

## 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.



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<sub>w</sub>ən</i> 'to see'
Weak Inceptive-Stative	S	ES,S	1	<i>čəjen</i> 'to sleep'
Processual	P	P	15	<i>ž'eg<sub>w</sub>ən</i> 'to play', <i>txen</i> 'to write' (intransitive)
Strong Ingressive-Processual	P	EP	4	<i>k<sub>w</sub>ən</i> 'to go', <i>bəbən</i> 'to fly'
Strong Multiplicative	M	Q	10	<i>k<sub>w</sub>əwen</i> 'to shout', <i>wəž<sub>w</sub>əntxen</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<sub>w</sub>ə j-e-ləb<sub>w</sub>ə.* boy-OBL girl-ABS good 3SG.A-DYN-see  
 'The boy loves the girl.'  
 b. *č'ale-m pšaše-r š<sub>w</sub>ə ə-ləb<sub>w</sub>ə-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<sub>w</sub>ə-x.* boy-PL-ABS DYN-play  
 'The children are playing.'  
 b. *č'ale-xe-r ž'erə-βe-x.* boy-PL-ABS play-PST-PL  
 'The children played (for some time).'

♣ Strong Ingressive-Processual<sup>3</sup>:

- (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<sub>w</sub>əntxe.* boy-ABS DYN-spit  
 'The boy is spitting.'  
 b. *č'ale-r wež<sub>w</sub>əntxa-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<sub>w</sub>ənč'əbzə q-e-β<sub>w</sub>etə.* girl-OBL keys DIR-DYN-find  
 'The girl (always) finds the keys || \*is finding the keys now.'  
 b. *pšaše-m ʔ<sub>w</sub>ənč'əbzə q-ə-β<sub>w</sub>etə-β.* girl-OBL keys DIR-3SG.A-find-PST  
 'The girl found the keys.'

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

♣ Strong Telic:

(15) a. *thamate-m zeʔ<sub>w</sub>əč'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<sub>w</sub>əč'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<sub>w</sub>ə.* b. *mələ-r tk<sub>w</sub>ə-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<sub>w</sub>e* 'for half an hour', *taqjəqjət<sub>w</sub>e* 'for two minutes' etc.;
- ♣ adverbials of temporal extent: 'Instrumental' suffix *-č'e*: *səhatnəq<sub>w</sub>e-č'e* 'in half an hour', *taqjəqjət<sub>w</sub>ə-č'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. *č'ale-m pšaše-r taqjəq-jə-t<sub>w</sub>ə-č'e ə-ləβ<sub>w</sub>ə-β.*  
 boy-OBL girl-ABS minute-INF-two-INS 3SG.A-see-PST  
 'The boy saw the girl in two minutes.'

b. *č'ale-r səhat-nəq<sub>w</sub>e-č'e čəja-βe.*  
 boy-ABS hour-half-INS sleep-PST  
 'The boy fell asleep in half an hour.'

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

d. *č'ale-r taqjəq-jə-t<sub>w</sub>ə-č'e wəž<sub>w</sub>əntxa-β.*  
 boy-ABS minute-INF-two-INS spit-PST  
 'The boy spat (again) in two minutes.'

e. *ʔeg<sub>w</sub>awe-r taqjəq-jə-t<sub>w</sub>ə-č'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-č'e qe-wəc<sub>w</sub>ə-β.*  
 car-ABS minute-INF-five-INS DIR-stop-PST  
 'The car stopped in five minutes.'

g. *pšaše-m səhat-nəq<sub>w</sub>e-č'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-č'e žə-βe.*  
 this man-ABS year-INF-five-INS old-PST  
 Intended meaning: 'This man grew old in five years.'

b. *ʔč'ale-r taqjəq-jə-tfə-č'e qe-š<sub>w</sub>a-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<sub>w</sub>e λeš'a-κ.*      b. *pšaše-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<sub>w</sub>e g<sub>w</sub>əš'ə'a-κe.*      d. *səmaž'e-r taqjəq-jə-t<sub>w</sub>e 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 pšaše-r jəles-jə-tfē š<sub>w</sub>ə ə-λeκ<sub>w</sub>ə-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<sub>w</sub>ə 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<sub>w</sub>e pjəsmə-r ə-txə-κ.*      e. *mələ-r mēf-jə-tfē t<sub>k</sub>wə-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<sub>w</sub>awe-r taqjəq-jə-t<sub>w</sub>e qe-we-κ.*  
 balloon-ABS    minute-INF-two    DIR-explode-PST  
 ‘\*The balloon exploded for two minutes.’
- b. *'əg<sub>w</sub>awe-xe-r taqjəq-jə-t<sub>w</sub>e 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 1<sup>4</sup>.

➤ 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-səmaʒ’-ew, šk<sub>w</sub>elə-m k<sub>w</sub>a-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<sub>w</sub>e-m pšaše-r š<sub>w</sub>ə zer-jə-λeg<sub>w</sub>-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):

<sup>4</sup> The material presented in this subsection was collected by Dmitry Gerasimov in Hakurinoahl in 2006.

- (27) a. *čʼale-r zere-čəj-ew, pčʼəhape ə-λeβ<sub>w</sub>ə-β.*  
 boy-ABS SBD-sleep-CNV dream 3SG.A-see-PST  
 ‘As soon as the boy fell asleep, he saw a dream.’
- b. *čʼale-r zere-čəj-ew, qarəwə-m qə-xe-χ<sub>w</sub>a-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. *čʼale-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. *čʼale-m čʼewə-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. *čʼale-m čʼewə-r zer-jə-βal-ew, weš<sub>w</sub>ə 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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