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**“INDIRECT ANTIPASSIVES” IN CIRCASSIAN****1. Antipassives: some general issues**

According to the standard definitions (Cooreman 1994; Polinsky 2005; Say 2008), antipassive is a valency-changing operation which is applied to a transitive verb with two core arguments (A and P) and makes it intransitive, with the A argument realized as a S of an intransitive predicate. The original P argument is either left unrealized (1) at all or demoted to an oblique grammatical function (2).

transitive	→	antipassive
I		I
II		II
A <sub>i</sub>		S <sub>i</sub>
P		(Obl)

MATSES (Panoan, Peru, Brazil; Fleck 2006: 559)

- (1) a. *aid opa-n matses pe-e-k.*  
 DEM dog-ERG people(Abs) bite-NPST-IND  
 ‘That dog bites people.’
- b. *aid opa pe-an-e-k.*  
 DEM dog(Abs) bite-AP-NPST-IND  
 ‘That dog bites.’

WARRUNGU (Pama-Nyungan, NE Australia; Tsunoda 1988: 598)

- (2) a. *pama-ngku kamu yangka-n.*  
 man-ERG water(Abs) search-NFUT  
 ‘The man looked for water.’
- b. *pama kamu-wu yangka-kali-n.*  
 man(Abs) water-DAT search-AP-NFUT  
 ‘id.’

Antipassives are usually morphologically marked on verbs, though P-demotion without any formal marking (“A-lability”) is also quite widespread.

ENGLISH

- (3) a. *John is reading a book.*  
 b. *John is reading.*

➤ The definition of antipassive implies that this operation affects only transitive verbs, and is not used to demote or eliminate an indirect object of a bivalent intransitive verb.

In our talk we will present a typologically unusual case of an antipassive construction which applies indiscriminately to both transitive and intransitive two-argument verbs.

## 2. Circassian languages

A branch of the North-West Caucasian (Abkhaz-Adyghe) language family, comprising two major languages (or rather groups of dialects): **Adyghe** (West Circassian) and **Kabardian** (East Circassian).

Our fieldwork data comes from two Circassian varieties spoken in the Republic of Adygheya (Russian Federation):

- Temirgoy dialect of Adyghe, village Haqwerinehabl (very close to standard Adyghe)
- Besleney dialect of Kabardian, village Ulyap (very different from standard Kabardian)

Important typological features of Circassian languages:

- (almost) no distinction between nouns and verbs (Lander & Testelelets 2006);
- polysynthesis: pronominal affixes expressing all arguments of the verb (S, A, P as well as various indirect objects such as recipient, benefactive, and even location, cf. e.g. Smeets 1992) and a rich system of affixes marking aspectual, temporal and modal meanings (Korotkova & Lander 2010; Lander, Letuchiy 2010; Arkadiev, Letuchiy 2011);
- rich system of valency increasing operations, including causative, benefactive, malefactive and other applicatives (Letučij 2009a,b, Letuchiy 2012);
- rich system of locational preverbs also functioning as applicatives (Paris 1995);
- ergativity in both head- and dependent-marking (Smeets 1992, Kumakhov & Vamling 2006, Letuchiy 2012), coupled with an impoverished case system comprising only Absolutive (-*r*, marks S (4a) and P (4b)) and Oblique (-*m*, marks A (4b), all types of indirect objects (4b), and adnominal possessors (4c); NB personal pronouns, proper names and non-referential nouns normally lack overt case marking.

ADYGHE

- (4) a. *č'ale-r*     $\emptyset^1$ -*me-čaje*.  
 boy-ABS    3SG.ABS-DYN-sleep  
 'The boy is sleeping.'
- b. *č'ale-m*    *pšaše-m*    *txəλə-r*     $\emptyset$ - $\emptyset$ -*r-j-e-tə*.  
 boy-OBL    girl-OBL    book-ABS    3SG.ABS-3SG.IO-DAT-3SG.A-DYN-give  
 'The boy is giving the book to the girl.'
- c. *çəfə-m*     $\emptyset$ -*jə-wəne*  
 man-OBL    3SG.PR-POSS-house  
 'the man's house'

Existing sources on Circassian morphosyntax:

- in general on Circassian: Kumaxov 1971, Kumakhov & Vamling 2006;
- on Adyghe: Paris 1989 (in French), Smeets 1984 (in English), Rogava & Keraševa 1962, Testelec (ed.) 2009 (in Russian);
- on Kabardian: Colarusso 1989, 1992, 2006, Matasovič 2008 (in English), Kumaxov (ed.) 2006 (in Russian);
- on Besleney: Balkarov 1952, 1969 (in Russian); Alparslan, Dumézil 1964 (in French).

Our data comes mainly from the fieldwork materials collected during field-trips in 2004–2005 (Haqwerinehabl) and 2011–2012 (Ulyap). Our research has been supported by the Russian Foundation for the Humanities, grants 04-04-18008e (2004), 11-04-00282a (2011–2012), and the Russian Foundation for Fundamental Linguistic Research, grant A-23 (2012).

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<sup>1</sup> Henceforth we will not mark and gloss zero morphemes.

### 3. Two-argument predicates in Circassian

Transitivity is a formal morphosyntactic feature of verbs in Circassian reflected in the kind of cross-referencing prefixes they take:

- Transitive verbs have at least two arguments: A cross-referenced in the prefixal position closest to the verbal stem by a special set of cross-referencing prefixes (in particular, the 3SgA prefix is overt, while other 3Sg prefixes are zero), and P cross-referenced in the word-initial position by a different set of prefixes (called “Absolutive”).
- Intransitive verbs have an S argument cross-referenced in the word-initial position by prefixes from the Absolutive set.

Both transitive and intransitive verbs may have an indirect object argument introduced either by one of the numerous specific applicative prefixes or by the “Dative” applicative prefix (*j*)e-. All applicative prefixes occur in slots intermediate between those of the Absolutive and the A arguments.

- transitive

BESLENEY

- (5) a. *wə-s-λex<sup>w</sup>-a*  
2SG.ABS-1SG.A-see-PST  
‘I saw you.’
- b. *w-jə-λex<sup>w</sup>-a*  
2SG.ABS-3SG.A-see-PST  
‘S/he saw you.’

- Intransitive with an indirect object

BESLENEY

- (6) a. *sə-qə-w-e-ž-a*  
1SG.ABS-DIR-2SG.IO-DAT-wait-PST  
‘I waited for you.’
- b. *∅-qə-w-e-ž-a*  
3SG.ABS-DIR-2SG.IO-DAT-wait-PST  
‘S/he waited for you.’

Circassian languages possess a large and heterogeneous class of two-argument intransitive verbs. These can denote both physical activity (‘hit’, ‘bite’, ‘drink’, ‘kiss’ etc.) and mental activity or perception (‘read/learn’, ‘look at’, ‘smell’, ‘think about’ etc.). Many of these verbs are translated by transitive verbs into SAE languages.

### 4. The Circassian antipassive: the “normal” case

The antipassive in Circassian applies to transitive verbs and generally just eliminates the P argument, thus producing a single-argument intransitive verb (there is a very limited number of antipassive verbs with which the former P argument is realized as an indirect object, but these won’t concern us here, see Arkadjev & Letučij 2008).

	transitive	
	I	II
	A <sub>i</sub>	P
cross-reference	Agent	Absolutive
case-marking	Oblique	Absolutive

→

	antipassive	
	I	(II)
	S <sub>i</sub>	—
	Absolutive	—
	Absolutive	—

There are two morphological subtypes of the antipassive: marked and unmarked.

The marked antipassive is formed from verbs whose stem ends in /ə/ (in some positions, especially in Besleney, this vowel is elided) by substituting it with /e/ (in some positions /e/ changes to /a/).

ADYGHE

- (7) a. *njewəš'*    *š'jewež'awew*    *c<sup>w</sup>əmpre-r*    *qə-č'-a-č'ə-ze*    *a-šxə-š't...*  
tomorrow    beginning.with    strawberry-Abs    DIR-LOC-3PL.A-pick-CNV    3PL.A-eat-FUT  
‘From tomorrow on they’ll eat strawberries right after having picked them...’ [GišKr: 111]

- b. *žadedem š<sup>w</sup>ə-z-ke-sxe-š't.*  
 now 2PL.ABS-1SG.A-CAUS-eat.AP-FUT  
 'And now I'll give you something to eat.', lit. "I will make you eat" [GišKr: 42]

## BESLENEY

- (8) a. *pšaše-m žane ja-də-n x<sup>w</sup>je.*  
 girl-OBL dress 3SG.A-sew-POT must  
 'The girl must sew a dress.'
- b. *nataše deš<sup>w</sup>-wə jač'ja dax-wə ma-de.*  
 Natasha good-ADV and beautiful-ADV DYN-sew.AP  
 'Natasha sews well and nicely.'

The unmarked antipassive occurs with verbs whose stem ends in /e/ and is manifested by the valency change alone, marked by the number and position of cross-referencing prefixes and the case-marking of corresponding NPs.

## ADYGHE

- (9) a. *š<sup>w</sup>əneš<sup>w</sup>ə-m xate-r j-e-pč'e.*  
 neighbour-OBL garden-ABS 3SG.A-DYN-weed  
 'The neighbour is weeding the garden.'
- b. *a-r mafe rjenə-m pč'a-ke.*  
 DEM-ABS day whole-OBL weed(AP)-PST  
 'He was busy weeding whole day long.'

## BESLENEY

- (10) a. *lə-xe-m š<sup>w</sup>efə-r ja-ve-n x<sup>w</sup>je.*  
 man-PL-OBL field-ABS 3PL.A-plough-POT must  
 'The men must plough the field.'
- b. *lə-xe-r ma-ve-xe.*  
 man-PL-ABS DYN-plough(AP)-PL.ABS  
 'The men are busy ploughing.'

The antipassive mostly applies to verbs denoting specific activities with a strong manner component ("manner verbs" in terms of Levin & Rappaport Hovav 1998), e.g. 'eat', 'wash', 'sew', 'knit', 'dig', 'sow', 'cut', 'wipe', 'write', 'steal' etc.), and is used when no particular P argument is implied and the speaker's focus is on the activity itself.

## 5. The "indirect antipassive"

Notably, the application of the valency-reducing operation described in the previous section is not restricted to morphosyntactically transitive verbs but can also apply to two-argument intransitive predicates.

	bivalent intransitive			antipassive	
	I	II		I	(II)
	S <sub>i</sub>	IO	→	S <sub>i</sub>	—
cross-reference	Absolutive	IO		Absolutive	—
case-marking	Absolutive	Oblique		Absolutive	—

➤ Marked antipassive from intransitive verbs:

## ADYGHE

- (11) a. *č'ale-r pšaše-m je-bewə-š.*  
 boy-ABS girl-OBL DAT-kiss-PST  
 'The boy kissed the girl.'
- b. *bewe-nə-r ja-č'as.*  
 kiss.AP-MSD-ABS POSS-love  
 'S/he loves kissing.' (lit. 'To kiss is his/her love').

## BESLENEY

- (12) *Б<sup>w</sup>ег<sup>w</sup>ə-m je-pλ-te-qəm a-r jə-šha*  
 road-OBL DAT-look-IPF-NEG DEM-ABS POSS-head  
*mədč'e pλe-w mədč'e pλe-w že-t g<sup>w</sup>əš'əʔe-r-wə.*  
 there look.AP-ADV there look.AP-ADV run-IPF talk-CNV-ADV  
 'He didn't look at the road, he would drive talking and looking here and there.' [TlinJiM: 4]

- (13) a. *çəx<sup>w</sup>-xe-r z-we-benə-r.*  
 man-PL-ABS REC.IO-DYN-fight-ACL  
 'The men are fighting with each other.' [ShekRIgra: 5]
- b. *Asλen deβ<sup>w</sup>-wə me-bane.*  
 Aslan well-ADV DYN-fight.AP  
 'Aslan is a good fighter.', lit. "fights well"

## ➤ Unmarked antipassives from intransitive verbs:

## ADYGHE

- (14) a. *č'ele-jež'aḱ<sup>w</sup>e-r ... sportə-m neməč'-xe-m-jə ja-g<sup>w</sup>əpšəse-š't.*  
 boy-pupil-ABS sports-OBL other-PL-OBL-ADD 3PL.IO + DAT-think-FUT  
 'The pupil ... won't think about anything but sports.' [AM<sup>2</sup> 18.05.10]
- b. *č'ale-r mə-dej-ew adəγa-bze-č'e me-g<sup>w</sup>əš'əʔe,*  
 boy-ABS NEG-bad-ADV Adyghe-tongue-INS DYN-speak  
*me-g<sup>w</sup>əpšəse, wered q-j-e-ʔ<sup>w</sup>e.*  
 DYN-think(AP) song DIR-3SG.A-DYN-say  
 'The boy speaks, thinks and sings in Adyghe.' [AM 31.07.12]

## Besleney

- (15) a. *ha-r qə-š'ə-w-e-zaqə-č'e vračə-m = djə k<sup>w</sup>e.*  
 dog-ABS DIR-TEMP-2SG.IO-DAT-bite-INS doctor-OBL = to go(IMP)  
 'If a dog bites you, go to the doctor.'
- b. *ha-r me-zaqə.*  
 dog-ABS DYN-bite(AP)  
 'The dog bites.'

To this class belong such verbs as *jebewə*- 'kiss (smb.)' / *bewe*- 'kiss (in general)', *jeχ<sup>w</sup>enə*- 'scold smb.' / *χ<sup>w</sup>ene*- 'scold (in general)', *jeγəjə*- 'rebuke, avenge (smb.)' / *γəje*- 'rebuke, avenge, curse (in general)', *jepλə*- 'look (at smth.)' / *pλe*- 'look (in general or in some direction)', *jepemə*- 'smell (smth.)' / *peme*- 'smell (in general)', *jewəpčə*- 'ask (smb.)' / *wəpče*- 'ask (in general)', *jedeʔ<sup>w</sup>ə*- 'listen (smth.)' / *deʔ<sup>w</sup>e*- 'listen (in general)', *jebenə*- 'fight, struggle (against smb.)' / *bene*- 'fight (e.g. for peace, no mention of an opponent)', Ady. *jeceqe*-, Besl. *jezeqe*- 'bite (smb.)' / Ady. *ceqe*-, Besl. *zeqe*- 'bite (in general)', Ady. *jeg<sup>w</sup>əpšəse*- 'think about smth.' / *g<sup>w</sup>əpšəse*- 'think', Ady. *jetχ<sup>w</sup>e*- 'catch (smth.)' / *tχ<sup>w</sup>e*- 'catch (in general)'; Besl. *jeʔ<sup>w</sup>ənč'ə*- 'to push (smb.)' / *ʔ<sup>w</sup>ənč'e*- 'to push (in general)', and a number of others.

The two ditransitive verbs, *tə*- 'give' and *š'e*- 'sell' allow suppression of both P and IO, with the constraint that the IO cannot be expressed in the absence of the P. With *š'e*- 'sell' both operations are "invisible", but with *tə*- 'give' the *e*-grade of the root shows up only when both objects are suppressed, and not when only the P is realized.

<sup>2</sup> The newspaper "Adyghe maq" ('Adyghe Voice') <http://www.adygvoice.ru>

## BESLENEY

- (16) a. *jə-de-qəm mašine-r qə-r-jə-tə-n-wə.*  
 3SG.A-agree-NEG car-ABS DIR-DAT-3SG.A-give-MSD-ADV  
 ‘[He] does not agree to give him the car.’ [HadPod: 7]
- b. *sedaqe p-tə-nə-r deš<sup>w</sup>e.*  
 alms 2SG.A-give-MSD-ABS good  
 ‘It is good to give alms.’
- c. *a λə-r ma-te = zepət.*  
 DEM man-ABS DYN-give.AP = always  
 ‘That man is always charitable’, lit. “always gives”.
- (17) a. *d-jə-β<sup>w</sup>əneβ<sup>w</sup>-xe-m ž’e-m ja-t-š’e-ne.*  
 1PL.PR-POSS-neighbour-PL-OBL COW-ABS 3PL.IO + DAT-1PL.A-sell-FUT  
 ‘We will sell a cow to our neighbours.’
- b. *bjezet jə-βe.ze.ž’-r-jə mešine-xe-r zə-š’-a-š’e-m k<sup>w</sup>-a...*  
 Bezet 3SG.A-turn-CNV-ADD car-PL-ABS REL.IO-LOC-3PL.A-sell-OBL go-PST  
 ‘Bezet turned and went to the place where they sell cars.’ [ShekPod: 4]
- c. *twəč’anə-m də-š’ə-š’e-ne.*  
 shop-OBL 1PL.ABS-LOC-sell(AP)-FUT  
 ‘We will trade in the shop.’

## 6. Discussion

With respect to the Circassian languages we believe that it is fully legitimate to treat both the “direct” (transitive-based) and the “indirect” (intransitive-based) instances of the valency-reducing operation in question uniformly as antipassive whose function is to eliminate the second (non-subject) argument of a two-argument verb.

Though in Circassian languages with their predominantly ergative morphosyntax there are not many diagnostics of grammatical relations such as subject and object, there still exist some, such as reflexivization and “inversion” marking, which group together the A and the S arguments to the exclusion of the P and the IO arguments.

➤ Reflexivization is expressed by the prefix *zə-* behaving as a pronominal affix: it occupies one of the valency slots corresponding to the participants which enter into the reflexive relation. With transitive verbs, as in (18a), the reflexive prefix occupies the absolutive (P) slot, while with intransitive ones it occurs in the IO slot (18b). In both cases the reflexive is “controlled” by the subject argument, i.e. A of transitive verbs and S of intransitive verbs, which are expressed with regular cross-referencing prefixes.

## ADYGHE

- (18) a. *zə-sə-wəpsə-β.*  
 RFL.ABS-1SG.A-shave-PST  
 ‘I shaved (myself).’
- b. *β<sup>w</sup>ənže-m-če s-jə-z-e-pλə-ž’ə-β.*  
 mirror-OBL-INS 1SG.ABS-LOC-RFL.IO-DAT-look-RE-PST  
 ‘I looked at myself in the mirror.’

Thus, reflexivization is sensitive to the hierarchy “subject (S,A) > object (P,IO)”, and not to the distinctions either between Agent and Absolutive or between transitive and intransitive verbs.

➤ “Inversion” marking concerns the use of the directional prefix (Ady. *qe-/qə-*, Besl. *qe-/qə-*) in those instances when the indirect object outranks the subject on the person hierarchy “1 > 2 > 3” (the directional prefix may be used when the P is higher on the hierarchy than the A, but in transitive verbs its use is optional). Notably, the use of the directional prefix is

insensitive to the distinction between transitive (19) and intransitive (20) verbs and, thus, between A and S.

BESLENEY

- |         |   |    |  |
|---------|---|----|--|
| (19) a. | <i>q̇ə-z-e-p-t-a</i><br>DIR-1SG.IO-DAT-2SG.A-give-PST<br>'You gave it to me.' | b. | <i>ja-p-t-a</i><br>3PL.IO + DAT-2SG.A-give-PST<br>'You gave it to them.' |
| (20) a. | <i>q̇ə-w-e-ž-a</i><br>DIR-2SG.IO-DAT-wait-PST<br>'S/he waited for you.'       | b. | <i>w-je-ž-a</i><br>2SG.ABS-DAT-wait-PST<br>'You waited for him/her.'     |

The antipassive is clearly another morphosyntactic process in Circassian which groups together S and A into a “subject” relation. See, though, Letuchiy 2012 for another possible explanation, i.e. that such operations can be semantically motivated as being oriented to the most agentive argument which is typically A of transitive verbs and S of bivalent intransitive verbs.

## 7. Typological outlook

The “indirect antipassive” found in the Circassian languages is a cross-linguistically fairly infrequent phenomenon.

In general, an asymmetry exists between valency increase and valency decrease which concerns their relations to transitivity. Two features: ‘valency increase’ vs. ‘valency decrease’ and ‘change in transitivity’ vs. ‘no change of transitivity’ yield four possible values shown in the table where only object-oriented valency change is represented.

	transitivity changes	transitivity does not change
valency increase	applicative adding a DO	applicative (‘version’) adding an IO
valency decrease	antipassive	??

If we consider only operations which affect object arguments, one of the four cells remains empty: applicatives can add either a DO (Kinyarwanda, see Peterson 2007) or an IO (Kartvelian and North-West Caucasian languages), but antipassives only eliminate a DO, not an IO. Most languages, when they need to eliminate an IO argument do not employ any special marking (such option, as we have seen, exists in Circassian as well, but is a minor pattern). Circassian languages fill this empty cell with the indirect antipassive.

Such an asymmetry between direct and indirect object demotion can be explained in semantic terms: when there is need to remove an IO argument, languages usually do not employ any special marking because IO is an argument low in prominence and not always clearly distinguishable from optional adjuncts. By contrast, the addition of an IO is nevertheless often marked, because the exact semantic role of the IO is not always obvious (recipient, benefactive, malefactive, instrument, etc.), and its addition can change the semantics of the whole situation.

## Abbreviations

A – agent, ABS – absolutive, ACL – “actual” present, ADD – additive, ADV – adverbial, AP – antipassive, CAUS – causative, CNV – converb, DAT – dative, DEM – demonstrative, DIR – directional prefix, DYN – dynamic, ERG – ergative, FUT – future, IMP – imperative, IND – indicative, INS – instrumental, IO – indirect object, IPF – imperfective, LOC – locative prefix, MSD – “masdar” (nominalization), NEG – negation, NFUT – non-future, NPST – non-past, OBL – oblique, PL – plural, POSS – possessive, POT – potential, PR – possessor, PST – past, RE – refactive, REC – reciprocal, REL – relativizer, RFL – reflexive, SG – singular, TEMP – temporal subordinator.

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