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**Between noun incorporation and
lexical affixation
in Northwest Caucasian
(with focus on Abaza)**

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What is “noun incorporation”?

Mithun (1984: 847-848):

- “In [Noun Incorporation], a N stem is compounded with a V stem to yield a larger, derived V stem.”
- “Interestingly, all languages which exhibit such morphological structures also have syntactic paraphrases.”

What is “noun incorporation”?

Chukchi (Chukotkan, Russia; Muravjeva 2004: 115):

- (1) a. *gəm-nan tekicgə-n tə-pela-gʔan*
1SG-ERG meat-ABS.SG 1SG.S-leave-PST.3SG.O
- b. *gəm tə-takecgə-pela-gʔak*
1SG.ABS 1SG.S-meat-leave-PST.1SG.S
'a=b. I left the / some meat.'

Southern Tiwa (Kiowa-Tanoan, USA; Allen et al. 1984: 295):

- (2) a. *yede seuan-ide a-mũ-ban*
that man-SUF 2SG-see-PST
- b. *yede a-seuan-mũ-ban*
that 2SG-man-see-PST
'a=b. You saw that man.'

What is “noun incorporation”?

Baker (1988: 80) and later generative work (see an overview in Johns 2017):

- “The **productivity and the referential transparency** of NI suggest that it is a **syntactic** process, rather than a lexical one <...> the verb <...> and the noun root <...> combine into a single word <...> by Move-Alpha, which moves the structurally lower lexical item (the noun) to adjoin to the higher lexical item [the verb] in the syntax”

What is “noun incorporation”?

Not only generative linguists, cf. Olthof (2020: 16) in the framework of Functional Discourse Grammar:

- “In this study, we restrict the term noun incorporation to **productive, semantically transparent processes** in which a nominal and a verbal unit at R[eferential]L[evel] together form a single verbal Word at M[orphosyntactic]L[evel]. <...> More specifically, we define noun incorporation constructions as cases in which a nominal and a verbal unit that are in a **dependency relation of the form head-modifier or predicate-argument** at RL form a single verbal Morphosyntactic Word.”

What is “noun incorporation”?

Cf. also Vinyar’s (2021: 23) comparative concept (in the sense of Haspelmath 2010) of NI:

- “N(oun) I(ncorporation) C(onstruction) is an **optional** construction used to express **discoursively low-prominent** participant of an event coded by a **noun**. The noun is **adjacent** to a **verb**, cannot be **inflected** and is **not phrasal**. NIC’s primary function is to deprofile a participant whose causal chain’s segment would otherwise be a part of the verbal profile.” (author’s emphasis)

What is “noun incorporation”?

Not all definitions are so restrictive, though.

De Reuse (1994: 2842):

- “Noun incorporation refers to the morphological construction where a **nominal lexical element is added to a verbal lexical element; the resulting construction being a verb and a single word**. The definition cannot be made more precise than that, because there is widespread disagreement <...>”

What is “noun incorporation”?

Not all definitions are so restrictive, though.

Massam (2009: 1078):

- “[W]e adopt the broad working definition of NI as a grammatical construction where a **nominal that would canonically (either in the given language, or in languages in general) be expressed as an independent argument or adjunct** is instead in some way incorporated into the verbal element of the sentence, forming part of the predicate.”

What is “noun incorporation”?

“Non-prototypical” (or “non-canonical”?) noun incorporation (cf. Mithun 2000):

- not necessarily highly productive:
 - only a subset of verbs are incorporating (Olthof et al. 2021);
 - only a subset of nouns can be incorporated
- the semantic role of the nominal root is not necessarily patient/theme:
 - incorporation of instruments;
 - incorporation of spatial modifiers.

In this talk

- The Northwest Caucasian (Abkhaz-Adyghean) languages are not mentioned in the literature on noun incorporation.
- This is not accidental: indeed, examples like (1) and (2) do not occur in NWC.

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- The Northwest Caucasian (Abkhaz-Adyghean) languages are not mentioned in the literature on noun incorporation.
- This is not accidental: indeed, examples like (1) and (2) do not occur in NWC.
- Nevertheless, focusing on Abaza, I shall argue that NWC languages not only show clear traces of historical noun incorporation, but also possess phenomena that can be analysed as incorporation even synchronically.
- These phenomena, which form a cline from noun-incorporation to “lexical affixation” (Mithun 1997), are fairly non-trivial from a typological perspective.

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- Northwest Caucasian:
 - Circassian: West Circassian (Adyghe), Kabardian
 - Abkhaz-Abaza: Abkhaz, Abaza
 - Ubykh (extinct since 1992)

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- Northwest Caucasian:
 - Circassian: West Circassian (Adyghe), Kabardian
 - Abkhaz-Abaza: Abkhaz, Abaza
 - Ubykh (extinct since 1992)
- Arguably distantly related to the Nakh-Daghestanian (East Caucasian) family (Nikolaev & Starostin 1994).

Northwest Caucasian languages

- West Caucasian peoples and languages have severely suffered during the Caucasian war (1763-1864) and the ensuing expulsions and resettlements.
- A number of varieties have become extinct, and the whole linguistic landscape has been disrupted.

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- West Caucasian peoples and languages have severely suffered during the Caucasian war (1763-1864) and the ensuing expulsions and resettlements.
- A number of varieties have become extinct, and the whole linguistic landscape has been disrupted.
- Currently spoken by ca. 700-800 thousand people in Abkhazia and the Russian republics of Adygeya, Karachaevo-Cherkessia and Kabardino-Balkaria, as well as neighbouring regions.
- A large Northwest Caucasian diaspora in Turkey and other countries of the Middle East, exact number of speakers unknown.

Northwest Caucasian languages



Northwest Caucasian languages

- Major typological traits (Hewitt 2005, Arkadiev & Lander 2020):
 - rich consonantism and impoverished vocalism;
 - weak distinction between major lexical classes;
 - head-marking and polysynthesis;
 - little (Circassian, Ubykh) or no (Abkhaz-Abaza) core case marking;
 - ergativity;
 - rich system of valency-increasing derivations, especially applicatives;
 - rich system of spatial marking in the verb;
 - complex system of clause-combining.

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Abaza

- *abáza bəzšá* (абазы бызшва), ISO 639-3 abq
- Ca. 38 000 speakers in Russia (Karachaevo-Cherkessia), ca. 10 000 in Turkey



Abaza

- The least-described language of the Northwest Caucasian family
- Descriptive works exist (e.g. Genko 1955, Tabulova 1976, Lomtadze et al. 1989, O'Herin 2002), but are insufficient

Abaza

The Abaza verbal template:

| | | “preverbs” (Π) | | | | | | | | “stem” (Σ) | | | | | “endings” | | | | |
|------------|----------------------------|----------------|-----------------------------|--------------|-------------------------|-------------------|-----------------|----------|----------|------------|-----------|------|-------------------------|-----------------|-----------|---------------|----------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| -12 | -11 | -10 | -9 | -8 | -7 | -6 | -5 | -4 | -3 | -2 | -1 | 0 | +1 | +2 | +3 | +4 | +5 | +6 | +7 |
| absolutive | subordinators, negation | repetitive | potential, involuntative | applicatives | directional preverbs | locative preverbs | indirect object | ergative | negation | causative | sociative | root | directional suffixes | event operators | plural | aspect, tense | negation | past tense, modality | subordinators, force, emphasis |

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locative preverbs

Locative preverbs

- Are found in all NWC languages:
 - ca. 30 in Circassian;
 - ca. 50 in Ubykh;
 - more than 100 in Abkhaz and Abaza (Avidzba 2017, Spruit 1986: 22-31)
- Express a variety a spatial and metaphorical meanings ranging from very abstract to very concrete.
- Often serve as applicatives introducing the landmark as an indirect object argument that can be cross-referenced in the verb.
- Can be simplex or complex.
- Differ in productivity.
- Obligatory in some cases, and often lexicalised.

Locative preverbs

Abaza

- (3) *a-wasa* *a-š'acara* *jə-la-wə-m-sa-n*
DEF-sheep DEF-lawn 3SG.N.ABS-LOC:mass-2SG.M.ERG-NEG-
shear-IMP

'Do not shear the sheep on the lawn.' (Klychev 1995: 145)

- (4) *a-ʒə* *ʒa-sə-k^w-χ^wχ^wa-t*
DEF-water CSL-1SG.IO-LOC:top-sprinkle(AOR)-DCL

'Water sprinkled on me.' (Klychev 1995: 117)

- (5) *a-çəjs* *a-qəš* *j-kə-la-pssʒa-t*
DEF-bird DEF-window 3SG.N.ABS-LOC:narrow-LOC:mass-
fly(AOR)-DCL

'The bird flew through the window.' (Klychev 1995: 131)

Locative preverbs

Simplex preverbs

Abaza

- (3) *a-wasa* *a-š'acara* *jə-la←wə-m-sa-n*
 DEF-sheep DEF-lawn 3SG.N.ABS-LOC:mass-2SG.M.ERG-NEG-shear-IMP

'Do not shear the sheep **on the lawn**.' (Klychev 1995: 145)

- (4) *a-3ə* *ʃa-sə-k^w-χ^wχ^wa-t*
 DEF-water CSL-1SG.IO-LOC:top-sprinkle(AOR)-DCL

'Water sprinkled **on me**.' (Klychev 1995: 117)

- (5) *a-çəjs* *a-qəš* *j-kə-la-pssʃa-t*
 DEF-bird DEF-window 3SG.N.ABS-LOC:narrow-LOC:mass-fly(AOR)-DCL

'The bird flew **through the window**.' (Klychev 1995: 131)

Locative preverbs

Abaza

Simplex preverbs

- (3) *a-wasa* *a-š'acara* *jə-la←wə-m-sa-n*
 DEF-sheep DEF-lawn 3SG.N.ABS-LOC:mass-2SG.M.ERG-NEG-shear-IMP

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- (4) *a-3ə* *ʃa-sə-k^w-χ^wχ^wa-t*
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'Water sprinkled **on me**.' (Klychev 1995: 117)

Complex preverb

- (5) *a-çəjs* *a-qəš* *j-kə-la←pssʃa-t*
 DEF-bird DEF-window 3SG.N.ABS-LOC:narrow-LOC:mass-fly(AOR)-DCL

'The bird flew **through the window**.' (Klychev 1995: 131)

Locative preverbs

Abaza

(3) *a-wasa* *a-š'acara* *jə-la* ← *wə-m-sa-n*
 DEF-sheep DEF-lawn 3SG.N.ABS-LOC:mass-2SG.M.ERG-NEG-
 shear-IMP

Simplex preverbs

'Do not shear the sheep on the lawn.' (Klychev 1995: 145)

Landmark

ɣ-ʒə *ɣa-sə-k^w-χ^wχ^wa-t*
 DEF-water CSL-1SG.IO-LOC:top-sprinkle(AOR)-DCL

'Water sprinkled on me.' (Klychev 1995: 117)

Complex preverb

(5) *a-çajs* *a-qəš* *j-kə-la* ← *pssɣa-t*
 DEF-bird DEF-window 3SG.N.ABS-LOC:narrow-LOC:mass-
 fly(AOR)-DCL

'The bird flew through the window.' (Klychev 1995: 131)

Locative preverbs

Abaza

(3) *a-wasa* DEF-sheep *a-š'acara* DEF-lawn *jə-la-wə-m-sa-n* 3SG.N.ABS-LOC:mass-2SG.M.ERG-NEG-shear-IMP

Simplex preverbs

'Do not shear the sheep on the lawn.' (Klychev 1995: 145)

Landmark

ɣ-ʒə DEF-water *ɣa-sə-k* CSL-1SG.IO-LOC:top *χ^wχ^wa-t* sprinkle(AOR)-DCL

Complex preverb

'Water sprinkled on me.' (Klychev 1995: 117)

(5) *a-çajs* DEF-bird *a-qəš* DEF-window *j-kə-la-pssɣa-t* 3SG.N.ABS-LOC:narrow-LOC:mass-fly(AOR)-DCL

Indirect object prefix

'The bird flew through the window.' (Klychev 1995: 117)

Locative preverbs

- NWC locative preverbs fall into the broad class of so-called “**lexical affixes**”, i.e. morphologically bound elements that modify roots but themselves have concrete semantics resembling that of roots.
- Cross-linguistically, lexical affixes express
 - body-parts (e.g. as instruments);
 - salient artifacts or natural objects;
 - locations;
 - various other adverbial and predicative notions.

Mithun 1997; Mattissen 2004: 190-194; 2006: 297-333

Locative preverbs

- Diachronically, most locative preverbs in NWC go back to incorporated nouns, mainly denoting parts of body or other objects (Kumakhov 1964: 164-182, 1989: 200-228; Lomtadze 1983; Avidzba 2017; Arkadiev & Maisak 2018: 121-125).
- A cross-linguistically common historical path for lexical affixes (Mithun 1984: 885–887; Mithun 1997: 365-366; Kinkade 1998; Mattissen 2006).
- NWC preverbs are in many cases much more transparently related to the corresponding nouns than e.g. the “body-part prefixes” in the Panoan languages (Fleck 2006, Zariquiey & Fleck 2012).

Locative preverbs

- Locative preverbs related to nouns:

West Circassian (Kumakhov 1964: 177-179):

- (6) *ḵ^weçə* ‘intestines’: *ḵ^weçə-λhe-n* ‘put inside smth’
ḵ^weçə-rə-čə-n ‘run through smth’
- (7) *ʔ^wə* ‘mouth’: *ʔ^wə-c^we-n* ‘stand near smth’
ʔ^wə-š’ə-n ‘lead away from smth’

Locative preverbs

- Some preverbs can be treated as incorporated nouns even synchronically.

West Circassian (Rogava & Kerasheva 1966: 131):

- (8) a. *ə-že* *d-jə-λha-β*
 3SG-mouth LOC:in-3SG.ERG-put-PST
- b. *že-d-jə-λha-β*
 mouth-LOC:in-3SG.ERG-put-PST
 a=b ‘S/he put it in his/her mouth.’

Locative preverbs

- Alternations of free vs. incorporated nouns like in (8) are rare.

Kabardian (Kumakhov 1964: 181-182)

(9) *ʃhe* 'head': *ʃhe-rə-xə-n* 'take from one's head'

(10) *ʔe* 'hand': *ʔe-ʃe-xə-n* 'take from one's hands'

Locative preverbs

- Many noun+verb combinations are lexicalised:

West Circassian (Rogava & Kerasheva 1966: 131):

(11) *g^wəʂ^we-k^wəwe-maqe-r* *qə-ž^e-de-zə-ʌ*
joy-cry-voice-ABS CSL-mouth-LOC:in-exit-PST
Lit. 'A joyful scream went out of his mouth.'

CSL - cislocative

Why Abaza?

- Abaza (and, mutatis mutandis, Abkhaz) offers much richer and varied material on noun incorporation than the rest of the family.
- Abaza locative preverbs happen to be amply documented.

Why Abaza?

- Dr. Rauf Klychev (Кълыч Рауф, 1934-1993)
- *The Locative Preverbial Derivation of Verbs in Abaza* (in Russian, Cherkessk, 1994).
- *A Dictionary of Collocations of Locative Preverbs with Suffixoids and Verbs in Abaza* (in Russian, Cherkessk, 1995). = К
- Ca. 4300 verbs with 150 preverbs.



Р. Н. КЛЫЧЕВ

СЛОВАРЬ СОЧЕТАЕМОСТИ
ЛОКАЛЬНЫХ ПРЕВЕРБОВ
С СУФФИКСИДАМИ
И ГЛАГОЛЬНЫМИ КОРНЯМИ
В АБАЗИНСКОМ ЯЗЫКЕ

*Утверждено Министерством образования
Карачаево-Черкесской республики*

КАРАЧАЕВО-ЧЕРКЕССКОЕ
КНИЖНОЕ ИЗДАТЕЛЬСТВО
ЧЕРКЕССК 1995

Incorporation in Abaza (I): body-part nouns

- Many preverbs are related to body-part nouns (Klychev 1994: 34-59).
- Some of them are clearly highly grammaticalised and desemanticised.

bva ‘back, waist’ > ‘down’ (*bva-pš-ra* ‘look down’, K: 53)

waça ‘intestines’ > ‘inside a container’ (*waça-ž-ra* ‘to boil inside smth’, K: 239)

mg^wa ‘belly’ > ‘wrapped up’ (*mg^wa-š-ra* ‘to freeze being dressed up’, K: 161)

qa ‘head’ > ‘above’, see (12) below

Incorporation in Abaza (I): body-part nouns

- Body-part preverbs widely differ in their productivity (data from Klychev 1995, including complex preverbs):

| | |
|--------------------------------------|-------------|
| <i>qa-</i> ‘head, above’ | > 200 verbs |
| <i>ča-</i> ‘face, vertical surface’ | > 200 verbs |
| <i>š’ta-</i> ‘trace, after’ | 175 verbs |
| <i>waça-</i> ‘intestines, container’ | 137 verbs |
| <i>napə-ça-</i> ‘in the hand’ | 59 verbs |
| <i>g^wə-</i> ‘heart’ | 53 verbs |
| <i>čə-</i> ‘skin, surface’ | 48 verbs |
| <i>lakta-</i> ‘face’ | 17 verbs |
| <i>q^wda-</i> ‘neck’ | 15 verbs |
| <i>k^wa-</i> ‘bosom’ | 6 verbs |
| <i>š’q^wa-</i> ‘heel’ | 2 verbs |
| <i>š’ačə-</i> ‘toe’ | 1 verb |

Incorporation in Abaza (I): body-part nouns

- In some cases the same preverb retains its body-part meaning.
- Then the personal prefix refers to the possessor of the body-part.
- *qa* ‘head’ > ‘above’:

(13) *j-qəlpə* *j-qa-ŝ-əw-n*
3SG.M.IO-hat 3SG.M.IO-LOC:head-fall-IPF-PST
‘The hat fit his head well (lit. fell on his head).’ (K: 260)

IPF – imperfective, M – masculine

Incorporation in Abaza (I): body-part nouns

- Some body-part preverbs retain their lexical meaning, reference and anchoring to a possessor in almost all cases:

(14) *a-saba* *ʕa-rə-lakta-ɸl-əw-n*

DEF-dust CSL-3PL.IO-LOC:face-pour.powder-IPF-PST

‘Dust was pouring onto their faces.’ (K: 154)

(15) *arqan-g’əj* *ʕ-a-q^wdə-j-χ-χə-n*

rope-ADD CSL-3SG.N.IO-LOC:neck-3SG.M.ERG-take-RE-PST

‘He took the rope off its (the stallion’s) neck’ (AbTa: 142)

(16) *a-ʒə* *jə-k^wa-ĉ-əw-n*

DEF-water 3SG.M.IO-LOC:bosom-pour.liquid-IPF-PST

‘Water was pouring into his bosom.’ (K: 138)

ADD – additive, RE – reflexive

Incorporation in Abaza (I): body-part nouns

- Other body-part preverbs are used both in the original and in the spatial meanings:
- *ʒa-* ‘cheek’ > ‘lateral surface’

- (18) a. *də-j-ʒa-kš-əw-n*
3SG.H.ABS-3SG.M.IO-LOC:cheek-hit-IPF-PST
‘S/he was beating him on the cheek.’ (K: 98)
- b. *a-kdə ʒa-r-bəl-wa-n*
DEF-stump LOC:cheek-3PL.ERG-burn-IPF-PST
‘They were burning the stump on one side.’ (K: 99)

Incorporation in Abaza (I): body-part nouns

- At least one body-part preverb occurs without the possessor prefix:

ĉa 'skin' > *ĉə-* 'skin; surface'

(19) *a-qaça* *jə-maĉ* *ĉə-j-q'a-t*
DEF-man 3SG.M.IO-finger LOC:skin-3SG.M.ERG-hit(AOR)-DCL
'The man scratched his finger.' (K: 309)

Incorporation in Abaza (I): body-part nouns

- Additional examples from Abkhaz (Spruit 1986: 28-29):

(20) *a-maĉwaz lə-mka-s-χə-jt̚*
DEF-ring 3SG.F.IO-LOC:finger-1SG.ERG-take(AOR)-DCL
'I took the ring from her finger.'

(21) *a-kʷtə χʷələ-s-χə-jt̚*
DEF-hen LOC:feather-1SG.ERG-take(AOR)-DCL
'I plucked the hen.' (lit. "took it out of its feather")

Incorporation in Abaza (I): body-part nouns

- Some of the body-part preverbs are lexicalised rather than grammaticalised and are used in metaphorical meanings:

(22) *j-r-a-s-h^w-wa-š*

REL.ABS-3PL.IO-DAT-1SG.ERG-say-IPF-FUT

ʃa-s-g^wa-q^wəc-ʔ

CSL-1SG.IO-LOC:heart-think(AOR)-DCL

‘I decided what I shall tell them (lit. “it thought in my heart”).’ (K: 72)

(23) *j-ʃa-s-g^wa-la-ša-χ-ʔ*

3PL.ABS-CSL-1SG.IO-LOC:heart-LOC:mass-fall-RE(AOR)-DCL

‘I recalled them (lit. “they fell back into my heart”).’
(K: 76)

DAT – “dative” marker

Incorporation in Abaza (I): body-part nouns

- A special case: *napə* ‘hand’
 - is mostly used in combination with the preverb *ça-* ‘under’
 - has both the literal and metaphorical meanings

- (24) a. *a-k^wʃtaβ’ s-napə-ça-p.č-ʔ*
DEF-egg 1SG.IO-LOC:hand-LOC:under-break(AOR)-DCL
‘The egg broke in my hands.’ (K: 170)
- b. *də-r-napə-ça-šə-ʔ*
3SG.H.ABS-3PL.IO-LOC:hand-LOC:under-fall(AOR)-DCL
a-haž’rat-k^wa
DEF-robber-PL
‘[A man] was attacked by (lit. “fell under the hands of”) robbers’ (AbLu 10:30)

Cross-linguistic perspective (I)

- Body-part nouns are frequent targets of incorporation in the languages of the world (Mattissen 2006: 310–315; Massam 2009: 1090; Lehmann 2016: 43-47; Zariquiey 2018; Vinyar 2021; Olthof et al. 2021: 228).
- The path from body-part incorporation to applicatives is documented outside of NWC as well (Fleck 2006; Nordlinger 2019), *pace* Peterson (2007: 141).
- However, the semantic roles of incorporated body-part nouns are usually patient / theme or instrument, rather than spatial landmark.

Cross-linguistic perspective (I)

Mohawk (Iroquoian, Canada, USA, Mithun 1996: 643)

(26) *wa-hi-kyhs-ohare-ʔ* patient
PST-1SG>3SG.M-*face*-wash-PUNC
'I washed his face.'

Bininj Gun-wok (Gunwinyguan, Australia, Evans 1996: 84)

(27) *ga-bid-wayda-n* instrument
3-*hand*-wave-NPST
'He is waving his hand.'

PUNC – punctual

Cross-linguistic perspective (I)

- Incorporation of body-parts as locations is, however, also attested, even if rarely.

Warray (Gunwinyguan, Australia, Harvey 1996: 144)

(28) *ngirri wang ban-nabat-nawa-m an-nebe-yang*
dog meat 1SG.O-hand-take-PFV.PST CL-hand-ABL
'The dog took the meat out of my hand.'

Oluta Popoluca (Mixe-Zoque, Mexico, Zavala 2000: 591)

(29) *sa:rakü ta=küx-tu:t-aʔx-ü-w=aʔ min=?unaʔk*
Sara 1.ABS=back-put-APPL-INV-CMPL-3 2.PR=son
'Sara put your son on my back.'

ABL – ablative, APPL – applicative, CL – class marker, CMPL – completive
INV – inverse, PR - possessor

Incorporation in Abaza (II): non-relational nouns

- Ca. dozen preverbs correspond to non-relational nouns denoting salient artefacts or locations.
- Most of them retain their lexical meaning.

| | |
|--|-----------|
| <i>č̣kara</i> ‘courtyard’ | 180 verbs |
| <i>ʃ^wna</i> ‘house, room’ | 150 verbs |
| <i>č̣ʃ^wa</i> ‘hearth’ | 125 verbs |
| <i>g^wara</i> ‘fence, enclosure’ | 55 verbs |
| <i>pṣ̌ça</i> ‘courtyard’ | 40 verbs |
| <i>q^wa</i> ‘ashes’ | 11 verbs |
| <i>gara</i> ‘cradle’ | 8 verbs |
| <i>č̣ə</i> ‘horse’ | 6 verbs |
| <i>çla</i> ‘tree’ | 1 verb |

Incorporation in Abaza (II): non-relational nouns

- Such incorporated nouns can express a referential spatial landmark involved in the event.

(30) *a-sabəj d-gara-l-g^wa-n*
DEF-child 3SG.H.ABS-LOC:cradle-3SG.ERG-lay-PST
'She laid the child into the cradle.' (K: 67)

(31) *w-g^wara-pš-ta w-ʕa.j.χ*
2SG.M.ABS-LOC:fence-look-ADV 2SG.M.ABS-return(IMP)
'Look in the courtyard (lit. "inside the fence") and come back.' (K: 69)

ADV – adverbial marker, IMP – imperative

Incorporation in Abaza (II): non-relational nouns

Additional examples from Abkhaz:

- (32) *a-raχ^w* *ʁə-ça-h-ga-ra.w-ḗ*
DEF-cattle LOC:winter-LOC:under-1PL.ERG-carry-DEB-NPST.DCL
'We have to keep the cattle during the winter.' (Avidzba 2017: 99)
- (33) *a-nəs^wəntra* *d-χək^w-gəla-w-ḗ*
DEF-grave 3SG.H.ABS-LOC:edge-stand-PRS-NPST.DCL
'He is standing at the edge of the grave.' (Spruit 1986: 27)

DEB – debitive

Incorporation in Abaza (II): non-relational nouns

- Being referentially autonomous, most such preverbs occur without a pronominal prefix.
- Still, some can take prefixes cross-referencing the possessor.

Cf. Abkhaz:

(34) *a-ǰama jə-ǰ^wnə-z-b.aa.la-jt̚*

DEF-dagger 3SG.M.IO-LOC:belt-1SG.ERG-descry(AOR)-DCL

'I descried a dagger on him (lit. "behind his belt").'

(Spruit 1986: 28)

Incorporation in Abaza (II): non-relational nouns

- Some develop more abstract spatial meanings.
- *š'kla* 'stirrup' > 'behind, following'

- (35) a. *d-rə-š'kla-šê-t*
 3SG.H.ABS-3PL.IO-LOC:stirrup-whistled(AOR)-DCL
 'He whistled after them.' (K: 332)
- b. *a-h^wəs* *jə-š'kla*
 DEF-calf 3SG.M.IO-stirrup
- j-a-š'kla-j-h^wa-t*
 3SG.N.ABS-3SG.N.IO-LOC:stirrup-3SG.M.ERG-tie(AOR)-DCL
 'He tied the calf to his stirrup.' (ibid.)

N – non-human

Incorporation in Abaza (II): non-relational nouns

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- *š'kla* 'stirrup' > 'behind, following'

(35) a. *d-rə-š'kla-šê-t*
 3SG.H.ABS-3PL.IO-LOC:stirrup-whistle (AO)
 'He whistled after them.' (K: 332)

b. *a-h^wəs* *jə-š'kla*
 DEF-calf 3SG.M.ERG-stirrup
j-a-š'kla-j-h^wa-t
 3SG.N.ABS-3SG.N.IO-LOC:stirrup-3SG.M.ERG-tie(AOR)-DCL
 'He tied the calf to his stirrup.' (ibid.)

Here the possessor is encoded on the independent noun, which is in turn cross-referenced by the pronominal prefix on the cognate preverb

N – non-human

Incorporation in Abaza (II): non-relational nouns

- Some occur only as part of complex preverbs:

(36) *d-q^wa-la-j-g^wa-t*

3SG.H.ABS-LOC:ashes-LOC:mass-3SG.M.ERG-lay(AOR)-DCL

‘He knocked him (the giant) down into ashes.’ (K: 273)

(37) *sawsrəq^wa d-čə-ž-pa-t*

Sosruko 3SG.H.ABS-LOC:horse-LOC-jump(AOR)-DCL

‘Sosruko jumped off his horse.’ (K: 237)

Incorporation in Abaza (II): non-relational nouns

- Non-relational preverbs can be used as **verbal classifiers** lacking independent reference and corresponding to a landmark expressed as a full nominal.
- Such a landmark can have the same root as the preverb, or be synonymous or hyponymous to it.

Incorporation in Abaza (II): non-relational nouns

- (38) *rə-čʃ^wa* *d-čʃ^wa-pχa-t*
3PL.IO-oven 3SG.H.ABS-LOC:oven-warm_up(AOR)-DCL
'He warmed himself up near their oven.' (K: 213)
- (39) *a-ḵ'adəg^w* *wə-čḵara-l-p̄*
DEF-courtyard 2SG.M.ABS-LOC:yard-enter-NPST
'You will enter the courtyard.' (AbTa: 85)
- (40) *a-klub* *jə-ʃ^wna-n.χ-əj-t*
DEF-club 3PL.ABS-LOC:house-work-PRS-DCL
'They work in the club.' (K: 88)

Incorporation in Abaza (II): non-relational nouns

- Such constructions are also attested with some body-part preverbs:

(41) *napə-ḵ-g'əj* *j-g'-a-napə-ça-m-ŝa-ṭ*
hand-INDF-ADD 3SG.N.ABS-NEG-3SG.N.IO-LOC:hand-LOC:under-
NEG-fall(AOR)-DCL

'It (your ring) did not fall into anybody's hands.' (AbAl: 139)

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NEG-fall(AOR)-DCL

'It (your ring) did not fall into anybody's hands.' (AbAl:
139)

The non-human
possessor prefix
obviously refers to the
external noun "hand",
not to any human
possessor

Cross-linguistic perspective (II)

Mithun (1984: 874):

- Type IV noun incorporation, where “a generic N is incorporated to qualify the V, while a more specific external NP identifies the implied referent”

Caddo (Caddoan, USA; *ibid.* : 865): ‘eye’ > ‘round object’

- (42) a. *kassi'* *háh-'ič'á-sswí'-sa'*
 bead PROG-*eye*-string-PROG
 ‘She is stringing beads.’
- b. *ka'ás* *háh-'ič'áh-'í'-sa'*
 plum PROG-*eye*-grow-PROG
 ‘Plums are growing.’

Cross-linguistic perspective (II)

Verbal classifiers (Aikhenvald 2000: 149):

- “Verbal classifiers appear on the verb, categorizing the referent of its argument in terms of its shape, consistency, size, structure, position, and animacy.”
- “Verbal classifiers **always refer to a predicate argument (usually S in an intransitive or O in a transitive clause)** and can co-occur with it.”
- “In a few languages, verbal classifiers **can also refer to peripheral arguments.**” (ibid. 162)

From incorporated nouns to affixes

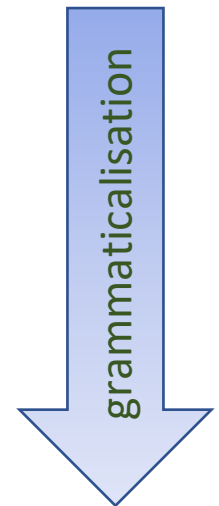
- Abaza locative preverbs form a continuum:

| | have related nouns | retain lexical meaning | example |
|----------|--------------------|------------------------|---|
| type I | yes | always | <i>lakta-</i> 'face' <i>gara-</i> 'cradle' |
| type II | yes | sometimes | <i>ča-</i> 'face, vertical surface' <i>ʕ^wna</i> 'house, room' |
| type III | yes | no | <i>qa-</i> 'head' > 'above' <i>š'kla</i> 'stirrup' > 'behind' |
| type IV | no | no | <i>ta-</i> 'inside', <i>ča-</i> 'below' |

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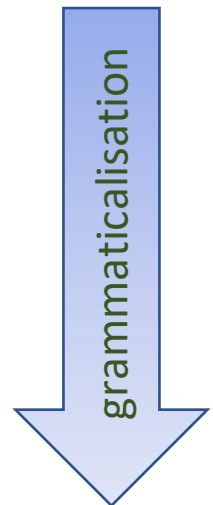
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| type IV | no | lexical affixation | <i>ta-</i> 'inside', <i>ča-</i> 'below' |



From incorporated nouns to affixes

- Grammaticalisation and affixalisation of incorporated nouns in Abaza is evidenced by their acquiring morphosemantic properties absent with nouns and characteristic of the indisputable lexical affixes.

From incorporated nouns to affixes

- The same distinction is attested with preverbs I have classified as incorporated nouns.
- No evidence of a similar distinction in the corresponding nouns when used independently.
- A clear sign of affixalisation of the incorporated nouns.
- Notably, can precede semantic change.

From incorporated nouns to affixes

- With incorporated body-part nouns:

- (44) a. *a-ʒə* *jə-q^wda-žž-wa-n* **introvert**
DEF-water 3SG.M.IO-LOC:neck-pour:liquid-IPF-PST
'Water was pouring **on** his neck.' (K: 274)
- b. *a-mχ^w-k^wa* *lə-q^wdə-l-žə-t* **extravert**
DEF-beads-PL 3SG.F.IO-LOC:neck.ELAT-3SG.F.ERG-
tear_off(AOR)-DCL
'She tore the beads **off** her neck.' (K: 275)

From incorporated nouns to affixes

- With incorporated non-relational nouns:

- (45) a. *aʃ^w ʃʃ^wa-l-ga-t introvert*
DEF+trough LOC:hearth-3SG.F.ERG-carry(AOR)-DCL
'She brought the trough **to** the hearth.' (K: 211)
- b. *d-ʃʃ^wə-r-ga-χ-t extravert*
3SG.H.ABS-LOC:hearth.ELAT-3PL.ERG-carry-RE(AOR)-DCL
'They carried him **out of** the hearth.' (K: 218)

Cross-linguistic perspective (III)

Purepecha (Tarascan, Mexico, Chamoreau 2017: 683)

- Several dozen “locative suffixes” most of which relate to parts of objects (including the body) and work as “locative verbal classifiers”.
- Some of the suffixes “indicate a specific physical area”:

- (46) a. *waxa-nu-x-ti* ‘He sat **on the patio.**’
 b. *waxa-ru-x-ti* ‘He sat **in the street.**’
 c. *waxa-k’ara-x-ti* ‘He sat **inside the house.**’

Cross-linguistic perspective (III)

Nuuchahnulth (Wakashan, British Columbia; Davidson 2002: 196-204):

- a number of directional and “well over 100” locative suffixes with very concrete meanings:

(47) *hič-k^wi[s]-saŋap*=’aļ

illuminate-move.away.PFV-on.beach.CAUS.PFV=TEMP

‘They startled them (the birds) off the beach with light.’

(Davidson 2002: 197)

(48) *mʌt-ʔa·ʔa*=*ma*=ʔa·tʌ

cold-on.rocks=IND=HAB

‘It is always cold on the rocks.’ (Davidson 2002: 202)

IND – indicative, HAB – habitual, TEMP – temporal specifier

Cross-linguistic perspective (IV)

- Incorporation of spatial modifiers is uncommon in the languages of the world (Vinyar 2021).

Warray (Gunwinyguan, Australia, Harvey 1996: 144)

(49) *an-mewel at-windi at-mirral-lagi-yn*
CL-clothes 1SG.S-hang_out 1SG.S-sun-put-PST.PFV
'I hung the clothes out in the sun.'

Chukchi (Vinyar & Gerasimenko 2018: 97)

(50) *ramaj-paṭqantat-yʔ-e*
village-return-TH-2/3SG.S
'S/he returned from the village.'

TH – thematic suffix

Cross-linguistic perspective (IV)

- No languages have been reported so far that would **only** allow noun incorporation to target locative participants.
- Cf. Mithun (1984: 875)'s claim that all languages with noun incorporation minimally incorporate patients of transitive verbs.
- However, this can be due to fact that the definitions of noun incorporation are centered around the incorporation of the patient into a transitive verb in the first place.

Cross-linguistic perspective (V)

- Mattissen's (2004, 2017) typology of polysynthesis:
 - “compositional” / “compounding” vs. “affixal”;
 - depends on whether the polysynthetic verbal complex can contain more than one lexical root;
 - according to Mattissen (2004: 202), Abkhaz (and, mutatis mutandis, Abaza) belongs to the “affixal” type.

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 - according to Mattissen (2004: 202), Abkhaz (and, mutatis mutandis, Abaza) belongs to the “affixal” type.
- An obvious simplification:
 - while there is no “ad hoc” noun incorporation in NWC languages, neither is it the case that for all their affixes “lexical source[s] cannot be reconstructed” (ibid.);
 - NWC languages present a clear example of a “transitional” structural type, both from synchronic and historical perspectives.

Conclusions

- There is noun incorporation in the Northwest Caucasian languages.
- It is most robustly attested in Abaza and Abkhaz.
- It is typologically non-trivial:
 - only Mithun (1984)'s types I (V+N compound) and type IV (classifiers) without the intermediate types;
 - the class of nouns subject to incorporation is closed and the very process is no longer productive;
 - incorporated nouns invariably function as spatial modifiers, not as patients or absolutes;
 - the predominantly “spatial” profile of “lexical” affixation in NWC is an areal feature shared with other languages of the Caucasus (and beyond);

Conclusions

- There is noun incorporation in the Northwest Caucasian languages.
- It is most robustly attested in Abaza and Abkhaz.
- It is typologically non-trivial:
 - even those incorporated nouns that retain their semantics and referentiality fall into one distributional class with unequivocal locative prefixes;
 - continuum from incorporated nouns to lexical affixes;
 - evidence of several successive layers of incorporation and ensuing affixalisation.

ŝə-zʰáda-χa-ʈ

2PL.ABS-healthy-INC(AOR)-DCL

Thank you!

Tack!



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