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Non-canonical inverse in Circassian languages

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The canonical inverse

Jacques & Antonov (2014: 302-303):

“a type of transitive person marking system presenting three essential characteristics”:

- role-neutrality of person markers;
- ambiguity resolution by means of obligatory dedicated markers (**direct** and **inverse**);
- no valency/transitivity change.

The canonical inverse

agent	patient	1	2	3prox	3obv
1		DIR	DIR		
2	INV		DIR		
3prox	INV	INV		DIR	
3obv			INV		

The canonical inverse

The **referential hierarchy** (Silverstein 1976, DeLancey 1981, Zúñiga 2006 etc.):

SAP > 3proximate > 3obviative

SAP > 3rd person pronoun > human > animate > inanimate

A>P: direct marking

P>A: inverse marking

The canonical inverse

Plains Cree (Algonquian, Canada; Zúñiga 2006: 76)

- a. *ni-sēkih-ā-w*
1-frighten-DIR-3
‘I frighten him.’
- b. *ni-sēkih-ikw-w*
1-frighten-INV-3
‘He frightens me.’

The canonical inverse

Plains Cree (Algonquian, Canada; Zúñiga 2006: 76)

- a. *ni-sēkih-ā-w*
1-frighten-DIR-3
'I frighten him.' role neutrality
of person markers
- b. *ni-sēkih-ikw-w*
1-frighten-INV-3
'He frightens me.'

The canonical inverse

Plains Cree (Algonquian, Canada; Zúñiga 2006: 76)

- a. *ni-sēkih-ā-w*
1-frighten-DIR-3
‘I frighten **him**.’ role neutrality
- b. *ni-sēkih-ikw-w*
1-frighten-INV-3
‘**He** frightens me.’ of person markers

The canonical inverse

Plains Cree (Algonquian, Canada; Zúñiga 2006: 76)

a. *ni-sēkih-ā-w*

1-frighten-**DIR**-3

‘I frighten him.’ **direct 1>3**

b. *ni-sēkih-ikw-w*

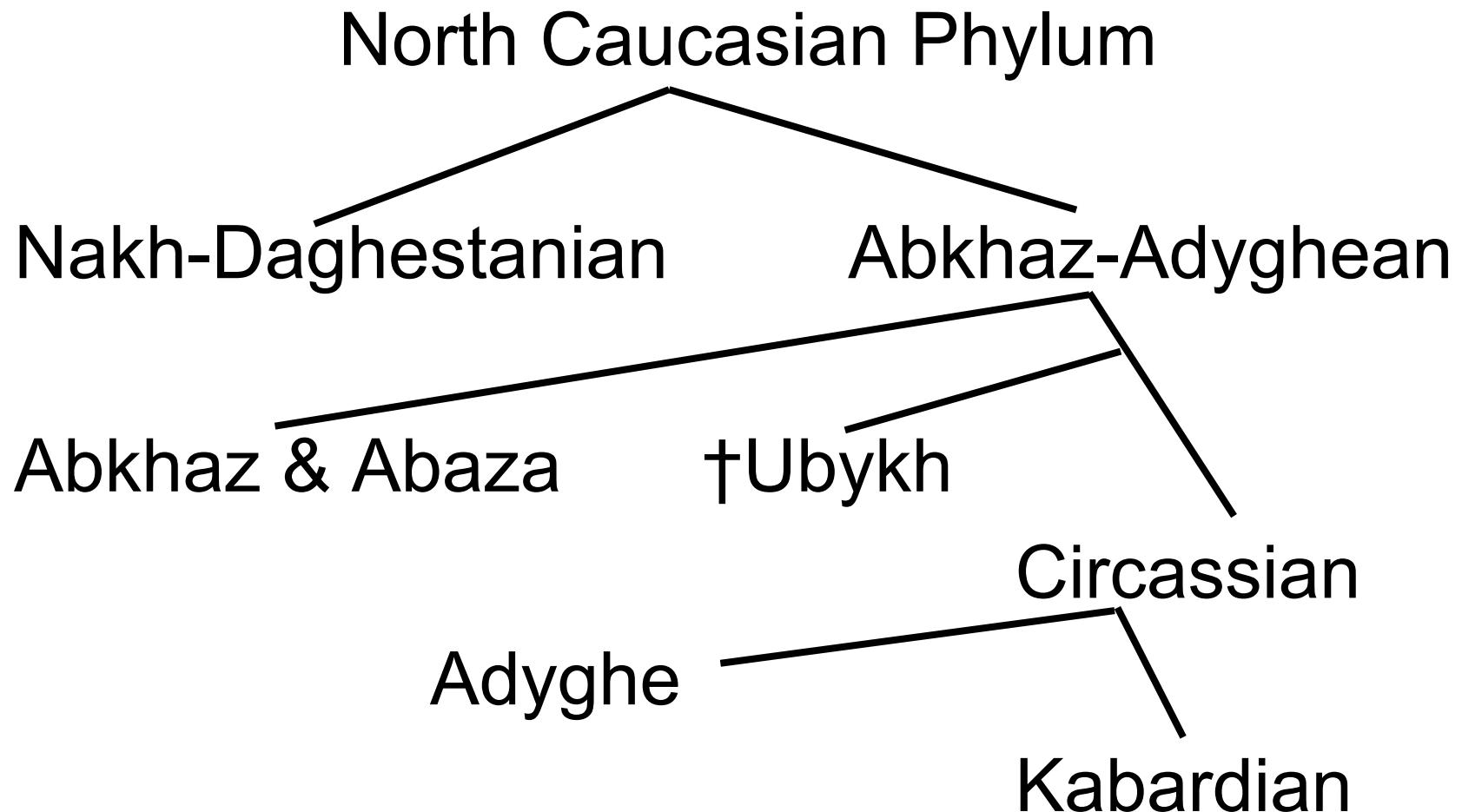
1-frighten-**INV**-3

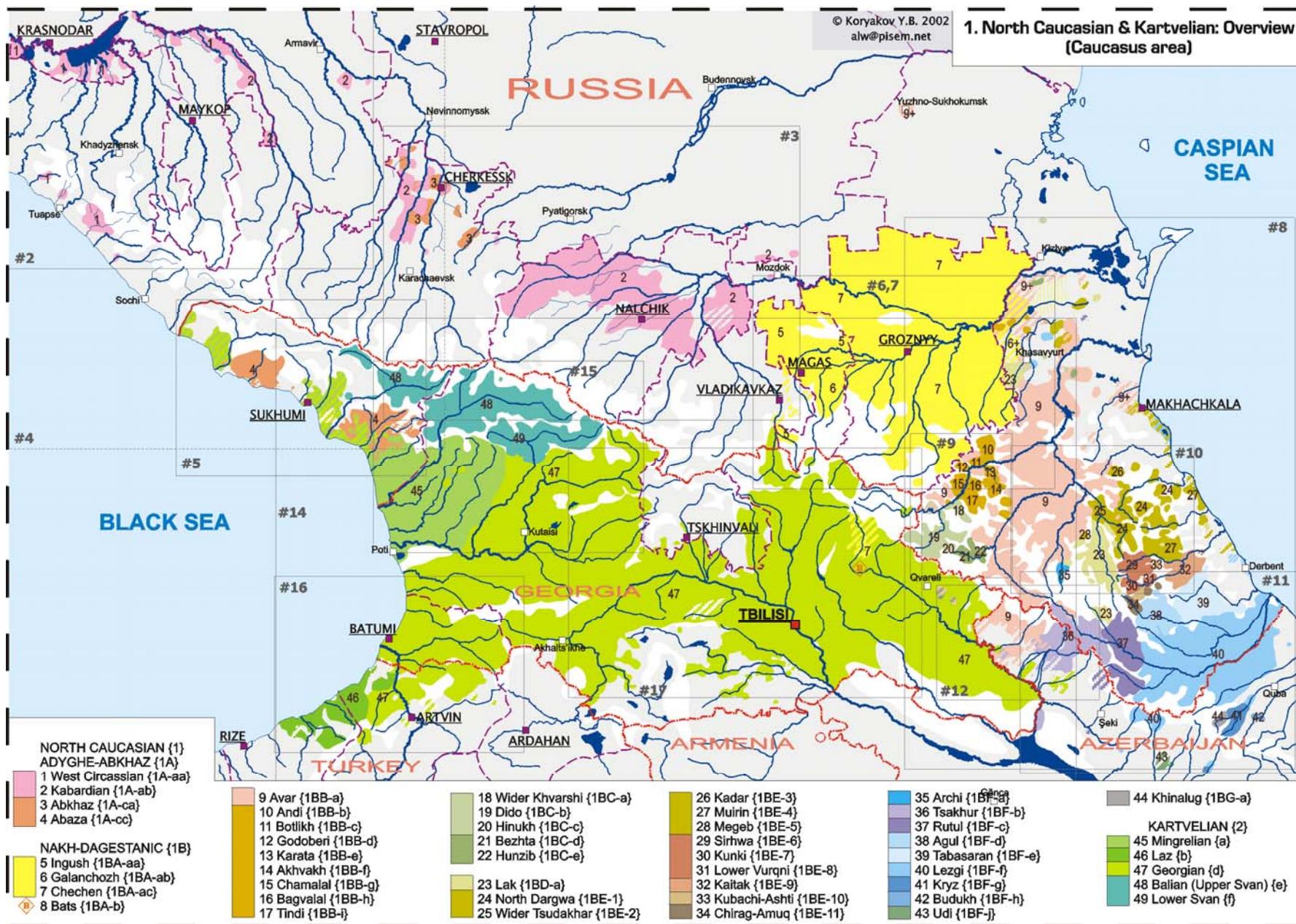
‘He frightens me.’ **inverse 3>1**

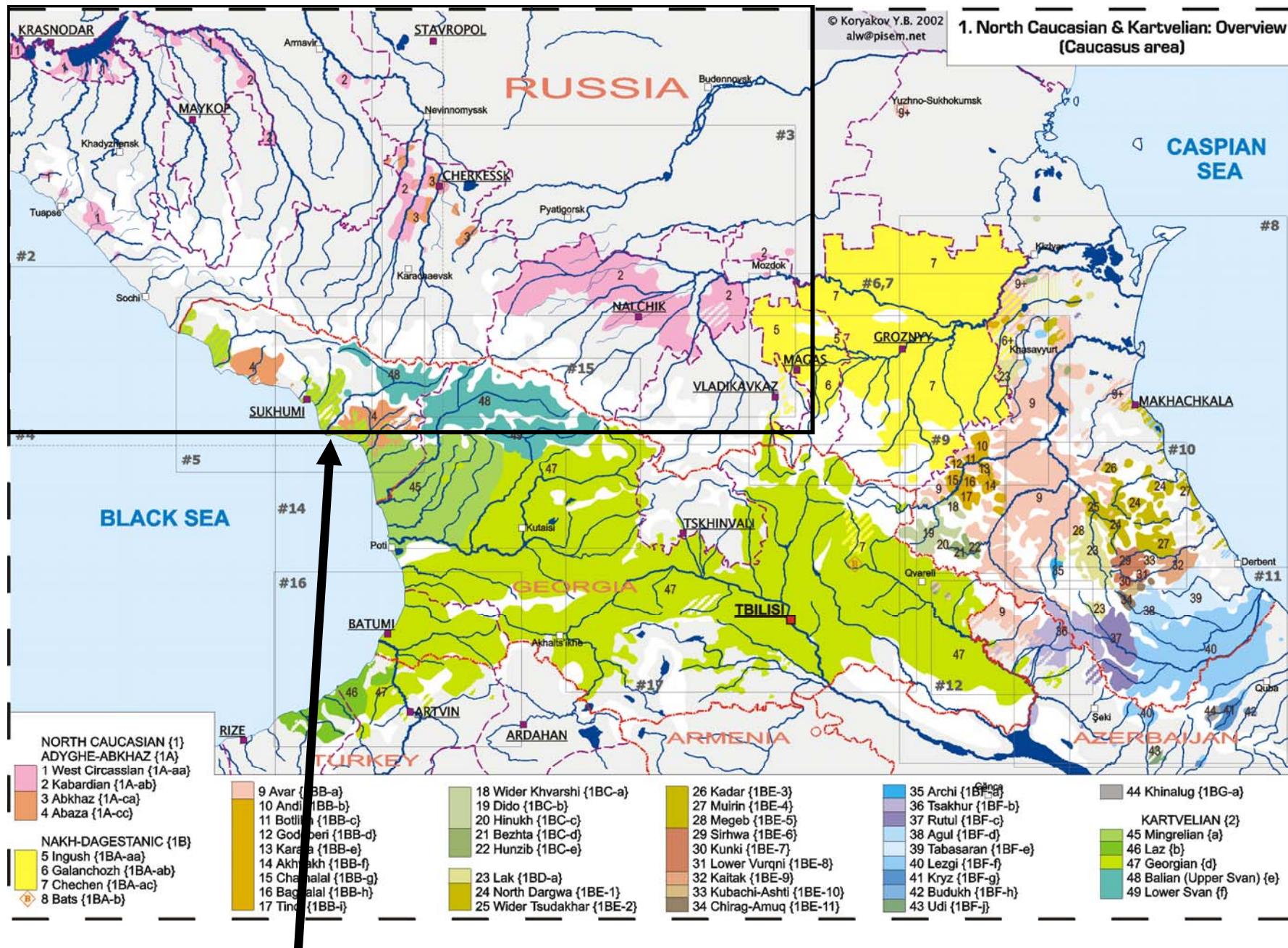
The canonical inverse

I present a case from **Circassian** (Northwest Caucasian) languages which can be considered a highly non-canonical instance of inverse.

The Circassian languages

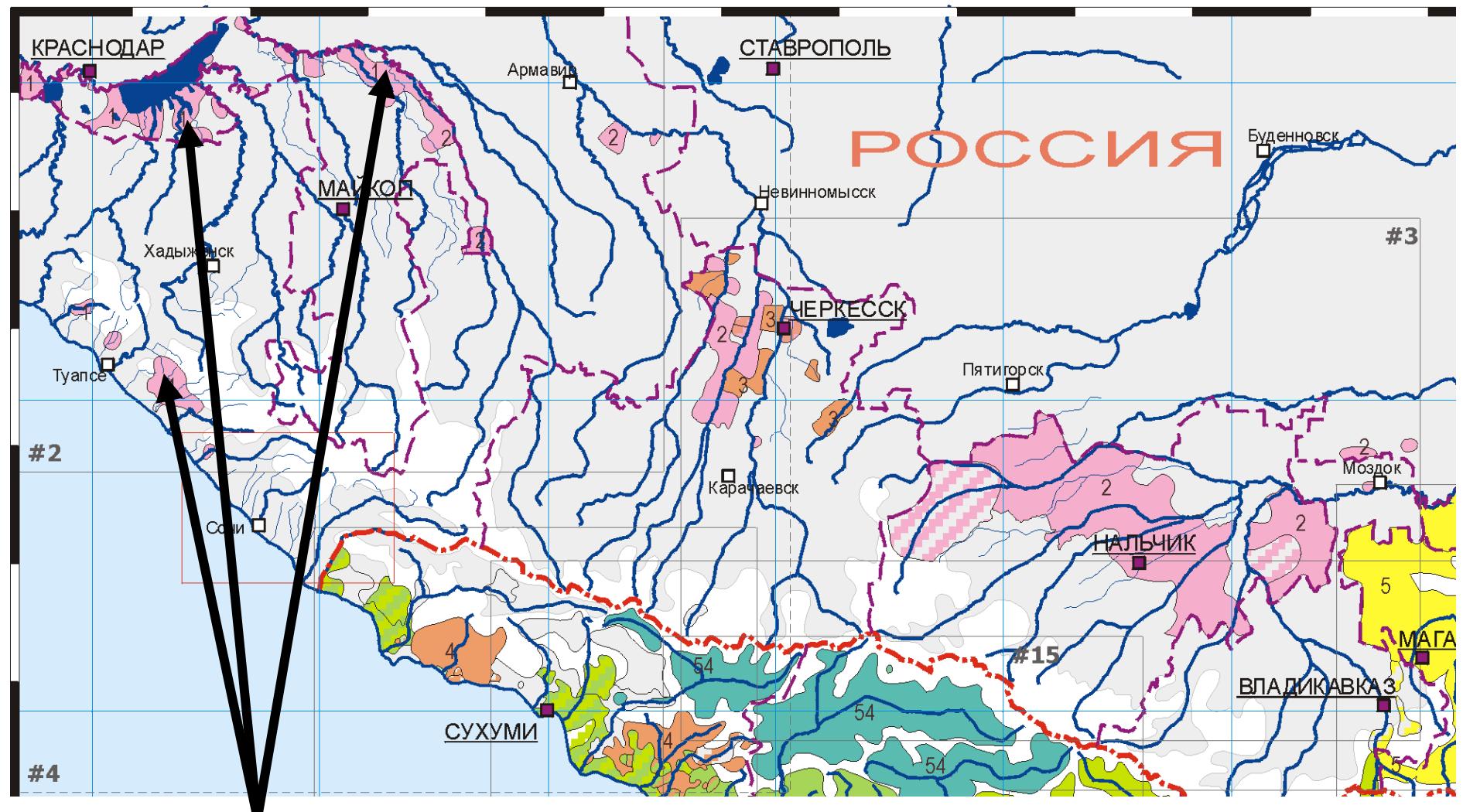




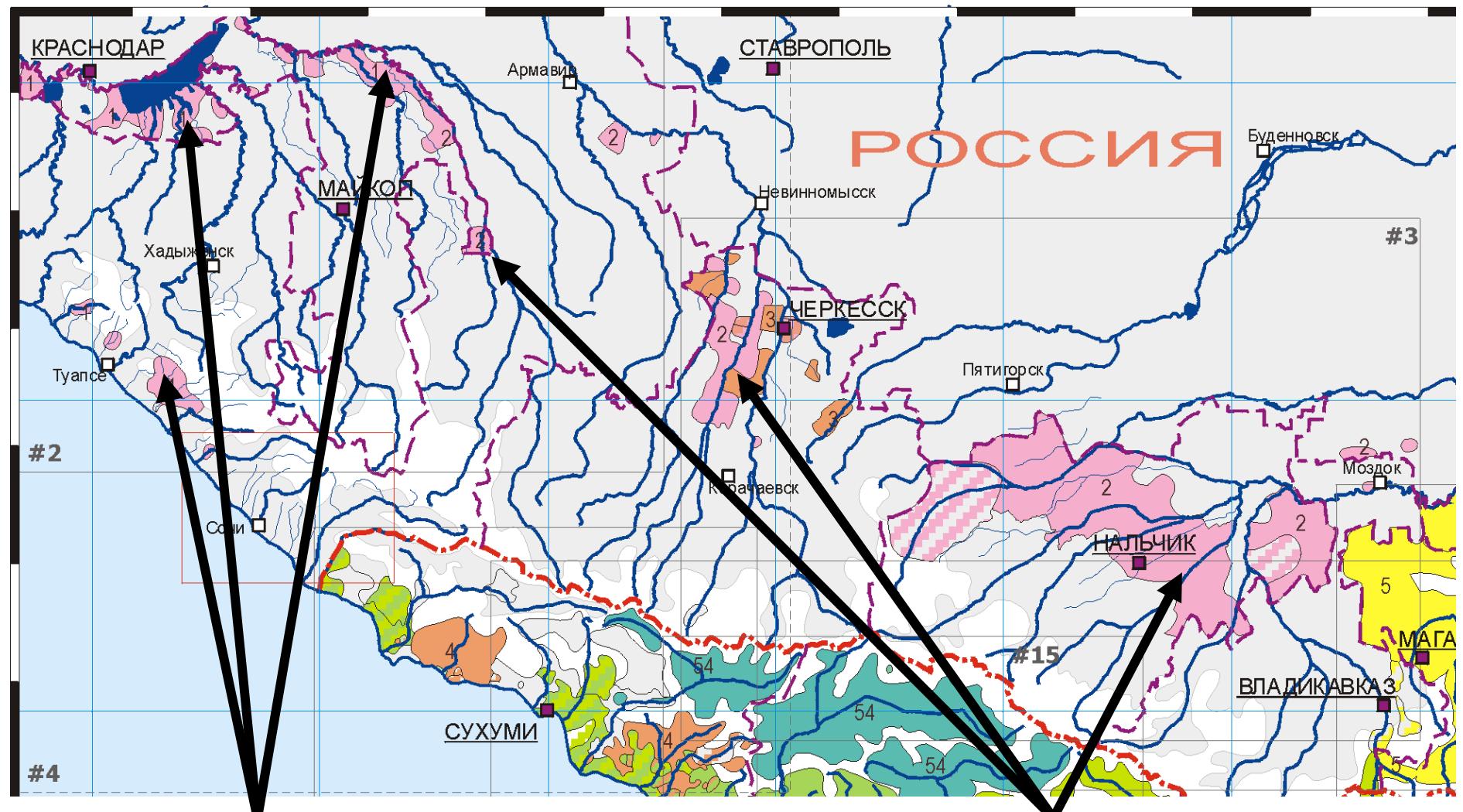


North-West Caucasian languages





Adygea



Adyge

Kabardian

Sources of data

- Examples from Temirgoy and Bzhedugh dialects of Adyghe and Besleney and Kuban dialects of Kabardian elicited during fieldtrips to the Republic of Adygheya in 2004-2016.
- A small corpus of oral narratives (mainly for Besleney Kabardian).
- Annotated published texts in Standard Adyghe.

Typological characteristics

- rich consonantism & poor vocalism
- polysynthesis
- morphological ergativity in both case marking and verbal indexing
- very little distinction between major parts of speech

(Smeets 1984, Kumakhov & Vamling 2009,
Testelets ed. 2009, Lander & Testelets 2017)

Polysynthesis

Besleney Kabardian (elicited)

sə-ɡə-zər-a-xʷə-č'era-mə-ʈətə-č'ə-ž'-a-r

1SG.ABS-CISL-REL.FCT-3PL.IO-BEN-LOC-NEG-tie-
ELAT-RE-PST-ABS

‘that they could not untie me from there’

abs – absolute

ben – benefactive

cisl – cislocative preverb

elat - elative

io – indirect object

loc – locative preverb

neg - negation

pl - plural

pst – past

re - refactive

rel.fct – factive relativization

sg - singular

Polysynthesis

Besleney Kabardian (elicited)

sə-ɟə-**zer**-a-xʷə-č'era-mə-ṭetə-č'ə-ž'-a-**r**

1SG.ABS-CISL-**REL.FCT**-3PL.IO-BEN-LOC-NEG-tie-
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elat - elative

io – indirect object

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pl - plural

pst – **past**

re - refactive

rel.fct – factive relativization

sg - singular

Polysynthesis

Besleney Kabardian (elicited)

sə-ɟə-zər-a-xʷə-č'era-**mə**-tətə-č'ə-ž'-a-r
1SG.ABS-CISL-REL.FCT-3PL.IO-BEN-LOC-**NEG**-tie-
ELAT-RE-PST-ABS

‘that they could **not** untie me from there’

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re - **refactive**

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Polysynthesis

Besleney Kabardian (elicited)

sə-ɟə-zər-a-xʷə-č'ərə-mə-**tətə**-č'ə-ž'-a-r
1SG.ABS-CISL-REL.FCT-3PL.IO-BEN-LOC-NEG-**tie**-
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Besleney Kabardian (elicited)

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The cislocative preverb

- *qe-* ~ *qa-* ~ *q(a)-* (the vowel depends on the morphophonological environment);
- one of the most frequently occurring morphemes in the Circassian languages;
- occupies the slot immediately following the absolute cross-referencing prefixes;
- fairly polyfunctional with different uses spanning the entire “derivation ~ inflection” continuum.

The cislocative preverb

- The basic meaning: orientation towards the deictic center (origo), in the simplest case towards the speaker.

Adyghe:

če ‘run (away)!’ vs. **qa**-če ‘run here!’

pλe ‘look (there)’ vs. **qa**-pλe ‘look here!’

The cislocative preverb

- In this talk: non-spatial uses in polyvalent verbal forms

Adyghe (textual example)

se *sədewəš'tew* *?epə?eKʷ*

1SG how help

sə-qə-šʷ-fə-χʷə-š'?

1SG.ABS-**CISL**-2PL.IO-BEN-become-FUT

‘What kind of aid can I become for you?’

Cross-referencing prefixes

- three persons, two numbers;
- no distinctions of gender or clusivity;
- most 3SG prefixes null;
- three sets of prefixes mainly distinguished by their position in the wordform:
ABSolute Indirect Object ERGative
- indirect objects are introduced by applicative prefixes.

Cross-referencing prefixes

Adyghe (textual example)

s-a-č'e-ž^w-ke-pλež'

1SG.ABS-3PL.IO-LOC-2PL.ERG-CAUS-look(IMP)

'(you all) let me look at them!'

abs – absolute

io – indirect object

caus – causative

loc – locative preverb

erg – ergative

pl – plural

imp – imperative

sg – singular

Cross-referencing prefixes

Adyghe (textual example)

s-a-č'e-**žʷ**-ke-pλež'

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Verb classes

- Circassian languages encode (in)transitivity morphologically by means of the choice of cross-referencing prefixes.
- Polyvalent verbs can be both **transitive** (with an ERG prefix) and **intransitive** (without an ERG prefix).

Smeets (1992)

Bivalent transitive

Adyghe (textual example)

wə-z-be-reze-n?

2SG.ABS-1SG.ERG-CAUS-glad-POT

‘Will I make you happy?’

A : ERGative

P : ABSolute

Bivalent transitive

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wə-z-be-reze-n?

2SG.ABS-**1SG.ERG**-CAUS-glad-POT

‘Will **I** make you happy?’

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wə-z-ke-reze-n?

2SG.ABS-1SG.ERG-CAUS-glad-POT

‘Will I make **you** happy?’

A : ERGative

P : ABSolute

Bivalent intransitive

Adyghe (textual example)

$\hat{s}^w \partial - q \partial - s - a - \check{z}$

2PL.ABS-CISL-1SG.IO-DAT-wait(IMP)

‘(you all) wait for me!’

A : ABSolute

dat – dative preverb

P : Indirect Object

Bivalent intransitive

Adyghe (textual example)

ʂʷə-qə-s-a-ʐ

2PL.ABS-CISL-1SG.IO-DAT-wait(IMP)

'(you all) wait for me!'

A : ABSolute

dat – dative preverb

P : Indirect Object

Bivalent intransitive

Adyghe (textual example)

ʂʷə-qə-s-a-ʐ

2PL.ABS-CISL-**1SG.IO-DAT**-wait(IMP)

‘(you all) wait **for me!**’

A : ABSolute

dat – dative preverb

P : Indirect Object

Cislocative again

Adyghe (textual example)

s̄wə-qə-s-a-ž

2PL.ABS-**CISL**-1SG.IO-DAT-wait(IMP)

‘(you all) wait for me!’

A : ABSolute

dat – dative preverb

P : Indirect Object

Cislocative again

The use of the cislocative prefix {*qV-*} is conditioned by the values of the person features in polyvalent verbs.

Kumakhov (1971: 253-254), Testelets (1989), Lomize (2013), Kuvshinova (2015)

Locutors vs. non-locutors

Besleney Kabardian (elicited)

a. *jə-z-o-t*

(3.ABS)3SG.IO-1SG.ERG-DYN-give

‘I give it to him/her.’ 1>3

b. *qə-z-j-e-t*

(3.ABS)CISL-1SG.IO-3SG.ERG-DYN-give

‘S/he gives it to me.’ 3>1

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‘S/he gives it to me.’ **3>1**

Locutors vs. non-locutors

Besleney Kabardian (elicited)

a. *jə-b-o-t*

(3.ABS)3SG.IO-2SG.ERG-DYN-give

‘You give it to him/her.’ 2>3

b. *qə-w-j-e-t*

(3.ABS)CISL-2SG.IO-3SG.ERG-DYN-give

‘S/he gives it to you.’ 3>2

Locutors vs. non-locutors

Besleney Kabardian (elicited)

a. *jə-b-o-t*

(3.ABS)3SG.IO-2SG.ERG-DYN-give

‘You give it to him/her.’ 2>3

b. *qə-w-j-e-t*

(3.ABS)**CISL**-2SG.IO-3SG.ERG-DYN-give

‘S/he gives it to you.’ **3>2**

Locutors only

Besleney Kabardian (elicited)

- a. *(qə-)wə-z-o-t*
(3.ABS)CISL-2SG.IO-1SG.ERG-DYN-give
‘I give it to you.’ 1>2
- b. *qə-zə-b-o-t*
(3.ABS)CISL-1SG.IO-2SG.ERG-DYN-give
‘You give it to me.’ 2>1

Locutors only

Besleney Kabardian (elicited)

a. *(qə-)*wə-z-o-t

(3.ABS)(CISL)-2SG.IO-1SG.ERG-DYN-give

‘I give it to you.’ 1>2

b. *qə-zə-b-o-t*

(3.ABS)CISL-1SG.IO-2SG.ERG-DYN-give

‘You give it to me.’ 2>1

3rd person only

Temirgoy Adyghe (elicited):

- a. *a-r č'ele-gʷere-m qə-r-jə-tə-k.*
DEM-ABS guy-some-OBL (3.ABS)CISL-
3SG.IO-3SG.ERG-give-PST

[How did she get this book?]

‘Some guy gave it to her.’

- b. *a-r č'ele-gʷere-m r-jə-tə-k.*
DEM-ABS guy-some-OBL (3.ABS)3SG.IO-
3SG.ERG-give-PST

[What did she do with the book?]

‘She gave it to some guy.’

3rd person only

Temirgoy Adyghe (elicited):

- a. *a-r č'ele-gʷere-m qə-r-jə-tə-k.*
DEM-ABS guy-some-OBL (3.ABS)CISL-
3SG.IO-3SG.ERG-give-PST

[How did she get this book?]

‘Some guy gave it to her.’ (obv>prox)

- b. *a-r č'ele-gʷere-m r-jə-tə-k.*
DEM-ABS guy-some-OBL (3.ABS)3SG.IO-
3SG.ERG-give-PST

[What did she do with the book?]

‘She gave it to some guy.’ (prox>obv)

3rd person only

- The labels “proximate” and “obviative” stand for not yet fully understood relations between 3rd person referents in discourse, having to do with differential activation / topicality / protagonisthood etc., see Lomize (2013) on Besleney Kabardian and Kuvshinova (2015) on Bzhedugh Adyghe.

Interim summary

object	1	2	3prox	3obv
subject				
1		±CISL	-CISL	
2	+CISL		-CISL	
3prox	+CISL	+CISL		-CISL
3obv			+CISL	

Interim summary

object subject	1	2	3prox	3obv
1		±CISL	-CISL	
2	+CISL		-CISL	
3prox	+CISL	+CISL		-CISL
3obv			+CISL	

The cislocative is used when the object is not lower than the subject on the hierarchy
1, 2 > 3prox > 3obv

Is it an inverse?

- Inverse markers in the languages of the world are sensitive precisely to the relative prominence of subjects and objects in polyvalent constructions (Zúñiga 2006; Jacques & Antonov 2014).
- The affinity of the Circassian cislocative to inverse markers has been pointed out already in Testelec (1989).

Is it an inverse?

- The diachronic development of cislocative markers into inverse markers is well-documented in various languages (Jacques & Antonov 2014: 312).

Is it an inverse?

Hakhun Tangsa (Sino-Tibetan, India; Boro 2017: 342)

d᷇ a kámí i-t^hγ? n᷇ mi?

however 1SG-over LOC person

m᷇-t^h᷇ a-dûŋ ν᷇ r-a

CLF-one NMLZ-big come **CISL.NON.PST-3**

‘However, a person greater than me will come.’ (cislocative)

Is it an inverse?

Hakhun Tangsa (Sino-Tibetan, India; Boro 2017: 342)

nuʔrûm kámá *ŋà* *ný* *mì*
2PL ERG 1SG LOC ADD

ŋâ r-a

say INV.NON.PST-3

‘You will also tell me.’ (inverse)

Is it an inverse?

The properties of the Circassian cislocative are in fact quite remote from the canonical inverse as defined by Jacques & Antonov (2014).

Redundancy

- The Circassian cislocative is in most cases **redundant**, because the mapping between person features and grammatical roles is fully indicated by the position of cross-referencing prefixes (apart from the combinations of several 3rd person arguments).

Redundancy

- In many cases the use of the cislocative with “inverse” mappings of persons and roles is optional, e.g. with the benefactive applicative.

Redundancy

Besleney Kabardian (textual examples)

few-č’e *qə-s-xʷe-f-ʂə-ž’!*
honey-new CISL-1SG.IO-BEN-2PL.ERG-make-RE
‘Make me new honey!’

kaše *s-xʷe-p-ʂə-ne.*
porridge 1SG.IO-BEN-2SG.ERG-make-FUT
‘You will make porridge for me.’

Redundancy

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few-č’e *qə-s-xʷe-f-ʂə-ž’!*
honey-new **CISL**-1SG.IO-BEN-2PL.ERG-make-RE
‘Make me new honey!’ (2>1 +cisl)

kaše *s-xʷe-p-ʂə-ne.*
porridge 1SG.IO-BEN-2SG.ERG-make-FUT
‘You will make porridge for me.’ (2>1 –cisl)

Relation to (in)transitivity

- Even more importantly, the canonical inverse is a hallmark of highly transitive verbs or constructions:
Direct and inverse “markers do not appear on intransitive verbs” (Jacques & Antonov 2014: 302).

Relation to (in)transitivity

- Even more importantly, the canonical inverse is a hallmark of highly transitive verbs or constructions:
Direct and inverse “markers do not appear on intransitive verbs” (Jacques & Antonov 2014: 302).
- However, in Circassian the cislocative is always **optional** with transitive verbs with an ergative A and an absolute P.

Relation to (in)transitivity

Besleney Kabardian (elicited)

$s\text{-}\lambda e \kappa^w\text{-}a$ I saw him/her 1 > 3 – CISL

Relation to (in)transitivity

Besleney Kabardian (elicited)

$s\text{-}\lambda e \kappa^w\text{-}a$	I saw him/her	1 > 3-CISL
$w\partial\text{-}s\text{-}\lambda e \kappa^w\text{-}a$	I saw you	1 > 2-CISL

Relation to (in)transitivity

Besleney Kabardian (elicited)

s-λeκʷ-a I saw him/her 1 > 3-CISL

wə-s-λeκʷ-a I saw you 1 > 2-CISL

sə-p-λeκʷ-a You saw me 2 > 1-CISL

Relation to (in)transitivity

Besleney Kabardian (elicited)

s-λeɪw^w-a I saw him/her 1 > 3-CISL

wə-s-λeɪw^w-a I saw you 1 > 2-CISL

sə-p-λeɪw^w-a You saw me 2 > 1-CISL

s-jə-λeɪw^w-a S/he saw me 3 > 1-CISL

Relation to (in)transitivity

- By contrast, the **cislocative prefix is obligatory** with the “inverse” combination of subject (S/A) and **indirect object** — with ditransitive and intransitive verbs alike.

Relation to (in)transitivity

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a. *(*qə-)jə-z-o-t*

(3.ABS)3SG.IO-1SG.ERG-DYN-give

‘I give it to him/her.’ 1>3 –CISL

b. **(qə-)z-j-e-t*

(3.ABS)CISL-1SG.IO-3SG.ERG-DYN-give

‘S/he gives it to me.’ **3>1 +CISL**

Relation to (in)transitivity

Standard Adyghe (Kumakhov 1971: 294)

a. *s-j-e-že*

1SG.ABS-3SG.IO-DYN-wait

‘I am waiting for him/her.’ 1>3 –CISL

b. *(*qə-*)*s-e-že*

(3SG.ABS)**CISL**-1SG.IO-DYN-wait

‘S/he is waiting for me.’ 3>1 +CISL

Relation to (in)transitivity

- Cross-linguistically, inverse markers can be sensitive to the relation between the Agent and the Recipient of ditransitive verbs (Malchukov et al. 2010: 44–45), but in such languages ditransitive verbs show **secundative** alignment ($R=P$).

Relation to (in)transitivity

- Itonama (isolate, Bolivia; Crevels 2010: 685, 693):

sih-k'i-ma-doh-ne upa'u

1PL.EX-INV-hand-bite-ASP dog

‘The dog bit us on the hand.’ (monotrans.)

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wase'wa sih-k'i-maki pilata

yesterday 1PL.EX-INV-give silver

‘Yesterday they gave us money.’ (ditrans.)

Relation to (in)transitivity

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sih-k'i-ma-doh-ne *upa'u*

1PL.EX-**INV**-hand-bite-ASP dog

‘The dog bit us on the hand.’ (monotrans.)

wase'wa *sih-k'i-maki* *pilata*

yesterday 1PL.EX-**INV**-give silver

‘Yesterday they gave us money.’ (ditrans.)

Relation to (in)transitivity

But Circassian languages show consistent **indirective** alignment with the role of indirect object clearly distinct from that of the absolute.

Towards a diachronic explanation

- As mentioned above, the change from cislocative ('hither') to inverse is a well-attested historical development (Jacques & Antonov 2014: 312–313).
- Moreover, this development seems to naturally explain the sensitivity of the Circassian “inverse” to the role of the indirect object.

Towards a diachronic explanation

The extension of the cislocative prefix to inverse person-role configurations should occur most naturally in the context of verbs of transfer with first or second person recipients as well as with verbs denoting activities directed at a non-affected object, such as contact, speech or perception, which are encoded as bivalent intransitives in Circassian.

Towards a diachronic explanation

- Cf. partly similar patterning of ‘hither’ and ‘thither’ markers with transfer verbs in geographically close Georgian and Ossetic.

Towards a diachronic explanation

TRAL - translocative ‘thither’

Towards a diachronic explanation

- Georgian (Vogt 1971: 173)
 - a. *mi-v-s-çer-e* *çeril-i.*
TRAL-1.SBJ-3.IO-write-AOR letter-NOM
‘I wrote him a letter.’ (1>3)
 - b. *mo-m-çer-a* *çeril-i.*
CISL-1SG.IO-write-AOR.3SG.SBJ letter-NOM
‘He wrote me a letter.’ (3>1)

TRAL - translocative 'thither'

Towards a diachronic explanation

- Iron Ossetic (Thordarson 2009: 68)

a. *æz a-rvəs-t-on wəm-æn činəg.*

I:NOM TRAL-send-PST-1SG he-DAT book

‘I sent him a book.’

b. *wəy ærba-rvəs-t-a mæn-æn činəg.*

he:NOM CISL-send-PST-3SG I-DAT book

‘He sent me a book.’

Towards a diachronic explanation

- Iron Ossetic (Thordarson 2009: 68)

a. *æz* *a-rvəs-t-on* *wəm-æn činəg.*

I:NOM **TRAL**-send-PST-1SG he-DAT book

‘I sent him a book.’ (1>3)

b. *wəy ærba-rvəs-t-a mæn-æn činəg.*

he:NOM **CISL**-send-PST-3SG I-DAT book

‘He sent me a book.’ (3>1)

Conclusions

- The Circassian cislocative prefix $\{qV-\}$ shares with the “canonical” inverse markers the factors conditioning its occurrence as well as a common diachronic origin.

Conclusions

- However, the “inverse” uses of the Circassian cislocative differ from the “canonical” inverse in two important respects:
 - it is almost fully redundant;
 - it is not sensitive to transitivity.

Conclusions

- From the typological point of view, the Circassian cislocative is a highly peculiar inverse, or probably not an inverse at all.
- In the context of predominantly ergative morphosyntax of the Circassian languages, the cislocative behaves in a somewhat nominative-accusative fashion (sensitivity to S+A vs. IO).

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A wide-angle photograph of a sunflower field. The foreground is filled with numerous sunflowers, their bright yellow petals and green centers facing towards the right side of the frame. The field extends to a distant horizon where a line of trees stands against a clear, pale blue sky.

Thank you for your
attention!