

# Borrowing non-canonical inverse between Kabardian and Abaza

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## Abstract

Abaza, a polysynthetic ergative Northwest Caucasian language, shares with its neighbour and distant relative Kabardian a typologically peculiar use of the deictic directional prefixes monitoring the relative ranking of the subject and indirect object on the person hierarchy. In both languages, the cislocative ('hither') prefixes are used if the indirect object outranks the subject on the person hierarchy, and the translocative ('thither') prefixes are used in combinations of first person subjects with second person singular indirect objects. This pattern, reminiscent of the more familiar inverse marking and hence called 'quasi-inverse', is observed with ditransitive and bivalent intransitive verbs and is almost fully redundant, since all participants are unequivocally indexed on verbs by pronominal prefixes. I argue that this isogloss, shared by West Circassian (a close relative to Kabardian) but not with Abkhaz, the sister-language of Abaza, is a result of pattern replication under intense language contact, which has led to an increase of both paradigmatic and syntagmatic complexity of Abaza verbal morphology.

**Keywords:** Northwest Caucasian languages, Abaza, Kabardian, polysynthesis, inverse, language contact, pattern-borrowing, morphological complexity

## 1. Introduction

In this paper I discuss a hitherto unreported case of pattern borrowing of a typologically peculiar morphological pattern between two distantly related polysynthetic languages of the Northwest Caucasian family, Kabardian (ISO 639-3: kbd) and Abaza (ISO 639-3: abq). The two languages, which are typologically similar but mutually unintelligible, have been in a state of intense contact for several centuries, which has resulted in Abaza having numerous lexical and some morphological borrowings, as well as morphosemantic calques from Kabardian. The morphological pattern in question involves what I call the

‘quasi-inverse’ use of the deictic directional prefixes forming part of the complex system of spatial marking in Northwest Caucasian languages (see Arkadiev & Lander 2021: 412–415): in both languages, in addition to their basic spatial meanings, the directional prefixes, in particular the cislocative ones, occur in polypersonal verbal forms with certain combinations of the person values of the subject and the indirect object (see Arkadiev 2020 for a detailed discussion of this phenomenon in Kabardian and its sister language West Circassian). This use is illustrated in examples (1) for Kabardian and (2) for Abaza. The (a) examples show that a 2<sup>nd</sup> person indirect object recipient does not trigger the occurrence of the cislocative with a 1<sup>st</sup> person subject, while in the (b) examples the same 2<sup>nd</sup> person indirect object now requires the cislocative in the presence of a 3<sup>rd</sup> person subject.

Kabardian (Kumakhov ed. 2006: 193)<sup>1</sup>

- (1) a.  $\emptyset$ -*m-e-s-t-a-ṡ*  
 3.ABS-2SG.IO-DAT-1SG.ERG-give-PST-DCL  
 ‘I gave it to you (sg)’
- b.  $\emptyset$ -*q̇ə-m-jə-t-a-ṡ*  
 3.ABS-CISL-2SG.IO-3SG.ERG-give-PST-DCL  
 ‘s/he gave it to you (sg)’

Abaza (own fieldwork data, elicited)

- (2) a. *j-ṡə-s-t-ṫ*  
 3SG.N.ABS-2PL.IO-1SG.ERG-give(AOR)-DCL  
 ‘I gave it to you (pl)’
- b. *j-ʃa-ṡə-l-t-ṫ*  
 3SG.N.ABS-CISL-2PL.IO-3SG.F.ERG-give(AOR)-DCL  
 ‘she gave it to you (pl)’

As I shall argue, the parallelism in the use of the deictic directional prefixes between the two languages shown in examples (1) and (2) is a result of pattern borrowing (in terms of Matras & Sakel 2007) or selective (in particular, semantic and combinatorial) copying (in terms of Johanson 2008) from Kabardian into Abaza. This contact-induced change involved not just an extension of the use of spatial markers in Abaza in accordance with the Kabardian model but also a creation of a new slot in the polysynthetic template of Abaza, since it will be shown that the position occupied by the deictic prefixes in their quasi-inverse use is distinct from the slot they normally occur in when expressing their original spatial meaning.

<sup>1</sup> The Northwest Caucasian examples are given in the Caucasological transcription rather than in IPA (see Arkadiev & Lander 2021: 373–376). The most important divergences from IPA are as follows: ejective consonants are marked by a dot below or above the symbol; palatalization is marked by an apostrophe; *c, ɕ, ʃ, ʒ, ʒ̣, ʒ̣̣* denote dento-alveolar affricates and fricatives; *ṡ, ż, ɕ̇* denote the so-called hissing-hushing consonants usually identified as alveolo-palatal but whose exact phonetic interpretation is subject to variation and controversy.

The remainder of the article is organized as follows. In section 2 I provide the necessary information about the structural features of Abaza and Kabardian relevant for my exposition. In section 3 the quasi-inverse uses of the deictic prefixes in both languages are discussed. In section 4 I present linguistic and sociolinguistic arguments for the contact-induced scenario, and section 5 concludes the article.

## 2. The important features of Kabardian and Abaza

Kabardian and Abaza belong to, respectively, Circassian and Abkhaz-Abaza branches of the Northwest Caucasian (Abkhaz-Adyghean) language family, currently spoken mainly in the Russian Federation and Abkhazia, as well as in the diaspora in Turkey and the Near East. Kabardian, comprising a set of closely related dialects, is spoken in the Russian autonomous republics of Kabardino-Balkaria, Karachaevo-Cherkesia and Adygea by more than 500,000 people. Abaza, consisting of the Tapanta and the Ashkarywa dialects, of which the latter is actually closer to Abkhaz, is spoken by about 35,000 people in Karachaevo-Cherkesia. Both languages have written standards and enjoy an official status in the relevant regions of the Russian Federation. Technically neither of the languages is endangered as they are acquired by children, taught to a limited extent at local schools and used in everyday communication (primarily in rural areas) as well as in press, media and on the internet; however, both languages experience considerable pressure from Russian, especially in urban areas.

All Northwest Caucasian languages are characterised by such properties as rich consonantism and very restricted vocalism, polysynthesis and polypersonalism, morphological ergativity in both head and dependent marking, and very little distinction between major lexical classes (for more details, see e.g. Hewitt 2005, Kumakhov & Vamling 2009, Lander & Testelets 2017, Arkadiev & Lander 2021; for a historical-comparative study of the family see Chirikba 1996). For the purposes of the present article, the following properties are of particular importance, all pertaining to the structure of the verb: polysynthesis and polypersonalism, valency classes, and the expression of spatial meanings.

The two languages dealt here are unevenly described. For Kabardian, a number of standard reference grammars have been published in Russian culminating in the two-volume compendium Kumakhov (ed. 2006); besides that, grammars by Colarusso (1992, 2006) and Matasović (2008) exist in English. By contrast, Abaza cannot boast a comprehensive reference grammar; the descriptions existing in Russian such as Genko (1955) and Tabulova (1976), as well as works in other languages such as Allen (1956), Lomtadze et al. (1989) and O'Herin (2002), are either sketchy or limited in their scope.

My Abaza data comes from the Tapanta dialect as spoken in the village of Inzhich-Chukun (Abazinsky district, Karachaevo-Cherkesia) collected during fieldtrips organized by the Higher School of Economics and Russian State University for the Humanities in 2017–2019. The Kabardian data comes from fieldwork on the Besleney dialect in Adygea in 2011–2013 and from published sources describing the standard variety. Both elicited and corpus examples will be presented.

prefixes				root	suffixes					
argument structure zone				pre-stem elements	stem			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

Figure 1: The Northwest Caucasian verbal template

2.1. Polysynthesis and polypersonalism

Polysynthesis in the Northwest Caucasian languages manifests itself in the very complex structure of verbal morphology, which expresses almost all clausal information, i.e. person-number (and, in Abkhaz-Abaza, gender) features of the participants, their syntactic and semantic roles (often specified by means of numerous applicatives), spatial, temporal, aspectual, modal and evaluative meanings as well as negation and the independent vs. subordinate status of the predication. All these meanings, many of which can neither be organised into neat paradigms nor uncontroversially assigned to ‘inflection’ or ‘derivation’, are expressed by prefixes and suffixes whose order and combinatorics is partly determined by a rigid template and partly guided by semantic scope. The general schematic template of the Northwest Caucasian verb is presented in Figure 1 (Arkadiev & Lander 2021: 404).

Examples (3) and (4) show particularly complex verbal forms attested in texts.

Kabardian (Besleney dialect, textual example)

- (3) *z-a-ǰǰ-š'ǰ-r-a-be-ǰλǰ-hǰ-ne*  
 RFL.ABS-3PL.IO-CISL-LOC-DAT-3PL.ERG-CAUS-look-around-FUT  
 ‘They will let them look around themselves.’

Abaza (textual example)

- (4) *s-z-a-la-nǰǰ'a-wa-ǰǰ-j'ǰ'a-t*  
 1SG.ABS-POT-3SG.N.IO-LOC-pass-IPF-LOC-3SG.M.IO-seem(AOR)-DCL  
 ‘It seemed to him that I would be able to pass there.’

For my exposition, only the prefixal part of the verbal template is relevant, since it is before the stem where participant indexation, applicatives, and deictic directional markers occur. Figures 2 and 3 show the prefixal templates of Kabardian and Abaza, which share overall organisation but differ in a number of important details.

As can be seen from the comparison of the Kabardian and Abaza prefixal templates in Figures 2 and 3, the two languages share the order of the three main positions where participants are indexed, i.e. the absolutive in the very beginning of the verbal form, the ergative closer to the stem and the indirect objects in between. Importantly, indirect objects can occur not only in the dedicated position (–6 in Kabardian, –5 in Abaza), but also in the positions for applicatives and locative preverbs (both –7 in Kabardian, –8

-10	-9	-8	-7	-6	-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0
absolutive	directional preverbs	subordinators	applicatives	indirect object	ergative	jussive	dynamivity	negation	causative	root

Figure 2: The prefixal template of the Kabardian verb

-12	-11	-10	-9	-8	-7	-6	-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0
absolutive	subordinators, negation	repetitive	potential	applicatives	directional preverbs	locative preverbs	indirect object	ergative	negation	causative	sociative	root

Figure 3: The prefixal template of the Abaza verb

and -6 in Abaza), which introduce indirect objects cross-referenced by person markers normally immediately preceding the applicative prefix (see e.g. O’Herin 2001 on Abaza applicatives).<sup>2</sup> The order ‘absolutive – indirect object – ergative’ was illustrated in the examples (1) and (2) above; examples (5) and (6) show that the use of applicatives (in this case the benefactive) allows Kabardian and Abaza verbs to host more than three participants. Note that 3<sup>rd</sup> person absolutive and 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular indirect object are expressed by zero in Kabardian; all 3<sup>rd</sup> person markers are normally overt in Abaza.

Kabardian (Besleney dialect, textual example)

- (5)  $\emptyset$ -t-x<sup>w</sup>-a-r-jə-βe-š-a  
 3.ABS-1PL.IO-BEN-3PL.IO-DAT-3SG.ERG-CAUS-do-PST  
 ‘He had them build it [the new mosque] for us.’

Abaza (textual example)

- (6) j-šə-z-j-a-s-h<sup>w</sup>-p̄  
 3SG.N.ABS-2PL.IO-BEN-3SG.M.IO-DAT-1SG.ERG-say-NPST.DCL  
 ‘I’ll tell this to him for your (pl) sake.’

Importantly, the prefixal templates of the two languages differ in the position of the deictic directional markers, which occur right after the absolutive in Kabardian (slot -9) and much closer to the root in Abaza (slot -7). I shall return to this later.

<sup>2</sup> In the Kabardian example (3) above the 3<sup>rd</sup> person plural indirect object prefix *a-* is separated from the dative applicative *r-* introducing it by two other prefixes as a result of an optional morphophonological process.

Table 1: Participant cross-referencing prefixes in Kabardian

	Abs	IO	Erg
1Sg	<i>sə-</i>	<i>s-/z-</i>	
1Pl	<i>də-</i>	<i>d-/t-</i>	
2Sg	<i>wə-</i>	<i>w-/p-/b-</i>	
2Pl	<i>fə-</i>	<i>f-/v-</i>	
3Sg	∅		<i>jə-</i>
3Pl	∅	<i>(j)a-</i>	

## 2.2. Ergativity and valency classes

As already mentioned, all Northwest Caucasian languages exhibit morphological ergativity, which manifests itself in patterns of verbal cross-reference and, in Kabardian, also in case marking of nominals (Abaza lacks grammatical cases altogether). For the current discussion, nominal marking is irrelevant, so I shall focus at verbal marking.

Participant cross-reference on the verb is achieved in both Kabardian and Abaza by means of prefixes<sup>3</sup> encoding person and number (in Abaza also gender: masculine, feminine and non-human) as well as the grammatical roles of participants. Two series of prefixes are distinguished: the absolutive and the oblique, shown in Tables 1 and 2. The prefixes of the absolutive series occur in the absolutive slot in the very beginning of the verbal word (slots –10 in Kabardian and –12 in Abaza) and cross-reference the S (‘sole’<sup>4</sup>) argument of intransitive verbs and the P (patient, direct object) argument of transitive verbs. Any verbal form must contain exactly one (possibly zero) prefix of the absolutive series. The prefixes of the oblique series occur in all other positions available for argument markers and cross-reference the A (agent) of transitive verbs as well as all kinds of indirect objects; a verbal form can have from zero to three or even four prefixes of the oblique series. As Tables 1 and 2 show, the two series of prefixes are largely similar (or even identical) in form, differing mostly in the third person, especially in Abaza, where the absolutive and the oblique series make different distinctions of gender features; in Kabardian the oblique series additionally distinguishes between the ergative and the indirect object subseries in the third person. The allomorphy of the prefixes is mostly phonologically determined by assimilation to the following consonant and, in Kabardian, by intervocalic voicing; the presence of the schwa vowel in Abaza depends on phonotactics and stress.

<sup>3</sup> Kabardian also has the suffix *-xe*, coinciding with the nominal plural and optionally marking the plurality of the 3<sup>rd</sup> person absolutive argument.

<sup>4</sup> For Northwest Caucasian languages the characterisation of the most central participant of intransitive verbs as ‘sole’ is highly problematic due to a large number of non-monovalent morphosyntactically intransitive verbs, see below; on verb classes in these languages see e.g. Hewitt (2008), Letuchiy (2013) and Smeets (1992).

Table 2: Participant cross-referencing prefixes in Abaza

	Abs	IO, Erg
1Sg	<i>s(ə)-</i>	<i>s(ə)-/z-</i>
1Pl	<i>h(ə)-</i>	<i>h(ə)-/ʕ-</i>
2SgM	<i>w(ə)-</i>	<i>w(ə)-</i>
2SgF	<i>b(ə)-</i>	<i>b(ə)-/p-</i>
2Pl	<i>ʃ(ə)-</i>	<i>ʃ(ə)-/ẓ-</i>
3SgM	<i>d(ə)-</i>	<i>j(ə)-</i>
3SgF		<i>l(ə)-</i>
3SgN	<i>j(ə)-/∅</i>	<i>na-/a-</i>
3Pl		<i>r(ə)-/d(ə)-</i>

Bivalent verbs in Northwest Caucasian languages come in two partly semantically motivated types. Transitive verbs express their subject (the most agent-like participant) in the ergative slot by the prefix of the oblique series, and their object (the most patient-like argument) in the absolutive slot, see examples (7a) and (8a), while the fairly numerous bivalent intransitive verbs encode their subject in the absolutive slot and take an indirect object, see examples (7b) and (8b). Ditransitive verbs encode their theme as the absolutive and the recipient as the indirect object, see examples (1) and (2) above partly repeated here as (7c) and (8c).

## Kabardian

(7) a. *sə-b-ew-h*

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

'you (sg) are carrying me' (monotransitive; Kumakhov ed. 2006: 190)

b. *s-j-e-ẓ-a-ʃ*

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

'I waited for him/her' (intransitive; Kumakhov ed. 2006: 177)

c. *∅-f-e-s-t-a-ʃ*

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

'I gave it to you (pl)' (ditransitive; Kumakhov ed. 2006: 193)

## Abaza (elicited)

(8) a. *wə-l-ba-t*

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

'she saw you (man)' (monotransitive)

b. *hə-j-pʃə-t*

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

'we looked at him' (intransitive)

c. *j-ʃə-s-t-t*

3SG.N.ABS-2PL.IO-1SG.ERG-give(AOR)-DCL

'I gave it to you (pl.)' (ditransitive)

The class of two-argument intransitive verbs in Northwest Caucasian languages includes verbs denoting physical activity not implying a change of state ('hit', 'bite' etc.) as well as cognition, speech, or perception ('read/learn', 'look at', 'talk to', 'ask') and some others (e.g. 'help' and 'wait'). Ditransitive verbs are not numerous, being represented by 'give', 'sell' and 'say'. As we shall see below, the phenomenon discussed in this paper primarily involves the relations between the indirect object and the (ergative or absolutive) subject of ditransitive and intransitive verbs.

### 2.3. Expression of spatial meanings in the verb

Northwest Caucasian languages boast a very complex system of encoding spatial meanings in the verb (see Arkadiev & Lander 2021: 412–415 for an overview), the most important part of which is comprised by locative and directional preverbs. There are about thirty simple and complex locative preverbs in Kabardian (see e.g. Kumakhov 1964: 164–182; Kumakhov ed. 2006: 258–270; Colarusso 1992: 97–105; Arkadiev & Maisak 2018: 121–125) and more than a hundred in Abaza (Klyčev 1994, 1995). The preverbs occur with verbs of position and motion as well as verbs with very diverse lexical meanings and specify the topological properties of the landmark with respect to which the situation is located or oriented; in many cases the combinations of the verbal root and the preverb are lexicalised, creating a high number of discontinuous lexical stems. Importantly, all locative preverbs in Kabardian and about a half of their counterparts in Abaza are applicatives and introduce indirect objects cross-referenced by the appropriate personal prefixes, see examples (9) and (10).

Kabardian (Besleney dialect, textual example)

- (9) *s-j-ane*                      *ɸ<sup>w</sup>abɬɛ-m*  
 1SG.PR-POSS-mother mat-OBL  
*sə-∅-tr-jə-be-β<sup>w</sup>al-a-t*  
 1SG.ABS-3SG.IO-LOC.**above**-3SG.ERG-CAUS-lie-PST-IPF  
*š'abe*              *qə-s-č'<sup>h</sup>-jə-ʒ-t-jə*  
 soft              CISL-1SG.IO-LOC.**under**-3SG.ERG-throw-IPF-ADD  
 'My mother used to lay me on a mat and put something soft under me.'

Abaza (textual example)

- (10) *s-š'ap-k<sup>w</sup>a*              *s-rə-k<sup>w</sup>-lə-r-gəɬ-χ-d*  
 1SG.PR-leg-PL 1SG.ABS-3PL.IO-LOC.**on**-3SG.F.ERG-CAUS-stand-RE(AOR)-DCL  
 'She let me again rise on my feet.'

In addition to locative preverbs, which can have very specialised meanings, Northwest Caucasian languages also possess directional preverbs which express the orientation of the situation with respect to the deictic centre and do not function as applicatives. In Kabardian and Abaza there are just two directional preverbs shown in Table 3.

The prefixes shown in Table 3 are probably historically cognate (see section 4); however, it is unclear to what extent the similarities in usage observed between the two



Table 3: Directional preverbs in Kabardian and Abaza

	Kabardian	Abaza
cislocative 'hither'	<i>q(V)-</i>	<i>ʕ(a)-</i>
translocative 'thither'	<i>n(V)-</i>	<i>n(a)-</i>

languages are due to common inheritance or contact (and the goal of this paper is to argue that at least one of the uses of the Abaza directional preverbs is a result of borrowing from Kabardian). As said above, in their basic spatial use these preverbs indicate the orientation of the situation with respect to the deictic centre, usually the speaker, cf. examples (11) and (12).

Kabardian (Kumakhov ed. 2006: 260)

- (11) a. *qe-s-h-a-ŝ*                                      b. *ne-s-h-a-ŝ*  
 CISL-1SG.ERG-carry-PST-DCL      TRAL-1SG.ERG-carry-PST-DCL  
 'I brought it here.'                              'I brought it there.'

Abaza (textual examples)

- (12) a. *h-aš'-ahba*                              *d-an-ʕa-j-χ ...*  
 1PL.PR-brother-elder      3SG.H.ABS-TEMP-CISL-go-RE  
*hə-j-zak-t*  
 1PL.ABS-3SG.ERG-beat.up(AOR)-DCL  
 'When our elder brother came back, he beat us up.'  
 b. *sa s-g'-na-j-χ-wa-šə-m*                              *h-pnə*  
 1SG 1SG.ABS-NEG-TRAL-go-RE-IPF-FUT-NEG 1PL.IO-at  
 'I won't go back to our place [from here].'

Importantly, the deictic directional prefixes occupy their own slots in the verbal template, and these slots are distinct between Kabardian and Abaza. In Kabardian, the deictic prefixes appear in slot –9 to the left of all other prefixes, including the applicatives and locative preverbs, and can normally be preceded only by the absolutive prefixes, see example (9) above and (13) below. By contrast, in Abaza directional prefixes occur in slot –7, preceding the locative preverbs, see example (14a), and following the other applicatives, see example (14b).

Kabardian (Besleney dialect, textual example)

- (13) *wə-qə-če-h-a*                              *wəne-m*  
 2SG.ABS-CISL-LOC-go.in-PST house-OBL  
 'You came into the house.'

Abaza (textual examples)

- (14) a. *šamił*      *čə-ʕ-w-ta*                              *d-na-sə-š'ta-lə-n*  
 Šamil horse-NAG-ADV 3SG.H.ABS-TRAL-1SG.IO-LOC:behind-go.in-PST  
 'Šamil caught up with me on horseback.'

- b. *d-sə-z-ʃa-r-g-χ-t*  
 3SG.H.ABS-1SG.IO-BEN-CISL-3PL.ERG-carry-RE(AOR)-DCL  
 ‘They brought him back to me.’

It has to be noted that in both languages, especially in Kabardian, the cislocative is by far the most frequently used of the two directional preverbs. The deictic meaning ‘thither’ is often left unexpressed rather than explicitly marked by the translocative preverb. By contrast, the cislocative prefixes show high textual frequency and possess a number of non-spatial uses such as inceptive or completive (see e.g. Kumakhov 1964: 190–192; Kumakhov ed. 2006: 260; Allen 1956: 164–169; Colarusso 1992: 92–95). Besides that, the cislocative and to a lesser extent the translocative have become integrated into the personal paradigms of polyvalent verbs with indirect objects in a fashion reminiscent of inverse marking. This will be the topic of the next section.

### 3. The quasi-inverse uses of the deictic preverbs

A conspicuous property of the deictic directional prefixes in Kabardian and Abaza, in particular of the cislocative prefixes, significantly contributing to their textual frequency, is their appearance in polyvalent verbs with specific combinations of person features of participants. In general, the cislocative prefix occurs whenever the indirect object outranks the subject (either the ergative A of a ditransitive verb or an absolutive S of a bivalent intransitive verb) on the person hierarchy  $1 > 2 > 3$ . In those cases when the subject outranks the indirect object, the cislocative is not used. For Kabardian ditransitive verbs this is shown in examples (15) and (16). For the sake of simplicity, in all examples the absolutive theme is held constant as 3<sup>rd</sup> singular expressed by zero and not indicated in the glosses; however, it could bear any person-number value without any impact on the occurrence or non-occurrence of the cislocative preverb (see full paradigms in Kumakhov 1971: 306–308).

Kabardian (Kumakhov 1971: 306–307)

- (15) a. *qə-z-e-p-t-a-š*  
 CISL-1SG.IO-DAT-2SG.ERG-give-PST-DCL  
 ‘you (sg) gave it to me’ 2>1
- b. *qə-d-jə-t-a-š*  
 CISL-1PL.IO-3SG.ERG-give-PST-DCL  
 ‘s/he gave it to us’ 3>1
- c. *q-w-a-t-a-š*  
 CISL-2SG.IO-3PL.ERG-give-PST-DCL  
 ‘they gave it to you (sg)’ 3>2
- (16) a. *w-e-s-t-a-š*  
 2SG.IO-DAT-1SG.ERG-give-PST-DCL  
 ‘I gave it to you (sg)’ 1>2

- b. *ja-p-t-a-s̆*  
 3PL.IO+DAT-2SG.ERG-give-PST-DCL  
 ‘You (sg) gave it to them’ 2>3
- c. *je-t-t-a-s̆*  
 3SG.IO+DAT-1PL.ERG-give-PST-DCL  
 ‘We gave it to him/her’ 1>3

Basically the same pattern is valid for the bivalent intransitive verbs, see examples (17) and (18), with a complication in the combinations involving a 1<sup>st</sup> person subject and a 2<sup>nd</sup> person singular indirect object, where the translocative preverb is used, see examples (19a,b). Note that translocative does not appear in the corresponding forms of ditransitive verbs, example (16a), nor in forms where a 1<sup>st</sup> person subject acts on a 2<sup>nd</sup> person plural object, example (19c); see the discussion in Kumakhov (1971: 253), who remarks that the use of the translocative in bivalent intransitive verbs “is not fully motivated”. This is in line with the observation regarding the lower productivity of the translocative made above.

Kabardian (Kumakhov 1971: 268)

- (17) a. *fə-ǰə-z-e-ǰ-a-s̆*  
 2SG.ABS-CISL-1SG.IO-DAT-wait-PST-DCL  
 ‘you (pl) waited for me’ 2>1
- b. *∅-ǰə-d-e-ǰ-a-s̆*  
 3.ABS-CISL-1PL.IO-DAT-wait-PST-DCL  
 ‘s/he/they waited for us’ 3>1
- c. *∅-ǰ-w-e-ǰ-a-s̆*  
 3.ABS-CISL-2SG.IO-DAT-wait-PST-DCL  
 ‘s/he/they waited for you (sg)’ 3>2
- (18) a. *s-je-ǰ-a-s̆*  
 1SG.ABS-3SG.IO+DAT-wait-PST-DCL  
 ‘I waited for him/her/them’ 1>3
- b. *w-je-ǰ-a-s̆*  
 2SG.ABS-3SG.IO+DAT-wait-PST-DCL  
 ‘you (sg) waited for him/her/them’ 2>3
- (19) a. *sə-n-w-e-ǰ-a-s̆*  
 1SG.ABS-TRAL-2SG.IO-DAT-wait-PST-DCL  
 ‘I waited for you (sg)’ 1sg>2sg
- b. *də-n-w-e-ǰ-a-s̆*  
 1PL.ABS-TRAL-2SG.IO-DAT-wait-PST-DCL  
 ‘we waited for you (sg)’ 1pl>2sg
- c. *sə-(\*nə-)v-e-ǰ-a-s̆*  
 1SG.ABS-(\*TRAL-)1PL.IO-DAT-wait-PST-DCL  
 ‘I waited for you (pl)’ 1sg>2pl

When both the subject and the indirect object are third person the occurrence of the cislocative is guided by pragmatic factors having to do with relative topicality of the participants (see the discussion in Lomize 2013: 224–229 and Arkadiev 2020: 91–94). Consider, for example, the passages from the Kabardian translation of the Gospel of Luke in (20), both featuring the ditransitive verb ‘say’. In both passages Jesus is the main protagonist; in (20a) He addresses the Pharisees, who are not highly activated participants, and the cislocative is not used. By contrast, in the second passage (20b) Jesus is the indirect object and the Pharisees are the agents, and now the cislocative appears.

Kabardian (KaLu 2009: 63)

- (20) a. *mədrjej-xe-m ja-žr-jə-ʔ-a-š* *jətane*  
 DEM-PL-OBL 3PL.IO-APPL-3SG.ERG-say-PST-DCL then  
 ‘Then He told them.’ (Lk. 14:5)
- b. *zə-r-jə qə-žr-a-ʔe-f-a-qəm* *a-bə-xe-m*  
 one-ABS-ADD CISL-APPL-3PL.ERG-say-able-PST-NEG DEM-OBL-PL-OBL  
 ‘They could not reply anything to Him.’ (Lk. 14:6)

A largely similar situation is observed in field data from Abaza, both elicited and textual. Examples in (21) show the use of the cislocative prefix with inverse combinations of subject and indirect object with the verb ‘give’, while examples in (22) show that the prefix is not used in direct combinations of the same participants.

Abaza (elicited)

- (21) a. *j-ʔa-sə-m-t-t*  
 3SG.N.ABS-CISL-1SG.IO-2SG.M.ERG-give(AOR)-DCL  
 ‘you (man) gave it to me’ 2>1
- b. *j-ʔa-hə-l-t-t*  
 3SG.N.ABS-CISL-1PL.IO-3SG.F.ERG-give(AOR)-DCL  
 ‘she gave it to us’ 3>1
- c. *j-ʔa-bə-r-t-t*  
 3SG.N.ABS-CISL-2SG.F.IO-3PL.ERG-give(AOR)-DCL  
 ‘they gave it to you (woman)’ 3>2
- (22) a. *j-šə-s-t-t*  
 3SG.N.ABS-2PL.IO-1SG.ERG-give(AOR)-DCL  
 ‘I gave it to you (pl)’ 1>2
- b. *j-lə-b-t-t*  
 3SG.N.ABS-3SG.F.IO-2SG.F.ERG-give(AOR)-DCL  
 ‘you (woman) gave it to her’ 2>3
- c. *j-rə-h-t-t*  
 3SG.N.ABS-3PL.IO-1PL.ERG-give(AOR)-DCL  
 ‘we gave it to them’ 1>3

Examples in (23) show the same patterns as attested in texts:

Abaza (textual examples)

- (23) a. *har-g'jə zə-k-g'jə g'-ɣa-hə-rə-m-t-χ-d*  
 we-ADD one-INDF-ADD NEG-CISL-1PL.IO-3PL.ERG-NEG-give-RE(AOR)-DCL  
 'They gave us nothing.' 3>1
- b. *premija-ta j-ɣa-wə-r-t-t-əj*  
 bonus-ADV 3SG.N.ABS-CISL-2SG.M.IO-3PL.ERG-give(AOR)-DCL-ADD  
 'they gave it to you (man) as a bonus' 3>2
- c. *abaza-k'wa a-mg'al-g'əj rə-s-ta-t*  
 Abaza-PL DEF-millet.bread-ADD 3PL.IO-1SG.ERG-give(AOR)-DCL  
 'I gave the Abaza the millet bread.' 1>3
- d. *sara j-ŝ-a-s-h<sup>m</sup>ə-rnəs j-s-taqə-β*  
 1SG 3SG.N.ABS-2PL.IO-DAT-1SG.ERG-say-PURP 3SG.N.ABS-1SG.IO-want-NPST.DCL  
 'I want to tell you (pl) this.' 1>2

Likewise, with bivalent intransitive verbs, the cislocative occurs when the absolutive subject is lower on the person hierarchy than the indirect object, see examples in (24), and is not used otherwise, see examples in (25). Moreover, Abaza mirrors the Kabardian use of the translocative in the combinations of a 1<sup>st</sup> person absolutive and a 2<sup>nd</sup> person singular indirect object, see (25c).

Abaza (elicited)

- (24) a. *w-ɣa-h-pšə-t*  
 2SG.M.ABS-CISL-1PL.IO-look(AOR)-DCL  
 'you (man) looked at us' 2>1
- b. *d-ɣa-s-pšə-t*  
 3SG.H.ABS-CISL-1SG.IO-look(AOR)-DCL  
 's/he looked at me' 3>1
- c. *j-ɣa-ŝ-pšə-t*  
 3PL.ABS-CISL-2PL.IO-look(AOR)-DCL  
 'they looked at you (pl)' 3>2
- (25) a. *hə-j-pšə-t*  
 1PL.ABS-3SG.M.IO-look(AOR)-DCL  
 'we looked at him' 1>3
- b. *ŝə-r-pšə-t*  
 2PL.ABS-3PL.IO-look(AOR)-DCL  
 'you (pl) looked at them' 2>3
- c. *h-na-w-pšə-t*  
 1PL.ABS-TRAL-2SG.M.IO-look(AOR)-DCL  
 'we looked at you (man)' 1>2sg

The same patterns are also attested in texts:

Abaza (textual examples)

- (26) a. *h-an d-ʕa-s-ʕʕa-t*  
 1PL.PR-mother 3SG.H.ABS-CISL-1SG.IO-ask(AOR)-DCL  
 ‘Mother asked me.’ 3>1
- b. *bzəj-bzəj š-ʕa-s-pšə jg’əj*  
 good~INTF 2PL.ABS-CISL-1SG.IO-look(IMP) and  
*š-ʕa-s-χ’əs sara*  
 2PL.ABS-CISL-1SG.IO-touch(IMP) 1SG  
 ‘Look at Me and touch Me.’ (Lk. 24:39, AbLu 2013: 101) 2>1
- c. *s-na-wə-ʕa-pš-əj-t*  
 1SG.ABS-TRAL-2SG.M.IO-LOC.down-look-PRS-DCL  
 ‘I am looking upon you.’ 1>2
- d. *hə-j-ʕʕa-ḫ araʔa*  
 1PL.ABS-3SG.M.IO-ask-NPST.DCL here  
*h-tə-j-s’tə-rnəs*  
 1PL.ABS-LOC.ELAT-3SG.M.ERG-release-PURP  
 ‘We shall ask him [God] to release us from here.’ 1>3

When both the subject and the indirect object are third person, the use of the cislocative is optional and seems to have to do with the relative topicality of arguments. Thus, in example (27a) with the ditransitive verb the protagonist of the story is the indirect object while the agent is a generic third person plural, and the cislocative is used; likewise, in example (27b) with a bivalent intransitive verb featuring the cislocative the absolutive subject is a less activated discourse participant than the indirect object. By contrast, in example (28a) from the same story from which example (27b) was taken, the subject is no less topical than the indirect object and the cislocative does not appear, and the same concerns example (28b) with the verb ‘give’, which is part of a description of what people do during weddings.

Abaza (textual examples)

- (27) a. *mhamatg’arəj j-ʕa-jə-r-t-t adg’əl*  
 PN 3SG.N.ABS-CISL-3SG.M.IO-3PL.ERG-give(AOR)-DCL DEF+land  
 ‘They gave land to Muhamat-Girey.’
- b. *wadərʕʕwana a-pajʕambar d-ʕa-rə-z-ʕʕa-t*  
 later DEF-prophet 3SG.H.ABS-CISL-3PL.IO-BEN-ask(AOR)-DCL  
 ‘Then the prophet asked them.’
- (28) a. *wadərʕʕwana a-pajʕambar alah də-j-ʕʕa-t*  
 later DEF-prophet DEF+god 3SG.H.ABS-3SG.M.IO-ask(AOR)-DCL  
 ‘Then the prophet asked God.’

Table 4: The distribution of directional prefixes in Kabardian and Abaza

IO ABS/ERG	1	2	3prox	3obv
1		(TRAL)	∅	∅
2	CISL		∅	∅
3prox	CISL	CISL		∅
3obv	CISL	CISL	CISL	

- b. *a-mnaŋ<sup>w</sup>a-çəc j-rə-r-t-əj-t*  
 DEF-family-new 3SG.N.ABS-3PL.IO-3PL.ERG-give-PRS-DCL  
 ‘They give it [half of the money] to the newlyweds.’

The distribution of the directional prefixes in the polyvalent personal paradigms of Kabardian and Abaza is schematically represented in Table 4 (cf. Arkadiev 2020: 95), where ‘3prox’ and ‘3obv’ stand for the more topical (proximative) and less topical (obviative) third person participants.

To summarise so far, both Kabardian and Abaza share an extended use of the cislocative and, to a lesser degree, also of the translocative deictic prefixes determined by the relative position of the subject and indirect object of polyvalent verbs on the person hierarchy, in some ways reminiscent of inverse marking (see Testelefs 1989 and Arkadiev 2020). The next section addresses the question about the historical origins of this shared trait.

#### 4. A case for pattern borrowing

The conspicuous similarity between Kabardian and Abaza in the patterns of use of the cislocative and translocative prefixes in person-number paradigms of polyvalent verbs with indirect objects can potentially be explained as common inheritance from the Northwest Caucasian protolanguage, as accidental parallel evolution guided by universal typological tendencies, and finally as a result of contact-induced change. In the following, I discuss these three explanations in turn, making a case for the last one, i.e. borrowing from Kabardian into Abaza, evaluating my arguments against the criteria of contact-induced replication summarised in Heine (2009) and Heine & Nomachi (2013).

Both the cislocative and the translocative prefixes are arguably reconstructible to the Northwest Caucasian protolanguage, see Chirikba (1996: 380–381), being absent only from Ubykh.<sup>5</sup> However, the quasi-inverse use of these prefixes is robustly attested only in the Circassian branch of the family and in Abaza, and is not found in Ubykh (see Fenwick 2011: 104–106, 111; Dumézil & Esenç 1975: 131–136 for comparative

<sup>5</sup> It has to be noted, however, that Kumakhov (1989: 243) rejects the cognate status of the Abkhaz–Abaza \**ŋa-* with the Circassian \**je-* on phonetic grounds, and Chirikba (1996: 380) reconstructs an unstable initial consonant for this putative common West Caucasian etymon.

observations) and, most importantly, in Abkhaz, the close relative of Abaza spoken on the other side of the Caucasian range (see e.g. Aristava ed. 1968: 82, 84–85, 87, 151–152). Indeed, Abkhaz uses both the cislocative prefix *aa-* (cognate to the Abaza *ʕa-*) and the translocative prefix *na-* in deictic contexts (see Hewitt 1979: 212–216 for a detailed discussion), cf. example (29a) with the cislocative; however, neither of them is easily admitted let alone required in non-deictic contexts such as (29b), where both Kabardian and Abaza would mandatorily use the cislocative.

Abkhaz (elicited)

- (29) a. *s-aʕ'a*                      *a-ʕnəka*    *a-ʕəza*  
 1SG.PR-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.’
- b. *s-aʕ'a*                      *d-(#aa-)bə-χ<sup>m</sup>a-ʕš-ma-jt*  
 1SG.PR-brother 3SG.H.ABS-(#CISL)-2SG.F.IO-LOC-look-PRS-DCL  
 ‘My brother is looking at you (woman).’ (The consultant’s comment: with *aa-* it will mean ‘is looking after you’, not ‘is looking at you’.)

Likewise, a search of the two Abkhaz texts in Colarusso (1999) yielded a number of verbal forms with an inverse combination of subject and indirect object all of which lacked the cislocative prefix, e.g. *jə-sə-t* 3SG.N.ABS-1SG.IO-give(IMP) ‘give it to me’ (Colarusso 1999: 129), *s-a-r-h<sup>m</sup>a-r* 1SG.IO-DAT-3PL.ERG-say-COND ‘if they tell me’ (Colarusso 1999: 137). By contrast, in the Tapanta Abaza text from the same collection the pattern of use of the cislocative prefix is observed, e.g. *j-ʕa-sə-r-t-t* 3SG.N.ABS-CISL-1SG.IO-3PL.ERG-give(AOR)-DCL ‘they gave it to me’ (Colarusso 1999: 94), *d-ʕa-mə-j-t-ḥ* 3SG.H.ABS-CISL-2SG.M.IO-3SG.M.ERG-give-NPST.DCL ‘he will give him to you’ (Colarusso 1999: 103).

The lack of the quasi-inverse use of the deictic prefixes in Abkhaz as opposed to its presence in Abaza could potentially be explained as a case of loss of an inherited feature in Abkhaz rather than as an innovation in Abaza. This hypothesis, however, can hardly be substantiated. There is no reason to assume that Abkhaz could spontaneously get rid of a robust systematic usage pattern of a morpheme otherwise productive in the verbal system. Language contact with Kartvelian could not be responsible for it, either, since, first, Kartvelian has not had such a huge impact on Abkhaz morphosyntax (at least for Mingrelian, with which Abkhaz was in closest contact, the direction of influence has arguably largely been the reverse, especially in the domain of locative preverbs, see e.g. Hewitt 1992, 2001, Chirikba 2006) and, second, the person-sensitive use of the deictic preverbs is also attested at least with the verb ‘give’ in Georgian (Vogt 1971: 173) and Mingrelian (Alexander Rostovtsev-Popiel, personal communication, 2020).

Thus, the criterion of genetic patterning (Heine & Nomachi 2013: 74–78) rather speaks against common inheritance and in favour of contact-induced replication.

There is likewise almost no doubt that the quasi-inverse could not have developed in Kabardian (and, more generally, Circassian) and Abaza independently. Even though the category of inverse is found in different language families and the cislocative is one of the



attested historical sources of inverse markers (see Jacques & Antonov 2014: 312–313), the situation we see in Circassian and Abaza is in many respects cross-linguistically unique (see Arkadiev 2020 for a detailed discussion). Indeed, in languages with direct-inverse systems, direct and inverse markers are found first and foremost in monotransitive verbs and monitor the relative ranking of agents and patients. However, in our case the deictic prefixes are sensitive to the role of indirect object expressing such semantic relations as recipient, addressee, beneficiary and less-affected object of verbs of impact or directed perception, are used regardless of transitivity, and, importantly, their quasi-inverse use is not observed with monotransitive verbs at all. Moreover, whereas in languages with canonical direct-inverse systems (Zúñiga 2006, 2014; Jacques & Antonov 2014) direct and inverse markers play a crucial role in establishing the mapping between person features and participant roles, the deictic prefixes in polyvalent verbs of Circassian and Abaza seem to be almost completely redundant, since the argument roles are unequivocally indicated by the shape and position of the cross-referencing prefixes. The only context where the cislocative can be argued to have some disambiguating function is the cases when both the subject and the indirect object are third person. These properties render the quasi-inverse use of the deictic preverbs in Kabardian and Abaza “crosslinguistically highly unusual” and clearly falling under the criterion of “rare grammatical category” (Heine & Nomachi 2013: 78). Besides that, the fact that not just one, but two markers are involved, falls under the criterion of “paired structural similarity” (Heine & Nomachi 2013: 79–83). To summarize so far, neither inheritance nor independent parallel development seem to be plausible hypotheses.

In favour of the contact-induced scenario speak the following facts. First, as has already been mentioned, Abaza has been in a state of prolonged and intense contact with Kabardian. Abaza and Kabardian villages are often located close to each other (e.g. the village Inzhich-Chukun, where the fieldwork this paper is based upon was conducted, is situated just across the river from a large Kabardian village Khabez) and many adult Abaza men and women are bilingual in Kabardian. Besides that, intermarriage is common, and many Abaza men have Kabardian wives who are expected to learn Abaza and at the same time teach Kabardian to their children. Four out of twenty our Abaza consultants reported that their mothers or mothers-in-law were Kabardian, and one of them explicitly stated that he used to speak Kabardian with his mother. Half of our consultants claimed that they used Kabardian frequently or even every day, and just three of them reported having only limited knowledge of the language.

The linguistic impact of Kabardian on Abaza is evident in a considerable number of loanwords including some verbal roots (this is notable, since in general, Northwest Caucasian languages are quite resistant to borrowing verbs) and certain basic lexemes such as body-part terms, names of common animals and plants, natural objects, artifacts and some abstract vocabulary (see e.g. Šagirov 1989: 43–58; Xaratokova 2011; Xaratokova et al. 2015: 125–186). Abaza also possesses numerous morphosemantic calques of Kabardian origin and even a number of borrowed bound morphemes, such as the frequentative suffix *-zapət* going back to the Circassian frequentative auxiliary *ze-pə-t* REC.IO-LOC.front-stand ‘be joined to each other; occur all the time’ (Genko 1955: 139; Tabulova 1976: 207–208; Kumakhov ed. 2006: 418; Bagov ed. 1999: 225). Notably, some

of the Kabardian calques in Abaza include the cislocative preverb, e.g. *ʕa-hʷəp-* ‘dance’ (Žirov & Ekba eds. 1956: 492), cf. Kabardian *q̄e-f̄e-* ‘id.’ (Bagov ed. 1999: 378); Abkhaz has only the common Abaza-Abkhaz verb *q̄ʷaša-* (Tugov ed. 1967: 187, 260; Bgažba ed. 1964: 567).

Returning to the diagnostics of contact-induced replication discussed by Heine & Nomachi (2013), there is some indirect evidence related to what they call “degree of grammaticalisation” (Heine & Nomachi 2013: 90–94), which is assumed to be usually lower for the replica categories than for their models in the source language (cf. also Heine 2012: 132). Even though the data provided above suggests that the quasi-inverse use of the cislocative in Abaza is fully systematic and hence grammaticalised to the same degree as its Kabardian counterpart (see also below), it is conspicuously ignored by most existing sources on the language. For example, the most detailed description of Abaza morphology in the reference grammar by Tabulova (1976) not only does not mention such a use of the deictic prefixes but provides examples of paradigms lacking it entirely (see e.g. Tabulova 1976: 124–132, 219–220).<sup>6</sup> Likewise, the use of the deictic prefixes in polypersonal paradigms is described neither in the short grammar by Genko (1955: 145, 170), nor in the sketch by Lomtadidze et al. (1989). O’Herin (2002: 58–59) provides a partial paradigm of the verb ‘give’ with the cislocative in all forms regardless of the concrete person values of the agent and indirect object, as well as some examples without the cislocative, but does not offer any comments about it. The only work on Abaza explicitly discussing the relevant use of the cislocative is Allen (1956: 164–169), from which this data even made its way into Anderson & Keenan (1985: 277–278). This almost unanimous silence of the sources on Abaza about the quasi-inverse use of the cislocative begs an explanation, but one is tempted to hypothesise that it may be at least partly due to the not yet fully systematic nature of the phenomenon. By contrast, the corresponding use of the cislocative prefix in Kabardian and West Circassian is recorded in all grammars of these languages and discussed in comparative works such as Kumakhov (1971: 251) and Dumézil & Esenç (1975: 131–136).

Importantly, however, I was not able to detect any noticeable variation in the quasi-inverse use of the deictic prefixes (primarily of the cislocative, which is much more frequent than the translocative) across my consultants: all of them showed a fairly consistent pattern in both spontaneous texts and elicitation regardless of such parameters as age or degree of proficiency in Kabardian. The only point of variation I could observe was that some of the older speakers accepted constructed verbal forms such as *j-sə-l-t-ǰ*

<sup>6</sup> Notably, in the examples from texts published in the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century amply provided in Tabulova (1976), relevant cases of the cislocative are well-attested, e.g. *j-ʕa-b-a-z-hʷ-da* 3SG.N.ABS-CISL-2SG.F.IO-DAT-REL.ERG-say(AOR)-QH ‘who told you (woman) that?’ (Tabulova 1976: 92), *d-ʕa-wə-m-pš-wa-ta* 3SG.H.ABS-CISL-2SG.M.IO-NEG-look-IPF-ADV ‘not looking at you’ (Tabulova 1976: 175), *j-ʕa-sə-l-t-t* 3SG.N.ABS-CISL-1SG.IO-3SG.F.ERG-give(AOR)-PST ‘she gave it to me’ (Tabulova 1976: 247), *d-ʕa-s-pš-wa-n* 3SG.H.ABS-CISL-1SG.IO-look-IPF-PST ‘he was looking at me’ (Tabulova 1976: 287), *j-ʕa-h-pš-wa* REL.ABS-CISL-1PL.IO-look-IPF ‘the one who is looking at us’ (Tabulova 1976: 304), *d-ʕa-sə-t* 3SG.H.ABS-CISL-1SG.IO-give(IMP) ‘give her to me (in marriage)’ (Tabulova 1976: 305) etc. I could not find any counterexamples to the generalisations from the previous section in the material given in this grammar.

3SG.N.ABS-1SG.IO-3SG.F.ERG-give-NPST.DCL ‘she will give it to me’ without the cislocative, while the younger speakers consistently rejected them as ungrammatical. However, even the older speakers never produced such forms spontaneously. This can possibly suggest that the system has become stable only fairly recently.

The last piece of evidence for pattern borrowing comes from morpheme order. As has been shown before, the normal position of deictic prefixes in Abaza is in slot –7 between the locative preverbs and the applicatives, see examples (14) above and (30) below. The same position is occupied by the cognate prefixes in Abkhaz, see Hewitt (1979: 214).

Abaza (textual examples)

- (30) a. *hə-nbʒʷaŋʷ-ča-kʷa* ... *j-rə-z-ŋa-ŋ-ga-t*  
 1PL.PR-friend-HPL-PL 3SG.N.ABS-3PL.IO-BEN-CISL-1PL.ERG-carry(AOR)-DCL  
 ‘We brought it for our friends.’
- b. *araχʷ-ara-t a-bəzša-kʷa-gʷəj*  
 other-PL DEF-language-PL-ADD  
*čə-r-zə-na-hə-r-χa-rnəs*  
 RFL.ABS-3PL.IO-BEN-TRAL-1PL.ERG-CAUS-turn-PURP  
*məwrad-ta j-h-kə-t*  
 goal-ADV 3SG.N.ABS-2PL.ERG-catch(AOR)-DCL  
 ‘We decided to turn to the other languages.’

However, in their quasi-inverse use the deictic prefixes occur farther from the root before the applicatives, cf. examples in (31).

Abaza (textual examples)

- (31) a. *jara awasa-bərg d-ŋa-sə-z-čŋa-t*  
 3SG.N DEM.ADV-EMPH 3SG.H.ABS-CISL-1SG.IO-BEN-ask(AOR)-DCL  
 ‘He asked me exactly this.’
- b. *j-ŋa-sə-z-na-χčʷa-t* *a-ψsa*  
 3SG.N.ABS-CISL-1SG.IO-BEN-3SG.N.ERG-protect(AOR)-DCL DEF-soul  
 ‘It protected my soul for me.’
- c. *sə-ŋʷ-na-pə-k* *wa*  
 1SG.PR-two-arm-INDF 2SG.M  
*j-ʔaʒa-na-wə-z-s-r-am-χʷ-əw*  
 3PL.ABS-until-TRAL-2SG.M.IO-BEN-1SG.ERG-CAUS-find-IAM-IPF  
 ‘While I have held out both my arms towards you’ (Tabulova 1976: 93)

That the position of the Abaza deictic prefixes in their quasi-inverse function is distinct from the position they occupy in their other uses is, in my view, not accidental and can also be explained by Kabardian influence. Recall that in Kabardian the deictic prefixes occur in slot –9 directly following the absolutive cross-referencing prefixes and before all applicative prefixes, see Figure 2 and example (13) above. It is thus not

Kabardian			Abs	Deictic/ Inverse	Subord	Appl	Erg	Stem
Abaza	Abs	Subord	Inverse	Appl	Deictic	Loc	Erg	Stem

Figure 4: The replication of the linear order of quasi-inverse prefixes

implausible that Abaza has replicated not only the usage pattern of the Kabardian deictic prefixes, but their linear position as well, see Figure 4. Note, however, that this linear parallelism is only partial, since in Abaza the quasi-inverse prefixes precede the applicatives but, unlike their Kabardian counterparts, follow the subordinating prefixes, e.g. the ‘until’ prefix in example (31c). This lack of full parallelism can be due to both rigid constraints on the ordering of subordinating prefixes in Abaza and to the higher token frequency of verbal forms without subordinating prefixes intervening between the deictic and applicative preverbs in both languages.

A possible scenario of the development of the quasi-inverse uses of the Abaza deictic prefixes can be summarised as follows. Bilingual speakers fluent in both Abaza and Kabardian<sup>7</sup> have identified the formally similar prefixes on the basis of their transparent spatial deictic meanings shared between the two languages most probably due to common inheritance (the so-called “pivot-matching”, see Matras & Sakel 2007: 830), and then have extended the use of the Abaza prefixes to cover the broader domain of use matching that of their Kabardian counterparts. Such an extension was clearly facilitated by the semantic naturalness of the use of deictic markers in situations of actions directed either towards one of the speech-act participants from a third person or from the addressee to the speaker in case of the cislocative, or from the speaker towards the addressee in case of the translocative. Besides replicating the functions of the Kabardian cislocative and translocative prefixes, bilingual speakers of Abaza have also at least partly copied the linear position of the Kabardian deictic prefixes, creating for the quasi-inverse use of their Abaza counterparts a new slot in the morphological template. Somewhat paradoxically, this has resulted in the partial formal dissociation of the original spatial and the new quasi-inverse uses of the Abaza deictic preverbs – something completely alien to the model language.

## 5. Conclusion

In this paper I have argued that Abaza has borrowed a typologically non-trivial inverse-like use of deictic verbal prefixes on the model of Kabardian, its distant relative. The two languages show striking similarities in the patterns of use of the deictic directional preverbs in polyvalent verbs with indirect objects. The cislocative (‘hither’) prefix appears when the indirect object outranks the subject (either the ergative agent of

<sup>7</sup> These bilingual speakers could in principle have either of the two languages as their L1; it remains to be hypothesised to what extent this process of pattern replication was driven by bilingual Kabardian wives of Abaza men or their bilingual children.

a ditransitive verb or an absolutive of a bivalent intransitive verb) on the person or topicality hierarchy, and the translocative ('thither') prefix occurs (mainly in bivalent intransitive verbs) in combinations of a first person subject with a second person singular indirect object. This phenomenon, which is well-described for Kabardian and its close relative West-Circassian but has heretofore almost completely escaped the attention of researchers of Abaza, is peculiar from a cross-linguistic perspective. On the one hand, it closely resembles the more familiar direct-inverse systems attested in such language families as Algonquian and Tibeto-Burman in its sensitivity to the relative ranking of arguments on the person hierarchy as well as to the relative topicality of third-person participants; however, on the other hand, it deviates from the canon of inverse (as defined by Jacques & Antonov 2014) by being almost fully redundant and restricted to the contexts where indirect objects rather than transitive patients are present (for more details see Arkadiev 2020).

This case of pattern borrowing is interesting for several reasons. First, it involves two genealogically related polysynthetic languages with complex templatic morphology, and thus contributes to the linguists' understanding both of the ways contact between related and 'typologically-congruent' languages proceeds (see e.g. papers in Epps et al. eds. 2013, Law 2020 and Souag 2020, 2021) and of the contact-induced developments in languages with extreme morphological complexity. For the latter, in spite of a growing body of literature (see e.g. Epps 2006, Mithun 2013, 2015 and an overview in Bakker & van der Voort 2017: 423–425), the data is still insufficient and one cannot but agree with Mithun (2013: 268) that "there is also much to discover". Moreover, since the Abaza and Kabardian prefixes involved in the contact scenario are arguably cognate, the case described here shows how functions inherited from the protolanguage can be overlaid by those arisen due to language contact, a topic highly relevant to the 'copy versus cognate' problem in historical linguistics (Johanson & Robbeets eds. 2012).

Second, as I have shown, pattern borrowing has resulted not just in a functional extension of affixes in Abaza but arguably in a creation of a new slot in a morphological template as well. This can be argued to at least partly fit under the definition of 'changes in affix ordering' under contact, which seem to have been heretofore not reported for polysynthetic languages (Bakker & van der Voort 2017: 424).

Third, this case is a clear instance of an increase of morphological complexity due to language contact, the phenomenon that, in spite of having received some attention in the literature (see e.g. Vanhove 2001, Aikhenvald 2003, Trudgill 2009, Dahl 2009, Meakins et al. 2019, Meakins & Wilmoth 2020), still remains in the shadow of the much better-documented processes of contact-induced simplification of morphology, references on which are too abundant to be quoted here (see e.g. Arkadiev & Gardani 2020 for an overview of this and related issues). Importantly, as a result of pattern borrowing of the quasi-inverse use of the deictic preverbs the complexity of Abaza verbal morphology has increased on both paradigmatic and syntagmatic levels. From the syntagmatic perspective, the nearly obligatory use of the cislocative prefix in certain polyvalent verbal forms yields a higher morpheme-to-word ratio (Greenberg 1954) and complicates the rules of morpheme combinatorics as well as the Abaza prefixal template. Paradigmatically, the intervention of the (originally derivational) deictic prefixes into

the domain of participant cross-reference has actually created in Abaza a new inflectional feature whose values are not autonomous but non-trivially depend on the combination of values of at least two other features as well as on the lexically determined transitivity of the verb. Last but not least, this complexification driven by language contact can be considered ‘gratuitous’, since as a result of borrowing no ‘functional gap’ in the system of the recipient language has been filled, and neither has the Abaza person marking become more transparent. All this suggests that under appropriate sociolinguistic conditions and especially given a sufficient degree of typological similarity and formal congruity between languages, language contact can result in additional and quite non-trivial morphological complexity (for a still less trivial example see Souag 2021 (this issue)), and, second, that morphological complexity *per se* need not have any apparent ‘function’ or rationale for its emergence and maintenance (Dahl 2004: 117), apart from perhaps increasing redundancy and thus facilitating information transfer (Dahl 2004: 295) and, admittedly, acquisition by children (Lupyan & Dale 2010).

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### Abbreviations

1 – 1<sup>st</sup> person; 2 – 2<sup>nd</sup> person; 3 – 3<sup>rd</sup> person; ABS – absolutive; ADD – additive; ADV – adverbial; AOR – aorist; APPL – applicative; BEN – benefactive; CAUS – causative; CISL – cislocative; COND – conditional; DAT – dative applicative; DCL – declarative; DEF – definite; DEM – demonstrative; ELAT – elative; EMPH – emphatic; ERG – ergative; F – feminine; FUT – future; H – human; HPL – human plural; IAM – iamitive (‘already’); IMP – imperative; INDF – indefinite; INTF – intensifier; IO – indirect object; IPF – imperfective; LOC – locative preverb; M – masculine; N – non-human; NAG – agent noun; NEG – negation; NPST – nonpast; OBL – oblique; PL – plural; PN – proper name; POSS – possessive; POT – potential; PR – possessor; PRS – present; PST – past; PURP – purposive; QH – human interrogative; RE – reflexive; REC – reciprocal; REL – relativization; RFL – reflexive; SG – singular; TEMP – temporal subordination; TRAL – translocative.

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