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**Non-canonical inverse in
Circassian and Abaza:
borrowing of morphological
complexity**

Peter M. Arkadiev

Institute of Slavic Studies of the Russian
Academy of Sciences / Russian State
University for the Humanities, Moscow /
Vilnius University

Roadmap

- The canonical inverse
- The Northwest Caucasian languages
- Deictic prefixes and their use in person paradigms in Circassian
- Why Circassian inverse is non-canonical
- Abaza: a case of pattern borrowing
- Conclusions

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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

patient	1	2	3prox	3obv
agent				
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.’

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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 canonical inverse

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

I argue that the Circassian (more precisely, Kabardian) non-canonical inverse has been borrowed by Abaza, another NWC language.

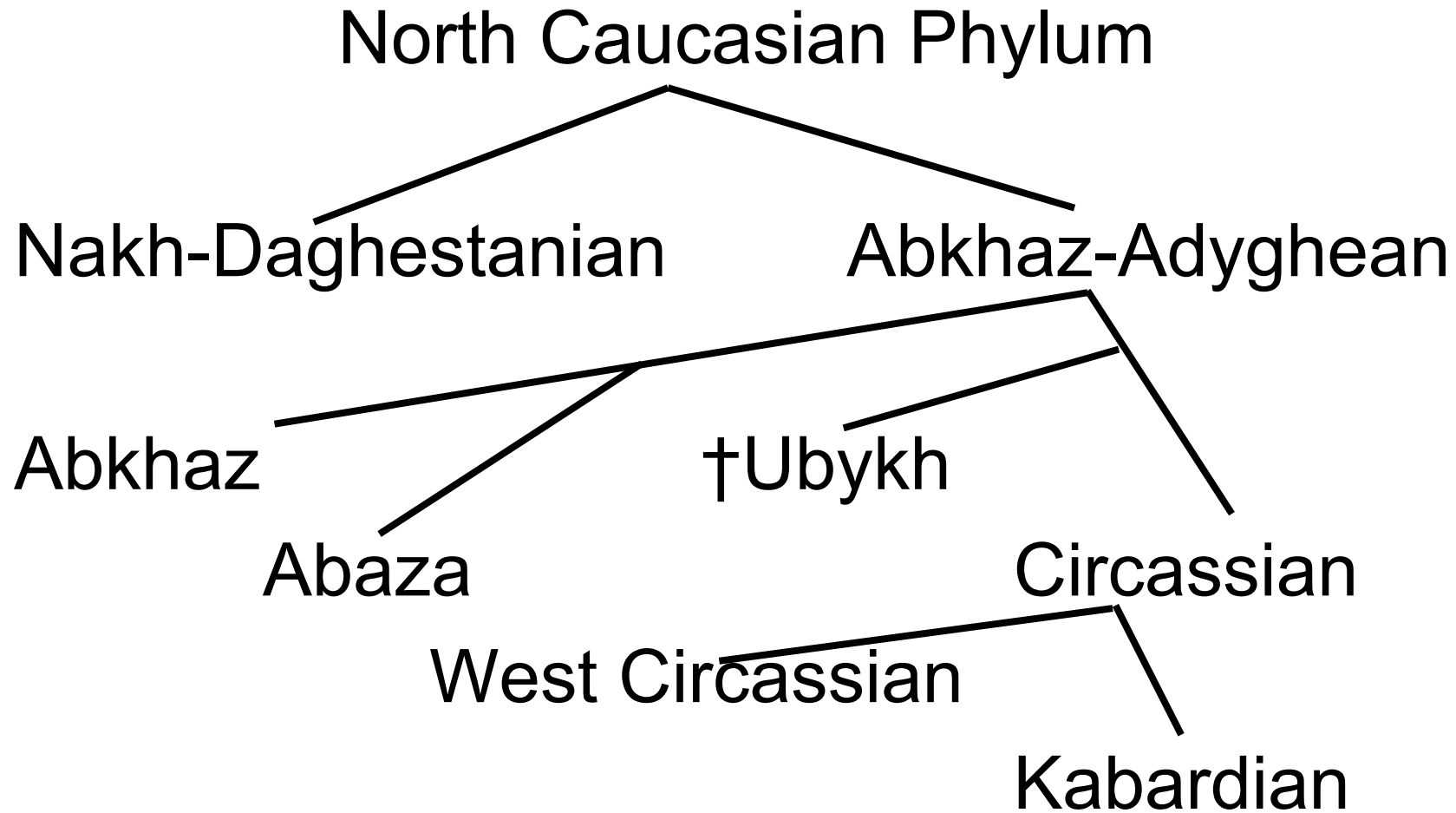
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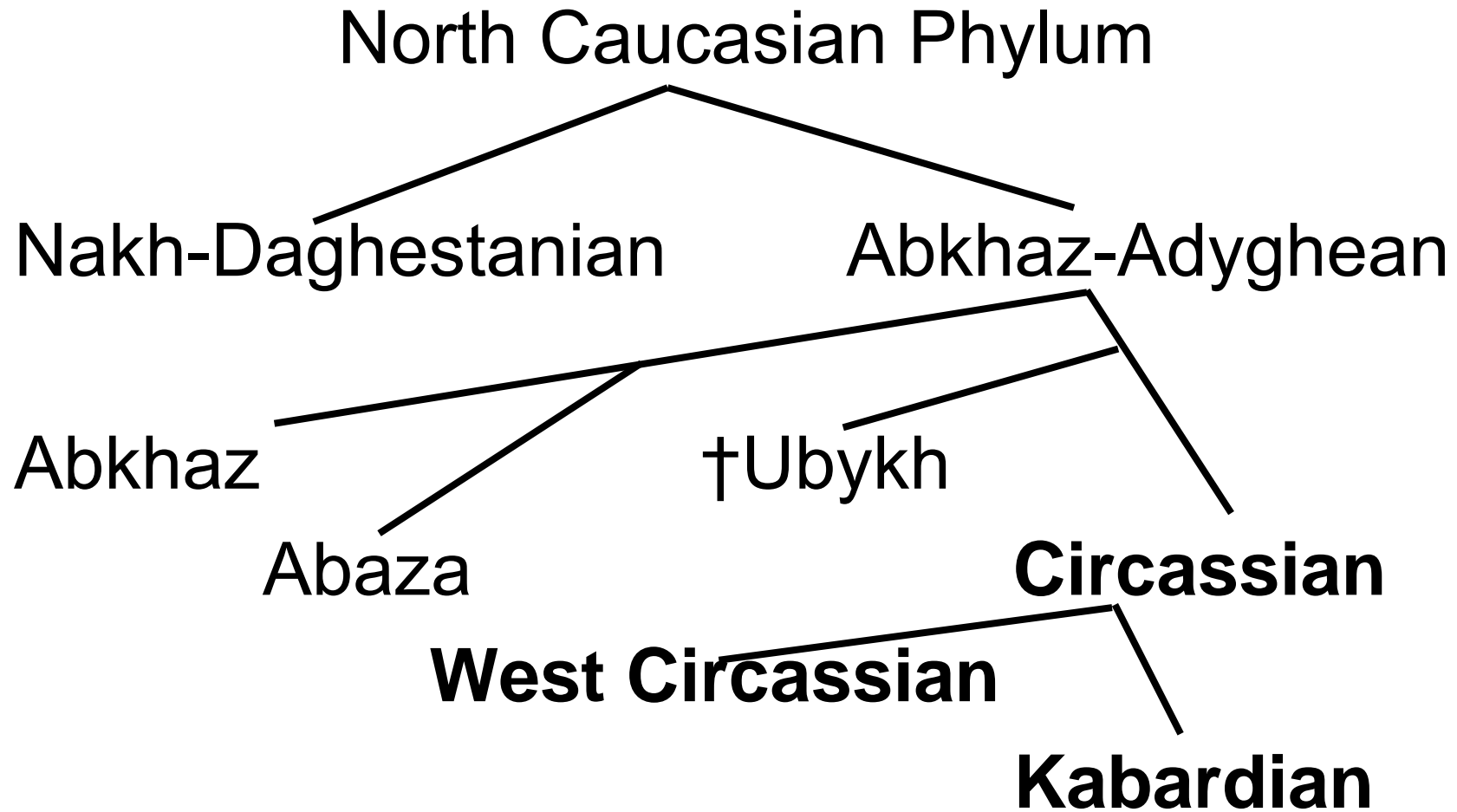
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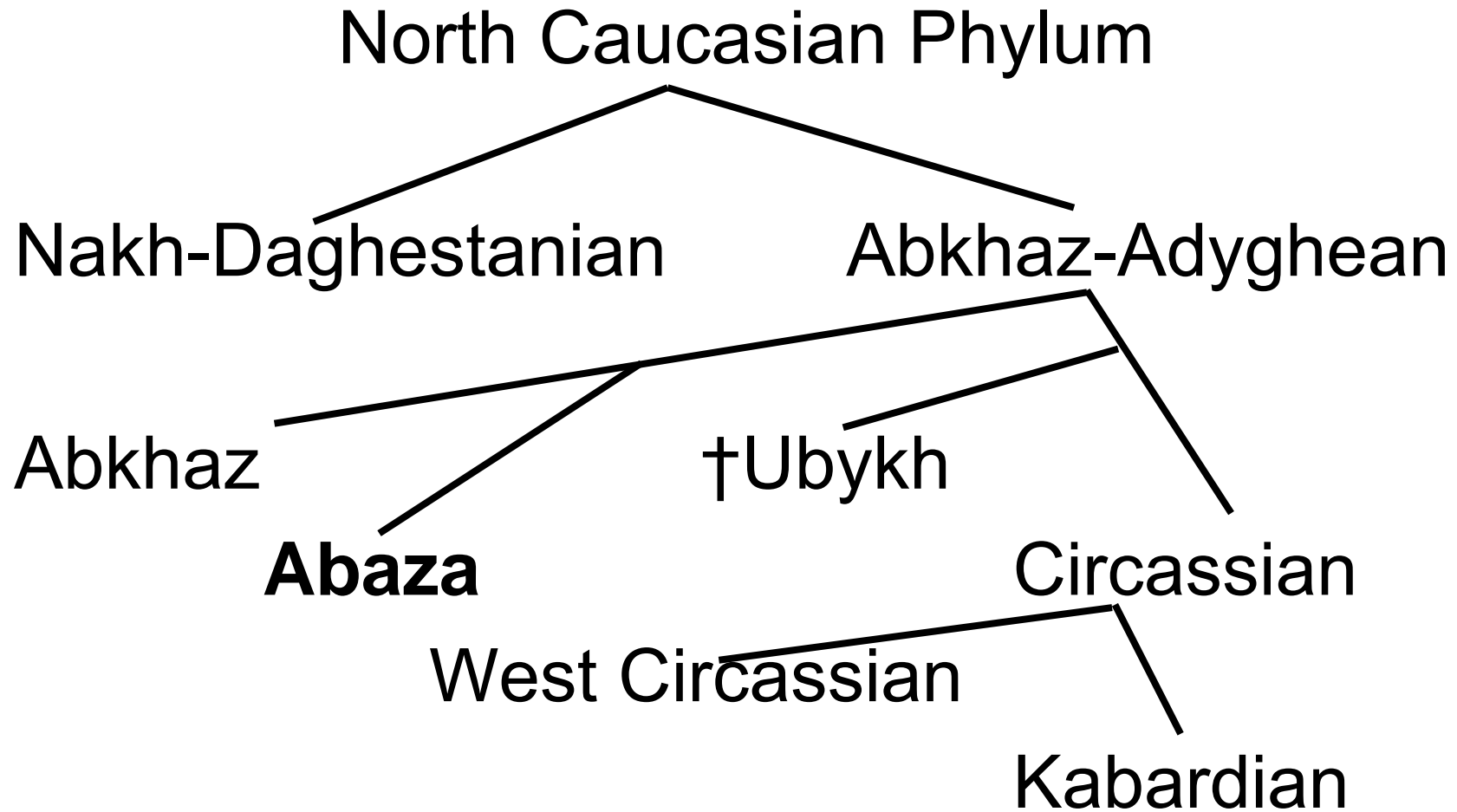
The Northwest Caucasian languages

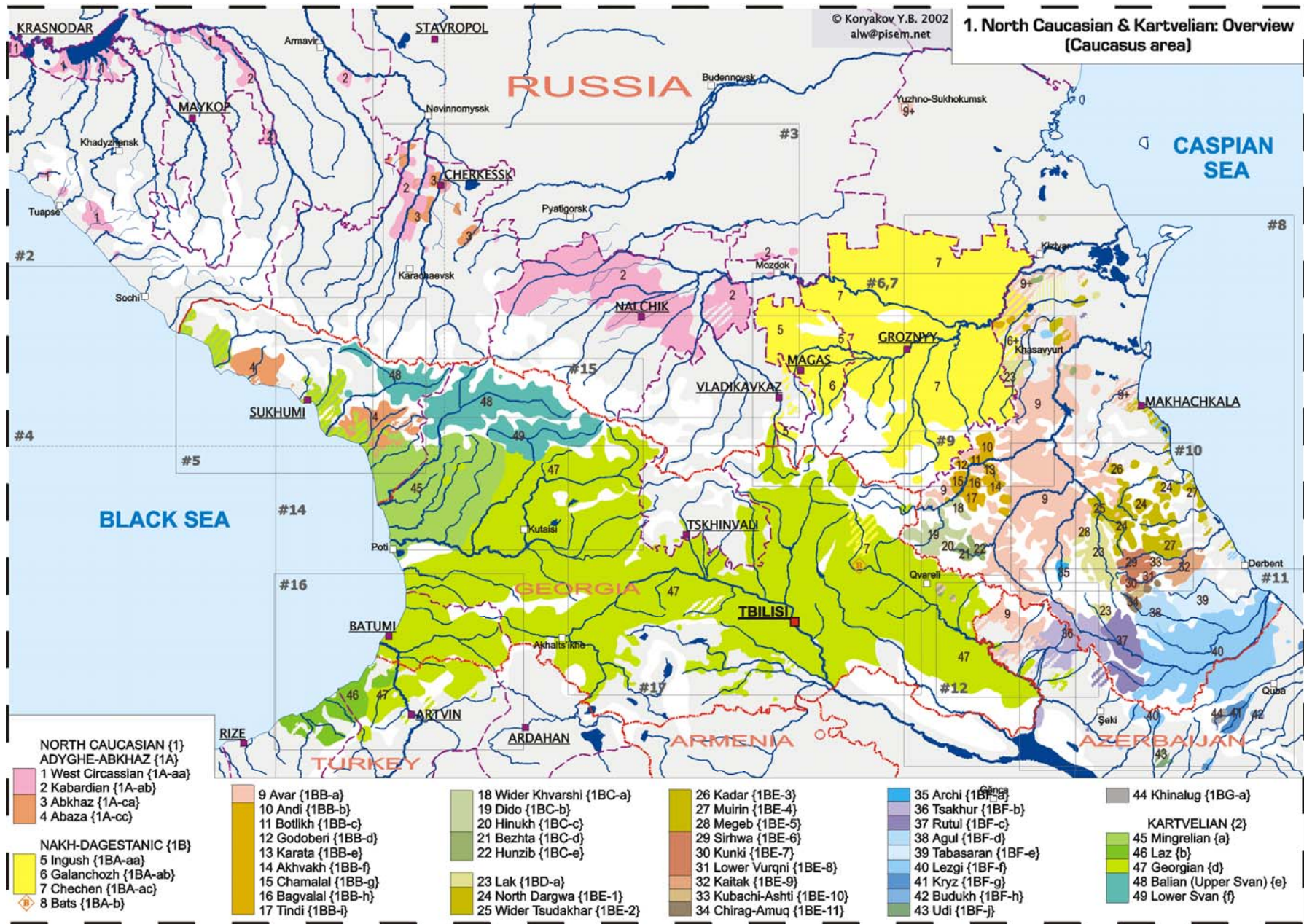


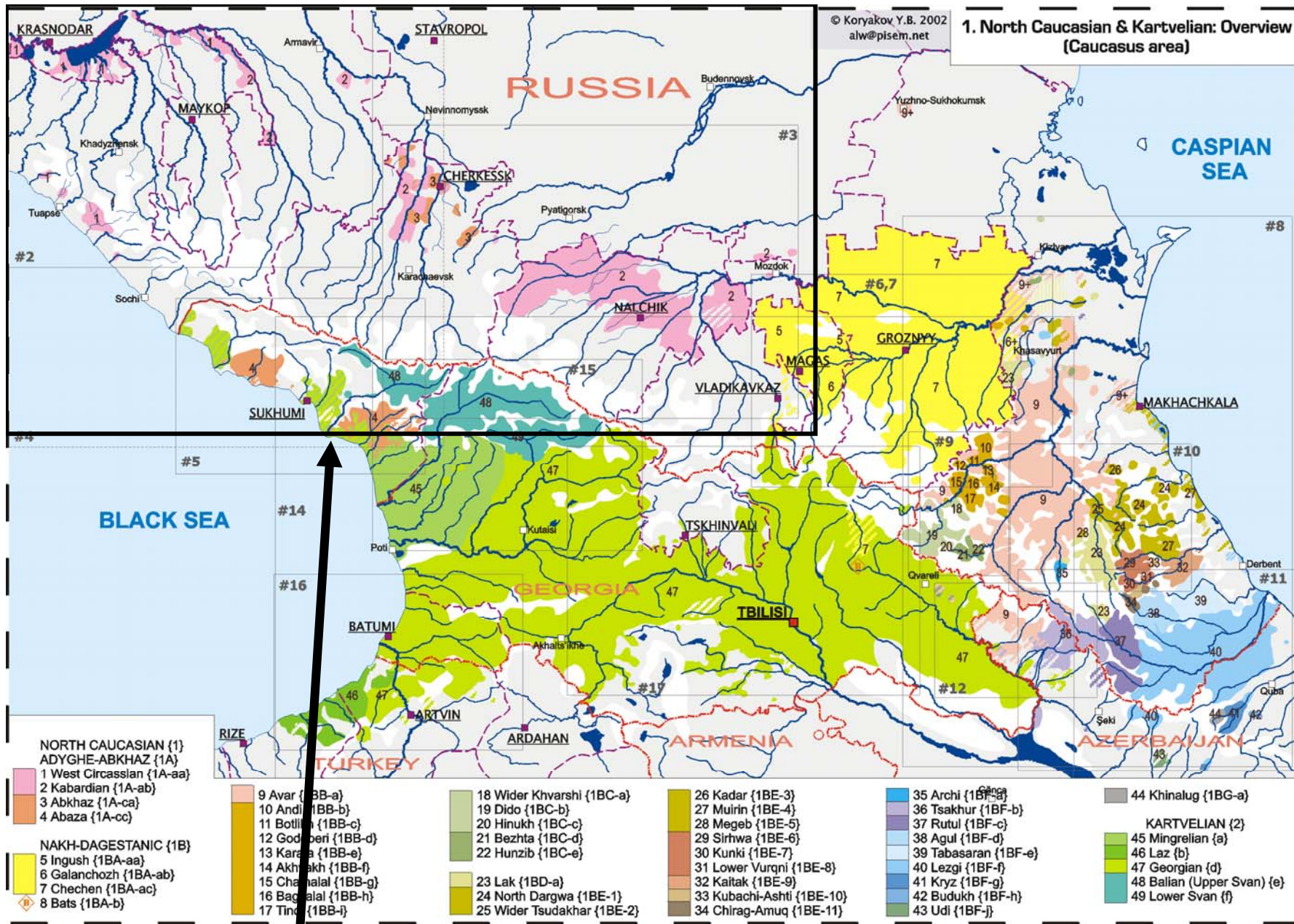
The Northwest Caucasian languages



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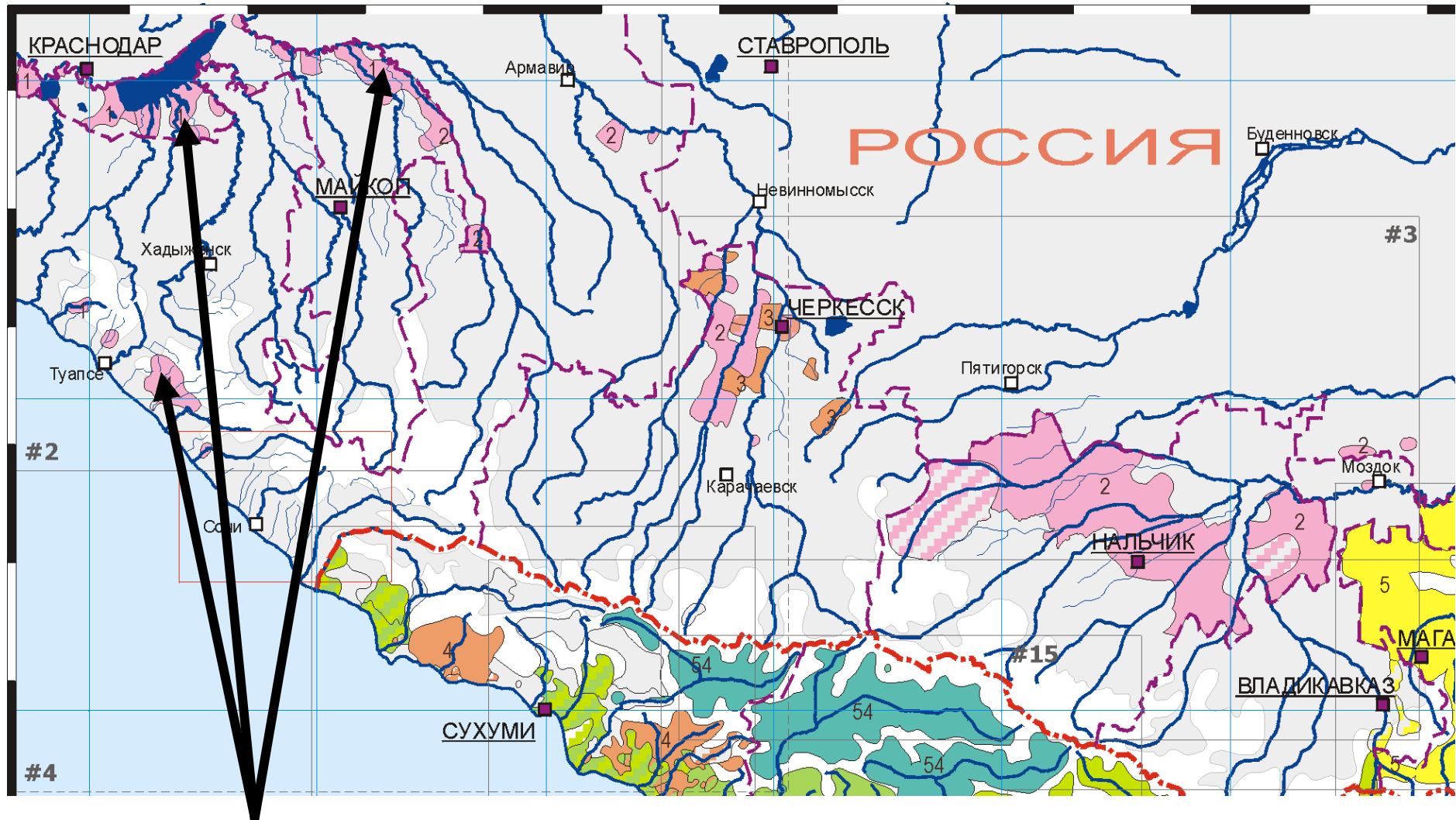




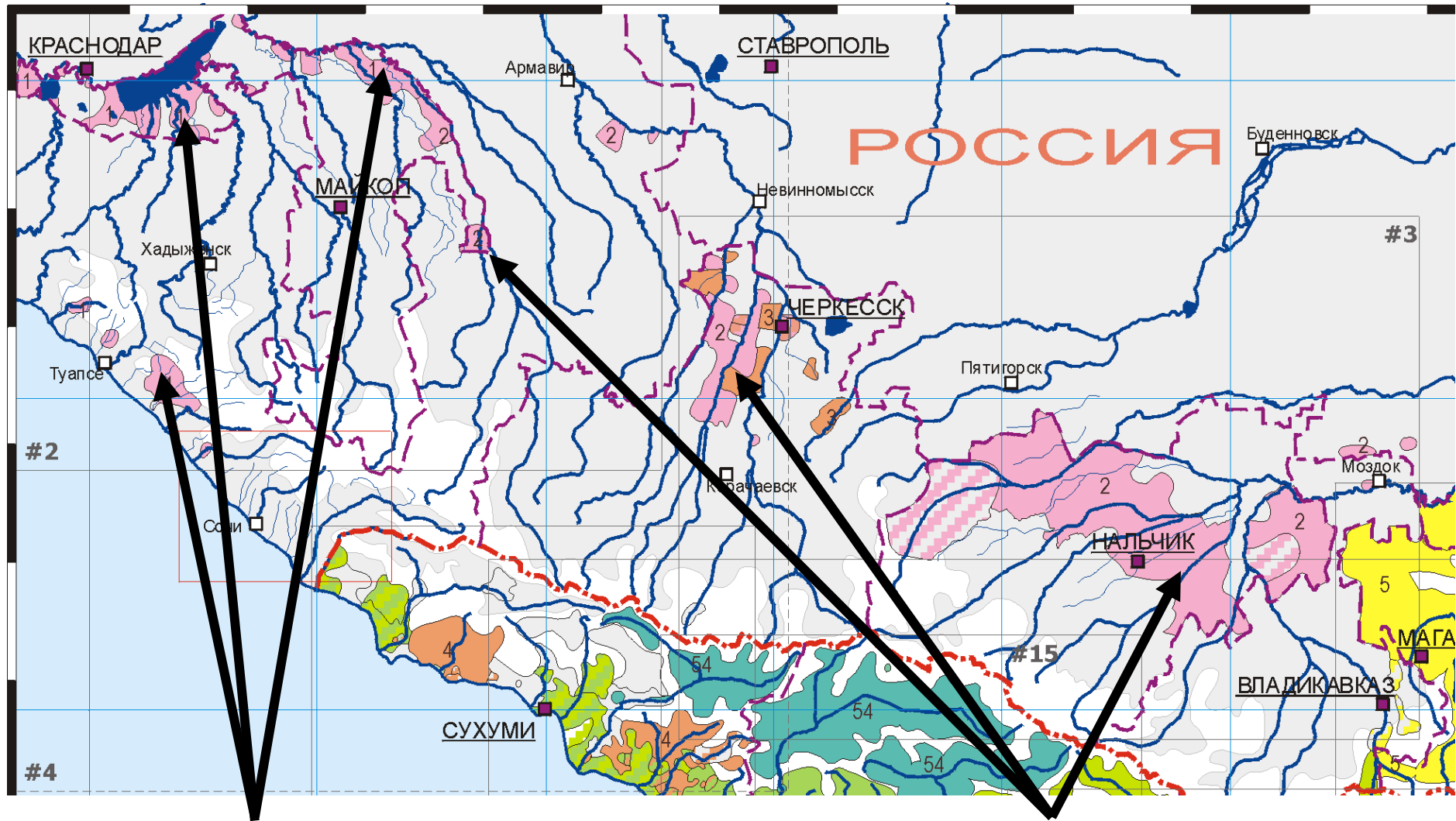


North-West Caucasian languages



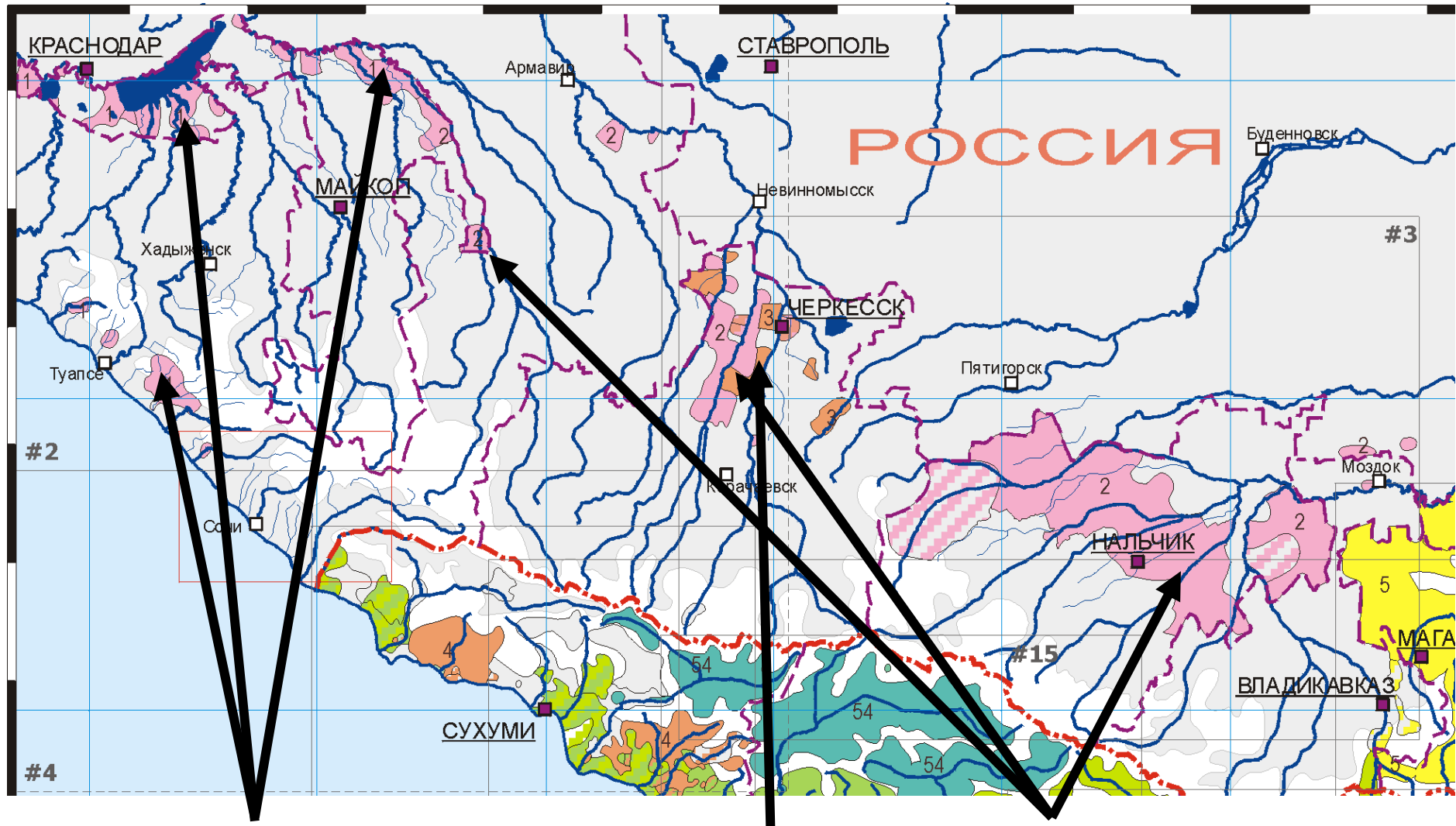


West Circassian



West Circassian

Kabardian



West Circassian

Abaza

Kabardian

The Northwest Caucasian languages

- West Circassian (a.k.a Adyghe):
 - ca. 100 thousand speakers
 - Russian republic of Adygeya and Krasnodarsky Kray

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- Kabardian:
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 - Russian republics of Adygeya, Karachay-Cherkesia and Kabardino-Balkaria

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 - ca. 100 thousand speakers
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- Kabardian:
 - more than 500 thousand speakers
 - Russian republics of Adygeya, Karachay-Cherkesia and Kabardino-Balkaria
- Abaza:
 - ca. 35 thousand people
 - several compact districts in Karachay-Cherkesia

The Northwest Caucasian languages

- rich consonantism and poor vocalism
- polysynthesis
- morphological ergativity:
 - both indexing and flagging in Circassian;
 - only indexing in Abaza;
- very little distinction between major parts of speech

(Smeets 1984, Kumakhov & Vamling 2009, Testelelets ed. 2009, Lander & Testelelets 2017, Arkadiev & Lander to appear)

The Northwest Caucasian languages

The general West Caucasian verbal template
(Arkadiev & Lander to appear):

prefixes				root	suffixes					
argument structure zone			pre-stem elements	stem (Σ)				endings		
absolutive	subordinators	applicatives and indirect objects	ergative	preradical negation	causative	root	aspectual, modal and evaluative operators	temporal operators	suffixal negation	illocutionary operators or subordinators
1	1	>1	1	1	1 or 2	may be complex	>1	>1	1	>1

Sources of data

- Examples from Temirgoy and Bzhedugh dialects of West Circassian 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 West Circassian and grammars for Standard Kabardian.
- Elicited and textual examples from the Tapanda dialect of Abaza as spoken in the village of Inzhich-Chukun (Abazinsky district, Karachay-Cherkesia) collected during fieldtrips in 2017-2019.

Verbal person marking

Polypersonalism:

- up to four (or even five) participants can be expressed by means of person-number(-gender) prefixes;
- facilitated by a rich system of semantically specialized applicative prefixes.

Verbal person marking

Polypersonalism:

- pronominal prefixes come in the order
Absolutive - Indirect Object(s) - Ergative

Verbal person marking

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Verbal person marking

Polypersonalism:

- pronominal prefixes come in the order
Absolutive - **I**ndirect **O**bject(s) - **Erg**ative
- In Abaza, all prefixes are normally overt;
- In Circassian, 3rd person absolutive and some 3rd person indirect object prefixes are null.

Verbal person marking

- Polypersonalism in Kabardian (Besleney dialect, textual example):

∅-t-x^w-a-r-jə-ke-ŝ-a

3.ABS-1PL.IO-BEN-3PL.IO-DAT-3SG.ERG-CAUS-do-PST

‘He had them make it for us.’

ABS - absolutive

BEN - benefactive

CAUS - causative

DAT - dative applicative

ERG - ergative

IO - indirect object

Verbal person marking

- Polypersonalism in Kabardian (Besleney dialect, textual example):

∅-*t*-*x^w*-*a-r-jə*-*ke-ŝ-a*

3.ABS-1PL.IO-BEN-**3PL.IO**-DAT-**3SG.ERG**-CAUS-do-
PST

‘**He** had **them** make **it** for **us**.’

ABS - absolutive

BEN - benefactive

CAUS - causative

DAT - dative applicative

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Verbal person marking

- Polypersonalism in Abaza (textual example)

j-ŝə-z-j-á-s-h^w-p̣

3SG.N.ABS-2PL.IO-BEN-3SG.M.IO-DAT-1SG.ERG-say-NPST.DCL

‘I will tell this to him about you.’

ABS - absolutive

BEN - benefactive

DAT - dative applicative

DCL - declarative

ERG - ergative

IO - indirect object

M - masculine

N - non-human

Verbal person marking

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‘I will tell **this** to **him** about **you**.’

ABS - absolutive

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ERG - ergative

IO - indirect object

M - masculine

N - non-human

Verbal person marking

- Two types of polyvalent verbs:
 - transitive (Erg, Abs)
 - intransitive (Abs, IO)
- Ditransitive verbs take Erg, IO and Abs.

Smeets (1992), O'Herin (2002), Letuchiy (2013)

Verbal person marking

- Kabardian (Kumakhov ed. 2006):

sə-b-ew-h

transitive

1SG.ABS-2SG.ERG-PRS-carry

‘You (sg) are carrying me.’

Verbal person marking

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s-j-e-ž-a-š intransitive

1SG.ABS-3SG.IO-DAT-wait-PST-DCL

‘I waited for him/her.’

Verbal person marking

- Kabardian (Kumakhov ed. 2006):

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‘**I** waited for **him/her**.’

Verbal person marking

- Abaza (elicited)

wə-l-bá-ṭ

transitive

2SG.M.ABS-3SG.F.ERG-see(AOR)-DCL

‘She saw you (man).’

AOR - aorist (perfective past)

F - feminine

Verbal person marking

- Abaza (elicited)

wə-l-bá-t̚

transitive

2SG.M.ABS-3SG.F.ERG-see(AOR)-DCL

‘**She** saw **you** (man).’

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Verbal person marking

- Abaza (elicited)

wə-l-bá-t

transitive

2SG.M.ABS-3SG.F.ERG-see(AOR)-DCL

‘**She** saw **you** (man).’

hə-j-pšá-t

intransitive

1PL.ABS-3SG.M.IO-look(AOR)-DCL

‘We looked at him.’

AOR - aorist (perfective past)

F - feminine

Verbal person marking

- Abaza (elicited)

wə-l-bá-ṭ

transitive

2SG.M.ABS-3SG.F.ERG-see(AOR)-DCL

‘**She** saw **you** (man).’

hə-j-pšá-ṭ

intransitive

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Verbal person marking

- Kabardian (Kumakhov ed. 2006):

∅-f-e-s-t-a-ŝ

ditransitive

3.ABS-2PL.IO-DAT-1SG.ERG-give-PST-DCL

‘I gave it to you (pl).’

Verbal person marking

- Kabardian (Kumakhov ed. 2006):

∅-*f*-*e*-*s*-*t*-*a*-*ŝ* ditransitive

3.ABS-2PL.IO-DAT-1SG.ERG-give-PST-DCL

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Deictic prefixes

- All Northwest Caucasian languages have complex systems of spatial marking in the verb.
- Among the various meanings expressed are the deictic ‘hither, towards the speaker’ (**cislocative**) and ‘thither, from the speaker’ (**translocative**).

Deictic prefixes

	Circassian	Abaza
cislocative	$\dot{q}(V)-$, $q(V)-$	$\text{ʕ}(a)-$
translocative	$n(V)-$	$n(a)-$

Deictic prefixes

- In Circassian, deictic prefixes occupy the slot immediately following the Absolute.

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- In Circassian, deictic prefixes occupy the slot immediately following the Absolute.
- In Abaza, deictic prefixes normally occur closer to the stem, after the applicative complexes.

Deictic prefixes

- Kabardian (Besleney dialect, textual example):

wə-ǰə-č̣e-h-a

2SG.ABS-CISL-LOC-go.in-PST

wəne-m

house-OBL

‘You came into the house.’

CISL - cislocative

LOC - locative applicative

OBL - oblique case

Deictic prefixes

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*wə-**qə**-če-h-a*

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‘You came into the house.’

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Deictic prefixes

- Abaza (textual example):

čə-r-zə-na-hə-r-χa-məs

RFL.ABS-3PL.IO-BEN-TRAL-1PL.ERG-CAUS-turn-PURP

‘for us to turn ourselves towards them’

PURP - purposive

RFL - reflexive

TRAL - translocative

Deictic prefixes

- Abaza (textual example):

*čə-r-zə-**na**-hə-r-χa-rnəs*

RFL.ABS-3PL.IO-BEN-**TRAL**-1PL.ERG-CAUS-turn-
PURP

‘for us to turn ourselves towards them’

PURP - purposive

RFL - reflexive

TRAL - translocative

The Circassian cislocative

- *qe-* ~ *qa-* ~ *q(ə)-* (the vowel depends on the morphophonological environment);
- one of the most frequently occurring morphemes in the Circassian languages;
- fairly polyfunctional with different uses spanning the entire “derivation ~ inflection” continuum.

The Circassian cislocative

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

West Circassian:

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

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

The Circassian cislocative

- The cislocative is much more frequent and productive than the translocative in Circassian.
- In fact, West Circassian as well as the western dialects of Kabardian do not seem to use the translocative apart from some lexicalized combinations.

Deictic prefixes in person paradigms

- Circassian languages have integrated the deictic prefixes into their person paradigms of polyvalent verbs with indirect objects in a fashion reminiscent of inverse marking.

Kumakhov (1971: 253-254), Testelet's (1989), Arkadiev (to appear)

Deictic prefixes in person paradigms

- The **cislocative** is used whenever the indirect object is higher than the ergative or absolutive subject on the person hierarchy $1 > 2 > 3$, or when a 3rd person IO is more topical than a 3rd person subject.
- The **translocative** is used in $1 > 2$ combinations in (eastern) Kabardian.

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. *(q̇ə-)wə-z-o-t*

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

‘I give it to you.’ 1>2

b. *q̇ə-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-g^were-m* *qə-r-jə-tə-ʁ.*
 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-g^were-m* *r-jə-tə-ʁ.*
 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'e-le-g^were-m* *qə-r-jə-tə-ɸ.*
 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'e-le-g^were-m* *r-jə-tə-ɸ.*
 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 / protagonist hood etc., see Lomize (2013) on Besleney Kabardian and Kuvshinova (2015) on Bzhedugh Adyghe.

Deictic prefixes in person paradigms: West Circassian & western Kabardian

object	1	2	3prox	3obv
subject				
1		(CISL)	∅	∅
2	CISL		∅	∅
3prox	CISL	CISL		∅
3obv	CISL	CISL	CISL	

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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)

d̂x̂ a kámí i-t^hx̂? n̂x̂ mi?

however 1SG-over LOC person

m̂x̂-t^hə a-d̂uŋ v̂x̂ 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)

<i>nuʔrûm</i>	<i>kámá</i>	<i>ηà</i>	<i>ný</i>	<i>mì</i>
2PL	ERG	1SG	LOC	ADD

ηâ 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

honey-new

qə-s-x^we-f-šə-ž'!

CISL-1SG.IO-BEN-2PL.ERG-make-RE

'Make me new honey!'

kaše

porridge

s-x^we-p-šə-ne.

1SG.IO-BEN-2SG.ERG-make-FUT

'You will make porridge for me.'

Redundancy

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few-č'e

qə-s-x^we-f-šə-ž'!

honey-new

CISL-1SG.IO-BEN-2PL.ERG-make-RE

'Make me new honey!' (2>1 +cisl)

kaše

 s-x^we-p-šə-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 absolutive P.

Relation to (in)transitivity

Besleney Kabardian (elicited)

s-λeB^w-a I saw him/her 1 > 3–CISL

Relation to (in)transitivity

Besleney Kabardian (elicited)

s-λeB^w-a I saw him/her 1 > 3 –CISL

wə-s-λeB^w-a I saw you 1 > 2 –CISL

Relation to (in)transitivity

Besleney Kabardian (elicited)

s-λeB^w-a I saw him/her 1 > 3 –CISL

wə-s-λeB^w-a I saw you 1 > 2 –CISL

sə-p-λeB^w-a You saw me 2 > 1 –CISL

Relation to (in)transitivity

Besleney Kabardian (elicited)

<i>s-λeB^w-a</i>	I saw him/her	1 > 3 –CISL
<i>wə-s-λeB^w-a</i>	I saw you	1 > 2 –CISL
<i>sə-p-λeB^w-a</i>	You saw me	2 > 1 –CISL
<i>s-jə-λeB^w-a</i>	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

Besleney Kabardian (elicited)

a. *(*q̇ə-)*jə-z-o-t

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

‘I give it to him/her.’ 1>3 –CISL

b. **(q̇ə-)*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

- Besides that, in the eastern varieties of Kabardian and in the standard language, the **translocative** prefix $n(V)$ - is often used in some 1>2 combinations.

Relation to (in)transitivity

- Standard Kabardian (Kumakhov ed. 2006):

sə-n-w-ew-že

1SG.ABS-TRAL-2SG.IO-PRS-wait

‘I am waiting for you.’

1>2

Relation to (in)transitivity

- Standard Kabardian (Kumakhov ed. 2006):

sə-n-w-ew-že

1SG.ABS-**TRAL**-2SG.IO-PRS-wait

‘I am waiting for you.’

1>2

Deictic prefixes in person paradigms: Standard (eastern) Kabardian

object	1	2	3prox	3obv
subject				
1		TRAL	∅	∅
2	CISL		∅	∅
3prox	CISL	CISL		∅
3obv	CISL	CISL	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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yesterday 1PL.EX-INV-give silver

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

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‘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 absolutive.

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.

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.’

b. *mo-m-çer-a* *çeril-i.*
CISL-1SG.IO-write-AOR.3SG.SBJ letter-NOM

‘He wrote me a letter.’

Towards a diachronic explanation

- Georgian (Vogt 1971: 173)

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

Roadmap

- The canonical inverse
- The Northwest Caucasian languages
- Deictic prefixes and their use in person paradigms in Circassian
- Why Circassian inverse is non-canonical
- Abaza: a case of pattern borrowing
- Conclusions

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Non-canonical inverse in Abaza

- Basically the same pattern is found in the fieldwork data from Abaza, both elicited and textual.

Non-canonical inverse in Abaza

- Abaza (elicited):

j-ʕa-wá-l-t-ṭ

3SG.N.ABS-CISL-2SG.M.IO-3SG.F.ERG-give(AOR)-DCL

‘She gave it to you (man).’ 3>2

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h-na-w-pšá-ṭ

1PL.ABS-TRAL-2SG.M.IO-look(AOR)-DCL

‘We looked at you (man).’ 1>2

Non-canonical inverse in Abaza

- Abaza (elicited):

*j-**ɣa**-wǎ-l-t-t̚*

3SG.N.ABS-**CISL**-2SG.M.IO-3SG.F.ERG-give(AOR)-DCL

‘She gave it to you (man).’ 3>2

*h-**na**-w-pšǎ-t̚*

1PL.ABS-**TRAL**-2SG.M.IO-look(AOR)-DCL

‘We looked at you (man).’ 1>2

Non-canonical inverse in Abaza

- Abaza (textual examples):

h-an

d-ɣa-s-çɣa-t

1PL.IO-mother

3SG.H.ABS-CISL-1SG.IO-ask(AOR)-DCL

‘My mother asked me.’

3>1

Non-canonical inverse in Abaza

- Abaza (textual examples):

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‘My mother asked me.’ 3>1

s-na-wə-çə-pš-əj-t

1SG.ABS-TRAL-2SG.M.IO-LOC-look-PRS-DCL

‘I look at you (man).’ 1>2

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1SG.ABS-**TRAL**-2SG.M.IO-LOC-look-PRS-DCL

‘I look at you (man).’ 1>2

Non-canonical inverse in Abaza

object subject	1	2	3prox	3obv
1		TRAL	∅	∅
2	CISL		∅	∅
3prox	CISL	CISL		∅
3obv	CISL	CISL	CISL	

A case of pattern borrowing

- Pattern borrowing:
“re-shaping of language-internal structures” when “it is the patterns of distribution, of grammatical and semantic meaning, and of formal-syntactic arrangement .. that are modeled on an external source” without transfer of phonological substance (Matras & Sakel 2007: 829–830).

A case of pattern borrowing

- The use of the cislocative prefix in person paradigms is a feature common to all Circassian varieties, including those which have never been in close contact with Abaza.

Kumakhov (1971: 253-254), Arkadiev (to appear)

A case of pattern borrowing

- The inverse-like uses of directional prefixes are not attested in Abkhaz, a close relative of Abaza spoken on the other side of the Caucasian range and not in contact with Kabardian.

A case of pattern borrowing

- Abkhaz (elicited):

s-aš'a *a-ɥnəka* *a-ɥəza*

1SG.IO-brother DEF-home DEF-friend

d-aa-j-ga-jt

3SG.H.ABS-CISL-3SG.M.ERG-bring(AOR)-DCL

‘My brother brought a friend home.’

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- Abkhaz (elicited):

s-aš'a

1SG.IO-brother

d-(#aa-)bə-χ^wa-pš-wa-jt

3SG.H.ABS-(#CISL)-2SG.F.IO-LOC-
look-PRS-DCL

‘My brother is looking after you (woman).’

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‘My brother is looking after you (woman).’

A case of pattern borrowing

- The quasi-inverse use of the cislocative is recorded in all grammars of West Circassian and Kabardian, while for Abaza this phenomenon is not yet recognized and is conspicuously ignored by existing sources (e.g. Genko 1955, Tabulova 1976, Lomtadze et. al. 1989, O'Herin 2002).

A case of pattern borrowing

- Abaza has been in close contact with Kabardian for several centuries.

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- Most speakers of Abaza also know and use Kabardian.
- It is common for Abaza men to marry Kabardian women, who then learn Abaza.
- Abaza has numerous lexical and some morphological borrowings, as well as morphosemantic calques, from Kabardian (Xaratokova 2011).



The Kabardian-speaking Khabez



The Abaza-speaking Inzhich-Chukun



A case of pattern borrowing

- In their inverse-like uses, the Abaza deictic prefixes mirror not only the function, but also the position of their Kabardian models.

A case of pattern borrowing

- In their inverse-like uses, the Abaza deictic prefixes mirror not only the function, but also the position of their Kabardian models.
- While in the spatial meanings the Abaza deictic prefixes follow the applicatives, in the inverse-like function they precede them.

A case of pattern borrowing

- Abaza (textual examples):

j-rə-z-ʃá-ʃ-ga-ṭ

3SG.N.ABS-3PL.IO-BEN-CISL-1PL.ERG-carry(AOR)-DCL

‘We brought it to them.’ (deictic)

A case of pattern borrowing

- Abaza (textual examples):

j-rə-z-ʁá-ʁ-ga-t

3SG.N.ABS-3PL.IO-BEN-CISL-1PL.ERG-carry(AOR)-DCL

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- Abaza (textual examples):

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‘We brought it to them.’ (deictic)

d-ʕa-rá-z-çʕa-t̚

3SG.H.ABS-CISL-3PL.IO-BEN-ask(AOR)-DCL

‘Then he asked them.’ (inverse-like)

A case of pattern borrowing

- Abaza (textual examples):

j-rə-z-ɣá-ɣ-ga-t̚

3SG.N.ABS-3PL.IO-BEN-CISL-1PL.ERG-carry(AOR)-DCL

‘We brought it to them.’ (deictic)

d-ɣa-rá-z-çɣa-t̚

3SG.H.ABS-CISL-3PL.IO-BEN-ask(AOR)-DCL

‘Then he asked them.’ (inverse-like)

A case of pattern borrowing

- Kabardian:

Abs	Deictic, Inverse	Appl	Erg	Root
-----	---------------------	------	-----	------

- Abaza (reconstructed):

Abs	Appl	Deictic	Erg	Root
-----	------	---------	-----	------

A case of pattern borrowing

- Kabardian:

Abs	Deictic, Inverse	Appl	Erg	Root
-----	---------------------	------	-----	------

- Abaza (reconstructed):

Abs	Appl	Deictic	Erg	Root
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A case of pattern borrowing

- Kabardian:



- Abaza (attested):



- Abaza (reconstructed):



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Conclusions

- The Circassian and Abaza cislocative prefixes share with the “canonical” inverse markers the factors conditioning their occurrence as well as a common diachronic origin.

Conclusions

- However, the “inverse” uses of the Circassian and Abaza 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/Abaza cislocative is a highly peculiar inverse.
- In the context of predominantly ergative morphosyntax of the NWC languages, the cislocative behaves in a somewhat nominative-accusative fashion (sensitivity to S+A vs. IO).

Conclusions

- Abaza has borrowed a typologically non-trivial inverse-like use of deictic verbal prefixes on the model of Kabardian, its distant relative.

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 - it involves two genealogically related polysynthetic languages with complex templatic morphology;
 - it shows contact-induced replication of a typological rarity;
 - its result is not just functional extension of an affix but a creation of a new slot in a morphological template as well.

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Conclusions

- This case of pattern borrowing is interesting because:
 - it involves complexification on both paradigmatic and syntagmatic dimensions;
 - this complexification is “gratuitous”, since as a result of borrowing no functional gap is filled, and neither has the Abaza person marking become more transparent.

ŝəzɪ^wádaχaʈ!



An aerial photograph of a town nestled in a valley. The town features a mix of residential buildings and a prominent large building with a blue roof. The surrounding landscape is green with rolling hills and fields. The sky is clear and blue.

them fjæpsew!

ŝəzɪ^wádaχaʈ!

An aerial photograph of a town nestled in a valley. The town features a mix of residential houses and larger buildings, including a prominent one with a blue roof. The surrounding landscape consists of rolling green hills and fields under a clear blue sky.

Thank you!

them fjækersew!

ŝəzɪ^wádaχat!

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