

## FROM RESULTATIVE TO INCIPIENT PASSIVE IN CIRCASSIAN?

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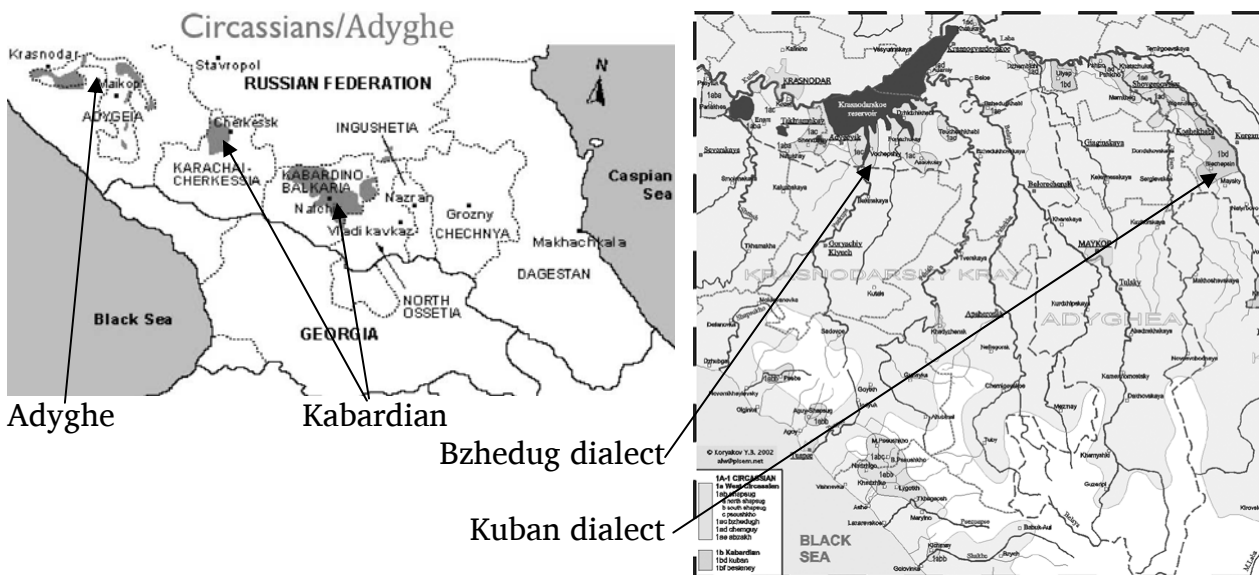
### 1. Introduction

Circassian languages, like North Caucasian languages in general, are believed to lack passive constructions (cf. Siewierska 2013).

I will present empirical evidence from two Circassian varieties admittedly showing different stages of the development of a passive-like construction out of the common-Circassian resultative, possibly under contact influence from Russian.

The varieties discussed are both spoken in the Republic of Adygheya, Russia:

- the **Bzhedug** dialect of Adyghe/West Circassian (village Wečepšəje / Вочепший);
- the **Kuban** dialect of Kabardian/East Circassian (village Blešepsəne / Блечепсин).



The data have been collected during field-trips jointly organized by the Russian State University for the Humanities and by the National Research University “Higher School of Economics” in 2014 (Wečepšəje) and 2015 (Blešepsəne).

### 2. The 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).

Important typological features of the Circassian languages:

- Very little distinction between major word classes (Lander & Testelets 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).

The general schema of the Circassian verbal complex:

prefixes						root	suffixes							
(A) argument structure zone						(B) pre-stem elements			(C) stem			(D) endings		
-10	-9	-8	-7	-6	-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	+4
absolutive	directional	subordinators	applicatives	dative	ergative	jussive	dynamicity	negation	causative	root	directionals, transitivity	propositional operators	absolutive plural	subordinators, force

(1) KUBAN

$[w\partial_{-10}-q\partial_{-9}-s-\check{c}'er_{-7}-j\partial-r_{-6}-a_{-5}]_A-[be_{-1}-wat\partial p\check{s}\partial_{-0}-\check{c}'\partial_{+1}-f_{+2}-a_{+2}]_C-[q\partial m_{+4}]_D$

2SG.ABS-DIR-1SG.IO-LOC-3SG.IO-DAT-3PL.ERG-CAUS-tie-ELAT-HBL-PST-NEG

'They could not make him untie you from me.' (elicited)

➤ Rich system of valency increasing operations, including causative and a large set of applicatives: benefactive, malefactive, many locatives etc. (Легучий 2009a,b, Paris 1995). By contrast, valency decreasing operations are few (Lander & Letuchiy to appear).

➤ Ergativity in both head- and dependent-marking (Smeets 1992, Kumakhov & Vamling 2009, Lander 2012, Letuchiy 2012), coupled with an impoverished case system comprising the Absolutive (-r, marks intransitive subjects (2a) and direct objects (2b)), the Oblique (-m with allomorphs, marks transitive subjects (2b), all types of indirect objects (2b), and adnominal possessors (2c), and the Instrumental -č'e/-ž'e marking a variety of non-cross-referenced elements (2d) (see Сердобольская & Кузнецова 2009, Рыжова et al. 2016).

(2) KUBAN

a.  $\check{s}ale-r$   $me-\check{z}'je$ .

boy-ABS DYN-sleep

'The boy is sleeping.'

b.  $\check{s}ale-m$   $p\check{s}a\check{s}e-m$   $tx\partial\lambda-r$   $j\partial-r-j\partial-t-a$ .

boy-OBL girl-OBL book-ABS 3SG.IO-DAT-3SG.ERG-give-PST

'The boy gave the book to the girl.'

c.  $\check{c}ax^w\partial-m$   $j\partial-w\partial ne-r$

man-OBL POSS-house-ABS

'the man's house'

d.  $ad\partial ge-bze-\check{c}'e$   $d-o-ps\partial\lambda e$ .

Adyghe-language-INS 1PL.ABS-DYN-speak

'We speak Adyghe.'

NB Personal pronouns, possessed nominals and proper names, as well as non-referential common nouns normally do not admit Absolutive and Oblique case markers (see Arkadiev & Testelets 2015).

NB Most 3<sup>rd</sup> person pronominal prefixes are null and won't be marked in the examples.

➤ The normal way of backgrounding the agent of the event is by means of a generic / non-referential 3<sup>rd</sup> person plural:

(3) BZHEDUG

$p^h\check{s}'\partial mafe$   $q-\partial-l^w a-B$   $t-j\partial-w\partial ne$   $svjet-er$   $zere-x-a-be-na-be-r$ .

Pshimafe DIR-3SG.ERG-say-PST 1PL-POSS-house light-ABS REL.FCT-LOC-3PL.ERG-CAUS-be.lit-PST-ABS

'Pshimafe said that light was turned on in our house (lit. that they turned on).'

➤ A “Romance-style” tense system with an inflectional distinction between the perfective Preterite and the Imperfect (see Arkadiev 2009, Короткова 2009 on Temirgoy Adyghe, Клягина 2016 on Kuban Kabardian).

	Present	Past		Future (+ 2)
		Preterite (+ 2)	Imperfect <sup>1</sup> (+ 3)	
Bzhedug	unmarked ~ dy-	- <i>ve</i> ~ - <i>в</i> (word-finally)	- <i>təve</i>	- <i>t</i>
Kuban	namic prefix (-3)	- <i>a</i> ~ - <i>ve</i> (stem-internally)	- <i>te</i> ~ - <i>t</i> (word-finally)	- <i>ne</i>

### 3. The Circassian resultative

In all Circassian varieties the Preterite suffix can be used to form resultative predicates from telic verbs, which differ from the normal past tense uses in that transitive verbs lack the ergative agent prefix (4a,b); with intransitive bases the uses are not formally differentiated (5a,b). Syntactically, resultative forms behave like adjectives, i.e. occur as incorporated postnominal modifiers in NPs (5b), or as stative predicates (4b).

#### (4) BZHEDUG

- a. *te psənč'-ew l-er d-ve-žə-v.*  
 we quick-ADV meat-ABS 1PL.ERG-CAUS-roast-PST  
 ‘We quickly roasted the meat.’
- b. *l-er ve-žə-ve.*  
 meat-ABS CAUS-roast-RES  
 ‘The meat is roasted.’

#### (5) KUBAN

- a. *λə-xe-r vino je-f-a-xe.*  
 man-PL-ABS wine DAT-drink-PST-PL  
 ‘The men drank wine.’
- b. *çəx<sup>w</sup> = je-f-a = dəde qe-k<sup>w</sup>-a.*  
 man = DAT-drink-RES = very DIR-go-PST  
 ‘A very drunk man came.’

In resultatives, the Preterite suffix does not have past time reference:

– resultative predicates denote situations simultaneous to the speech time or narrative line, cf. (6)–(7):

#### (6) BZHEDUG

- pče-r ɫ<sup>w</sup>ə-xə-v.*  
 door-ABS LOC-open-RES  
 ‘The door is open (now).’

#### (7) KUBAN (textual example)

- a komnete = pebž'-č'e tjeljevžəzer še-t, vane-r še-t,*  
 DEM room = each-INS television LOC-stand bath-ABS LOC-stand  
*məste-r še-t ve-ps-a-we.*  
 like-ABS LOC-stand CAUS-live-RES-ADV  
 ‘In each room there was a TV-set, a bath and all that, all well-organized.’

<sup>1</sup> The Adyghe Imperfect is historically a combination of the stative verb *šət-* with the past tense marker. The origins of the Kabardian Imperfect ending *-t(e)* are obscure.

– for non-present reference, resultative predicates take regular tense markers, cf. (8)–(9):

- (8) BZHEDUG  
*sə-qə-z-e-k<sup>w</sup>e-m*                      *pče*    *ʔ<sup>w</sup>ə-xə-ba-v.*  
 1SG.ABS-DIR-REL.TEMP-DYN-go-OBL    door    LOC-open-RES-PST  
 ‘When I came, the door was opened.’
- (9) KUBAN  
*wə-ǰə-šə-k<sup>w</sup>e-ž<sup>ʔ</sup>-č<sup>ʔ</sup>e*                      *bž’e-r*    *ʔ<sup>w</sup>ə-xə-be-ne.*  
 2SG.ABS-DIR-REL.TEMP-go-RE-INS    door-ABS    LOC-open-RES-FUT  
 ‘When you come, the door will be opened.’

In contrast to the preterite proper (11b), the resultative may attach certain aspectual or modal affixes thus behaving as a derived stem, cf. (10)–(11).

- (10) BZHEDUG: reflexive  
*pče-r*            *ʔ<sup>w</sup>ə-xə-be-ž’-ep<sup>h</sup>.*  
 door-ABS    LOC-open-PST-RE-NEG  
 ‘The door is no longer opened.’
- (11) KUBAN: habilitive  
 a. *ž’eš’-č<sup>ʔ</sup>e*    *bž’e-r*            *ʔ<sup>w</sup>ə-xə-be-fə-ne.*  
     night-INS    door-ABS    LOC-open-RES-HBL-FUT  
     ‘The door can stay opened at night.’  
 b. *šale-m*    *bž’e-r*            *ʔ<sup>w</sup>-jə-xə-f-a* / \**ʔ<sup>w</sup>-jə-xə-be-f.*  
     boy-ERG    door-ABS    LOC-3SG.ERG-open-HBL-PST / \*LOC-3SG.ERG-open-PST-HBL  
     ‘The boy managed to open the door.’

#### 4. From resultative to passive?

Since a canonical resultative (Nedjalkov & Jaxontov 1988) denotes a state, it suppresses the agentive and dynamic components of the basic situation, which is manifested by the incompatibility of the resultative with expressions whose interpretation depends on such components. This distinguishes the resultative from the (actional) passive, cf. English examples in (12):

- (12) ENGLISH  
 a. *The door **has been closed** quickly / on purpose.*            (passive)  
 b. *The door **is closed** (\*quickly / on purpose).*            (resultative)

Surprisingly, the native speakers of both Circassian varieties I have studied allow the resultative to combine with the following expressions referring to the dynamic phases of the situation:

➤ temporal extent adverbials (+ Bzhedug, + Kuban):

- (13) BZHEDUG  
*pjasm-er*    *mjənut = pšək<sup>w</sup>ət<sup>h</sup>fə-ž<sup>ʔ</sup>e*            *txə-ba-be.*  
 letter-ABS    minute = fifteen-INS            write-RES-PST  
 ‘The letter was written in fifteen minutes.’
- (14) KUBAN  
*bž’e-r*            *mjənut-jə-t-č<sup>ʔ</sup>e*            *ʔ<sup>w</sup>ə-x-a-t.*  
 door-ABS    minute-LNK-TWO-INS            LOC-open-RES-IPF  
 ‘The door was opened in two minutes.’

➤ celerative adverbials (+ Bzhedug, + Kuban):

(15) BZHEDUG

*l-er*      *psanč'-ew*      *be-že-ka-b*  
meat-ABS      quickly-ADV      CAUS-roast-RES-PST  
'The meat was quickly roasted.'

(16) KUBAN

*pjās'mo-r*      *psanč'-u*      *tx-a*.  
letter-ABS      quick-ADV      write-RES  
'The letter has been (lit. is) written quickly.'

➤ instrument expressions (+ Bzhedug, + Kuban):

(17) BZHEDUG

*pče-r*      *mə*      *ʔwəč'əbze-m-ž'e*      *ʔwə-xə-ka-b*.  
door-ABS      this      key-OBL-INS      LOC-open-RES-PST  
'The door was opened by means of this key.'

(18) KUBAN

*β<sup>w</sup>əšəne-r*      *wede-šx<sup>w</sup>e-m-č'e*      *xə-wəč'-a*.  
nail-ABS      hammer-big-OBL-INS      LOC-hit-RES  
'The nail has been (lit. is) hammered with a large hammer.'

➤ purpose adverbials and purpose clauses (+ Bzhedug, + Kuban):

(19) BZHEDUG

*mə*      *txəλ-er*      *ʔaqš'e-m*      *p<sup>h</sup>aj*      *txə-ka-b*.  
this      book-ABS      money-OBL      for      write-RES-PST  
'This book was written for the sake of money.'

(20) KUBAN

*[haše-xe-m jə-r-a-βe-š'xə-n-u]*      *haləve = k<sup>w</sup>ed*      *βe-ž-a*.  
guest-PL-OBL      3SG.IO-DAT-3PL.ERG-CAUS-eat-POT-ADV      pancake = much      CAUS-roast-RES  
'In order to feed the guests, many pancakes have been (lit. are) baked.'

➤ agent-oriented adverbials (+ Bzhedug, –Kuban):

(21) BZHEDUG

*lake-xe-r*      *g<sup>w</sup>əš<sup>w</sup>eps-ew*      *thač'ə-ž'ə-ka-βe-x*.  
plate-PL-ABS      willing-ADV      wash-RE-RES-PST-PL  
'The dishes were washed willingly.'

(22) KUBAN

\**lake-xe-r*      *g<sup>w</sup>əf-u-re*      *theš-a-t*.  
plate-PL-ABS      joy-ADV-CNV      wash-RES-IPF  
intended: 'The dishes were washed with joy.'

➤ agent-oriented malefactive applicative (+ Bzhedug, –Kuban):

(23) BZHEDUG

*a*      *pjasm-er*      *se*      *s-š<sup>w</sup>e-ka-hə-ka-b*.  
DEM      letter-ABS      I      1SG.IO-MAL-CAUS-carry-RES-PST  
'This letter was sent against my will.'

(24) KUBAN

\**mə*      *pjās'mo-r*      *s-fe-tx-a*.  
this      letter-ABS      1SG.IO-MAL-write-RES  
intended: 'This letter is written against my will.'

➤ NPs in the instrumental case referring to the agent (+ Bzhedug, –Kuban):

(25) BZHEDUG

*mə tʰxəl-er tʰxek<sup>w</sup>e = ɕerəɽ<sup>w</sup>e-m-ɕ<sup>ʔ</sup>e tʰxə-βa-βe.*  
 this book-ABS writer = famous-OBL-INS write-RES-PST  
 ‘This book was written by a famous writer.’

(26) KUBAN

*\*d-jə-wəne-r d-j-ade-m-č<sup>ʔ</sup>e ɕ-a-t.*  
 1PL-POSS-house-ABS 1PL-POSS-father-OBL-INS do-RES-IPF  
 intended: ‘Our house was built by our father.’

It is important to note that neither of the aforementioned contexts triggered unanimous reaction of my consultants. In both dialects, there were native speakers who consistently rejected such an extended use of the resultative. Instead, they proposed that the “impersonal” with the overt 3<sup>rd</sup> plural agent prefix should be used, as in (27) and (28):

(27) BZHEDUG

*mə t<sup>h</sup>xəl-er \*(a-)t<sup>h</sup>xə-βa-βe [ʔaqʂ<sup>ʔ</sup>e = βw-ew q-a-βe.χe-n-ew].*  
 this book-ABS \*(3PL.ERG)-write-PST-PST money = much-ADV DIR-3PL.ERG-gain-POT-ADV  
 ‘This book was written (lit. they had written) in order to get a lot of money.’

(28) KUBAN

*χ<sup>w</sup>enave-χe-r [parə-m-jə jə-mə-λav<sup>w</sup>-u] doske-m tər-\*(a)-tx-a.*  
 swearword-PL-ABS nobody-OBL-ADD 3SG.ERG-NEG-see-ADV board-OBL LOC-\*(3PL.ERG)-write-PST  
 ‘Someone secretly wrote swearwords on the blackboard.’

## 5. Discussion

The data presented above, especially the possibility for the Bzhedug resultative to co-occur with agent phrases (25), suggests that the Circassian resultative has started developing into an actional passive denoting not just the resultant state of the event, but also the event itself.

This might be due to the influence from Russian, where the resultative and the (perfective) passive use the same morphology and are often hard to tease apart, especially in the past tense (29).

(29) RUSSIAN

- a. *Дверь была открыта долго.* (resultative)  
 ‘The door was open for a long time.’
- b. *Дверь была открыта быстро.* (actional passive)  
 ‘The door was opened quickly.’

Note that many of the “actional” uses of the Circassian resultative presented above feature the past, rather than the present, resultative.

However, the elicited data available so far is fairly tentative and shows a high degree of inter-speaker variation, and thus should ideally be supplemented by naturalistic data, e.g. from the written registers of standard Circassian languages (Adyghe and Kabardian), which may exhibit greater influence from (formal) Russian than spoken vernaculars. However, due to the lack of annotated corpora, the access to such naturalistic data is (yet) technically almost impossible.

Perhaps most notably, this material offers a potential window into the initial stages of the transition between resultative proper and passive, with subtle differences between varieties and even speakers of the same variety, as well as showing the role of optional modifiers in this change, which is manifested mainly in semantics rather than morphosyntax.

## Abbreviations

ABS — absolutive; ADD — additive; ADV — adverbial; CAUS — causative; CNV — converb; DAT — dative; DEM — demonstrative; DIR — directional; DYN — dynamic; ELAT — elative; ERG — ergative; FCT — factive; FUT — future; HBL — habilitive; INS — instrumental; IO — indirect object; IPF — imperfect; LNK — linker; LOC — locative; MAL — malefactive; NEG — negation; OBL — oblique; PL — plural; POSS — possessive; POT — potential; PST — past; RE — reffective; REL — relativizer; RES — resultative; SG — singular; TEMP — temporal.

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