS day-INF-five melt-PST
 ‘The boy wrote the letter for half an hour.’ ‘The ice melted for five days.’
- f. **txamate-m taqjəq-jə-š'e ze'əç'e-r r-jə-κe-ž'a-κ.*
 director-OBL minute-INF-three meeting-ABS 3SG.IO-3SG.A-CAUS-begin-PST
 ‘*The director opened the meeting for three minutes (i.e. he tried to open the meeting for three minutes, but failed, e.g. because the people were too loud.’

➤ The only actional class whose members normally do not combine with durational adverbials is the Punctual class (21a); however, in appropriate contexts recategorization is possible (21b):

- (21) a. **'əg_wawe-r taqjəq-jə-t_we qe-we-κ.*
 balloon-ABS minute-INF-two DIR-explode-PST
 ‘*The balloon exploded for two minutes.’
- b. *'əg_wawe-xe-r taqjəq-jə-t_we qe-we-κe-x.*
 balloon-PL-ABS minute-INF-two DIR-explode-PST-PL
 ‘The balloons exploded (one after another) for two minutes.’

③ How to explain the behaviour of the adverbials of temporal duration?

➤ Two possible accounts:

- ♣ **The ‘lexical’ account** (cf. Tatevosov 2002 and especially Tatevosov 2005 for Bagwalal, Mari and Tatar): Adyghe ‘Strong’ predicates are in fact ‘Weak’, i.e. inherently actionally ambiguous: their Preterite forms always allow both telic (ES, EP, Q) and atelic (S, P, M) interpretations, but the latter requires special context which is provided precisely by the durational adverbials.
- ♣ **The ‘compositional’ account** (cf. Depraetere 1995, Smith 1995, de Swart 1998): Adyghe actional classes are as in Table 1; the actional properties of the predicate may be subject to change when it is combined with adjuncts of various kinds.

5. Arguments for the compositional account

❶ ‘Weak’ Inceptive-Stative and Ingressive-Processual verbs in other languages allow atelic interpretation regardless of whether durational adverbials are present.

BAGWALAL (Avar-Andi < North-East Caucasian, Tatevosov 2002: 383, 385)

(22) a. *moHammad-i-la o-b zadača b-uhā.*

Mohammed-OBL-DAT this-N task N-understand

‘Mohammed came to understand this task || understood this task for some time.’

b. *pat’imat qari.*

Fatima cry

‘Fatima started crying || cried for some time.’

➤ There is at least one predicate in Adyghe which behaves like Bagwalal *-uhā* ‘understand’, viz. *čəjen* ‘sleep’ (9). Other Inceptive-Stative and Ingressive-Processual (‘initiotransformative’ in terms of Johanson 1996, 2000) predicates are rather similar to Bagwalal *hā* ‘see’, cf. (23) and (8) or Tatar *kajna* ‘boil’, cf. (24) and (11):

BAGWALAL (Tatevosov 2002: 382):

(23) *moHammad-i-ba ʕali hā.*

Mohammed-OBL-AFF Ali see

‘Mohammed saw (= caught sight of) Ali || *saw Ali for some time.’

TATAR (Turkic < Altaic, Tatevosov 2002: 385):

(24) *su kajna-dʒ.*

water boil-PST

‘Water came to boil, started boiling || *boiled for some time.’

➤ As far as I can judge from Tatevosov 2001: 251–263, ‘Strong’ verbs in Bagwalal do not combine with durational adverbials. However, their counterparts in Adyghe do it freely.

☞ Co-occurrence with durational adverbials in Bagwalal is determined on the level of the **lexicon**, whereas in Adyghe it is rather a matter of semantic compatibility.

❷ There are morphological forms of predicates whose interpretation is sensitive precisely to the actional properties as stated in Table 1⁴.

➤ A non-finite form in *zere-...-ew* denoting the event immediately preceding the one denoted by the main clause:

(25) *ə-šhe qə-zer-jə-ʔat-ew sə-wa-β.*

3SG.POSS-head DIR-SBD-3SG.A-raise-CNV 1SG.A-shoot-PST

‘As soon as he raised his head, I shot.’

➤ The meaning of constructions with *zere-...-ew* crucially depends on the actional characteristic of the Preterite. Cf. Stative (26a) and Strong Inceptive-Stative (26b) predicates:

(26) a. *č’ale-r zere-səmaž’-ew, šk_welə-m k_wa-βe.*

boy-ABS SBD-ill-CNV school-OBL go-PST

‘The boy, still being ill, went to school. || *The boy went to school as soon he became ill.’

b. *šak_we-m pšaše-r š_wə zer-jə-λeg_w-ew qə-š’a-β.*

hunter-OBL girl-ABS good SBD-3SG.A-see-CNV DIR-marry-PST

‘The hunter married the girl as soon as he fell in love with her || *still being in love with her.’

➤ Strong Inceptive-Stative predicates do not allow atelic interpretation of the *zere-...-ew* form; however, the Weak Inceptive-Stative predicate *čəjen* ‘to sleep’, **does allow** the atelic interpretation, cf. (27a), (27b) and (27c):

⁴ The material presented in this subsection was collected by Dmitry Gerasimov in Hakurinoahl in 2006.

- (27) a. *čʰale-r zere-čəj-ew, pčʰəhəpe ə-λeβ_wə-β.*
 boy-ABS SBD-sleep-CNV dream 3SG.A-see-PST
 ‘As soon as the boy fell asleep, he saw a dream.’
- b. *čʰale-r zere-čəj-ew, qarəwə-m qə-xe-χ_wa-β.*
 boy-ABS SBD-sleep-CNV strength-OBL DIR-LOC-become-PST
 ‘As soon as the boy had slept (for a while), he acquired strength.’
- c. *čʰale-r zere-čəj-ew, wəne-m r-a-xə-β.*
 boy-ABS SBD-sleep-CNV house-OBL 3SG.IO-3SG.A-carry-PST
 ‘While the boy was still sleeping, they carried him out of the house.’

➤ Those Telic predicates which allow atelic interpretation with durational adverbials, do not allow it in the *zere-...-ew* construction, cf. (28a) and (28b):

- (28) a. *čʰale-m čʰewə-r səhat-nəqwe ə-βela-β.*
 boy-OBL fence-ABS hour-half 3SG.A-paint-PST
 ‘The boy has been painting the fence for half an hour.’
- b. *čʰale-m čʰewə-r zer-jə-βal-ew, weš_wə q-je-xə-β.*
 boy-OBL fence-ABS SBD-3SG.A-paint-CNV hail DIR-LOC-come.down-PST
 ‘Just as the boy finished painting the fence, it started to hail. || *While the boy was still painting the fence, it started to hail.’

➤ Incidentally, the putative ‘Strong’ vs. ‘Weak’ Telic distinction based on the behavior of durational adverbials is not as rigid as a lexical contrast might be: some native speakers allow more Telic predicates to combine with adverbials of duration than others; however, it does not seem that any of the native speakers allow the atelic interpretation of the *zere-...-ew* forms of Telic predicates.

☞ The non-finite *zere-...-ew* forms preserve the independently established distinction between the Strong and Weak Inceptive-stative predicates, but fail to reveal any contrast between those Telic predicates which co-occur with the durational adverbials and those which do not.

☞ Both these facts strongly suggest that in Adyghe (at least) temporal adverbials of duration constitute a separate level of aspectual operators, which may change the actional properties of the predicate in a semantically-driven compositional way.

6. Theoretical implications

❶ Adyghe material provides important evidence for the idea that aspectual structure has a richer architecture than is usually assumed even by the proponents of ‘two-component’ theories (cf. Sasse 2002): between the ‘inner’ level of lexically-driven actional properties of predicates and the ‘outer’ level of viewpoint operators there is at least one separate level of aspectual operators, viz. the temporal adverbials. The degree of prominence and importance this level acquires is subject to cross-linguistic variation; Adyghe is an example of a language where this level is very prominent.

❷ The use of temporal adverbials for various aspectual tests (e.g. the common tests for telicity/atelicity) should be extremely cautious: it is justified only when there is independent evidence that adverbials do not shift the actional meaning of the predicate as they do in Adyghe.

Abbreviations

A – agent, ABS – absolutive, AFF – affective, CAUS – causative, CNV – converb, DAT – dative, DIR – directional preverb, DYN – dynamic prefix, INF – interfix, INS – instrumental, IO – indirect object, IPF – imperfect, LOC – locative preverb, N – neuter, OBL – oblique, PL – plural, POSS – possessive, PST – preterite, S – single core argument of intransitive predicate, SBD – subordinator, SG – singular, SOC – sociative

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