

The Northwest Caucasian Languages

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Abstract and Keywords

This chapter describes the major features of the Northwest Caucasian (Abkhaz-Adyghe) language family, comprising Abkhaz, Abaza, West Circassian (Adyghe), East Circassian (Kabardian), and the now extinct Ubykh. Starting with the sociolinguistic setting of the Northwest Caucasian varieties and the history of linguistic research on them, the discussion then proceeds to a description of the most important features of their phonology, morphology, and syntax, concluding with a brief discussion of a number of typologically outstanding features. The chapter, based both on published sources and the authors' fieldwork data, covers issues such as exuberant consonantism, lexical category underspecification, polysynthetic morphology, expression of spatial meanings in the verb, rich systems of tense, aspect and mood categories, finite and non-finite verbal forms, non-trivial noun phrase syntax, relativization, and complexities of clause-combining. Besides describing the features common for all the languages of the family, we focus on important points of variation among the Northwest Caucasian languages and their dialects, aiming at an adequate representation of the wealth of phenomena they present and highlighting the challenges they offer for typology and linguistic theory.

Keywords: Northwest Caucasian languages, Abkhaz, Abaza, Circassian, Ubykh, polysynthesis

9.1 The Languages and Their Speakers

THE Northwest Caucasian (NWC) family, also known as West Caucasian or Abkhaz-Adyghe, comprises five languages, which are grouped into three branches:

(1)

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- a. Abaza-Abkhaz:
 - i. Abkhaz (including the Sadz, Ahchapsy, Bzyp, Tsabal, and Abzhya dialects)
 - ii. Abaza (nominally including the Tapanta and Ashkharywa dialects)
- b. Ubykh
- c. Circassian:
 - i. Adyghe/West Circassian¹ (with the Bzhedugh, Shapsugh, Abzakh/Abadzeh, and Temirgoy dialects)
 - ii. Kabardian (also known as East Circassian and including the Besleney, Baksan, Mozdok, Malka, Terek, and Kuban dialects)

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This division is based on linguistic and sociolinguistic considerations and involves some simplifications. For example, Adyghe and Kabardian are often considered by their (p. 370) speakers to constitute a single Adyghe (or Circassian) language (despite the absence of mutual intelligibility), and some dialects of Abkhaz (e.g., Sadz) and Adyghe (e.g., Shapsugh) may be treated as separate languages. Nonetheless, in the sections that follow we use the language list as given in (1) with a proviso that whenever it is possible, we will try to overtly mark the variety referred to—with the exception of Abaza, whose examples always represent the Tapanta dialect.

Speakers of NWC languages traditionally inhabited areas to the north and partly to the south of the western part of the Caucasian Ridge including the northeastern coast of the Black Sea. The situation changed drastically in the middle of the 19th century, when many Circassian, Abkhaz-Abaza, and Ubykh communities migrated to the Ottoman Empire after their lands were occupied by the Russian Empire. Speakers of NWC languages now live not only in the Northwest Caucasus per se (primarily in the Russian regions of Adygea, Karachaevo-Cherkessia, Kabardino-Balkaria, and Krasnodarsky Kray, and in the de facto independent Republic of Abkhazia), but also within a massive diaspora in Turkey, Syria, Jordan, and Israel. Outside the Caucasus, the people of this diaspora are referred to as the Cherkess, i.e., Circassians, irrespective of their actual origin. According to the 2010 Russian census, Adyghe in Russia has about 117,500 speakers; Kabardian, about 515,700 speakers, and Abaza, about 38,000 speakers. The number of Abkhaz speakers in Abkhazia and in Russia is about 100,000. There are no parallel data for the diaspora, mainly because of the complicated status of the NWC languages in Turkey (see below in this section). Tevfik Esenç, the last competent speaker of Ubykh, died in Turkey in 1992.

In the Russian Federation, Adyghe is one of the official languages in the Republic of Adygea, and is also used in Krasnodarsky Kray, where its position is much less healthy. Kabardian is one of the official languages in Kabardino-Balkaria and in Karachaevo-Cherkessia; the latter is also home to Abaza. All these languages are taught at school, are represented in local media, and have literature, mostly published in partly standardized varieties which use the Cyrillic-based orthography with many digraphs and even tri-

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graphs (see section 9.2.1). Abkhaz is the state language of the de facto independent Republic of Abkhazia, where it is represented in media and literature (including academic publications). All these languages undergo considerable pressure of Russian, both in Russian Federation and in Abkhazia, especially in the urban areas.

In Turkey, where the number of the representatives of the NWC peoples exceeds their number in Russia, the use of their languages was much more restricted for political reasons. That is why Ubykhs lost their language completely; however, they were mostly bilingual in Circassian even before migration. Outside Turkey, the Abkhaz-Abaza communities have shifted to Circassian or Arabic. Over the last decades there have been numerous attempts to revive NWC languages in all of these countries.

For long-range genealogical comparisons involving NWC languages, see chapter 1. A number of studies compare languages within the family from both historical and (p. 371) typological perspectives: Dumézil (1932), Shakryl (1971), Colarusso (1988), a series of monographs by Kumakhov (1964, 1971, 1981, 1989) and Kumakhov and Vamling (2009) on Circassian, and Chkadua (1970) on Abkhaz-Abaza, to mention just a few.

Systematic studies of NWC languages started in the 19th century with Peter Uslar's grammar of Abkhaz. Uslar left insightful notes on other NWC languages including Ubykh (Uslar, 1887). In the 20th and 21st centuries, NWC languages (especially their standardized varieties) obtained a number of detailed grammatical descriptions, mainly in Russian but also in some other European languages (as well as in NWC languages themselves). Compare Russian grammatical descriptions: Jakovlev and Ashkhamaf (1941), Rogava and Kerasheva (1966), and Zekokh (2004) for Adyghe; Abitov et al. (1957), Bagov, Balkarov, Kuasheva, Kumakhov, and Rogava (1970), Jakovlev (1948), Kumakhov, Apazhev, Bizhoev, Zekoreev, & Taov (2006), and Turchaninov and Tsagov (1940) for Kabardian; Aristava, Bgazhba, Tsikolia, Chkadua, and Shakryl (1968) and Jakovlev (2006) for Abkhaz; Lomtatidze (2006; also in Georgian, which is the original version of her sketch published in English in 1989) and Tabulova (1976) for Abaza. The descriptions in other languages include sketches by Colarusso (1989) on Kabardian; Hewitt (1989) on Abkhaz; Lomtatidze & Klychev (1989) on Abaza; Paris (1989) on Abzakh Adyghe; Charachidzé (1989) on Ubykh; Abkhaz grammars by Hewitt (1979a) and Chirikba (2003a); Kabardian grammars by Colarusso (1992, 2006) and Matasović (2010a); and Ubykh grammars by Dirr (1928c), Dumézil (1931), von Mészáros (1934), and especially Fenwick (2011), who summarized the previous research.

In addition to these sources, there are numerous papers and monographs devoted to specific aspects of NWC languages, as well as numerous descriptions of dialects and local varieties of the languages of the family.

The electronic corpora of NWC languages include an Abkhaz corpus which is not tagged, and a West Circassian annotated corpus allowing search based on specific morphological information (Arkhangelskiy and Lander, 2016). In the examples in this chapter, whenever

a source is not explicated, examples either come from the authors' field notes or are taken from a text including one of the corpora.

9.2 Phonetics and Phonology

For detailed information and an extensive bibliography on segmental inventories, see chapter 15. This section briefly outlines the most salient facts as well as the conventions of phonological representation that we adhere to. For a detailed description based on instrumental analysis, see Colarusso (1988) on the family in general, Gordon and Applebaum (2013) on Circassian in general, Höhlig (2003) on West Circassian, Paris (1974) (p. 372) and Gordon and Applebaum (2006) on Turkish Kabardian, and Vaux (2012) on Abkhaz.

9.2.1 Consonants

NWC consonant inventories are among the richest in the world, ranging from about 50 in standard Kabardian to more than 80 in Ubykh. This is due to a large number of sibilant fricatives (cf. Paschen, 2015) and affricates as well as to secondary articulations such as labialization and palatalization (and, in Ubykh only, pharyngealization). The typical system of plosives distinguishes three series: voiced, ejective, and voiceless (often with a non-distinctive aspiration), but Bzhedugh and Shapsugh dialects of Adyghe feature a four-way system contrasting plain and aspirated plosives, reconstructed back to proto-Circassian (Chirikba, 1996, pp. 109–117; Kuipers, 1963, pp. 69–71; Kumakhov, 1981, pp. 121–141; Paschen, 2019). Consider Bzhedugh *tʰəze* ‘given’ versus *təze* ‘sun’. This contrast is observed not only in stops and affricates but in fricatives as well (cf. Bzhedugh *šʰe* ‘milk’ vs. *š'e* ‘sell’). Ubykh has uvular stops and fricatives distinguishing plain, palatalized, labialized, pharyngealized, and pharyngo-labialized series.

Sonorant inventories are, by contrast, poor, being limited to just /j/, /w/, /n/, /m/, and /r/, with /l/ present only in Abkhaz-Abaza and Ubykh, and /ɥ/ only in Abkhaz and also in some varieties of Abaza. In Circassian, except for the Shapsugh varieties near the Black Sea and possibly some other varieties in closer contact with Russian, the voiced lateral is a fricative /ʒ/ rather than an approximant.

The systems of sibilant fricatives and affricates in NWC are particularly rich distinguishing four points of articulation (in eastern Kabardian dialects and in the standard language, the system is reduced to three), whose characterization is not uncontroversial (see, e.g., Ladefoged and Maddieson, 1996, pp. 161–163). Traditional (Russian-oriented) grammars distinguish between dental *s* /s/, *c* /ts/, alveolar *š* /ʃ/, *č* /tʃ/, plain postalveolar *š* /ʃ/, *č* /tʃ/, and palatalized postalveolar *š'* /ʃ̯/, *č'* /tʃ̯/ series (Höhlig, 2003; Rogava and Kerasheva, 1966, pp. 30–34, 38–40). Colarusso (1988, pp. xxvi, 18, 33) identifies these as lamino-dental, alveo-palatal, apico-palato-alveolar, and lamino-palato-alveolar, respectively, while Hewitt (2005a, pp. 94–98) calls them alveolar, alveolo-palatal, retroflex, and palato-alveo-

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lar. Yet Catford (1977) proposes a different classification which is uncritically accepted by Beguš (chapter 15 of this volume).

NWC languages boast many rare consonants, such as the Circassian glottalized fricatives, e.g., the “hissing-hushing” /ʂ²/ and the lateral /ɬ/, attested in both Adyghe and Kabardian, and the mutually corresponding Adyghe labialized alveolar /ʂʷ/ and Kabardian labio-dental /f/. No less exotic are palatalized uvular stops and fricatives (p. 373) attested in Abkhaz-Abaza and Ubykh (Colarusso, 1988, pp. 219–292), the palatalized glottal stop /ʔ'/ in the Abzakh dialect of Adyghe (Kumakhova, 1972, pp. 15, 48), and the Abkhaz palatal approximant /ɥ/.

Given the dearth of fully reliable and comparable instrumental studies for all NWC varieties and a discrepancy between different sources, we refrain from using IPA (International Phonetic Alphabet) symbols, reverting to the traditional Caucasological phonemic transcription employed in Smeets (1984) and Testelets (2009a). Tables 9.1 through 9.5 represent consonantal systems of Standard Adyghe, Standard Kabardian, Standard Abkhaz, Tapanta Abaza, and Ubykh (in the absence of an orthography for Ubykh, we use the transcription in Fenwick (2011) as a reference point; Fenwick’s symbols are shown only when different from those used in this chapter).³ Phonemes attested only in loans appear in parentheses.

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Table 9.1 Consonants: Standard Adyghe

	Plosives			Fricatives			Sonorants	
	-voice	+glottal	+voice	-voice	+glottal	+voice	nasals	resonants
Labial	p	ɸ	b	f		(v)	m	w
Labial- ized		ɸʷ						
Dental	t	t̪	d	s		z	n	r
Labial- ized		t̪ʷ						
Affricates	c	ç	ʒ					
"Hissing- hushing"	čʷ		ʒʷ	š	ʂ	ʐ		
Labial- ized				šʷ	ʂʷ	ʐʷ		
Palato- alveolar	č	č̪	ž	š		ž		
Palatal- ized	č'	č̪'	ž'	š'		ž'		
Lateral				λ	λ̄	ł		

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Palatal								j
Velar	k	ḳ	g ^w	x		γ		
Labial- ized	k ^w	ḳ ^w						
Uvular	q			χ		χ		
Labial- ized	q ^w			χ ^w		χ ^w		
Pharyn- geal				h				
Laryn- geal	?							
Labial- ized	?							

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Table 9.2 Consonants: Standard Kabardian

	Plosives			Fricatives			Sonorants	
	-voice	+glottal	+voice	-voice	+glottal	+voice	nasals	resonants
Labial	p	ɸ	b	f	f	v	m	w
Dental Af-fricates	t	t̪	d	s		z	n	r
“Hissing-hushing”				š	ʂ	ʐ		
Palato-alveolar	č	č̪	ڇ	š		ڙ		
Lateral				λ	λ̪	ł		
Palatal								j
Velar Labial-ized	k	k̪	gʷ	x		ɣ		
Uvular	qχ	q̪		χ		ʁ		

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Labial- ized	q^{χ_w}	\dot{q}^w		χ^w		ϵ^w		
Pharyn- geal				h				
Laryn- geal	$?$	$?^w$						
Labial- ized								

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Table 9.3 Consonants: Standard Abkhaz

	Plosives			Fricatives			Sonorants	
	-voice	+glottal	+voice	-voice	+glottal	+voice	nasals	resonants
Labial	p	ɸ	b	(f)		(v)	m	w
Dental	t	t̪	d	s		z	n	r
Labial- ized	t ^w	t̪ ^w	d ^w					
Af- fricates	c	ç	ʒ					
“Hissing- hushing” labialized	č ^w	č̪ ^w	ž ^w					
Palato- alveolar	č	č̪	ž	š		ž		
Palatal- ized	č'	č̪'	ž'	š'		ž'		
Labial- ized				š ^w		ž ^w		
Lateral								l

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Palatal							j ψ
Velar	k	k	g				
Palatal- ized	k'	k'	g'				
Labial- ized	k ^w	k ^w	g ^w				
Uvular		q̇		χ		v	
Palatal- ized		q̇'		χ'		v'	
Labial- ized		q̇ ^w		χ ^w		v ^w	
Pharyn- geal				h			
Labial- ized				h ^w			

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Table 9.4 Consonants: Tapanta Abaza

	Plosives			Fricatives			Sonorants	
	-voice	+glottal	+voice	-voice	+glottal	+voice	nasals	resonants
Labial	p	ɸ	b	(f)	(f)	(v)	m	w
Dental Af-fricates	t	ʈ	d	s		z	n	r
“Hissing-hushing”	č	č̥	ž	š		ž̥		
Palato-alveolar Palatalized	č̄	č̄'	ž̄	š̄		ž̄	ž̄'	
Lateral				(λ)	(λ)	(l̄)		l
Palatal								j
Velar Palatalized	k	k̄	g					
	k'	k'	g'					
	kʷ	kʷ	gʷ					

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Labial- ized							
Uvular	q	q̫		χ		χ	
Palatal- ized	q ^w	q̫ ^w		χ'		χ'	
Labial- ized				χ ^w		χ ^w	
Pharyn- geal				h		χ	
Labial- ized				h ^w		χ ^w	
Laryn- geal	?						

Table 9.5 Ubykh Consonants

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	Plosives			Fricatives			Sonorants	
	-voice	+glottal	+voice	-voice	+glottal	+voice	nasals	resonants
Labial Pharyngealized	p p ^f	ɸ <p'> ɸ ^f <p ^f '>	b b ^f	f			v v ^f	m m ^f
Dental Labial- ized Af- fricates	t t ^w c <ts>	t̪ <t'> t̪ ^w <t ^w '> ç <ts'>	d d ^w ð <dz>	s			z	n
"Hissing- hushing" Labial- ized	ç̄ <tç> ç̄ ^w <tç ^w >	ç̄ <tç'> ç̄ ^w <tç ^w '>	ʒ̄ <dʒ> ʒ̄ ^w <dʒ ^w >	ʂ̄ <ç> ʂ̄ ^w <ç ^w >			ʐ̄ <z> ʐ̄ ^w <z ^w >	
Palato- alveolar Palatal- ized Labial- ized	č̄ <tʂ> č̄' <tʃ>	č̄ <tʂ'> č̄' <tʃ'>	ڇ̄ <dʐ> ڇ̄' <dʒ>	ʂ̄ <ʂ> ʂ̄' <ʃ> ʂ̄ ^w <ʃ ^w >			ڙ̄ <z̄> ڙ̄' <ڙ> ڙ̄ ^w <ڙ ^w >	

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Lateral				$\lambda <\ddot{\lambda}>$	$\lambda <\ddot{\lambda}'>$			l
Palatal								j
Velar	k	$\dot{k} <k'>$	g	x		γ		
Palatal- ized	$k' <k^j>$	$\dot{k}' <k^{j'}>$	$g' <g'>$	x^w				
Labial- ized	k^w	$\dot{k}^w <k^{w'}>$	g^w					
Uvular	q	$\dot{q} <q'>$		χ		κ		
Palatal- ized	$q' <q^j>$	$\dot{q}' <q^{j'}>$		$\chi' <\chi^j>$		$\kappa' <\kappa^j>$		
Labial- ized	q^w	$\dot{q}^w <q^{w'}>$		χ^w		κ^w		
Pharyn- gealized	q^s	$\dot{q}^s <q^s'>$		χ^s		κ^s		
Lab. +pharyn g.	q^{ws}	$\dot{q}^{ws} <q^{ws'}>$		χ^{ws}		κ^{ws}		
		>						
Laryn- geal				h				

(p. 374) 9.2.2 Vowels

In contrast to the exuberant consonantal inventories, the vocalic systems of NWC are quantitatively reduced, although qualitatively quite complex. Abkhaz and Abaza have only two vowel phonemes, low /a/ (ə) and (mid-)high /ə/ (i); Ubykh and Circassian also have the mid-low /e/ (ɔ).⁴ Such “vertical” vocalic systems, first posited for Kabardian in Jakovlev (1923), with members displaying minimal contrast, are typologically rare. It is therefore no surprise that the NWC vocalic systems have received much attention in the literature, with divergent views on their composition (see Hewitt, 2005a, pp. 99–100). Kuipers (1960) and Allen (1965b), followed by Anderson (1978), posit a one-vowel system for Circassian and Ubykh, arguing that the surface vocalic contrasts are determined positionally. Kumakhov (1977) and later Choi (1991) and Catford (1997, pp. 99–102) argue for a three-vowel system in Circassian, as does Fenwick (2011, pp. 24–27) for Ubykh. Two-vowel analyses for Circassian, collapsing /e/ and /a/, have also been proposed, see Colarusso (1988, pp. 294, 312–329), Halle (1970), and Jakovlev (1923).

(p. 375) Any theory positing less than three vowel phonemes is falsified by the existence of unquestionable minimal pairs (cf. Besleney Kabardian šxə ‘eat it!’ ~ šxe ‘eat! (antipassive)’ ~ šxa ‘s/he ate (antipassive)’, or Ubykh ass̊ én ‘I reap it’ ~ ass̊ én ‘I milk it’ ~ ass̊ án ‘I milk/rip them’) (Fenwick, 2011, p. 25, after Dumézil, 1965, p. 202). Dispensing with such pairs can be achieved by postulating covert consonants and additional phonological rules. Such analyses are not entirely unmotivated, since the distribution of vocalic contrasts in NWC is fairly restricted. Thus, in Circassian and Ubykh /a/ and /e/ are neutralized to /a/ word-initially (in Ubykh also word-finally; Fenwick, 2011, pp. 26–27), and in Circassian /a/ is derived from /e/ by a morphophonological rule (see section 9.2.5), with “stable /a/” restricted to just a few morphemes. Anyway, the contrast between /ə/ and /a/ in Abkhaz-Abaza and /e/ in Circassian and Ubykh has a clear functional load both in lexical roots and affixes. As Colarusso (1988, pp. 350–372) argues, it is impossible to predict the occurrence of /ə/ on the basis of syllable structure or morphological environment.

(p. 376) Basic contrasts have been contentious even within three-vowel systems. The contrast between /e/ and /a/ is especially controversial; Colarusso (1988), Hewitt (2005a), and Jakovlev (1923) characterize it as a quantitative opposition between /a/ and /a:/, respectively. At least for Circassian, this analysis is invalidated by instrumental studies (Choi, 1991; cf. also Catford, 1997, pp. 100–101), and by the presence of genuine, if marginal, quantitative contrasts. Compare in Bzhedugh (Paschen, 2014; Sitimova, 2004, pp. 26, 100–101):⁵

(2)

Bzhedugh Adyghe

- | | |
|--------------------|-------------------|
| a. <i>q-a:-kʷe</i> | b. <i>qa-kʷe!</i> |
| CISL-DYN-go | CISL-go.IMP |
| ‘s/he comes’ | ‘come!’ |

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(p. 377) (p. 378) Despite the dearth of vocalic contrasts in phonology, phonetically NWC languages have diverse vowel qualities due to the “coloring” of vowels by adjacent consonants (Colarusso, 1988, pp. 295–304 in general; Moroz, 2018, on Abaza). Thus, in Circassian /e/ and /ə/ are realized close to [o] and [u] after labialized consonants, while /e/ becomes almost indistinguishable from /a/ when adjacent to laryngeals. *we/ew* and *wə/əw* tend to be realized as [o] and [u], while *je/ej* and *jə/əj* as [e]⁶ and [i]. Word-initially and intervocally, glides are preserved. These processes work differently across languages and dialects, thus, in Temirgoy Adyghe *ew*, *ej* and *əw*, and *əj* are intact, while in Kabardian and Abkhaz-Abaza they undergo monophthongization.

Nasalized vowels are reported for Bzhedugh and Shapsugh dialects of Adyghe (Kerasheva, 1957a[1995], p. 231; Rogava and Kerasheva, 1966, p. 24) (cf. Bzhedugh *psə̃* vs. Temirgoy *psə* ‘water’). Deriving these from original combinations with nasal consonants is problematic, since the cognates of the very few forms for which nasalized vowels are reported do not show any traces of final nasal consonants in other NWC varieties, and neither is nasal drop with vowel nasalization a synchronic phonological process in Bzhedugh and Shapsugh.

9.2.3 Phonotactics and Syllable Structure

NWC languages show considerable variation in their phonotactics and syllable structure (cf. Moroz, 2019b, on Adyghe). The constraint against vocalic hiatus is the only general rule, at least if recent borrowings are excluded. The most common syllable type is C(C)V, but complex onsets and complex codas are well attested. Consonant clusters can appear inside a morpheme both in roots and affixes and across morpheme boundaries. Intramorphemic initial clusters are in most cases biconsonantal and decessive with all members sharing the features of voice and glottalization, e.g., Adyghe *pχe* ‘wood’ ~ *bχe* ‘breast’ ~ *tkʷə* ‘melt’ or Abaza *z̥ʃʷa* ‘shoulder’ ~ *ʂχə* ‘carrot’. Accessive clusters are diachronically secondary (cf. Adyghe *λfe* vs. Kabardian *λxʷe* ‘give birth’). Intramorphemic triconsonantal clusters are rare (cf. Adyghe **pske** ‘cough’ or Ubykh *tχre* ‘break’; Fenwick, 2011, p. 27). At least in Circassian, most affixes have a CV structure, and those which feature consonant clusters, such as certain preverbs, clearly go back to lexical roots.

Syllable- and word-final clusters usually result from the dropping of final /ə/ (cf. Adyghe *je.pλ* ‘look at it!’ ~ *je.pλə.ə* ‘s/he looked’). The range of consonant sequences created by morphological rules is much greater and includes typologically unusual ones:

(3)

Besleney Kabardian

- a. *fe-v-bz-t* (root *bzə*)
MAL-2PL.ERG-CUT-IPFV
'you were slaughtering it'
- b. *je-t-t-t-jə* (root *tə*)
DAT-1PL.ERG-give-IPFV-ADD
'because we gave it to him/her'

(p. 379) Such complex clusters, especially the ones containing both voiced and unvoiced consonants, normally do not arise in Ubykh and Adyghe; at least in the latter this is due to the preservation of /ə/. In Abkhaz-Abaza, in contrast to the other NWC languages, non-syllabic sonorants can occur in word-initial clusters (4) but not in word-final clusters (5):

(4)

Abaza

- a. *mfʷa*
'road'
- b. *j-s-taqd-p̪*
3SG.N.ABS-1SG.IO-Want-nPST.DECL
'I want it'

(5)

Abaza

- sə-ç-t̪* ~ *sá-çə-n*
1SG.ABS-sleep.AOR-DECL 1SG.ABS-sleep-PST.DECL
'I slept'

Vowels in word-peripheral positions are subject to a number of restrictions. In particular, /ə/ is impossible in the word-initial position across the entire family, with the exception of certain Adyghe dialects. We already mentioned that between /e/ and /a/, only /a/ is possible word-initially in Circassian and Ubykh, and even its occurrence is restricted to a few grammatical morphemes. For Circassian, one can argue that all *a*-initial roots have a prosthetic glottal stop; in Kabardian, *a*-initial prefixes receive a prosthetic /j/ word-initially:

(6)

Besleney Kabardian

- a. *w-a-λeɣʷ-a*
2SG.ABS-3PL.ERG-see-PST
'they saw you'
- b. *ja-λeɣʷ-a*
3PL.ERG-see-PST
'they saw it'

In Kabardian /ə/ does not occur word-finally except for monosyllables and the additive suffix -jə.

9.2.4 Stress and Prosody

For details of NWC stress, see chapter 16. All NWC languages have dynamic stress, although its perceptual salience differs across languages. With regard to stress assignment, there is a major division between the mobile morphologically determined stress (p. 380) in Abkhaz-Abaza and Ubykh versus the more fixed stress in Circassian, though even there the stress is bound to the morphologically determined stem rather than to the whole word.

For intonation, see chapter 17. Sentence intonation is one of the most under-investigated fields of NWC grammar. Some instrumental work has been recently done on the Kabardian varieties spoken in Turkey (see Applebaum, 2010, 2013; Applebaum and Gordon, 2007). These are in many respects inconclusive, primarily because they do not take into account the syntactic encoding of focus (for the latter, see Rygaev, 2016; Sumbatova, 2009b).

9.2.5 (Morpho)phonological Processes

Although phonological processes play an important role in NWC phonology and morphology, fusion and obliteration of morpheme boundaries are rare. Most processes that do not involve surface phonology (e.g., the coloring of vowels by adjacent consonants mentioned in Section 9.2.2) are at least partly morphologically conditioned.

All NWC languages have consonant assimilation, which mostly affects personal prefixes, and vowel-hiatus resolution. Personal prefixes consisting of a single obstruent (in the non-absolutive series, see section 5.2) regressively assimilate their laryngeal features to those of the following consonants⁷ (cf. (7a) and (7b)):

(7)

Besleney Kabardian

- a. *t-λeɣʷ-a*

1PL.ERG-SEE-PST

‘we saw it’

- b. *d-ke-kʷ-a*

1PL.ERG-CAUS-GO-PST

‘we sent him/her’

In Abkhaz-Abaza, all types of personal prefixes can consist of a single consonant; however, assimilation does not occur in the absolute position (cf. (8)).

(8)

Abaza

- a. *j-ʃ-ž-əj-t̪*

3SG.N.ABS-1PL.ERG-boil-PRS-DECL

‘we boil it’

- b. *h-ž-əj-t̪*

1PL.ABS-dig-PRS-DECL

‘we dig’ (Tabulova, 1976, p. 114).

(p. 381) Akin to this assimilation is the intervocal voicing of indirect object and ergative personal prefixes in Kabardian:

(9)

Besleney Kabardian

- a. *f-je-ž-a*

2PL.ABS-DAT-Wait-PST

‘you.PL waited for him/her’

- b. *qə-v-e-ž-a*

CISL-2PL.IO-DAT-Wait-PST

‘s/he waited for you.PL’

Otherwise there is no intervocal voicing of consonants in Kabardian. Besides that, in Adyge the prefixes of 1SG *s-* and 1PL *t-* fuse with the following sibilants yielding affricates, not attested otherwise (cf. (10)).

(10)

Temirgoy Adyghe

çe-r-ep < {*s-še-r-ep*}

1SG.ERG-know-DYN-NEG

‘I don’t know’ (Smeets, 1984, pp. 118–119).

The only instance of progressive assimilation is found in Abkhaz-Abaza and concerns the adverbial question prefix *-ba*, which turns into *-pa* after voiceless consonants (cf. (11)).

(11)

Abkhaz

a. *d-a-bá-ca-wa?*

3SG.H.ABS-REL.LOC-Q.ADV-go-IPFV

‘where does he go?’

b. *wə-š-pá-qa-w?*

2SG.M.ABS-REL.MNR-Q.ADV-live-PRS.nFIN

‘how are you?’ (Spruit, 1986, pp. 123–124).

Vowel sequences are normally disallowed at morpheme boundaries except for recent borrowings. Such sequences are resolved by the deletion of the higher of the two vowels, i.e., *a* > (*e* >) *ə* (cf. Ubykh *bz-anṭé* < {*bzə-anṭé*} water-snake ‘river eel’; Fenwick, 2011, p. 28, after Vogt, 1963, p. 92). The general rule, however, has exceptions; for example, in Temirgoy Adyghe the /e/ of the cislocative preverb deletes before the 3SG.ERG prefix *ə-*: *q-ə-ʔʷa-β* < {*qe-ə-ʔʷe-βe*} CISL-3SG.ERG-say-PST ‘s/he said’. In Abaza, the second of the two vowels is preserved (cf. *a-hʷ-əj-t* < {*a-hʷa-əj-t*} 3SG.N.ERG-say-PRS-DECL ‘it says’).

In addition, there are instances of vowel coalescence associated with particular morphemes; thus, in Abkhaz and Abaza the imperfective suffix *-wa* coalesces with the final /a/ of the preceding morpheme (cf. (12)).

(12)

Abkhaz

s-co-jt < {*s-ca-wa-jt*}

1SG.ABS-go-IPFV-DECL

‘I am going’ (Hewitt, 1979a, p. 267)

(p. 382) Such coalescence is impossible word-finally and before some non-finite endings (cf. (13)).

(13)

Abaza

h-ca-wa

1PL.ABS-go-IPFV

‘for us to go’

A number of morphophonemic processes involve affixes containing /j/. In Circassian vowels are deleted if followed by /jV/ (cf. (14)).

(14)

Adyghe

q-j-e-?wate < {*qe-j-e-?wate*}

CISL-3SG.ERG-DYN-tell

‘s/he tells’

In Kabardian this rule normally applies only to unstressed vowels (cf. (15)), and stem-internal vowels are preserved in both languages, as shown in (16).

(15)

Besleney Kabardian

χʷ-á-jə

become-PST-ADD

‘it happened’

(16)

Adyghe

de-kʷe-ja-β

LOC-go-UP-PST

‘s/he went up’

When two *j*-prefixes occur in a sequence, the first one dissimilates to /r/ in Circassian (17a), and is dropped in Abkhaz-Abaza (17b). However, the absolute relative prefix is preserved, as shown in (18). In Circassian, when the 3PL.IO prefix *a-* is combined with a *j*-prefix which is not transformed into *r-*, metathesis occurs, contrast (19a) and (19b).

(17)

a. Adyghe

r-jə-?ʷa-β < {*j[e]-jə-?ʷa-β*}

DAT-3SG.ERG-say-PST

's/he said to him/her'

b. Abkhaz

jə-l-to-jt < {*jə-jə-l-ta-wa-jt*}

[3SG.N.ABS-]3SG.M.IO-3SG.F.ERG-give-IPFV-DECL

'she gives it to him' (Hewitt, 1979a, 267)

(p. 383) (18)

Abkhaz

jə-j-hʷa-z

REL.ABS-3SG.M.ERG-say-PST.nFIN

'that what he said' (Hewitt, 1979a, p. 267)

(19)

Adyghe

a. *a-r-jə-tə-β.*

3PL.IO-DAT-3SG.ERG-give-PST

'S/he gave it to them'

b. *j-a-s-tə-β.*

DAT-3PL.IO-1SG.ERG-give-PST

'I gave it to them'

Another instance of consonant dissimilation concerns the allomorphy of the 3PL non-absolutive prefix in Abkhaz-Abaza, which is normally *r(ə)-*, but changes to *d(ə)-* before the homophonous causative prefix, compare (20a) and (20b). This dissimilation is not automatic: when two 3PL prefixes cooccur, both surface as *r(ə)-* (20c).

(20)

Abkhaz

- a. *jə-r-bo-jt̪*
3SG.N.ABS-3PL.ERG-see.IPFV-DECL
'they see it'
- b. *jə-d-də-r-bo-jt̪*
3SG.N.ABS-3PL.IO-3PL.ERG-CAUS-see.IPFV-DECL
'they show it to them' (Aristava, Bgazhba, Tsikolia, Chkadua, & Shakryl, 1968, p. 130)
- c. *jə-rə-r-to-jt̪*
3SG.N.ABS-3PL.IO-3PL.ERG-give.IPFV-DECL
'they give it to them' (Hewitt, 1979a, p. 266)

The doubling of the causative prefix itself does not result in dissimilation, either (cf. (21) in Abaza).

(21)

Abaza

- jə-w-sə-r-r-cu-št̪*
3SG.N.ABS-2SG.M.IO-1SG.ERG-CAUS-CAUS-go.IPFV-FUT.DECL
'I won't let you lead it' (Tabulova, 1976, p. 181).

(p. 384) Instances of haplology include the deletion of the ergative relativizer *d(ə)-* before the homophonous causative prefix in Ubykh (22a), and optional deletion of one of the causative prefixes in double causatives in Circassian (22b). (22)

(22)

- a. Ubykh
sə-[də-]də-pč'-ewt-á
1SG.ABS-[REL.ERG-]CAUS.SG-guest-FUT-nFIN
'the one who will give me hospitality' (Fenwick, 2011, p. 29, after Dumézil, 1957, p. 64)
- b. Temirgoy Adyghe
s-jə-(ke-)ke-č'anə-κ
1SG.IO⁸-3SG.ERG-(CAUS-)CAUS-sharp-PST
'S/he made me sharpen it.' (Letuchiy, 2009b, p. 401)

A peculiar case of metathesis is found in Ubykh with the plural possessive prefix *ew-* prefixed to *a*-initial nouns (Fenwick, 2011, pp. 29, 49–50; cf. *s-ew-č'á* (1SG.PR-PL-horse) ‘my horses’ vs. *s-a<w>b'é* < {*s-ew-ab'é*} (1SG.PR-PL-sick) ‘my sick people’). Other apparent instances of metathesis involving /ə/ in Ubykh and Abkhaz-Abaza can be analyzed as “variant realizations of multiple instances of underlying” /ə/ (Fenwick, 2011, p. 29; cf. Abaza *bzə* ‘tongue’ vs. *á-bəz* DEF-tongue < {*bəzə*}).

Circassian languages have two vocalic alternations determined by, and indicative of, morphological structure. The first one is the dissimilation *e-e* > *a-e* in the last disyllabic foot of the stem, which is the clearest indication of the stem boundary in Adyghe (see Arkadiev & Testelets, 2009, pp. 122–131; Smeets, 1984, pp. 206–211); in Kabardian the alternation is closely tied to stress, which in such contexts falls on the penultimate /a/ (</e/) of the stem. The examples in (23) show the basic working of the alternation; | indicates stem boundary. In nominal complexes (see Lander, 2017, and section 9.6.1) the alternation normally occurs only once at the right boundary (23d), which indicates that such complexes are single words.

(23)

Besleney Kabardian

- a. *ž'anə|-xe-r* < {*ž'ene*}
dress-PL-ABS
'dresses'
- b. *ž'ena-č'e* < {*ž'ene-č'e*}
dress-new
'a new dress'
- c. *ž'ene-žə|-r* < {*ž'ene-žə*}
dress-old-ABS
'the old dress'
- d. *jə-ž'ene-šχʷente-daxe|-r*
POSS-dress-blue-beautiful-ABS
'her beautiful blue dress' (field notes)

(p. 385) The alternation affects most prefixes containing /e/, e.g., the cislocative, the applicatives, and the word-initial *me*-allomorph of the dynamic prefix (cf. (24)) but does not affect others, e.g., the word-internal *e*-allomorph of the dynamic prefix and the *je*-allo-morph of the dative preverb, (25).

(24)

Temirgoy Adyghe

- a. *ma-kʷe* < {*me-kʷe*}
- DYN-go
's/he goes'
- b. *qə-s-fa-kʷe|-re-r* < {*qe-s-fe-kʷe|-re*}
- CISL-1SG.IO-BEN-go-DYN-ABS
'the one who goes to me'
- c. *qə-s-a-že|-re-r* < {*qe-s-e-že|-re*}
- CISL-1SG.IO-DAT-wait-DYN-ABS
'the one who waits for me'

(25)

Temirgoy Adyghe

- a. *q-e-kʷe*
CISL-DYN-go
's/he is coming'
- b. *q-je-že|-s'ṭə-ṛ*
CISL-DAT-wait-IPFV-PST
'they were waiting for it'

Another vocalic alternation in Circassian applies to prefixes with the structure /Ce/ and changes this /e/ to /ə/ if the prefix is followed by another prefix in a particular morphological slot (Arkadiev and Testelets, 2009, pp. 131–139; Smeets, 1984, pp. 215–217). In Adyghe the alternation affects the cislocative and applicative prefixes and is triggered by subordinators (for the cislocative only) (26a), and applicatives, (27a,b), but not by the ergative prefix, the dynamic prefix and the causative prefix (26b), (27c). In Kabardian the range of alternation triggers is broader and includes the dynamic prefix (28a), as well as the ergative reciprocal prefix (28b), but excludes the causative (28c). The phonological motivation and historical sources of this alternation are unclear.

(26)

Temirgoy Adyghe

- a. *qə-z-e-kʷe-xe-m*
CISL-REL.TEMP-DYN-go-PL-OBL
'when they came'
- b. *sə-qə-w-e-λeʂʷ-a?*
1SG.ABS-CISL-2SG.ERG-DYN-see-Q
'Do you see me?'

(p. 386) (27)

Temirgoy Adyghe

- a. *qə-f-a-ʂʷetə-n*
CISL-BEN-3PL.ERG-find-MSD
'that they could find it'
- b. *w-a-də-de-č'ə-ʂ*
2SG.ABS-3PL.IO-COM-LOC-exit-PST
'you quit (the village) with them'
- c. *sə-z-fe-b-ʂe-kʷe-ʂ'tə-r*
1SG.ABS-REL.IO-BEN-2SG.ERG-CAUS-go-FUT-ABS
'the one to whom you will send me'

- - -
(28)

Besleney Kabardian

- a. *q-a-x^wə-v-ə-?wete-ž'-qe*
CISL-3PL.IO-BEN-2PL.ERG-DYN-narrate-RE-EMPH
'but you tell them stories'
- b. *qə-zerə-š'-a-xe-r*
CISL-REC.ERG-lead-PST-PL-ABS
'husband and wife' (lit. 'those who have led each other')
- c. *qə-s-x^we-b-ke-n-a-qəm*
CISL-1SG.IO-BEN-2SG.ERG-CAUS-remain-PST-NEG
'you haven't left (anything) for me'

9.3 Lexical Classes

NWC languages belong to languages with flexible word classes (van Lier and Rijkhoff, 2013). Nouns in these languages can function as predicates and take morphology typical of predicates, and verbal forms can constitute referring expressions, sometimes without apparent nominalization:

(29)

Adyghe

- a-š'ə-psew-xe-re-r* *adəge-š't-x-ep.*
3PL.IO-LOC-live-PL-DYN-ABS Circassian-FUT-PL-NEG
'It will not be Circassians who (will) live there.'

However, in argument positions, nouns and verbs can be distinguished, as the latter do not allow modification by adnominal possessors or by relative clauses. In Abkhaz-Abaza, there are further morphological contrasts. In particular, verbs occurring in (p. 387) argument positions cannot take articles, and nouns can lack absolute cross-reference where it is expected for predicates (see also Jakovlev, 1951, 2006, p. 133):

(30)

Abaza

- (j-)f^waž'-p* *awəj*
(3SG.N.ABS-)yellow-nPST.DECL DIST
'It is yellow.'

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The semantic class of property words formally constitutes a subclass of nouns and has the same distribution as nouns. When combining with words denoting typical “nouny” concepts within nominal complexes, property words usually follow them (but typical nouns may follow other nouns too). Property words more easily participate in comparative constructions and/or combine with various markers of intensity, but some typical nominal concepts allow this as well. Besides property words, we also find adjective-like words like ‘yesterday’s’, which may modify the noun outside the nominal complex (see section 9.6.1). Relational adjectives (like ‘stony’) are almost absent, although all NWC words are reported to use various caritive (‘without’) suffixes and Abkhaz has a suffix deriving the description of the material (Hewitt, 1979a, p. 117).

Non-derived adverbs constitute a closed class. Most adverbial expressions are derived by highly productive adverbial affixes which may attach to all kinds of predicates; in (31a), the adverbial suffix combines with a noun, in (31b), with a property word, and in (31c), with a verb.

(31)

Ubykh

- a. *κ-éw-čəce-ne* *χ'ətʷéssʷe-n* *a-qá-κ-qe*
3SG.PR-PL-people-OBL.PL capital-ADV 3PL.OBL-LOC-be.hanging-PST
'his people had it as [their] capital' (Fenwick, 2011, p. 42, after Dumézil and Esenç, 1975a, p. 44)
- b. *agé-n*
bad-ADV
'badly' (Fenwick, 2011, p. 95)
- c. *šʷə-déxe-ne-n* *šʷə-qʷmále-n!*
2PL.ABS-stand.up.PL-PL-ADV 2PL.ABS-dance.IMP-PL
'stand up and dance!' (Fenwick, 2011, p. 162, after Dumézil, 1967, p. 54)

Grammatical words primarily include a small number of postpositions⁹ and conjunctions, which are even fewer than postpositions, since subordination usually involves either exclusively morphological marking or nominalized structures introduced by postpositions. However, coordinating conjunctions are also found.

(p. 388) 9.4 Nominal Morphology

Nominal morphology of NWC languages is quite impoverished if compared to the verbal morphology of these languages or to Northeast Caucasian nominal morphology; however, it is not without its own puzzles. Given the elusive distinction between the major word classes in NWC mentioned in section 9.3, we treat as “nominal” those morphological cate-

gories that prototypically apply to “thing-denoting words” and are attested in argument and adjunct phrases as opposed to predicates.

9.4.1 Nominal Inflection

NWC languages show considerable variation both in the range of nominal inflectional features available in individual languages and in their formal expression (although some common patterns may be observed as well). Table 9.6 summarizes the distribution of nominal inflectional categories across the family.

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Table 9.6 Nominal Categories in NWC

	Abkhaz	Abaza	Ubykh	Adyghe	Kabardian
Gender	+	+	–	–	–
Possession alienability distinctions	+	+	+	+	+
Number	+	+	+	+	+
Definiteness	+	+	+	(+)	(+)
Grammatical cases	–	–	+	+	+
Peripheral cas- es	+	+	+	+	+

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Gender is attested only in Abkhaz and Abaza. Ubykh shows a vestigial optional distinction in the second singular that may be characterized as “polite feminine” versus “default” (Dumézil and Esenç, 1975b, pp. 76–79; Fenwick, 2011, pp. 47–48). The Abkhaz–Abaza gender system is “nested,” with a primary opposition between human versus non-human, and a subordinate distinction between masculine and feminine in the former. There is no gender agreement on nominal modifiers in Abkhaz and Abaza (possibly apart from numerals), gender being expressed together as part of person-number indexing.

All the languages of the family express adnominal possession by means of personal prefixes on nouns. While Abkhaz, Abaza, and Ubykh attach the personal prefixes directly to the nominal stem (32), Kabardian uses the possessive applicative *jə-* to host (p. 389) the personal prefixes (33), while Adyghe employs both strategies, marking inalienable possession directly and alienable possession by means of the possessive applicative (34).

(32)

Abaza

- a. *s-psə*
1SG.PR-soul
'my soul'
- b. *j-aš'á*
3SG.M.PR-brother
'his brother'

(33)

Besleney Kabardian

- a. *w-jə-wəne*
2SG.PR-POSS-house
'your house'
- b. *s-jə-šəpχʷ*
1SG.PR-POSS-sister
'my sister'

cf. above, between (32) and (33)

(34)

Temirgoy Adyghe

- a. *p-še*
2SG.PR-head
'your head'
- b. *w-ja-č'ezəw*
2SG.PR-POSS-time
'your time'

Table 9.7 lists possessive prefixes in Abaza, Ubykh, and Adyghe.

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Table 9.7 Possessive Prefixes

	Abaza	Ubykh	Adyghe	
			inalienable	alienable
1Sg	<i>s-</i>	<i>sθ-</i>	<i>s(ə)-</i>	<i>s-jθ-</i>
2SgM	<i>w-</i>	<i>wθ- ~ xe-</i>	<i>p- / wθ-</i>	<i>w-jθ-</i>
2SgF	<i>b-</i>			
3SgM	<i>j-</i>			
3SgF	<i>l-</i>	<i>ve-</i>	<i>θ-</i>	<i>Ø-jθ</i>
3SgN	<i>a-</i>			
1Pl	<i>h-</i>	<i>šθ-</i>	<i>t(ə)-</i>	<i>t-jθ-</i>
2Pl	<i>š-</i>	<i>šʷθ-</i>	<i>šʷ(ə)-</i>	<i>šʷ-jθ-</i>
3Pl	<i>r-</i>	<i>aše-</i>	<i>a-</i>	<i>j-a-</i>

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Besides personal possessive prefixes, the relevant slot can be also occupied by the relative prefix (see section 9.7.2), as well as by reciprocal possessive markers indicating a mutual relationship between the possessor and the possessed:

(35)

Ubykh

a-bla-zekew-č'æλe

DEF-seven-REC.PR-brother

‘the seven brothers (i.e., the seven people who are brothers to each other)’
(Fenwick, 2011, p. 52, after Vogt, 1963, p. 58)

All NWC languages express nominal determination (definiteness and/or indefiniteness) by morphological means, albeit in different ways (see, e.g., Khalbad, 1975). In Abkhaz, Abaza, and Ubykh, there is a prefixed definite article *a-* occupying the same slot (p. 390) as the possessive prefixes. In Abkhaz, the prefix has become a generic article and no longer signals definiteness or specificity; note that Abkhaz dictionaries list nouns and adjectives with the initial *a-*. In Abaza, the prefixed article signals specificity rather than just definiteness, and in Ubykh, the prefixed article is used with definite nominals (Dumézil, 1931, p. 13; Fenwick, 2011, p. 45).

(36)

Abkhaz

<i>a-škol</i>	<i>s-ta-le-jt̪</i>	<i>w-hʷa-ma?</i>
ART-school	1SG.ABS-LOC-enter-AOR.DECL	2SG.ERG-say-Q

‘Did you say you started school?’ (Shakryl, 1970b, p. 8)

Both Abkhaz and Abaza mark specific indefinite (but not non-specific) nominals by the suffix *-k*, going back to the numeral ‘one’ (Aristava, Bgazhba, Tsikolia, Chkadua, and Shakryl, 1968, p. 44; Tabulova, 1976, p. 46; see also chapter 10). Ubykh and Circassian languages use the numeral ‘one’ when introducing referents into the discourse, as in (37). In Circassian, such use is optional; although the sources on Ubykh do not state explicitly that such use of ‘one’ is obligatory, both Dumézil (1931, p. 15) and Fenwick (2011, p. 45) treat it as “indefinite article” (cf. also Khalbad, 1975, pp. 19–20). The Circassian languages have no dedicated grammaticalized markers of (in)definiteness, although they mark nonspecificity and indefiniteness by omission of grammatical case markers (see below).

(37)

Ubykh

<i>fəχ'e</i>	<i>ze-pχ'ēsʷ-jebʷe-n</i>	<i>še-pχ'ēdəkʷ qə-ʂ-qé.</i>
long.ago	one-woman-widow-OBL.SG	three-girl PVB-be.hanging.SG-PST

‘Long ago, there was a woman who had three daughters.’ (Fenwick, 2011, pp. 201, 204)

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(p. 391) Bare nominals have more or less restricted use in Abkhaz, Abaza, and Ubykh. In Abkhaz, bare nominals occur just in a few contexts (cf. Hewitt, 1979a, pp. 153–154; Khalbad, 1975, pp. 128–153), e.g., as predicates, in combination with numerals and, when non-specific, under direct scope of verbal negation (38). In Abaza, bare nominals are admitted in a much broader range of contexts (cf. Khalbad, 1975, p. 128), including specific indefinite (39a), which can be contrasted with (39b), where the same referent is encoded by the prefixed nominal in the second mention. In Ubykh, bare nominals can even be definite when modified by a proposed relative clause (Charachidzé, 1989, p. 418).

(38)

Abkhaz

žʷə	sə-m-be-jt̪.
COW	1SG.ERG-NEG-SEE-AOR.DECL

‘I didn’t see a cow/any cows.’ (Hewitt, 1979a, p. 154)

(39)

Abaza

- a. *čəmla-awəra r-č'pa-wa j-a-la-ga-t̪.*
stairs-tall 3PL.ERG-make-IPFV 3PL.ABS-3SG.NIO-LOC-begin-AOR.DECL
‘They began to build a tall staircase.’
- b. *a-čəmla r-č'pa-t̪.*
DEF-stairs 3PL.ERG-make-AOR.DECL
‘They built the staircase.’

NWC languages consistently distinguish between an unmarked singular and a marked plural (no grammaticalized expression of any other possible number features such as dual is attested). Yet there is considerable variation in the formal expression of number and its interaction with other nominal features. The simplest system is attested in Kabardian, where the plural is consistently marked by the suffix *-xe*. Already in its sister Adyghe, in addition to the same dedicated marker *-xe*, plurality can be expressed cumulatively with the oblique case, and sometimes both the dedicated and the cumulative markers are used in the same word (cf. the variants in (40)):

(40)

Adyghe

- a. *çəf-xe-m*
man-PL-OBL
- b. *çəf-me*
man-OBL.PL
- c. *çəf-xe-me*
man-PL-OBL.PL

Abaza and Abkhaz distinguish between the default plural suffix *-kʷa* and the human plural suffix *-čʷa ~ -ča*. This dichotomy does not map into the distinction between (p. 392) human and non-human genders. First, the human plural suffix is no longer productive; it does not attach to borrowed nouns denoting humans, which all take the default suffix. Second, in many cases the human plural suffix is followed by the default pluralizer (e.g., (41)).

(41)

Abaza

j-ájs'-ča-kʷa
3SG.POSS-brother-PL.HUM-PL
'his brothers'

Both Abkhaz and Abaza (but not the Circassian languages) have suppletion for number in some nouns denoting humans. Compare Abaza *a-ʃʷá* 'human.SG' ~ *a-wʃá* 'human.PL' (Genko, 1955, p. 124) and Abkhaz *a-phʷós* 'a woman' ~ *á-hʷsa* 'women' (Hewitt, 1979a, p. 149); such plural stems nevertheless can attach the regular plural suffixes, as in Abkhaz *a-hʷsa-kʷa* (DEF-woman.PL-PL).

Ubykh has the most intricate system of nominal number marking. There is no default dedicated morphological expression of plurality, and number is expressed cumulatively with the oblique case: *-n* OBL.SG vs. *-ne* OBL.PL (42). The absolute case is unmarked and does not distinguish number. Suppletion for number is also attested (cf. *pχ'ěšʷ* 'woman' vs. *šʷəmčé* 'women', *məzá* 'child' ~ *čʷəčé* 'children') (Fenwick, 2011, p. 34).

(42)

Ubykh

- a. *sə-pχ'ēšʷə-n* *jə-dʷá-n.*
1SG.PR-WOMAN.SG-OBL.SG 3SG.ABS-sew-PRS
'My wife is sewing it' (Fenwick, 2011, p. 33, based on Hewitt's unpublished field notes)
- b. *a-šənž'ēšʷe-ne* *wəbáx* *a-bjé-be...*
DEF-Abzakh-OBL.PL Ubykh 3PL.ERG-see-COND.IRR
'If the Abzakhs see an Ubykh ...' (after Vogt, 1963, p. 52)

The oblique plural suffix *-ne* can also co-occur with the second person plural possessor prefix, redundantly marking the plurality of the possessor and appearing even in absolute positions (Fenwick, 2011, p. 48; (43)); this reflects the general rule triggering pluralization whenever 2PL is present (see also section 9.5.2). Ubykh also has a special prefix *ew-* marking the plurality of the possessed in possessive constructions (Fenwick, 2011, pp. 49–51).

(43)

Ubykh

- šʷeλé* *šʷə-χ'áš'-ne* *á-č'e-qe.*
2PL 2PL.PR-reign-PL 3SG.ABS-end-PST
'Your (pl.) reign has come to an end' (Fenwick, 2011, p. 48, based on Dumézil and Esenç, 1975a, p. 44)

(p. 393) The overt marking of plurality normally implies specificity throughout NWC. For Abkhaz and Abaza this is formally manifested in the ban on the occurrence of plural morphemes on bare common nouns (cf. Testelets, 2017). Note that in these languages plural suffixes are compatible with both the generic/specific and the indefinite article, as in Abaza *a-çla-kʷa* 'the trees' vs. *çla-kʷa-k* 'some trees'. This is paralleled by the obligatory use of overt grammatical case marking with plural nominals in Circassian languages (see below in this section). Bare nominals in both Abkhaz-Abaza and Circassian are usually number-neutral. The situation in Ubykh is different, given that number marking is restricted to the oblique case; anyway, the available sources do not comment on the interaction between case/number and definiteness.

An expression of associative plurality is found in Abkhaz-Abaza (Hewitt, 1979a, p. 152) as well as in Circassian. Compare Abkhaz *Záíra-raa* 'Zaira and friends' and Kabardian *Sofjat səme* 'Sofiyat and others' (Kumakhov, 1971, p. 25).

There is a major split between Abkhaz-Abaza and the other NWC languages with respect to the morphological marking of case. Abkhaz-Abaza lack any argument-nominal marking and rely exclusively on pronominal head-marking. Ubykh and Circassian have head-marking, almost as complex as in Abkhaz and Abaza, but also have case suffixes, thus exhibit-

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ing double-marking. The grammatical case systems of Ubykh and Circassian are very simple, distinguishing between just two cases: the absolute and the oblique (often somewhat misleadingly called “ergative” in traditional grammars, see critique of such practice in Kumakhov, 1967). We already mentioned that the absolute case in Ubykh is unmarked and does not show number distinctions. By contrast, in Circassian languages, the absolute has an overt suffix *-r*, which follows the suffix *-xe* in the plural. Table 9.8 summarizes the main formal exponents of the core cases in Ubykh and Circassian (the special allomorphs of the oblique case found with pronouns in Circassian will be discussed separately in section 9.4.2).¹⁰

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Table 9.8 Grammatical Case Markers in Ubykh and Circassian

		Ubykh	Adyghe	Kabardian
Sg	Abs	Ø	-r	-r
	Obl	-n	-m	-m
Pl	Abs	Ø	-xe-r	-xe-r
	Obl	-ne	-xe-m, -me, -xe-me	-xe-m

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On the functional side, there is a considerable asymmetry in the distribution of the grammatical cases. The absolute is restricted to marking the sole argument of intransitive verbs (44a), and the patientive argument of transitive verbs (44b). The oblique, by contrast, covers a very wide range of grammatical roles, including the ergative of (p. 394) transitive verbs (45a); indirect objects with both transitive and intransitive verbs (45b,c); indirect objects introduced by specialized applicative prefixes (45d); adnominal possessors (45e); objects of postpositions (45f), and certain locative and temporal adjuncts (45g).¹¹

(44)

Standard Adyghe

a. *the-r adəye-ba?*

God-ABS Circassian-EMPH

'Isn't God a Circassian?'

b. *nəbž'ə-č'e-maqe-r ze-x-jə-xə-ve amdeχan.*
age-young-voice-ABS REC.IO-LOC-3SG.ERG-carry-PST Amdekhan
'Amdekhan heard a young voice.'

(45)

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Standard Adyghe

- a. *adəye-m* *a-r-jə-?wa-κ.*
Circassian-OBL 3PL.IO-DAT-3SG.ERG-say-PST
'The Circassian told them.'
- b. *jane z-jə qə-r-jə-?wə-ž'ə-κ-ep* *a-nahə-č'e-m.*
mother one-ADD CISL-DAT-3SG.ERG-say-RE-PST-NEG 3PL.PR-COMPR-young-OBL
'Mother didn't say anything to the youngest (son).'
- c. *čəlze-r zewəλ-me ja-ža-κ.*
village-ABS warrior-OBL.PL 3PL.IO+DAT-wait-PST
'The village waited for the warriors.'
- d. *čəlze-m jə-λəχʷəžə-me w-a-də-de-č'ə-κ.*
village-OBL POSS-hero-OBL.PL 2SG.ABS-3PL.IO-COM-LOC-go.out-PST
'You went out of the village together with its heroes.'
- e. *pəjə-m a-pse*
enemy-OBL 3SG.PR-soul
'the enemy's soul'
- f. *χʷəλfəκ-jə-š'-me a-wəž jə-t-ew*
man-LNK-three-OBL.PL 3PL.PP-after LOC-stand-ADV
'following the three men'
- g. *nefšakʷe-m <...> zeč'e de-č'ə-κ.*
dawn-OBL all LOC-go.out-PST
'At dawn everybody left (the village)'.

Overt marking for grammatical case in Circassian languages is normally not used with proper names (except for recent Russian loans) and with possessed nouns; by contrast, (p. 395) nouns marked for plural usually inflect for case, at least in written sources. With plural possessed nouns, the rule requiring overt case markers after the plural suffix wins, contrast (45e) with (46):

(46)

Adyghe

- ə-nape-xe-r ze-tər-jə-λha-ž'ə-κe-x.*
3SG.PR-eyelid-PL-ABS REC.IO-LOC-3SG.ERG-put-RE-PST-PL.ABS
'He closed his eyelids.'

Indefinite and non-specific nominals in Circassian usually lack case markers and cannot inflect for number either. Though reminiscent of the well-known phenomenon of differential object marking (Bossong, 1985; Comrie, 1979; de Swart, 2007), the alternation of overt versus zero case marking in Circassian is not restricted to a particular value of case

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or a particular syntactic position. Bare nominals in Circassian can be both absolute (47a), and oblique (47b), and can occupy any of the syntactic positions available to these two cases. For more details, see Arkadiev and Testelets (2019).

(47)

Besleney Kabardian

- a. *ž' em qe-s-š' ex^{wə}-ne-w s-o-kʷe ž'-jə-ʔ-a.*
cow CISL-1SG.ERG-buy-FUT-ADV 1SG.ABS-DYN-go PREF-3SG.ERG-say-PST
'He said: I'm going in order to buy a cow.'
- b. *č'eʒe-ke-s-a apx^we-de-pisme jə-txə-ne-qəm.*
boy-CAUS-bring.up-RES such-letter 3SG.ERG-write-FUT-NEG
'No well-behaved boy will write such a letter.'

In addition to grammatical cases, Circassian and Ubykh have a small number of peripheral cases marking adjunct nouns; such peripheral cases are found in Abaza and Abkhaz as well.

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Table 9.9 Peripheral Cases

Case	Abkhaz	Abaza	Ubykh ¹²	Adyghe	Kabardian
Instrumental	-la	-la	-ale, -onə	-č'e, -ž'e, -g'e	-č'e
Adverbial	-s	-ta	-n(ə)	-ew	-we ~ -u
Locative	—	—	-ye	—	—
Limitive ‘until’	-nʒa	-ʒa	—	—	—
Comparative ‘than’	—	—	(-q'e)	—	—

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(p. 396) Some peripheral case markers go back to postpositions. This is clearly seen for the Abkhaz and Abaza instrumental, which is treated as a suffix in Abaza grammars (e.g., Tabulova, 1976, pp. 273–274) and attaches directly to the nominal form, while its cognate in Abkhaz can also occur as a free-standing postposition with possessive prefixes indexing its nominal complement.

(48)

Abaza

χán-la j-a-ɻʷá-r-χ-əj-d.
saw-INS 3SG.N.ABS-3SG.N.IO-LOC-3PL.ERG-saw-PRS-DECL

‘They saw with a saw.’ (Genko, 1955, p. 119)

(49)

Abkhaz

a-čada a-ləmχa-kʷa rə-la
DEF-donkey 3SG.N.IO-ear-PL 3PL.IO-by
‘donkey [is recognized] by its ears’ (Aristava, Bgazhba, Tsikolia, Chkadua, and Shakryl, 1968, p. 193)

Likewise, the Ubykh comparative marker *-q'e* is suffixed to nouns but behaves as an inflecting postposition with pronouns and may even stand on its own (Fenwick, 2011, pp. 53–54). The postpositional origin of the Circassian instrumental is evident from the fact that it can attach to the oblique case and participate in the definiteness-based case alternation; compare Kabardian *qaʒe-m-č'e* ‘with the pencil’ versus *qaʒe-č'e* ‘with a pencil’.

A notable feature of the NWC peripheral case systems is the lack of dedicated spatial cases. The only exception is Ubykh, where the locative *-xe* serves as the general spatial marker not limited to any particular function. The lack of spatial cases is compensated by a highly elaborated system of verbal spatial marking (section 9.5.3). Spatial and temporal meanings are also encoded by the oblique and the instrumental cases. The latter is highly polyfunctional, especially in Circassian, where it comprises a very wide range of functions (see Serdobolskaya, 2011, on Adyghe and Ryzhova, Kyuseva, & Arkadiev, 2016, on Kabardian). Only in Ubykh does the instrumental case also mark comitative relations (cf. Dumézil, 1931, p. 27; Fenwick, 2011, pp. 43–44).

All NWC case systems include an adverbial case whose function can be broadly described as turning a nominal into a secondary predicate and whose marker usually coincides with one of the converbs (see, e.g., Shagirov, 2001). When attaching to adjectives, the adverbial case turns them into adverbs (= predicate modifiers) or depictive expressions (see example (31b)). The adverbial form of nouns is mainly used in expressions of being or becoming (example (31a)); on its use in internally headed relative clauses, see section 9.7.2.

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Besides the inflectional features mentioned above in this section, NWC languages have morphological means for marking coordination of nominals (see, e.g., Kumakhov, 1971, pp. 170–183, on Circassian). In Abaza and Abkhaz these coincide with the more general additive markers, but Circassian languages have a dedicated coordinating affix appearing on all conjuncts, *-re*. The nominal preceding *-re* usually occurs in (p. 397) the oblique case regardless of its actual syntactic position, as in (50) where the entire coordinate structure is an absolute S of an intransitive verb. For an analysis of NP coordination in Adyghe, see Ershova (2011).

(50)

Temirgoy Adyghe

<i>č’emə-m-re</i>	<i>bəkʷə-m-re</i>	<i>ze-də-de-č’ə-me ...</i>
COW-OBL-COORD	BULL-OBL-COORD	REC.IO-COM-LOC-go.out-COND
‘if a cow and a bull go together ...’		

In Ubykh, nominal coordination is expressed by means of the instrumental/comitative case (Fenwick, 2011, pp. 44–45; Vogt, 1963, p. 84), regardless of the actual syntactic position.

9.4.2 Pronominal Morphology

Table 9.10 shows the basic forms of the personal pronouns in NWC (cf. Table 9.7, which shows possessive prefixes).

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Table 9.10 Personal Pronouns

	Abkhaz	Abaza	Ubykh	Adyghe	Kabardian
1Sg		<i>sa(rá)</i>	<i>s(ə)Bʷé</i>		<i>se</i>
2Sg		<i>wa(rá) (m), ba(rá) (f)</i>	<i>w(ə)Bʷé</i>		<i>we</i>
3Sg		<i>ja(rá) (m,n), la(rá) (f)</i>	<i>aBʷé</i>		demonstratives
1Pl		<i>ha(rá)</i>	<i>š'əBʷéλe</i>	<i>te</i>	<i>de</i>
2Pl	<i>šʷa(rá)</i>	<i>ša(rá)</i>	<i>šʷəBʷéλe</i>	<i>šʷe</i>	<i>fe</i>
3Pl		<i>dará</i>	<i>aBʷéλe</i>		demonstratives

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Abkhaz-Abaza has the most complex system, with gender distinctions in the singular second and third persons.¹³ By contrast, the other branches of NWC show only the most basic contrast between three persons and two numbers, with Circassian arguably lacking third person pronouns employing demonstratives instead.¹⁴

Pronominal stems can occur bare or be extended by suffixes. The suffixes *-ra* in Abkhaz-Abaza and *-ɛwə* in Ubykh can be considered synchronically as markers of free stressed pronouns, while the *-λe* in Ubykh is clearly a specialized plural suffix, generalized from the third person and the demonstrative system. Circassian pronouns have a *-r* (p. 398) formative in certain forms (cf. the instrumental *se-r-č'e* 1SG.INS); this element also shows up in the adverbial form of demonstratives (cf. Adyghe *a-r-ew* 'thus'), as well as in emphatic reduplicated pronouns (cf. Adyghe *se-r-se-r-ew* 'I myself') (Rogava and Kerasheva, 1966, p. 88). It is not clear whether this element is cognate with the Abkhaz-Abaza *-ra* (Smeets, 1992b).

First and second person pronouns in NWC do not distinguish between the absolute and oblique (this works trivially for Abkhaz and Abaza, which lack core cases altogether). By contrast, third person pronouns in Ubykh and demonstratives in Circassian consistently distinguish between absolute and oblique cases. While in Ubykh third person pronouns employ the same markers as nouns, the Circassian pronouns feature special morphology. In Adyghe, first and second person pronouns can take the oblique case suffix when governed by a postposition (cf. *se-š' paje* 'for me'); the same suffix occurs with demonstratives.

NWC personal pronouns can function as predicates and, when used that way, combine with verbal morphology. In Abaza and Abkhaz pronominal roots can be directly inserted into the appropriate verbal morphology (51a), although normally the construction with the copula is used instead (51b).

(51)

Abaza

- | | |
|--|---|
| a. <i>sará g'-sá-m-ma</i> | <i>j-w-á-z-h^{wə}-z?</i> |
| 1SG NEG-1SG-NEG-Q | 3SG.N.ABS-2SG.M.IO-DAT-REL.ERG-say-PST.nFIN |
| b. <i>sará g'-s-ák^{wə}-m-ma</i> | <i>j-w-á-z-h^{wə}-z?</i> |
| 1SG NEG-1SG.IO-COP-NEG-Q | 3SG.N.ABS-2SG.M.IO-DAT-REL.ERG-say-PST.nFIN |
| 'Wasn't it me who told you that?' | |

In Circassian, personal pronouns and demonstratives always combine with the predicative marker *-rə*, Kabardian *-ra* (cf. Smeets, 1992b); this complex can then function as a verbal stem to which the appropriate prefixes and suffixes are added (e.g., (52)).

(52)

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Besleney Kabardian

<i>sə-wə-ra-te-me</i>	<i>apx^{wed}-əw</i>	<i>s-ʂe-ne-te-ɻəm.</i>
1SG.ABS-2SG-PRED-IPFV-COND	such-ADV	1SG.ERG-do-FUT-IPFV-NEG
'If I were you, I would not do that.'		

Demonstratives vary considerably across NWC, but they all share special morphology. In terms of deixis, Abkhaz and Abaza distinguish three degrees of distance, while Ubykh and Circassian only two. Circassian languages have four rather than just two demonstratives; in addition to the deictic demonstratives *mə* or *wə* (proximal) and *mew* (distal), there are two demonstratives which can be best characterized as anaphoric, viz., *a* and *ɿ'a*. Of these, *a* is by far the most frequent and serves as the default third person pronoun. Table 9.11 shows demonstratives in Abaza and Ubykh. These demonstratives have overt marking in the singular, in contrast to (almost) all other nominals in NWC, (p. 399) as well as special plural suffixes. The Circassian pronouns are regular in terms of number marking but show special suffixes of the oblique case: Adyghe *-j* or *-š'*, Kabardian *-bə*. In Kabardian, this *-bə* can mark oblique case alone or together with the regular oblique suffix *-m*, as in *a-bə ~ a-bə-m*; moreover, the suffix can serve as a stem extension to which the plural marker attaches yielding forms such as OblPl *a-bə-xe-m* and even AbsPl *a-bə-xe-r* (cf. Arkadiev, 2014a).

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Table 9.11 Demonstratives in Abaza and Ubykh

Abaza			Ubykh		
	Singular	Plural		Singular	Plural
Proximal	<i>arəj</i>	<i>arat</i>	Proximal	<i>jənē</i>	<i>jəλé</i>
Medial	<i>anəj</i>	<i>anat</i>	Distal	<i>wené</i>	<i>weλé</i>
Distal	<i>awəj</i>	<i>awat</i>			

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Demonstratives can also function as determiners modifying noun phrases. In Abkhaz and Abaza determiners are free stress-bearing forms requiring the definite form of the following NP and agreeing with it in number (53). In Circassian, determiners are uninflected and arguably phonologically bound, while Ubykh determiners show mixed behavior, being at the same time bound (according to Fenwick, 2011, p. 79), incompatible with the definite article, and still inflecting for number.

(53)

Abaza

<i>awa-t</i>	<i>j-ɻa-n-χa-z</i>	<i>a-wɻa-kʷa</i>
DIST-PL	REL.ABS-CISL-remain-INC-PST.nFIN	DEF-people-PL
'the remaining people'		

(54)

Ubykh

- a. *we-λé-məz*
DIST-PL-child
'those children (absolutive)' (Fenwick, 2011, p. 80, after Dumézil and Esenç, 1987, p. 4)
- b. *jə-λé-məz-ne*
PROX-PL-child-OBL.PL
'these children (oblique)' (Fenwick 2011, p. 80, based on Hewitt's field notes)

Possessive pronouns are typically formed on the basis of bound roots with the meaning 'belong to' which takes the necessary possessive morphology: a prefix indexing the possessor. In standard Circassian varieties, whenever the possessor is of the first or the second person, such formations are normally accompanied by pronouns (presumably (p. 400) because of the inherent emphasis on the possessor), the resulting combination written and commonly interpreted as a single word (e.g., (55)):

(55)

Adyghe
<i>se-s-jə-j</i>
1SG-1SG.IO-POSS-belong
'mine'

Reflexives and reciprocals in NWC languages are primarily encoded by verbal morphology (see section 9.5.2). However, all NWC languages also have free-standing reflexive and reciprocal elements; on reciprocals and reflexives in the Circassian languages, see Kazenin (2007) and Letuchiy (2007). Ubykh seems to have a dedicated reflexive pronoun

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g'e occurring with a possessive prefix; otherwise, all NWC languages employ the noun 'head' in the reflexive function, for instance, Circassian *she* or Abaza *qa*, in example (56).

(56)

Abaza

<i>z-qa</i>	<i>j-a-z-a-z-ga-wa</i>
REL.IO-head	3SG.N.ABS-3SG.N.IO-BEN-DAT-REL.ERG-carry-IPFV
<i>d-h^wənapə-p.</i>	3SG.H.ABS-mouse-nPST.DECL

'Who saves for oneself is a mouse.' (a proverb) (Tabulova, 1976, p. 188)

Reciprocal elements are based on the words for 'one' and involve doubling. Compare Circassian *zə-m zə-r* (one-OBL one-ABS), Abkhaz *á-k-əj á-k-əj* (DEF-one-ADD DEF-one-ADD) (Hewitt, 1979a, p. 89), or Ubykh *z-alé z-alé* (one-INS one-INS) (Fenwick, 2011, p. 83).

Interrogative pronouns as such are attested in Circassian and Ubykh only, while Abkhaz and Abaza form content questions mainly by means of verbal constructions (see sections 9.5.6, 9.6.9); Abkhaz has an interrogative root *-árban* functioning as the predicate of the clefted question and taking the absolutive person-number prefixes:

(57)

Abkhaz

<i>j-aa-z</i>	<i>d-árban?</i>
REL.ABS-come-PST.nFIN	3SG.H.ABS-Q

'Who came?' (Hewitt, 1979a, p. 11)

Circassian languages have three basic interrogative roots: Adyghe *xet* 'who' (for humans), *səd* 'what' and *tV-* 'which', also serving for adverbial questions, *te/təde* 'where' and the composite *taw-š'tew* 'how'; in the Kabardian dialects such forms for 'what' are found as the Besleney *sjə/stjə* and the Kuban *λew*. The Ubykh system is richer (Fenwick, 2011, pp. 83–86). Compare *š'ə* 'who', *se/sák'e* 'what', *šeʃ'e* 'when', *mák'e* 'where', *dxeñé* 'how'. Ubykh interrogative pronouns can procliticize to the verb:

(p. 401) (58)

Ubykh

<i>má-š^wə-le-xe-ne-j?</i>
where-2PL.ABS-PVB-stand.PL-PL-Q

'Where are you?' (Fenwick, 2011, p. 85, based on Hewitt's unpublished field notes)

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Indefinite pronouns are either based on the interrogative words (this option is not available in Abaza and Abkhaz) or on other elements, most commonly the numeral ‘one’.¹⁵ Circassian and Ubykh share the indefinite suffix *-gʷere* ‘some’, often used in combination with the prefixed numeral ‘one’ and covering a wide range of indefinite contexts, both specific and non-specific.

In negative, free choice, and generic contexts, indefiniteness is conveyed by the combination of the interrogative pronouns or the numeral ‘one’ with the additive suffixes, as in (59). In addition to that, Kabardian has a specialized negative indefinite stem *par-* always used with the additive suffix and requiring the negative form of the predicate, as in (60).

(59)

Ubykh	
<i>ze-laž'e-g'ə</i>	<i>jə-sə-m-bje-λe-n.</i>
one-fault-ADD	3SG.ABS-1SG.ERG-NEG-see-LAT-PRS
‘I do not see any fault (in her).’ (Fenwick, 2011, p. 61, after Dumézil, 1959a, p. 113)	

(60)

Besleney Kabardian	
<i>par-ja</i>	<i>q-a-κʷet-a-qəm.</i>
nothing-ADD	CISL-3PL.ERG-find-PST-NEG
‘They did not find anything.’	

In Abaza and Abkhaz the whole domain of indefiniteness is covered by the same pronominal elements based on the variants of the numeral ‘one’ such as Abaza (*z)aʒé* INDEF.H, *zaké/kará* INDEF.N; the additive suffix is optionally used under negation. Emphatic reduplication of indefinite pronouns is also attested, as in Abaza *zaʒ-zaʒé-k-g'əj* ‘not a single person’ (Tabulova, 1976, p. 102).

9.4.3 Numerals

NWC languages feature mixed decimal-vigesimal numeral systems, as can be seen in Table 9.12 showing a sample of the cardinal numerals 1–100 in Temirgoy Adyghe (Moroz, 2011), Ubykh (Dumézil, 1931, p. 42; Fenwick, 2011, p. 90) and Abaza (Genko, 1955, pp. 177–178).

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Table 9.12 Basic Numerals

	Adyghe	Ubykh	Abaza
1	<i>zə</i>	<i>ze</i>	<i>za-</i>
2	<i>tʷə</i>	<i>tqʷe</i>	<i>fʷə-</i>
3	<i>š'ə</i>	<i>še</i>	<i>χə-</i>
4	<i>pλə</i>	<i>pλə</i>	<i>pš'ə-</i>
5	<i>tfə</i>	<i>š'xə</i>	<i>χʷə-</i>
6	<i>xə</i>	<i>fə</i>	<i>cə-</i>
7	<i>błə</i>	<i>blə</i>	<i>bžə-</i>
8	<i>jə</i>	<i>βʷe</i>	<i>aʃ-</i>
9	<i>bβʷə</i>	<i>bβ'ə</i>	<i>ẑə-</i>
10	<i>pšə</i>	<i>žʷə</i>	<i>ža-</i>
11	<i>pšə-kʷə-z</i>	<i>žʷ́-ze</i>	<i>žə-j-z</i>
12	<i>pšə-kʷə-tʷ</i>	<i>žʷ́-tqʷe</i>	<i>žə-fʷ</i>
13	<i>pšə-kʷə-š'</i>	<i>žʷ́-še</i>	<i>ža-χ</i>
20	<i>tʷe-č'</i>	<i>tqʷe-tʷ́</i>	<i>fʷa-ža</i>
21	<i>tʷe-č'ə-re zə-re</i>	<i>tqʷe-tʷ́-alé z-alé</i>	<i>fʷa-ž-əj-za-k</i>
30	<i>š'e-č'</i>	<i>tqʷe-tʷ́-alé žʷ-alé</i>	<i>fʷa-ž-əj-ža</i>
40	<i>tʷe-č'-jə-tʷ</i>	<i>tqʷe-mče-tqʷe-tʷ́</i>	<i>fʷə-n-fʷa-ža</i>
50	<i>šə-nəqʷe 'half-hundred'</i>	<i>tqʷe-mče-tqʷe-tʷ́-alé žʷ-alé / šʷé-ze(n)ž'e 'half-hundred'</i>	<i>fʷə-n-fʷa-ž-əj-ža</i>

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60	<i>t^we-č'-jə-š'</i>	<i>še-m̥e-t̥q^we-t̥w̥é</i>	<i>χə-n-Γ^wa-ža</i>
70	<i>t^we-č'-jə-š'-re p̥ṣə-</i> <i>re</i>	<i>še-m̥e-t̥q^we-t̥w̥-alé</i> <i>ž^w-alé</i>	<i>χə-n-Γ^wa-ž-əj-</i> <i>ža</i>
80	<i>t^we-č'-jə-pλ̥</i>	<i>p̥λ̥ə-m̥e-t̥q^we-t̥w̥é</i>	<i>p̥š'ə-n-Γ^wa-ža</i>
90	<i>t^we-č'-jə-pλ̥-re p̥ṣə-</i> <i>re</i>	<i>p̥λ̥ə-m̥e-t̥q^we-t̥w̥-alé</i> <i>ž^w-alé</i>	<i>p̥š'ə-n-Γ^wa-ž-</i> <i>əj-ža</i>
100	<i>šə</i>	<i>š^we</i>	<i>šə-</i>

(p. 402) NWC languages formally differentiate between numerals used independently and as modifiers of nominals. In the Circassian languages the numeral ‘one’ is prefixed to the nominal complex it modifies (cf. Adyghe **zə-nebŷere** ‘one person’), while the numerals 2–10 have suffixed non-syllabic forms with the addition of the linker *-jə-* (cf. Adyghe *haləž^w-jə-tf* ‘five pancakes’). In Abkhaz-Abaza and Ubykh all lower numerals are prefixed (cf. Ubykh *we-še-mše* ‘those three days’) (Fenwick, 2011, p. 91 after Dumézil, 1957, p. 58); in Abaza and Abkhaz compounds with numerals take the indefinite/singulative suffix *-k* (cf. Abaza **pš'á-məz-k** ‘three months’). Besides that, in Abkhaz and Abaza most cardinals are not used independently and require a suffix indicating the human versus non-human class of the referent (cf. Abaza *pš'-Γ^wa* ‘four people’ vs. *pš'-ba* ‘four (animals/things)’).

(p. 403) Ordinal numerals are formed in several ways. Abkhaz uses the suffix *-t̥w̥əj* and the definite prefix attached to the cardinal numeral with the non-human classifier suffix (Aristava, Bgazhba, Tsikolia, Chkadua, and Shakryl, 1968, pp. 55–56; cf. *Γ^w-ba* ‘two things’ ~ *a-Γ^w-ba-t̥w̥əj* ‘second’). In Circassian and Ubykh, ordinal numerals involve 3PL possessive prefixes, as *aʒe-* in Ubykh *aʒe-t̥q^wé-χ* ‘second’, where *-χ* is the bound root of the verb ‘to belong to’ (Fenwick, 2011, p. 92). In Abaza, ordinal numerals are relativized inceptive forms which can inflect for tense (cf. (61)):

(61)

Abaza

a. *j-za-k-χa-wa*

REL.ABS-one-nH-INC-IPFV

‘first (non-human)’ (lit. ‘that which becomes one’)

b. *j-p̥š'ə-Γ^w-χ-əw-š*

REL.ABS-four-H-INC-IPFV-FUT

‘the person who will be the fourth’ (Tabulova, 1976, p. 88)

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The numeral ‘first’ is normally suppletive, being based on the expressions meaning ‘in front of’ (cf. Adyge *a-pe-re*).

In Circassian, multiplicative numerals are formed by ablaut (cf. *bʒə* ‘seven’ ~ *bʒe* ‘seven times’), and distributive numerals by reduplication (e.g., *bʒə-rə-bʒ* ‘seven each’). Distributive numerals in Abkhaz and Abaza are formed by simple reduplication (Abaza *fʷ-ba-fʷ-ba* ‘two each’; Tabulova, 1976, p. 89), and in Ubykh by the suffix *-dʷe* / *-be* (Fenwick, 2011, p. 93).

9.4.4 Postpositions

Most postpositions in NWC are grammaticalized nouns, often retaining such elements of nominal morphology as possessive prefixes (e.g., Abaza *r-pnə* ‘to them’) or case markers (e.g., Kabardian *sha-č’e* ‘because, for’ < head-INS). In Adyge, certain postpositions take special pronominal prefixes. Compare *ta-dež’* ‘to us, at our place’ or *sa-pe* ‘before me’, in contrast to *s-pe* ‘my nose’. Some adpositions behave differently depending on the type of their complement; it is common even for those adpositions that take possessive prefixes with pronominal complements to lack them with nominal ones, especially if singular, as in Adyge (*j)a-dež’* ‘to them’ vs. *wəne-m dež’* ‘at home, toward home’ (Rogava & Kerasheva, 1966, p. 92). In general, postpositions are not very numerous, and only a few of them are used frequently.

9.5 Verbal Morphology

Verbal morphology constitutes the core of the grammatical structure of NWC languages and is responsible for the bulk of their formal complexity. It should be described more accurately as predicate morphology, since it is not associated with verbs but with the predicate position and can appear, for example, on nouns (see section 9.3).

(p. 404) 9.5.1 The General Outline of Verbal Morphology

Prominent characteristics of the NWC verbal morphology include (i) consistent encoding of argument structure by means of person-number(-gender) and valency-changing prefixes; (ii) rich marking of spatial meanings by means of prefixes, suffixes, and verbal roots; (iii) marking of clausal subordination, most importantly, relativization; and (iv) a complex interplay of the rigid templatic affix ordering with the more flexible, scope-driven layered organization. The latter defies a description in terms of inflectional paradigms and makes the division between inflection and derivation difficult to maintain. Noun incorporation, another typical property of polysynthetic languages, though not completely absent from NWC, is not a systematic productive process, and neither is verb-verb compounding. Auxiliary verb constructions are prominent in Circassian (Arkadiev and Maisak, 2018; Kimelman, 2011), but less so in the other branches of the family.

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Verbal morphology shows considerable variation among the three branches of NWC; however, a core common to all the languages can be identified and even putatively reconstructed (Chirikba, 1996, ch. 10, 2010). Table 9.13 represents the schematic order of affixes (abstracting away from the peculiarities of individual languages). The last line of the table specifies how many times a particular slot can be normally occupied in a given form.

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Table 9.13 Verbal Template

prefixes					root	suffixes				
argument structure zone				pre-stem elements	stem (Σ)				endings	
absolu-tive	subor-dina-tors	ap-plica-tives and in-direct objects	erga-tive	pre-radical nega-tion	causati-ve	root (sim-ple or com-plex)	aspec-tual, modal and evalua-tive opera-tors	tempo-ral op-erators	suffix-al nega-tion	illocu-tionary opera-tors or subor-dina-tors
1	1	>1	1	1	1 or 2	1	>1	>1	1	>1

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The following examples show particularly complex verbal forms attested in texts. Note that (64) simultaneously illustrates a unique case of a complex verb with two stems projecting two syntactic clauses (see Panova, 2018, 2019a).

(62)

Temirgoy Adyghe

wə-qə-šə-ze-č'ə-mə-kʷe-žə-n-ew

2SG.ABS-CISL-LOC-REC.IO-LOC.under-NEG-go-RE-MSD-ADV

'so that you don't retreat before him'

(p. 405) (63)

Ubykh

já-s-tʷ-a-j-le-f-ew-mə-t

3SG.ABS-(3SG.IO)1SG.ERG-give-RE-CMPL-HBL-FUT-NEG-FUT

'I will not be able to give it back to him completely' (Fenwick, 2011, p. 127, after Dumézil and Esenç, 1975b, p. 70)

(64)

Abaza

s-z-á-la-nəqʷa-wa-ʒə-j-ša-t

1SG.ABS-POT-3SG.N.IO-LOC-pass-IPFV-LOC-3SG.M.IO-seem.AOR-DECL

'It seemed to him that I would be able to pass there'

In those slots of the verbal template that can host more than one element (applicative prefixes and aspectual/evaluative suffixes), affix order is determined by semantic scope,¹⁶ as illustrated by the following examples of variable order:

(65)

Temirgoy Adyghe

a. *a-də-f-je-z-ke-txə-κ*

3PL.IO-COM-(3SG.IO-)BEN-DAT-1SG.ERG-CAUS-write-PST

'I together with them asked him/her to write for him/her' (COM > CAUS > BEN)

b. *f-a-d-je-z-ke-txə-κ*

(3SG.IO-)BEN-3PL.IO-COM-DAT-1SG.ERG-CAUS-write-PST

'I asked him/her to write together with them for him/her' (CAUS > COM > BEN)

(66)

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Temirgoy Adyghe

- a. *gʷəʂʷe-ʂʷe-ʐ'ə-*
be.glad-SML-RE-PST

‘s/he pretended again that s/he was happy’ (refactive > similative)

- b. *gʷəʂʷe-ʐ'ə-ʂʷa-*
be.glad-RE-SML-PST

‘s/he pretended that s/he was happy again’ (similative > refactive)

(Lander, 2016b, pp. 3519, 3523)

Even some cases of rigid morpheme order can be explained by the fixed scopal relations. For example, subordinators (elements that introduce embedded clauses) have wide scope over applicatives and hence precede them in the prefixal domain, while temporal suffixes have wide scope over aspectual ones and hence follow them in the suffixal domain. There are exceptions to this; for instance, the causative marker always occupies the pre-root position even though it very often scopes over the combination of the root with one or more prefixes located further to the left. In Circassian, the cislocative prefix (p. 406) *qV-* normally occurs between the absolute and any other prefixes, including subordinators, which always have it in their scope, as shown in (67):

(67)

Temirgoy Adyghe

qə-z-e-kʷe-xe-m

CISL-REL TEMP-DYN-GO-PL-OBL

‘when they came back’ (temporal relativization > cislocative)

Variable morpheme order may also be due to phonological or processing reasons. For instance, in Circassian the 3PL indirect object prefix *a-* can be separated from the applicative introducing it by the subordinating or cislocative prefixes:

(68)

Besleney Kabardian

sə-q-a-de-kʷ-a ~ *1SG.ABS-CISL-3PL.IO-COM-go-PST*

s-a-qə-de-kʷ-a ~ *1SG.ABS-3PL.IO-CISL-COM-go-PST*

‘I came with them’

The NWC morphotactics are mostly agglutinative, allomorphy is primarily governed by (morpho)phonological processes, and most exponents are suffixal or prefixal. Nevertheless, the relation between form and meaning is often far from trivial, with some functions (e.g., negation) showing variable position of exponents depending on finiteness and tense as well as multiple exponence (see section 9.5.7). Certain affixes either have multiple functions which are not related synchronically or may be homophonous.

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As a consequence of the partially templatic organization of NWC verbal morphology, discontinuous lexical bases consisting of a root and one or several lexicalized prefixes are common. Components of such complex stems can be separated by regular inflectional prefixes expressing negation, cross-reference, or subordination.

Among the instances of non-affixal exponence is the alternation of the root-final vowels *ə* and *e* in Circassian. This alternation reflects valency alternations (section 9.5.2) and direction of motion (section 9.5.3). Compare Adyghe *šxə* 'eat it' versus *šxe* 'eat (intransitive)' or *jə-pλə* 'look out of smth' versus *jə-pλe* 'look into smth' (see Chirikba, 1996, pp. 385–387; Kumakhov, 1974, 1981, pp. 229–255; Smeets, 1984, pp. 442–443, 1992a, pp. 105–108). In Abkhaz and Abaza the *a~ə* ablaut is used in some locative preverbs to express direction of motion (cf. Abaza *š'ta-ça-* 'to put down' versus *š'tə-χ-* 'to raise') (Genko, 1955, p. 171).

Reduplication is attested in all NWC languages to express intensity or temporal duration (Bersirov, 1988). Consider Ubykh *k'ər-k'ərə-n* 'neighs continuously' (Fenwick, 2011, p. 30 after Dumézil and Esenç, 1977b, p. 22) or Adyghe *təgʷə-rəgʷə* 'tremble' (Bersirov, 1969, p. 77). A special case is attested in Abkhaz and Abaza, where the first consonant of the verbal stem can be geminated for intensification or distributivity (cf. Abkhaz *ahʷara* 'speak' ~ *ahʷhʷara* 'scream' or *aš'ara* 'crack' ~ *aš's'ara* 'crack in several places', Arista-va, (p. 407) Bgazhba, Tsikolia, Chkadua, and Shakryl, 1968, p. 160). In Abaza, applicative preverbs can be reduplicated to express reciprocity of the arguments they introduce (cf. (69)):

(69)

Abaza

- a. *z-qaca-ra*
BEN-believe-MSD
'believe someone'
- b. *azaz-qaca-ra*
BEN~REC-believe-MSD
'believe each other' (Tabulova, 1976, p. 194)

Finally, stem suppletion based on the number of the absolutive argument is found with a considerable number of verbs in Ubykh (Fenwick, 2011, pp. 135–136; cf. 'stand' SG *tʷə* ~ PL *xe*, 'bring' SG *wə* ~ PL *k'e*) but not elsewhere.

9.5.2 Argument Indexing and Valency Alternations

A large part of NWC verbal morphology reflects argument structure. The markers from this domain, mostly prefixal, fall into two groups: argument indexes and valency markers, which interact with each other.

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Argument prefixes signal the person, number and, in Abkhaz-Abaza, gender of the argument, as well as its grammatical role; the latter is primarily expressed by the position rather than the shape of the prefixes. Among the grammatical roles the major division is between absolute (ABS) and non-absolute, and in the latter between ergative (ERG) and indirect object (IO). In Abkhaz-Abaza the latter two are virtually non-distinct, while in Circassian and to a lesser extent in Ubykh ERG and IO differ at least in the third person. The reflexive, reciprocal, and relative prefixes belong to the same class as the personal cross-referencing prefixes; the two sets occupy the same position in the word. Table 9.14 shows the series of argument prefixes for Abaza and Table 9.15, for Ubykh and Adyghe. Major differences between the series are found in the third person.

Table 9.14 Argument Prefixes in Abaza

	ABS	IO, ERG
1Sg	<i>s(ə)-</i>	<i>s(ə)-/z-</i>
1Pl	<i>h(ə)-</i>	<i>h(ə)-/f-</i>
2SgM	<i>w(ə)-</i>	<i>w(ə)-</i>
2SgF	<i>b(ə)-</i>	<i>b(ə)-/p-</i>
2Pl	<i>ŷ(ə)-</i>	<i>ŷ(ə)-/z[^]-</i>
3SgM	<i>d(ə)-</i>	<i>j(ə)-</i>
3SgF		<i>l(ə)-</i>
3SgN	<i>j(ə)-/Ø</i>	<i>na-/a-</i>
3Pl	<i>j(ə)-/Ø</i>	<i>r(ə)-/d(ə)-</i>
Reflexive	<i>čə-</i>	—
Reciprocal	—	<i>aj-/aba-</i>
Relative	<i>j(ə)-</i>	<i>z(ə)-</i>

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Table 9.15 Argument Prefixes in Adyghe and Ubykh

	Adyghe			Ubykh (Fenwick, 2011, p. 101)		
	ABS	IO	ERG	ABS	IO	ERG
1Sg	<i>sə-</i>		<i>s-/z-</i>	<i>s(ə)-</i>		<i>s(ə)-/z-</i>
1Pl	<i>tə-</i>		<i>t-/d-</i>	<i>š'(ə)-</i>		<i>š'(ə)-/ž'-</i>
2Sg	<i>wə-</i>		<i>w-/p-/b-</i>	<i>wə- ~ χe-</i>		<i>w(ə)- ~ χe-</i>
2Pl	<i>swə-</i>		<i>sw-/žw-</i>	<i>sw(ə)-</i>		<i>sw(ə)-/žw-</i>
3Sg		<i>Ø-</i>	<i>jə-/ə-</i>	<i>a-/jə-/ə-/Ø-</i>	<i>Ø-</i>	<i>n(ə)-/Ø-</i>
3Pl	<i>Ø-</i>		<i>a-</i>		<i>a-</i>	<i>a-/na-</i>
Reflexive		<i>zə-</i>	—	—	<i>ze-</i>	—
Reciprocal	—	<i>ze-</i>	<i>zere-</i>	—		<i>ze-</i>
Relative	<i>Ø-</i>		<i>z(ə)-</i>	<i>Ø-</i>		<i>d(ə)-/t-</i>

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The choice between the voiceless and voiced consonants in the prefixes depends on the following consonant (besides that, in Kabardian personal prefixes are voiced intervocally, see section 9.2.5); by contrast, the allomorphy of the 3Abs marker in Ubykh is determined by complex morphological rules (Fenwick, 2011, pp. 103–104). The 3abs prefix can be omitted in Ubykh and Abkhaz-Abaza if the corresponding full noun phrase immediately precedes the verb; in Abkhaz-Abaza this is limited to non-human and plural absolutives (O’Herin, 2002, p. 64; and chapter 10 of this volume).

Besides the cross-referencing prefixes which are available (even if zero) for all arguments, Abkhaz, Ubykh, and Circassian have endings expressing the plurality of the absolute argument. In Circassian this is *-x(e)* used normally only with the third person. In Abkhaz, the plural ending is *-kʷa* (Chirikba, 2003a, p. 42), whose cognate in (p. 408) Abaza is only used in non-finite forms to express the plurality of the relativized argument. In Ubykh the expression of plurality is more complex and involves the plural suffixes *-a* and *-ne* whose choice is dependent on tense (Fenwick, 2011, p. 118), the retrospective shift markers *-jt* SG ~ *-jλ(e)* PL (Fenwick, 2011, p. 121), the causative prefixes (p. 409) *də-* SG ~ *be-* PL (Fenwick, 2011, p. 138), as well as the aforementioned root suppletion. These markers often combine:

(70)

Ubykh

a-z-be-dex-á-n

3PL.ABS-1SG.ERG-CAUS.PL-stand.PL-PL-PRS

‘I make them stand up.’ (Vogt, 1963, p. 112)

In Ubykh, the 2Pl prefix triggers pluralization in any position, not just in the absolute (Dumézil and Esenç, 1975b, p. 162; Fenwick, 2011, p. 101) (cf. (71)).

(71)

Ubykh

a. *a-šʷə-s-tʷ-a-n*

3SG.ABS-2PL.IO-1SG.ERG-give-PL-PRS

‘I give it to you (pl.)’

b. *a-sə-šʷ-tʷ-a-n*

3SG.ABS-1SG.IO-2PL.ERG-give-PL-PRS

‘you (pl.) give it to me’ (Dumézil and Esenç, 1975b, pp. 90–91)

Valency increase is much more widespread in NWC than valency decrease. All NWC languages have a productive causative as well as a considerable number of applicatives comprising many specialized locative preverbs (see section 9.5.3). The use of the causative is

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virtually unrestricted; it can apply to verbs of any valency, and multiple causativization is also attested (Lander and Letuchiy, 2010):

(72)

Adyghe

dwembajə-rλə-m qʷasʷe-m r-a-r-jə-ke-ke-wəcʷ-a-β.

bison-ABS man-OBL boat-OBL LOC-3PLIO-DAT-3SG.ERG-CAUS-CAUS-stand up-LAT-PST

‘The man ordered them to put bison in the boat.’ (lit. ‘made them make it stand there’)

Causativization always transitivizes verbs and introduces a new ergative argument; when applied to transitive verbs, it turns the original ergative into an indirect object, leaving all other arguments intact, as shown in (72). For causativization in Adyghe, see Letuchiy (2009b, 2015), in Abaza, see O’Herin (2002, pp. 125–166), and in Kabardian, see Matasović (2010b).

NWC applicatives include benefactive, malefactive, comitative, and instrumental, as well as the less cross-linguistically common applicatives such as the involuntary (in all languages) (73) and the judicantis in Abaza only (74). The latter introduces the observer. Detailed descriptions of NWC applicatives can be found in Letuchiy (2009a) for Adyghe, O’Herin (2001) for Abaza, and Fell (2012) for Ubykh. On the use of applicatives in subordinate clauses, see section 9.7.2.

(p. 410) (73)

Ubykh

jə-χ'ž-n ze-tót-gʷere qeke-kʷ-qe.

this-prince-OBL.SG one-man-certain (3.ABS)(3SG.IO)INVOL[hand-from]-kill-PST

‘This prince accidentally killed a man.’ (Fenwick, 2011, p. 114, after Dumézil and Esenç, 1975b, p. 119)

(74)

Abaza

a-č'kʷən_a a-lagaž_b d_b-jə_a-ma-laqərd-χa-n.

DEF-guy DEF-old.man 3SG.H.ABS-3SG.M.IO-JUD-funny-INC-PST.DECL

‘The old man seemed funny to the guy.’ (Tabulova, 1976, p. 184)

Valency-increasing derivations are extremely productive. Both causative and applicatives apply to intransitive and transitive verbs, and there is no upper bound on the number of arguments a verbal form may take (pragmatic and processing considerations notwithstanding). Four-argument verbs are well attested in texts, and five-argument verbs are presented in grammars, even if rarely used. A combination of causativization and reflex-

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ivization is sometimes used to form imperatives of non-agentive and inverse verbs (cf. (75) and see Ershova, 2017, on Kabardian).

(75)

Abaza

sə-b-q-bə-m-r-áštələ-n!

1SG.ABS-2SG.F.IO-LOC-2SG.F.ERG-NEG-CAUS-forget-NEG.IMP

‘Don’t forget about me!’ (lit. ‘don’t let me be forgotten on you’)

In contrast to the rich and productive system of valency-increasing operations, valency decreasing processes are restricted. We already noted that reflexivization and reciprocalization do not decrease valency in NWC (see also section 9.6.6). This is particularly obvious in Abkhaz-Abaza, which have a dedicated reflexive only for the absolute argument and reflexivize indirect objects by simple repetition of the appropriate personal prefix (cf. (76)).

(76)

Abaza

j-h-hə-r-dər-d

3SG.N.ABS-1PL.IO-1PL.ERG-CAUS-know-DECL

‘we learned’ (lit. ‘we caused ourselves to know’)

Antipassive is attested only in Circassian; it is formally marked by the change of the last vowel of the stem from /ə/ to /e/. Antipassivization in Circassian applies not only to transitive verbs (77b) but also to bivalent intransitive verbs eliminating their indirect object¹⁷ (78b); Arkadiev and Letuchiy, to appear). In both cases the process is lexically restricted and applies to several dozen verbs.

(p. 411) (77)

Besleney Kabardian

a. *wə-s-šxə-ne-ğəm.*

2SG.ABS-1SG.ERG-eat-FUT-NEG

‘I won’t eat you.’

b. *der~der-u də-pš'erəhe-ž'-t-jə də-şxe-t.*

we~INTENS-ADV 1PL.ABS-COOK-RE-IPFV-ADD 1PL.ABS-eat.AP-IPFV

‘We cooked ourselves and ate.’

(78)

Besleney Kabardian

- a. *ɛ^weg^w-ə-m je-pλ-te-qəm.*
road-OBL DAT-look-IPFV-NEG
'He didn't look at the road.'
- b. *məd-č'e pλe-w že-t g^wəš^vələ-r-u.*
here-INS look.AP-ADV run-IPFV talk-CVB-ADV
'He drove talking and looking here and there.'

The ergative agent is suppressed in the lexically restricted resultative construction, which is based on the preterite form of transitive verbs in Circassian (79b) and involves stative inflection in Abkaz-Abaza ((80b); Arkadiev, 2018).¹⁸ In the latter, it is possible to form a passive-like construction by attaching the inchoative suffix to the resultative, perhaps a syntactic calque from Russian (80c). A passive calqued from Turkish is reported for Ubykh (Fenwick, 2011, pp. 142–143).

(79)

Bzhedugh Adyghe

- a. *te psənč'-ew bʒ-er d-ke-ža-ke.*
we quick-ADV meat-ABS 1PL.ERG-CAUS-roast-PST
'We quickly roasted the meat.'
- b. *bʒ-er ke-ža-ke.*
meat-ABS CAUS-roast-RES
'The meat is roasted.'

(80)

Abaza

- a. *a-ph^wáspa á-ś j-ʕa-l-tá-d.*
DEF-girl DEF-door 3SG.N.ABS-CISL-3SG.F.ERG-open.AOR-DECL
'The girl opened the door.'
- b. *sə-ś-k^wa w-zə-t-þ.*
1SG.IO-door-PL 2SG.M.IO-BEN-open.RES-nPST.DECL
'My doors are opened for you.'
- c. *á-mača-k^wa a-sabój-k^wa-la j-ʒʒa-χá-d.*
DEF-plate-PL DEF-child-PL-INS 3PL.ABS-wash.RES-INC.AOR-DECL
'The dishes were washed by the children.'

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(p. 412) All NWC languages have both P-labile (where the transitive and the intransitive variants share the patient) and A-labile (where the transitive and the intransitive variants share the agent) verbs (Hewitt, 1981, Letuchiy, 2009b, and Smeets, 1992a) specifically on Adyghe. Compare such verbs as Circassian P-labile *qʷəte* 'break' or A-labile *pč'e* 'weed', Ubykh P-labile *šxereb* 'shatter' (Fenwick, 2011, p. 143), or Abaza A-labile *maçaw* 'cook'.

9.5.3 Expression of Spatial Meanings

In addition to lexical expression of spatial relations by means of positional and motion roots¹⁹ as well as postpositions, NWC languages have three interacting categories that serve to express spatial meanings: (i) locative preverbs whose choice depends on the spatial configuration of the landmark; (ii) prefixes or suffixes indicating the direction of motion; and (iii) deictic preverbs showing the orientation of motion with respect to the speaker. Most of these elements have extended their functions beyond the spatial domain.

Locative preverbs are by far the most numerous, ranging from about 30 in Circassian (Kumakhov, 1964, pp. 164–182) to several dozen in Ubykh (Dumézil and Esenç, 1975b, pp. 103–130; Fenwick, 2011, pp. 112–114) to more than a hundred in Abaza and Abkhaz (Klychev, 1994, 1995; Spruit, 1986, pp. 22–31).²⁰ The majority of preverbs derive from incorporated nouns or postpositions. Their meanings are sometimes specific, as the Abaza *naþə-* 'hand' (81), and sometimes quite general, as the Adyghe *tje-* 'on the surface' (82). Preverbs can be stacked, as in (81).

(81)

Abaza

<i>a-kʷtaþ</i> '	<i>s-naþə-ça-pə-l-č-t̪.</i>
DEF-egg	1SG.IO-LOC:hand-LOC:below-LOC:front-3SG.F.ERG-break(AOR)-DECL
'She broke the egg in my hands.' (Klychev, 1995, p. 170)	

(82)

Temirgoy Adyghe

<i>gʷegʷə-m</i>	<i>sə-tje-ha-ž'ə-ks.</i>
road-OBL	1SG.ABS-LOC:ON-enter-RE-PST
'I entered (lit. on the surface of) the road.'	

(p. 413) In Circassian, all locative preverbs are applicatives introducing indirect objects; the same probably holds for Ubykh (Charachidzé, 1989, p. 384). In Abkhaz-Abaza only a subset of locative preverbs are applicatives (A. Avidzba, 2017, pp. 109–122; Lomtatidze, 1983). Some of the locative preverbs may function as static verb roots:

(83)

Abaza

- a. *də-la-ṗ*
3SG.H.ABS-be.in-nPST.DECL
's/he is there' (Tabulova, 1976, p. 104)
- b. *j-a-la-gəla-n*
3SG.N.ABS-3SG.N.IO-LOC.in-stand-PST.DECL
'it stood there' (Klychev, 1995, p. 140)

The choice of a preverb usually depends not only on the spatial configuration but primarily on the topological properties of the landmark (Kerasheva, 1957b[1995], 1992[1995]; Mazurova, 2009; Paris, 1995, on Adyghe). Consider the following set of examples all denoting location inside the landmark:

(84)

Standard Kabardian

- a. *tjepšec'ə-m jə-λə-n*
plate-OBL LOC:container-lie-MSD
'to be on a plate'
- b. *škampə-m de-λə-n*
cupboard-OBL LOC:enclosure-lie-MSD
'to be in a cupboard'
- c. *dake-m xe-λə-n*
oil-OBL LOC:mass-lie-MSD
'to be in oil'
- d. *šxəʔenə-m kʷeçə-λə-n*
blanket-OBL LOC:through-lie-MSD
'to be in a blanket' (Kumakhov, 1964, p. 165)

Locative preverbs do not specify the direction of motion with respect to the landmark. Such meanings are indicated by directional markers, expressed by suffixes or root ablaut in Circassian, prefixes in Ubykh, and suffixes or ablaut of locative preverbs in Abkhaz-Abaza. The most elaborate system of directional markers is found in Circassian (Arkadiev and Maisak, 2018, pp. 125–127; Smeets, 1984, pp. 436–451; Urusov, 1983); in addition to the centripetal/centrifugal opposition marked by ablaut (cf. Adyghe *jə-š'ə-* 'lead into' vs. *jə-š'ə-* 'lead out of'), we find lative and elative suffixes (-*he* and -*č'ə*),²¹ as well as suffixes

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co-occurring with particular preverbs: *de*-V-*je* ‘upward’, *je*-V-*xə* ‘downward’, and *je*-V-*λe* ‘toward’. Some examples:

(p. 414) (85)

Besleney Kabardian

- a. *je-ž'-a-xe* *çəxʷ-xe-r* *q-a-kʷə-hə-n-u.*
DAT-start-PST-PL man-PL-ABS CISL-3PL.ERG-go.TR-CIRC-MSD-ADV
‘They started going around the people.’
- b. *p̄seχʷə-r* *d-a-hə-je-ž'-a.*
chain-ABS LOC:enclosure-3PL.ERG-carry-UP-RE-PST
‘They carried the chain up.’
- c. *bγə-m* *q-je-že-xə-n-u* *kʷ-a.*
hill-OBL CISL-DAT-run-DOWN-MSD-ADV go-PST
‘He went to run (skiing) down from the hill.’
- d. *a-bə* *s-je-?əsə-λe-rjə ...*
DEM-OBL 1SG.ABS-DAT-sit.down-ALLAT-ADD
‘I sat near him and ...’

Abkhaz and Abaza have the lative-elative opposition expressed by means of post-radical suffixes (Klychev, 1972; Spruit, 1986, pp. 16–21) as well as the change of the final vowel of the locative preverb from *a* to *ə* (A. Avidzba, 2017, pp. 123–131).

(86)

Abkhaz

- a. *jə-ta-j-ga-la-jt.*
3SG.N.ABS-LOC:inside-3SG.M.ERG-carry-LAT.AOR-DECL
‘He brought it inside.’ (Chirikba, 2003a, p. 39)
- b. *a-čla* *a-χra* *j-a-č-j-aa-jt.*
DEF-tree DEF-rock 3SG.N.ABS-3SG.N.IO-LOC:face-go-ELAT.AOR-DECL
‘The tree grew out of the rock.’ (Spruit, 1986, p. 21)

(87)

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Abaza

- a. *a-qanž'a a-ʃ^wara j-ta-pssʃa-χ-t.*
DEF-crow 3SG.N.IO-nest 3SG.N.ABS-LOC:inside.LAT-fly-RE.AOR-DECL
'The crow flew back into its nest.'
- b. *a-warba a-ʃ^wara j-tə-pssʃa-t.*
DEF-eagle 3SG.N.IO-nest 3SG.N.ABS-LOC:inside.ELAT-fly.AOR-DECL
'The eagle flew out of its nest.' (Klychev, 1995, pp. 197, 205)

The only directional marker in Ubykh is the prefix *xe-*, which can occur both on its own in the elative meaning (88a) and following the locative preverb in the translative meaning (88b).

(88)

Ubykh

- a. *a-w-xé-sə-wt^wə-n.*
3SG.ABS-2SG.IO-ELAT-1SG.ERG-take-PRS
'I take it away from you.'
- b. *a-ɻ^wé-n šə-beč^we-xe-le-χ^we-ɻe-n.*
DEF-cavern-OBL.SG 1PL.ABS-LOC:under-ELAT-LOC-pass-PST-PL
'We passed through (under) the cavern.' (Fenwick, 2011, p. 114–115, after Dumézil and Esenç, 1975b, pp. 80, 106)

(p. 415) Deictic preverbs occupy the slots to the left of the locative preverbs. These are most numerous in Abkhaz, which has a four-term system including a horizontal ('hither' ~ 'thither') and a vertical ('up' ~ 'down') dimension (Aristava, Bgazhba, Tsikolia, Chkadua, and Shakryl, 1968, pp. 151–152). Other NWC languages have just a binary opposition between cislocative and translocative; the latter is usually less productive (Ubykh and Adygehe do not have overt translocative markers at all):

(89)

a. Abaza

- | | | |
|----------------|---|----------------|
| <i>fa-j-ra</i> | ~ | <i>na-j-ra</i> |
| CISL-go-MSD | | TRAL-go-MSD |
| 'come here' | | 'arrive there' |

b. Ubykh

- | | | |
|-----------------------------|---|--------------------------------|
| <i>a-z-wá-n</i> | ~ | <i>a-j-z-wá-n</i> |
| 3SG.ABS-1SG.ERG-carry-PRS | | 3SG.ABS-CISL-1SG.ERG-carry-PRS |
| 'I carry it' ~ 'I bring it' | | (Fenwick, 2011, p. 111) |

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The cislocative is one of the most frequent prefixes, at least in Circassian and Abaza. It has a number of non-spatial uses, including inchoative (cf. Adyghe *敝ə* ‘weep’ ~ **qe-敝ə** ‘start weeping’), and it has undergone considerable lexicalization. In Circassian and Abaza, the cislocative also appears as a (redundant) inverse-like marker occurring when the indirect object is higher on the person hierarchy than the subject²²:

(90)

Besleney Kabardian

- a. zeč'e-m-jə qə-d-jə-t-a zadanje-zə-rə-z-xe-r.
 all-OBL-ADD CISL-1PL.IO-3SG.ERG-give-PST task-one-DISTR-one-PL-ABS
 ‘He gave each of us a task.’

b. qə-w-e-ž-a.
 (3SG.ABS)CISL-2SG.IO-DAT-wait-PST
 ‘S/he waited for you.’

9.5.4 Finiteness

All NWC languages morphologically distinguish verbal forms heading independent declarative clauses and those (usually) heading only subordinate clauses (see, e.g., Chkadua, 1970, on Abkhaz-Abaza, Hewitt, 2010, on Abkhaz, and Kerasheva, 1984, on (p. 416) Circassian). In the simplest case there are verbal affixes of relativization, nominalization, and various converbs; sometimes, by contrast, certain non-finites lack overt morphology characteristic of declarative verbal forms. With the exception of certain nominalizations, forms called non-finite in NWC retain the indexing of arguments characteristic of finite forms, and at least some non-finite forms do not impose any restrictions on the expression of TAM categories (see also chapter 10). Some forms cannot be unequivocally classified as finite or non-finite due to their mixed behavior, and some verbal forms occurring in independent clauses are formally related or even identical to forms used in subordinate clauses.

NWC languages can be classified into those that have overt marking of finite declarative verbal forms (Abkhaz-Abaza and eastern dialects of Kabardian) and those that have extra marking only for non-finites (Ubykh, Adyghe, and western dialects of Kabardian). In the former group, the marking of finiteness (or rather, declarative mood) interacts with the tense system (section 9.5.5) and negation (section 9.5.7).

Standard Kabardian has an optional declarative marker *-r* used in the present tense of dynamic verbs (91a), and an obligatory declarative marker *-s̄* used in the present tense of stative verbs (91b), and in the preterite and future of all verbs (91c) (Bagov, Balkarov, Kuasheva, Kumakhov, & Rogava, 1970, pp. 124–125).

(91)

Standard Kabardian

- a. *ma-kʷe-r*
DYN-go-PRS.DECL
's/he is going'
- b. *šə-t-š*
LOC-stand-DECL
's/he is standing'
- c. *jə-š-a-š*
3SG.ERG-lead-PST-DECL
's/he led him/her'

Declarative suffixes are absent from forms used in subordinate clauses, as well as from negative, interrogative and imperative clauses. Forms of imperfect and pluperfect lack a declarative suffix and can appear in subordinate and other non-declarative clauses.

The situation in Abkhaz and Abaza is even more complex: in addition to a declarative marker (Abkhaz *-jt*, Abaza *-t~d*) appearing in the affirmative present, aorist, and one of the future tenses of dynamic verbs as well as in at least some negative forms, the form of certain tense markers differs between declarative and non-declarative (most negative, interrogative, and subordinate) contexts (cf. Abaza *-n* PST.DECL vs. *-z* PST.nFIN) (see section 9.5.5 for verbal paradigms; cf. Chkadua, 1970, and chapter 10 of this volume).

Ubykh, Adyghe, and western Kabardian dialects do not have declarative marking, so finite forms can only be characterized by the absence of overt markers of non-finiteness, such as prefixes of relativization or suffixes of nominalization or converbs, as well as by the choice of the so-called dynamic markers in the present tense. However, dedicated (p. 417) markers of non-finiteness can also be lacking, as is the case of relative clauses with relativized absolutives in Circassian languages. As a result, certain forms neutralize the finite/non-finite distinction (cf. (92)).

(92)

Besleney Kabardian

- qe-kʷ-a*
CISL-go-PST
's/he came'
'(one) who came'

In Ubykh and Adyghe certain finite and non-finite forms differ only in stress or in the absence versus presence of the final vowel (Fenwick, 2011, pp. 109–110), cf. (93).

(93)

Ubykh

- a. *a-s-ɻe-ná*
3SG.ABS-1SG.ERG-say-PRS
'what I say'
- b. *a-s-ɻé-n*
3SG.ABS-1SG.ERG-say-PRS
'I say it/something'

NWC languages have large inventories of non-finite forms with specialized functions. The most prominent class of non-finites is relative forms, traditionally called "participles" but quite distinct from participles of Indo-European languages (see Hewitt, 1979c, 2010, on Abkhaz, O'Herin, 2002, ch. 8 on Abaza, Lander, 2010, 2012, on Adyghe). Relative forms are marked by prefixes occupying the same slots as the personal markers; in Abkhaz and Abaza this is supplemented by the change in TAM-inflection (94b).

(94)

Abaza

- a. *a-phʷáspa hʷrápšza lə-w-t-t̫.*
DEF-girl flower 3SG.F.IO-2SG.M.ERG-give.AOR-DECL
'You gave flowers to the girl.'
- b. *a-phʷáspa hʷrápšza zə-w-tá-z*
DEF-girl flower REL.IO-2SG.M.ERG-give-PST.nFIN
'the girl whom you gave flowers' (Rossius, 2017)

For more on relativization, see section 9.7.2. Adverbial clauses in NWC are often expressed by converbs (see section 9.7.4).

Nominalizations are varied. Some verbal nominalizations denote place, time, manner, or referents; such nominalizations take possessive and case markers and are often lexicalized. Compare Abaza *apχ'a-* 'read, learn' ~ *apχ'a-ga* (learn-NOBJ) 'book', *apχ'a-rta* (p. 418) (learn-NLOC) 'school', Ubykh *čʷe* 'sleep' ~ *čʷé-xe* 'time to sleep' (Fenwick, 2011, p. 73). Event/action nominals (masdars) show mixed behavior, in some of their uses retaining verbal morphosyntax (see section 9.7.3). For other forms that can function as finite and non-finite in Circassian, see, e.g., Arkadiev and Gerasimov (2008, 2009, 2019); Serdobolskaya (2009).

9.5.5 Tense and Aspect

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NWC languages have numerous tense, aspect, and modal categories which are marked mostly by suffixes and which often interact with each other and with other domains (see Chkadua, 1970, on Abkhaz-Abaza; Dumézil and Esenç, 1975b, pp. 145–160 on Ubykh; Kummakhov, 1971, pp. 210–241 on Circassian). In order to describe the basics of this system we first need to address the dichotomy between dynamic and stative verbs, a common-NWC morphological distinction.

9.5.5.1 Dynamic and Stative Verbs

In terms of numbers, the majority of NWC verbs are dynamic, regardless of semantics. The clearest distinction between dynamic and stative verbs is found in Abkhaz-Abaza, where the two verb classes differ in their tense categories and patterns of exponence, as shown in Table 9.16 and 9.17 (see also chapter 10).

Table 9.16 Affirmative Tense Forms of Static Verbs in Abkhaz

Tense	Finite	Non-finite
Present	-w-p̄	-w
Past	-n	-z

Table 9.17 Affirmative Tense Forms of Dynamic Verbs in Abkhaz

Tense	Finite	Non-finite
Present	-wa-jt̄ > o-jt̄	-wa
Aorist	-jt̄	Ø
Imperfect	-wa-n	-wa-z
Future I	-š-t̄	-ša
Future II	-p̄	-ra/ə

Ubykh stative verbs have a similarly impoverished paradigm, with present and past tenses only, but the morphological difference is found only in the present tense, between the dynamic -n and stative -Ø (Dumézil and Esenç, 1975b, pp. 145–160; Fenwick, 2011, pp. 117–124).

In Circassian, dynamic and stative verbs have identical arrays of tense forms and consistently differ only in the formation of the present tense. Dynamic verbs in the present

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tense appear with the immediately pre-radical prefix *me-* ~ *-e-* ~ *-ew-* (Kabardian) (e.g., (95)).

(95)

Adyghe

- a. *s-e-qʷəte*
1SG.ERG-DYN-break.PRS
'I break it' (dynamic)
- b. *s-ɿək*
1SG.ERG-hold.PRS
'I hold it' (stative)

(p. 419) In all Adyghe varieties, negative, interrogative, and certain non-finite forms of dynamic verbs take the present tense suffix *-re*, while in Shapsugh Adyghe dynamic verbs take the prefix *re-* if there are no other prefixes other than negation, typically in non-present tenses (Lander, 2010, p. 83; Smeets, 1984, p. 251). In those dialects of Kabardian that have overt declarative suffixes, dynamic verbs can take *-r* in the present declarative as opposed to the default *-s* with stative verbs.

Semantically, stative verbs all denote states; probably related to that is the fact that these verbs usually do not have the imperative form. However, not all states are expressed by statives; for instance, stative meanings such as 'know' or 'see' are expressed by dynamic verbs in all NWC. Positionals such as 'stand', 'sit', and 'lie' as well as the locational/possession 'be' and the verb meaning 'want/need' belong to the stative class. Nominal predicates take stative morphology. The boundary between the two classes is flexible; in Circassian it is possible to attach the dynamic prefix to some stative verbs, including some nominal stems, which yields a contrast between a state and an activity, as shown in (96).

(96)

Standard Adyghe

- a. *a-r bzaʒ'e.*
DEM-ABS wicked
'S/he is wicked.'
 - b. *a-r me-bzaʒ'e.*
DEM-ABS DYN-wicked
'S/he behaves badly.'
- (Rogava & Kerasheva, 1966, p. 102)

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Dynamic transitive verbs become static in the resultative, and with certain evaluative affixes.

9.5.5.2 Tense Systems

Despite considerable structural diversity, tense-aspect systems of NWC dynamic verbs are similar in crucial respects (see Klyagina, 2018, for a typologically oriented overview of (p. 420) Abkhaz-Abaza and Circassian). First, there is an opposition between perfective and imperfective aspect in the past (preterite/aorist vs. imperfect). Second, NWC languages distinguish between basic and “retrospectivized” tenses (traditional “series I” and “series II”). This distinction cross-cuts the three-way distinction between present, past, and future. Third, there is a distinction between neutral and modal future tenses. These oppositions have different formal expressions across languages of the family. The primary division is between Abkhaz-Abaza on the one hand, where the perfective past (aorist) is least marked, as opposed to the formally marked present, and the rest of languages on the other, where perfective past has a dedicated suffix (Ubykh *-qe*, Adyghe *-be*, Kabardian *-a* ~ *-be*).²³

Table 9.18 lists basic and retrospectivized tense forms in Abaza. Retrospectivized tense forms are marked by *-n* (non-finite *-z*), which also serves as the past marker with stative verbs.

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Table 9.18 Abaza Tense System

Basic			Retrospectivized		
	Finite	Non-finite		Finite	Non-finite
Present	- <i>əj-t̪</i>	- <i>wa</i>	Imperfect	- <i>wa-n</i>	- <i>wa-z</i>
Aorist	- <i>t̪</i>	Ø	Preterite	- <i>n</i>	- <i>z</i>
Perfect	-χ'a- <i>t̪</i>	-χ'a	Pluperfect	-χ'a- n	-χ'a- z
Future I	- <i>wa-š-t̪</i>	- <i>wa-š</i>	Subjunctive I	- <i>wa-šə-n</i>	- <i>wa-šə-z</i>
Future II	- <i>p̪</i>	- <i>ra</i>	Subjunctive II	- <i>rə-n</i>	- <i>rə-z</i>

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The Abkhaz preterite (retrospectivized aorist) is mainly used as a medial verbal form in connected narratives (Hewitt, 1979a, pp. 174–175). For Abaza, much the same is reported in the literature (e.g., Chkadua, 1970, pp. 137–140), but recent fieldwork data (Klyagina, 2018, Arkadiev and Klyagina, 2019) shows that the preterite also has independent uses, often to indicate that the resultant state of the event no longer holds.

At least for Abaza it has been argued that the perfect and pluperfect suffix *-χ'a* and its negated counterpart *-s* are distinct from the European-style perfect and express a meaning like ‘already’ in the affirmative and ‘not yet’ in the negative (Klyagina, 2017, 2018, pp. 40–46):

(97)

Abaza

- a. *sara ará?a χʷá-skʷša s-bzáza-χ'a-t.*
1SG here five-year 1SG.ABS-live-IAM-DECL
'I have been living/have lived here for five years.'
- b. *sara warad g'-sə-m-hʷa-s-t.*
1SG song NEG.EMP-1SG.ERG-NEG-say-NONDUM-DECL
'I haven't yet sung.' (Klyagina, 2018, p. 43)

(p. 421) The retrospectivized future form has the modal meaning of irrealis; the temporal meaning of past intention is also attested:

(98)

Abaza

- a. *sara ačə-ja jə-s-č'p-əw-šə-z?*
1SG what-QN REL.ABS-1SG.ERG-do-IPFV-FUT-PST.NFIN
'What could I do?'
- b. *waderfʷána a-kalχóz-la d-cá-χ-wa-šə-n.*
thereafter DEF-kolkhoz-INS 3SG.H.ABS-go-RE-IPFV-FUT-PST.DECL
'After that she was going to return to the kolxozi field.'

The tense system of Ubykh is similar to that of Abkhaz-Abaza (see Table 9.19), but the aorist is replaced by the perfect with the suffix *-qe* (Fenwick, 2011, p. 118). The aorist is attested on its own with a “mirative” function (Dumézil and Esenç, 1975b, pp. 151–152) and is used as a retrospectivization marker attaching to the other tense suffixes. However, subjunctive II is derived from the future II by the past suffix *-qe* (Fenwick, 2011, pp. 118, 121).

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Table 9.19 Ubykh Tense System

Basic			Retrospectivized		
	Sg	Pl		Sg	Pl
Present	-n	-a-n	Imperfect	-ne- jł	-a-ne-jł(e)
Preterite	-qe	-qe-n(e)	Pluperfect	-qe- jł	-qe-jł(e)
Future I	-ew	-n-ew	Subjunctive I	-ewə- jł	-n-ewə-jł(e)
Future II	-ewt	-n-ewt	Subjunctive II	-ewt ^w - qe	(-n-)ewt ^w - qe (-n)

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In Circassian, only the Kabardian tense system readily lends itself to an analysis in terms of simple versus retrospectivized forms (see Table 9.20), with the imperfect suffix *-t(e)* serving as the retrospectivization marker (cf. Bagov, Balkarov, Kuasheva, Kumakhov, & Rogava, 1970, pp. 131–138; Klyagina, 2018, pp. 65–90).

Table 9.20 Besleney Kabardian Tense System

Simple		Retrospectivized	
Present	(dynamic prefix)	Imperfect	-t
Preterite/aorist	<i>-a ~ -be</i>	Pluperfect	-a-t
Future I	<i>-ne</i>	Subjunctive I	-ne-t
Future II	<i>-n</i>	Subjunctive II	(-n-t)

Tense suffixes in Circassian combine more freely than in the other languages of the family. In addition to the forms in Table 9.20, there is a double past *-be-a* used in variation (p. 422) with the pluperfect in *-a-t*, and it is possible to add the future suffixes to the preterite, usually with the inferential meaning (e.g., (99)).

(99)

Adyghe

qe-p-še-be-š't

CISL-2SG.ERG-know-PST-FUT

‘you must know it’

In Adyghe, the marker of the perfective preterite *-be* is used as a retrospectivizer (see Korotkova, 2009). At least in the Shapsugh dialect, both the preterite and the imperfect can be retrospectivized with a predictable semantic difference (Arkadiev, 2014c) (see (100)).²⁴

(100)

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Shapsugh Adyghe

The two futures in NWC differ in modal overtones; generally, future I expresses neutral prediction or planned action, as in (101a), while future II expresses some sort of epistemic or emotional commitment on the part of the speaker, for example, promise, threat, or doubt, as in (101b) (see Serdobolskaya, 2009, pp. 456–474 on Temirgov Adyghe).

(101)

Temirgoy Adyghe

- a. *njewəš'* ź'-ew *sə-qe-tež'ə-š't.*
 tomorrow early-ADV 1SG.ABS-CISL-stand.up-FUT
 'I shall get up early tomorrow (I have a reason to do it).'

b. *njewəš'* ź'-ew *sə-qe-tež'ə-n.*
 tomorrow early-ADV 1SG.ABS-CISL-stand.up-MOD
 'I shall get up early tomorrow (I've just decided to).' (Serdobolskaya, 2009,
 p. 467)

9.5.5.3 Aspectual Marking

In addition to the perfective versus imperfective opposition in the past tenses, NWC languages have a number of optional aspectual categories expressed by dedicated affixes. The most productive of them is the refactive used to express reverse motion (Adyghe *qe-kʷe-ž’ə* CISL-go-RE ‘return’), responsive action (Abaza *fʷə-χ* write-RE ‘write a response’), single repetition (Besleney Kabardian *žejə-ž’* (sleep-RE) ‘fall asleep again’), and a number of other functions (see Avidzba, 1968, Panova, 2019b on Abkhaz-Abaza and Arkadiev and Korotkova, 2005 on Adyghe).

Other aspectual categories attested in NWC include the inchoative (mostly used to derive dynamic verbs from nominals, productive in Abkhaz-Abaza and Ubykh), completive, iterative, frequentative, habitual and continuative (see e.g. Z. Avidzba, 2017 on Abkhaz, and Panova, 2019c on Abaza). The frequentative suffix *-zepət* in Circassian stems from an auxiliary verb *ze-pə-t* (REC.IO-LOC:tip-stand) ‘be interconnected’; it has been borrowed into Abaza, where it is used both as a suffix and as an adverb (Tabulova, 1976, p. 207–208); similar origin is evident for the Ubykh continuative *-зəлeфeъ* (Fenwick, 2011, p. 127). In

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Circassian, aspectual meanings are primarily expressed by auxiliary constructions (Kimmelman, 2011, Arkadiev and Maisak, 2018, pp. 127–132).

9.5.6 Mood and Modality

Modal categories in NWC vary in expression and function; they have not yet been adequately described (but see Kuznetsova, 2009, on Temirgoy Adyghe). The expression of irrealis (subjunctive) is handled by the tense system, while conditional and concessive meanings are integrated into the system of non-finite subordination (see section 9.7.4). Illocutionary categories include imperative, hortative, optative and interrogative. The imperative is the simplest verbal form which often consists the bare stem without the second person prefix indexing the ergative argument:

(102)

Adyghe

šxə!

eat.IMP

‘Eat it!’

In Abkhaz-Abaza and Ubykh, the ergative prefix is omitted only with transitive verbs.

Across the family, the ergative prefix is present in negative imperatives and in the plural:

(103)

Abaza

j-ş-č'ak’!

3SG.N.ABS-2PL.ERG-weigh.IMP

‘You (pl.) weigh it!’

Besides the regular prefixal negation, negative imperative in Abkhaz-Abaza has the suffix *-n*:

(104)

Abkhaz

wə-m-ca-n!

2SG.ABS-NEG-go-NEG.IMP

‘Don’t go!’ (Aristava, Bgazhba, Tsikolia, Chkadua, and Shakryl, 1968, p. 118).

(p. 424) Commands and wishes directed at a third person are marked by the hortative suffixes in Abkhaz-Abaza and Ubykh, and by prefixes in Circassian languages (cf. (105)).

(105)

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a. Ubykh

a-j-má-k'e-g'aqʷ.

3SG.ABS-LOC-NEG-COME-HORT

'Let him not come.' (Fenwick, 2011, p. 130)

b. Temirgoy Adyghe

q-j-ere-ne-ž.

CISL-LOC-HORT-remain-RE

'Let him remain there.'

The optative can combine with the past tense to express counterfactual wishes (e.g., (106)).

(106)

Abkhaz

j-z-dər-wa-nda-z

3SG.N.ABS-1SG.ERG-know-IPFV-OPT-PST.nFIN

'If only I had known!' (Aristava, Bgazhba, Tsikolia, Chkadua, and Shakryl, 1968, p. 122)

Interrogative forms are signaled by a dedicated marker. Circassian has the same interrogative marker in general and content questions (Adyghe *-a*, Kabardian *-re*, limited to the present tense), and the rest of the languages use different markers for general and content questions. See also section 6.9 for content questions in Abkhaz and Abaza.

Other modal meanings expressed in the verbal complex include situational possibility, necessity, and epistemic modality. Situational possibility can be expressed by the benefactive applicative or by specialized suffixes like Adyghe *-sʷə* or Ubykh *-fe* (cf. (107)).

(107)

Ubykh

sə-gʷəč'áqe-fe-qe-me.

1SG.ABS-speak-HBL-PST-NEG

'I was not able to speak' (Fenwick, 2011, p. 126 after Dumézil, 1967, p. 111).

Necessity is expressed mainly by auxiliaries, but Adyghe also has a debititive suffix (cf. (108)).

(108)

Adyghe

wə-t-λeʂʷə-pχa-ʂ.

2SG.ABS-1PL.ERG-see-DEB-PST

‘We had to see you.’ (Smeets, 1984, p. 279)

(p. 425) Epistemic modality is primarily expressed by auxiliary constructions, especially in Circassian (see Aksënova, 2015, on Bzhedugh Adyghe); some auxiliaries have already turned suffixes, as in (109).

(109)

Temirgoy Adyghe

mə-ʂ' zə-gʷere ʂ'ə-χʷə-ʂe-ʂ'tən.

this-OBL one-certain LOC-happen-PST-INFER

‘Something must have happened here.’

Abkhaz-Abaza has an inferential mood (Chirikba, 2003b; Hewitt, 1979b) with the suffix *-za*, probably an earlier auxiliary, which itself can take either the non-past suffix *-p* in basic tenses or the subjunctive marker *-rə-n* in retrospecitivized tenses:

(110)

Abaza

a. *d-ʂ-kət-laʃʷ-za-p.*

3SG.H.ABS-2PL.IO-village-mate-INFER-nPST.DECL

‘He must be your fellow villager.’

b. *a-mʂ ajʂəs-za-rə-n.*

DEF-day short-INFER-FUT.nFIN-PST.DECL

‘The day must have been short.’ (Tabulova, 1976, p. 167)

There are no unequivocal evidential categories in NWC (not counting the inferential), even though marking of quotation and indirect speech is well-developed (see section 9.7.3).

The NWC verbal complex also encodes various evaluative meanings, such as ‘easy’ versus ‘hard’, excessive or intensive action, and others, such as the Adyghe similitative suffix *-ʂʷe* ‘pretend’ in (66) or the Abaza suffixes *-gʷəʂ'a-* (borrowed from Circassian); Rogava and Kerasheva, 1966, pp. 306–307), and *-məfʷa-* expressing pity (Tabulova, 1976, p. 212).

Facilitive (‘easy’) and difficultive (‘hard’) suffixes turn dynamic verbs into stative and can suppress the agent of transitive verbs (cf. (111)).

(111)

Abaza

- a. *j-s-fa-t.*

3SG.N.ABS-1SG.ERG-eat.AOR-DECL

'I ate it.'

- b. *j-fa-χʷə-p̪.*

3SG.N.ABS-eat-FCL-NPST.DECL

'It is easy to eat.' (Tabulova, 1976, p. 107)

Suffixes expressing aspectual, evaluative, and modal meanings can combine with each other, their order generally reflecting their semantic scope (see Korotkova and Lander, 2010, on Adyghe; Panova, 2019c, on Abaza) (cf. (66)). Many of the suffixes described in grammars, however, appear to have limited productivity, and speakers are reluctant to combine them in elicitation.

(p. 426) 9.5.7 Negation

The expression of negation is one of the most intricate phenomena in NWC verbal morphology (see Chkadua, 1970, and Gvanceladze, 2010 on Abkhaz-Abaza; Dumézil and Esenç, 1975b, pp. 163–170, and Fenwick, 2011, pp. 136–138 on Ubykh; Kumakhov, 1971, pp. 245–247, and Smeets, 1984, pp. 289–378, on Circassian in general; Sumbatova and Lander, 2007, on Adyghe). All NWC languages have both prefixal and suffixal negative morphemes. The prefixal negation *m-*, occurring immediately before the stem, clearly belongs to the common layer of NWC affixes. In Abkhaz-Abaza and Ubykh the negative suffix is also *-m*. Negative suffixes in Circassian (Adyghe *-ep*, Kabardian *-qəm*) are innovative (see Kumakhov, 1971, pp. 246–247; Smeets, 1984, pp. 344–378), as is the Abaza/Sadz emphatic negative prefix *g'-*. The distribution of prefixal and suffixal negative markers in Abkhaz-Abaza and Ubykh differs from their distribution in Circassian.

In Abaza and in the Sadz dialect of Abkhaz, declarative verbal forms include negation marked twice: in the beginning of the word by the emphatic prefix *g'-* (in the post-absolutive slot), followed by the regular prefixal or suffixal *-m-*. The emphatic negative prefix is absent from non-declarative and non-finite forms (on the status and origins of this prefix see Pazov, 2019). Table 9.21 shows Abaza forms (Lomtadidze & Klychev, 1989, pp. 111–112).

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Table 9.21 Negative Verbal Forms in Abaza

	Finite	Non-finite
Stative present	-g'-...-Σ-m	-Σ-m
Stative past	-g'-...-Σ-mə-z-t	-Σ-mə-z
Dynamic present	-g'-...-Σ-wa-m	-m-Σ-wa
Imperfect	-g'-...-Σ-wa-mə-z-t ~ -g'-...-m-Σ-wa-z-t	-m-Σ-wa-z
Aorist	-g'-...-m-Σ-t	-m-Σ
Future I	-g'-...-Σ-wa-šə-m	-m-Σ-wa-š
Subjunctive I	-g'-...-m-Σ-wa-šə-z-t	-m-Σ-wa-šə-z
Imperative	-m-Σ-n	—
Realis conditional	—	-m-Σ-ztən

In both Abkhaz-Abaza and Ubykh the choice of prefixal vs. suffixal position of the negative *-m-* depends on whether the verb is stative or dynamic, declarative or non-declarative (all non-declarative and most non-finite forms have prefixal negation). With declarative forms, the choice of the marker depends on tense. For example, in Ubykh the dynamic present is negated prefixally as opposed to most other tenses (Fenwick, 2011, pp. 136–137); both options are attested for the imperfect in Ubykh and Abaza.

(p. 427) In Circassian, the majority of non-declarative and non-finite verbal forms combine only with prefixal negation. In the declarative, the normal position of negation is suffixal; prefixation is possible but leads to a meaning difference (cf. a minimal pair from the Nart sagas):

(112)

Bzhedugh Adyghe

a. *sə-qə-b-de-kʷe-n-ep!*

1SG.ABS-CISL-2SG.IO-COM-go-MSD-NEG

‘I won’t marry you!’ (‘it is not the case that [I will marry you]’)

b. *sə-qə-b-de-mə-kʷe-n!*

1SG.ABS-CISL-2SG.IO-COM-NEG-go-MSD

‘I still won’t marry you!’ (‘it will be the case that [I don’t marry you]’)

(Smeets, 1984, pp. 328–329)

Forms with two non-redundant negative markers are also possible (e.g., (113)).

(113)

Adyghe

sə-mə-dax-ep *səd-ep!*

1SG.ABS-NEG-beautiful-NEG what-NEG

‘No, it’s not the case that I’m not pretty!’ (Sumbatova & Lander, 2007, p. 81).

Smeets (1984, pp. 327–332) describes the difference between suffixal and prefixal negation as the contrast between predicative and attributive negation; Sumbatova and Lander (2007) argue that the negative suffix encodes standard negation in terms of Miestamo (2005) (i.e., the negative truth value of the proposition), while the negative prefix is reserved for all other types of negation.

9.6 Simple Clause

In this section, we describe the basics of clausal syntax in NWC languages, starting with noun phrase syntax in section 9.6.1 and proceeding to valency and grammatical relations in sections 9.6.2 and 9.6.3. We also address word order, agreement, anaphora, interrogativity, and negation.

9.6.1 Structure of Noun Phrases

The core of the noun phrase in all NWC languages is constituted by the *nominal complex*, which includes the head noun and some of its modifiers. Typically, the head noun can be followed by an adjective-like modifier and preceded by a non-referential nominal (p. 428) modifier or a borrowed relational expression; below, the brackets indicate the boundaries of the stem of the nominal complex:

(114)

Adyghe

<i>qałze-m</i>	<i>jə-[tarjəχ]</i>	<i>qebar</i>	<i>ke.ʂeʂʷen]-xe-r</i>
town-OBL	POSS-history	tale	wonderful-PL-ABS
'the wonderful historical tales of the town'			

NWC languages differ in the position of simple numerals within the nominal complex. In Circassian they are typically accompanied by a "linker" morpheme and occur at the end of the complex (115). In Ubykh and Abkhaz-Abaza, numerals normally occur to the left of other lexical elements of the complex (116), but in Abkhaz they may also occur outside the nominal complex.

(115)

Adyghe

<i>šə-çəkʷ-jə-šə-r</i>
horse-small-LNK-three-ABS
'three small horses'

(116)

Ubykh

<i>ke-tqʷe-qap[e]-ewn</i>
3SG.PR-two-hand[.OBL]-INS
'with his two hands' (Fenwick, 2011, p. 91, after Dumézil, 1960, p. 435)

In Circassian and Abkhaz-Abaza complex numerals simply follow the nominals they quantify (117a), while in Ubykh they precede the nominal, and the final component of the numeral forms a compound with the noun, as in (117b).

(117)

a. Adyghe

<i>jəλes</i>	<i>tʷe-č'-jə-pλ</i>
year	two-ten-LNK-four
'eighty years'	

b. Ubykh

<i>tqʷétʷ-ale</i>	<i>šə-šʷ-ále-n</i>
twenty-COORD	three-year-COORD-OBL
'twenty-three years' (Fenwick, 2011, p. 90, after Dumézil and Esenç, 1977a, p. 14)	

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The lexical parts of a nominal complex combine to produce a single stem surrounded by prefixes and suffixes (see Lander, 2017, on Adyghe). Despite this, orthographic conventions often require that it be written as a sequence of separate words, probably because lexical parts of a nominal complex can in turn have complex morphological structure.

(p. 429) Moreover, in some varieties, especially in Kabardian, the nominal complex was seemingly reanalyzed as a syntactically complex phrase.

A noun or a nominal complex can be preceded by various modifiers such as demonstratives, referential possessors, relative clauses, and closed-class elements whose inventory differs across the NWC languages. Possessors constitute an autonomous constituent and must be cross-referenced on the nominal complex (see section 9.4.1). For demonstratives, see section 9.4.2, and for relative clauses, see section 9.7.2.

It is not always clear whether a modifier preceding a noun is included into the nominal complex or not. For example, in Adyghe, the predicate of a relative clause sometimes lacks the properties of an independent prosodic word when it immediately precedes the head noun (Lander, 2010, 2012, 2017). Demonstratives are usually described as autonomous words or as proclitics; in Ubykh, Fenwick (2011, pp. 79–81) analyzes them as prefixes.

A combination of two nominals describing the same individual may form a complex phrase by simple apposition (presumably within a single nominal complex). At least in Circassian, another structure is available where one of the nominals bears the adverbial marker (118).

(118)

Adyghe

<i>tərkʷəje-m</i>	<i>jə-qatʃ-ew</i>	<i>samswan</i>	<i>sə-q-jə-č'ə-k.</i>
Turkey-OBL	POSS-town-ADV	Samsun	1SG.ABS-CISL-LOC-go.out-PST
'I went out of the Turkish town of Samsun.'			

9.6.2 Predicate Structure

We distinguish between two classes of predicates: predicates proper and copular predicates. Predicates proper can bear cross-reference prefixes and tense morphology, see (199). Copular predicates consist of two parts: a copula and its complement which immediately precedes it. The complement of a copula may be a referential NP, as in (120), where it is manifested by a headless relative clause, but in clefts, it may be manifested by other kinds of constituent like an adverbial clause in (121).

(119)

Abaza

d-čənčə-p̄.

3SG.ABS.H-fly-nPST.DECL

‘He is a fly.’

(120)

Abaza

sara arəj z-ʃʷə-z sakʷ-p̄.

I PROX REL.ERG-write-PST.nFIN 1SG.COP-nPST.DECL

‘I am the one who wrote this.’

(p. 430) (121)

Abaza

sup vilka-la j-z-s-fa-wa

soup fork-INS 3SG.N.ABS-REL.RSN-1SG.ERG-eat-IPFV

[*loška g'-a-?a-m-ta*] *akʷ-b.*

spoon NEG.EMP-3SG.N.IO-be-NEG-ADV 3SG.IO+COP-DECL

‘I am eating the soup with a fork because there is no spoon.’ (lit. ‘Why I am eating the soup with a fork is the non-existence of a spoon.’)

Because of a strong tendency to encode focus as the predicate, predicates proper can be formed on the basis of verbs (122a), nouns (119) and (122b), and even some postpositions (122c), all of which appear with the relevant predicate morphology.

(122)

Adyghe

- a. *səhatə-r* *šə-m* *dež'* *bzəwə-xe-r* *kʷec-hase-m*
hour-ABS three-OBL at bird-PL-ABS wheat-field-OBL
tje-bəb-a-ke-x.
LOC-fly-LAT-PST-PL
'Around three o'clock the birds flew to the wheat field.'
- b. *səhatə-r* *šə-m* *dež'* *bzəwə-xe-r* *zə-tje-bəb-a-ke-xe-r*
hour-ABS three-OBL at bird-PL-ABS REL.IO-LOC-fly-LAT-PST-PL-ABS
kʷec-hesa-κ.
wheat-field-PST
'Around three o'clock the birds flew TO THE WHEAT FIELD.'
- c. *bzəwə-xe-r* *kʷec-hase-m* *zə-šə-tje-bəb-a-ke-xe-r.*
bird-PL-ABS wheat-field-OBL REL.IO-TEMP-LOC-fly-LAT-PST-PL-ABS
səhatə-r *šə-m* *dež'ə-κ.*
hour-ABS three-OBL at-PST
'The birds flew to the wheat field AROUND THREE O'CLOCK.'

Regardless of transitivity, the predicate forms a tighter unit with the absolute argument as compared to other arguments. For instance, in Circassian the absolute argument and predicate of a relative clause usually are not separated by an internal head (Lander, 2010). In Abkhaz-Abaza, as already said in section 9.5.2, if a non-human or plural absolute argument immediately precedes the predicate, the latter lacks the absolute cross-reference index.

9.6.3 Valency Classes

Major valency classes in NWC are defined by the patterns of verbal cross-reference (e.g., Bossong, 1982; Hewitt, 2008a; Paris, 1969; Smeets, 1992a). All verbs can take an overt (p. 431) absolute cross-reference marker (though with some verbs it seems to be an expletive), and transitive verbs are those which can have ergative cross-reference markers:

(123)

Temirgoy Adyghe

- a. *č'abze-r* *me-žəje.*
boy-ABS [3.ABS]DYN-sleep
'The boy is sleeping.'
- b. *pšasə-m* *č'abze-r* *j-e-λeκʷə.*
girl-OBL boy-ABS [3.ABS]3SG.ERG-DYN-see
'The girl sees the boy.'

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Importantly, transitivity and valency are relatively independent of each other (Lander and Letuchiy, 2017); all NWC languages have large classes of bivalent intransitive verbs with the absolute agentive argument and the patient-like argument encoded and cross-referenced as indirect object (see Letuchiy, 2013, on Circassian). Verbs denoting activities that do not affect the object in its entirety ('hit', 'touch', or 'kiss'), speech-act verbs such as 'ask' or 'scold', as well as 'look' (as opposed to 'see') belong to this class of bivalent verbs. The indirect-object prefix is introduced either by the general dative-applicative preverb (124) or by one of the specialized applicatives; in Circassian and Ubykh the IO of such verbs is case-marked by the same oblique case as the ergative agent of transitive verbs (125). In Abkhaz, Abaza, and Ubykh the indirect object of such bivalent verbs can be expressed just by the personal prefix (125b), which is impossible in Circassian.

(124)

Temirgoy Adyghe

p̄saše-r *č'aže-m* *Ø-je-pλə.*
girl-ABS boy-OBL 3SG.IO-DAT+DYN-look.at
'The girl is looking at the boy.'

(125)

Abaza

- a. *ša-Γ-b-ðj-t.*
2PL.ABS-1PL.ERG-see-PRS-DECL
'We see you.' (transitive)
- b. *w-Γa-hə-m-pšá-n!*
2SG.M.ABS-CISL-1PL.IO-NEG-look-NEG.IMP
'Don't look at us!' (intransitive)

Ditransitive verbs like 'give', 'say', or 'sell' encode the theme as Abs and the recipient as IO; in Circassian and Ubykh this results in a typologically rare structure with identical case marking of the agent and the recipient, as in (126).

(126)

Temirgoy Adyghe

č'aže-m *p̄saše-m* *txəλə-r* *Ø-Ø-r-j-e-tə.*
boy-OBL girl-OBL book-ABS 3SG.ABS-3SG.IO-DAT-3SG.ERG-DYN-give
'The boy is giving the book to the girl.'

(p. 432) Besides the major classes of transitive and intransitive verbs, all NWC languages possess the class of so-called inverse intransitive verbs, mainly verbs of cognition, emo-

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tion, and desire (O'Herin, 2002, pp. 167–212). Their experiencer is expressed as an indirect object (usually introduced by an applicative), while the stimulus appears in the absolute. Inverse forms can also be derived by means of involuntary or benefactive applicatives, the latter denoting possibility (Hewitt, 2008a, pp. 80–82; Lander and Vydrin, 2009).

9.6.4 Word Order

NWC languages are generally left-branching, with a number of head-final characteristics. The predicate typically occupies the final position in a matrix clause; predicate-final orders are found in embedded clauses; adnominal possessors precede their heads (section 9.6.1), and only postpositions are used. Word order at the matrix-clause level is quite flexible (see Kumakhov & Vamling, 2009, ch. 5; Khutezhev, 1999, for Kabardian, Tsikolia, 1973, for Abkhaz). The predicate in matrix clauses need not occupy the clause-final position, and arguments can be scrambled especially where case marking and/or the context provide cues to grammatical relations. Polinsky (1989) and Kumakhov and Vamling (2009, p. 126) argued that in Kabardian, an inanimate ergative argument typically follows the absolute argument.

Kumakhov and Vamling (2009, pp. 122–125) suggest that when proper names (which normally lack overt case marking) function as core arguments in Circassian, word order is strictly SOV. However, this conclusion has been made mainly on the basis of sentences elicited out of context; in fact, proper context and the appropriate intonation (probably reflecting topicalization) may improve different orders:

(127)

Kuban Kabardian

<i>nəwrjet</i>	<i>zarjeme</i>	<i>jə-ke-šxe-ne,</i>	<i>sare</i>
Nuriel	Zarema	3SG.ERG-CAUS-eat-FUT	Sara
<i>jə-ke-gʷe.λə-ž'ə-ne.</i>			
3SG.ERG-CAUS-lie-RE-FUT			
'Zarema will feed Nuriel, Sara will care for her sleeping.'			

Information structure can affect word order as well. Contrastive elements can occur sentence-initially, and the preverbal position is typical of focus.

9.6.5 Agreement

Absolute, ergative, indirect, and oblique objects are cross-referenced on predicates, possessors on their head nouns, and complements on postpositions (sections 9.4.1 and 9.5.2). The only other type of agreement attested in NWC is agreement in number

(p. 433) between nouns and determiners in Abkhaz-Abaza and Ubykh (section 9.4.2).

Cross-referencing reflects person and number features in all the languages, and gender in Abkhaz-Abaza. This cross-reference is determined by semantics rather than by syntax,

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as evidenced by instances of mismatch between the features encoded in the personal prefixes and those of the cross-referenced nominals, as, for example, in (128), where a non-pronominal phrase is cross-referenced by a 1PL prefix.

(128)

Temirgoy Adyghe

<i>hałzəžʷe-r</i>	<i>nebyər-ja-š'ə-m-ja</i>	<i>ze-fe.d-ew</i>
pancake-ABS	person-LNK-three-OBL-ADD	REC.IO-similar-ADV
<i>t-šxə-ye-š...</i>		
1PL.ERG-eat-PST-CS		

‘As to pancakes, we, the three men, ate them as equals, so ...’ (Lander, 2012, p. 150)

In addition to personal prefixes indexing all syntactic arguments, NWC languages have morphological means to index the plurality of the absolute argument (section 9.5.2). In Ubykh, this plural marking is extremely complex and admittedly obligatory, while in Circassian and Abkhaz the use of plural endings is optional.

9.6.6 Anaphora

In general, NWC languages employ two types of anaphoric devices: morphological, represented by prefixes (section 9.5.2), and free-standing, represented by autonomous words. Both may be found in one and the same language and sometimes even in one and the same clause. For example, in (129), a free-standing reciprocal marker (the complex expression *z-alé z-alé* ‘each other’) co-occurs with a reciprocal prefix:

(129)

Ubykh

<i>z-alé</i>	<i>z-alé</i>	<i>çe-n</i>	<i>fə-ze-bj-á-n.</i>
one-COM	one-COM	good-ADV	1PL.ABS-REC.ERG-see-PL-PRS

‘We love one another.’ (Fenwick, 2011, p. 83, based on Hewitt’s unpublished field notes)

Morphological and free-standing anaphors are not always easily distinguished. The Abkhaz absolute reflexive pronoun *čə-* takes its own possessive prefixes and could be described as a word-like element combining with the verb as an incorporated stem:

(130)

Abkhaz

<i>lara</i>	<i>l-čə-l-š-we-jt.</i>
she	3SG.F.IO-RFL.ABS-3SG.F.ERG-kill-IPFV-DECL

‘She kills herself.’ (Hewitt, 1979a, p. 77)

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(p. 434) In Circassian, all kinds of coreference between the arguments of the predicate are normally expressed by morphological devices, while free-standing anaphors are peripheral.

(131)

Adyghe

nebgər-jə-t^wə-m-jə a-ne.?^w*ə-č'ə zə-ze-f-a-keza-v.*

person-LNK-two-OBL-ADD 3PL.PR-face-INS RFL.ABS-REC.IO-BEN-3PL.ERG-turn-PST

‘The two persons turned their faces to each other.’ (lit. ‘turned themselves to each other with their faces’)

Abkhaz-Abaza lack morphological reflexives with the exception of the absolute reflexive čə-, and hence have to rely on syntactic means (132a), unless the coreference is implied by simple doubling of a person-number feature (132b). In Ubykh, the ergative argument licenses free-standing reflexives, and all other reflexives are morphologically bound.

(132)

Abaza

a. *awaj a-χalʒáṭ l-qa*

DIST.SG DEF-mistake 3SG.F.IO-RFL

j-a-z-lə-rf^wa-χ-t.

3SG.N.ABS-3SG.N.IO-BEN-3SG.F.ERG-forgive-RE-DECL

‘She forgave herself for the mistake.’ (lit. ‘forgave the mistake to herself’)

b. *j-ʃa-h-hə-r-dər-d.*

3SG.N.ABS-CISL-1PL.IO-1PL.ERG-CAUS-know(AOR)-DECL

‘we learned this.’ (lit. ‘we made ourselves know this’)

(133)

Ubykh

a. *sə-g'ē pʃá-sə-š'-ew.*

1SG.PR-self warm-1SG.ERG-make-FUT

‘I will warm myself.’ (Fenwick, 2011, p. 82, after Dumézil, 1967, p. 68)

b. *še-ná a-ze-fé-s-ɻ-ew-t.*

three-ADV 3.ABS-RFL.IO-LOC-1SG.ERG-cut-FUT-FUT

‘I will cut it (lit. separate from itself) into three.’ (Fenwick, 2011, p. 107, after Dumézil and Esenç, 1977a, p. 12)

In Circassian, reciprocal prefixes almost coincide with the reflexive, and in Ubykh the same prefix is used for reflexivity and reciprocity. In Abkhaz-Abaza, the reciprocal construction has a dedicated prefix (134).

(134)

Abkhaz

j-ej-zá-χʷmar-we-jt̪.

3PL.ABS-REC.IO-BEN-play-IPFV-DECL

‘They are playing for each other.’ (Hewitt, 1979a, p. 87)

(p. 435) Morphological reflexives and reciprocals are strictly local. Ergative binds the absolutive reflexive in transitive verbs; the absolute binds the indirect object in bivalent intransitives (see section 9.6.3 on these verbs). However, in potential constructions, the indirect object antecedes the absolute reflexive:

(135)

Adyghe

zə-s-fe-?aže-r-ep.

RFL.ABS-1SG.IO-BEN-restrain-DYN-NEG

‘I cannot restrain myself.’

Morphological reciprocals differ from reflexives in that with transitive stems, they seem to replace the ergative prefix with a specific ergative reciprocal marker (distinct from that used in other slots), which creates an impression that the absolute binds the ergative (Colarusso, 2004; Kazenin, 2007; Letuchiy, 2007). However, in all the languages with dedicated reciprocal prefixes, this marker appears to include a simple reciprocal prefix and some other morpheme; compare (136a) and (136b). Diachronically this reciprocal construction may have resulted from the demotion of the agent to indirect object with subsequent binding (cf. Lander and Letuchiy, 2010, p. 270, for other arguments for this analysis). The synchronic status of this construction is still to be explored.

(136)

Kabardian

a. *mežjəd-re de-re də-ze-de-ʒež-a-š.*

Mazhid-COORD we-COORD 1PL.ABS-REC.IO-COM-work-PST-DECL

‘Mazhid and we worked together with each other.’

b. *λə-ž-xe-m-re fe-re maxʷe-qes*

man-old-PL-OBL-COORD you.PL-ADD day-every

fə-ze.rə-λagʷə-nu-š

2PL.ABS-REC.ERG-SEE-FUT-DECL

‘The old men and you will see each other every day.’ (Kumakhov, Apazhev, Bizhoev, Zekoreev, & Taov, 2006, pp. 250, 252)

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Syntactic reflexives and reciprocals have been studied in much less detail, but as it seems they are clause-bound; no long-distance reflexives/reciprocals are reported.

9.6.7 Negation

As stated in section 9.5.7, negation in NWC languages is expressed by prefixes and suffixes, whose distribution interacts with (non-)finiteness, albeit in a complex way. Negation almost always appears on the predicate of a clause, either matrix or subordinate (p. 436) (137). The negated predicate can, however, be represented by a focused non-verbal element, and this may be translated via constituent negation into English (138):

(137)

Abaza

<i>j-qara-m-kʷa</i>	<i>a-ž'awra</i>	<i>də-ča-ča-ta</i>
3SG.N.ABS-distant-NEG-CVB.NEG	DEF-shadow	3SG.H.ABS-LOC-sit-ADV
<i>awat</i>	<i>j-χč'-əw-n.</i>	
DIST.PL	3SG.M.ERG-guard-IPFV-PST.DECL	
'He sat not far away in the shadow and guarded (sheep).'		

(138)

Standard Kabardian

<i>a-bə</i>	<i>papše</i>	<i>neχə-b.r-əw</i>	<i>wə-zə-xʷ-jəj-r</i>	<i>aχše-qəm</i>
DIST-OBL	for	more-often-ADV	2SG.ABS-REL.IO-BEN-want-ABS	money-NEG
'That's why you need not MONEY most of all...'				

The focus-associated negation, however, occasionally occurs on the predicate even when the focused quantified parts of the sentence remain embedded (although a wide-scope reading of negation is still possible):

(139)

Adyghe

<i>zeč' e-m-jə</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>?ʷefə-r</i>	<i>a-šə-r-ep.</i>
all-OBL-ADD	that	work-ABS	3PL.ERG-do-DYN-NEG
'Not all (persons) did this work.'/'Nobody did this work.' (lit. 'all did not do this work'). (Testelets, 2009b, p. 684)			

One can also observe NP-internal negation which could be considered a kind of constituent negation, but even here it can be argued that the negated element is the predicate of a headless relative clause ('what is not your pleasure'):

(140)

Adyghe

w-*jə-mə-gʷape-r* *çafə-m* *je-mə-ʂ.*
2SG.IO-POSS-NEG-pleasure-ABS person-OBL DAT-NEG-do
'Do not do to other people what is not pleasant to yourself' (lit. 'your not-pleasure')

9.6.8 Question Formation

Questions in NWC languages typically require specific marking on the predicate (see section 9.5.6). Yes-no questions usually employ specific affixes in the rightmost slot of the verbal complex, as in (141), though Kabardian has such a marker just for the present tense and relies on intonation elsewhere (Applebaum, 2010).

(p. 437) (141)

Abaza

wə-g'ə-m-pχaš'-əw-ma?
2SG.M.ABS-NEG.EMPH-NEG-be.ashamed-IPFV-Q
'Aren't you ashamed?'

Content questions are typically pseudo-clefts, with the wh-word in the predicate position (142), although wh-in-situ is also attested.

(142)

Ubykh

sak'e-j *ʂ-aj-χ'e-ç-a-n-jəj?*
what-Q 2PL.ABS-REL-BEN-cry-PL-PRS-nFIN
'What is it that you're crying about?' (Fenwick, 2011, p. 196, after Dumézil, 1960, p. 35)

In Abkhaz and Abaza, content questions can be formed without a question word. The argument in question is relativized, and the predicate appears with one of the three specialized markers: suffixes *-da* for human referents and *-j(a)* for non-human referents, and the prefix *-ba-* ~ *-pa-* for adverbial questions, inserted after the adverbial subordination prefixes (see Hewitt, 1979a, pp. 10–23 on Abkhaz; Arkadiev, 2020b, Idiatov, 2007, pp. 271–278, and Pazov, 2016, on Abaza).

(143)

Abaza

- a. *j-wá-c-kʷa-z-da?*
REL.ABS-2SG.IO-be.with-PL-PST-Q.H
'Who were with you?'
- b. *z-fá-wə-m-d-ja?*
REL.IO+BEN-CISL-2SG.M.ERG-NEG-lead-Q.N
'Why (lit. what for) didn't you bring them here?'
- c. *j-š-pa-h-č'p-əw-š?*
3SG.N.ABS-REL.MNR-Q.ADV-1PL.ERG-do-IPFV-FUT
'How will we do it?'

9.7 Complex Sentence

NWC languages express interclausal relations by morphological means. Conjunctions are rare but include, for example, the coordination marker (see section 9.7.1) and probably also the Abkhaz-Abaza citation particle *hʷa* originating from the verb 'say', which may be developing into a complementizer (see section 9.7.3).

Subordination and coordination are not always easily set apart, since verbal forms marked for interclausal relations may show mixed behavior. Within subordination proper, relative clauses (see section 9.7.2), complement clauses, and adverbial clauses are (p. 438) not always clearly distinguished. For example, relativization is regularly used in complement and adverbial clauses (see sections 9.7.3, 9.7.4).

9.7.1 Clause Chaining and Coordination

Clause chaining in Circassian and Ubykh makes use of general converbs, marked by a neutral adverbial suffix as in (144). We also find tenseless verbal forms with the additive suffix, as in (145).

(144)

Ubykh

a-məšʷe-n jə-qʷe-n jə-də-dwe-qe.
DEF-bear-OBL.SG 3SG.ABS+3SG.ERG-seize-ADV 3SG.ABS+3SG.ERG-CAUS-die-PST
'The bear caught and killed him.' (Fenwick, 2011, p. 187, after Dumézil, 1965, p. 154)

(145)

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Kuban Kabardian

...?ene-daxe ja-x^we-d-ke-hazər-jə
table-beautiful 3PL.IO-BEN-1PL.ERG-CAUS-ready-ADD
haše-xe-r ja-ke-heš-a.
guest-PL-ABS 3PL.ERG-CAUS-guest-PST
‘... we set a nice table and entertained the guests.’ (lit. ‘caused the guests to be guests’).

In Abkhaz-Abaza, on the other hand, there are dedicated forms which are normally used as non-final predicates in describing a sequence of events (Chirikba, 2003a, p. 49), e.g., the preterite with the suffix *-n*.

Coordinating conjunctions occur primarily but not exclusively in adversative contexts:

(146)

Standard Kabardian

wezž'əne-r q-je-w-a-§ jač'ja ja-pe-dəde-w
bell-ABS CISL-DAT-beat-PST-DECL and 3PL.IO+POSS-front-very-ADV
žare klassə-m šə-h-a-§.
Lara classroom-OBL LOC-go.in-PST-DECL
'A bell rang and Lara entered the classroom for the first time.' (Kumakhov, Apazhev, Bizhoev, Zekoreev, & Taov, 2006, p. 504)

9.7.2 Relative Clauses

For relative forms, see section 9.5.4, and Hewitt (1979c, 2010) on Abkhaz, O’Herin (2002, ch. 8, and chapter 10 of this volume) on Abaza, and Lander (2010, 2012) on Adyghe. In Circassian and Ubykh relative forms retain the same TAM-markers, while Abkhaz and (p. 439) Abaza use non-finite tense forms. Almost all positions in the clause can be relativized, but in some languages or dialects the relativization of possessors of non-absolutive arguments is impossible (cf. Lander, 2010, for Shapsugh Adyghe).

There is a contrast between relativization of the absolutive and relativization of all other constituents (see Hewitt, 1979d, Lander, 2010, 2012, and Shagirov, 1965, for Circassian; Özsoy, 1992, for Ubykh; Hewitt, 1979c, 1987b, for Abkhaz; O’Herin, 2002, for Abaza; and Nichols, 2017, for a general survey). The absolutive argument in Circassian is not overtly cross-referenced on the verb; it is overtly cross-referenced in Ubykh. In both languages, the predicate of the relative clause with the relativized absolutive argument is the same in form as the matrix clause predicate (e.g., (147)).

(147)

Adyghe

- a. *se wəne-r s-λeBʷə-Be.*
1SG house-ABS 1SG.ERG-see-PST
'I saw a/the house.'
- b. [*se s-λeBʷə-Be*] *wəne-r*
1SG 1SG.ERG-see-PST house-ABS
'a/the house that I saw'

In Abkhaz-Abaza the absolutive in a relative clause is cross-referenced by a relative prefix *jə-*, formally identical to the verbal index of third person non-human/third person plural argument (e.g., (148)).

(148)

Abaza

- a. *á-č'kʷən a-páχ' d-qʷmar-đj-t.*
DEF-boy DEF-yard 3SG.H.ABS-play-PRS-DECL
'The boy is playing in the yard.'
- b. [*a-páχ' j-qʷmár-wa*] *á-č'kʷən*
DEF-yard REL.ABS-play-IPFV DEF-boy
'the boy who is playing in the yard' (Alexandra Rossius, field notes)

All other positions, including possessors and postpositional objects, are cross-referenced on the relative clause predicate with a relative prefix (*də-* in Ubykh, *zə-* elsewhere). Consider the relativization of the ergative argument in (149) and the relativization of possessor in (150):

(149)

Adyghe

- [*gumboldt a-če zə-hə-re*] *univjersitjetə-m*
Humboldt 3SG.PR-name REL.ERG-carry-DYN university-OBL
tə-š'ə-?a-γ.
1PL.ABS-LOC-be-PST
'We were at the university that bears the name of Humboldt.'

(p. 440) (150)

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Ubykh

[*d-ke-t^w*] *dwe-qed*] *məzə*

REL-3SG.PR-father die-PST(nFIN) child

'the child whose father has died' (Fenwick, 2011, pp. 178–179, based on Hewitt's unpublished field notes)

NWC languages have externally headed and internally headed relative clauses. The external semantic head normally follows the relative clause. The internal semantic head is often marked with an adverbial marker and tends to appear in the left periphery of the relative clause.²⁵ Compare the following minimal pair:

(151)

Kuban Kabardian

a. *pχe qe-zə-qʷət-a* *ṣale-m* *žə*
wood CISL-REL.ERG-chop-PST boy-OBL now

z-j-e-ke-psex^w

RFL.ABS-3SG.ERG-DYN-CAUS-rest

b. *ṣale-əw pχe qe-zə-qʷət-a-m* *žə*
boy-ADV wood CISL-REL.ERG-chop-PST-OBL now
z-j-e-ke-psex^w.

RFL.ABS-3SG.ERG-DYN-CAUS-rest

'The boy that chopped wood now is taking a rest.' (Anastasia Kobzeva, field notes)

The internal head in Abkhaz-Abaza can remain unmarked (Andrej Kibrik, 1992):

(152)

Bzyp Abkhaz

[*a-č'kʷən a-la jə-jə-pqa-z*]

ART-boy ART-dog REL.ABS-3SG.M.ERG-beat-PST.nFIN

jə-ŋ-nə *jə-ce-jt̪.*

3SG.N.ABS-run-CVB 3SG.N.ABS-go.AOR-DECL

'The dog that the boy beat ran away.' (Andrej Kibrik, 1992, p. 147)

In all NWC languages, relative clauses may appear without an overt head, as shown in example (153).

(153)

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Adyghe

<i>zə-lež'-xe-re-m</i>	<i>ə-?wə-re-r</i>	<i>f-a-še.</i>
REL.ERG-work-PL-DYN-OBL	3SG.ERG-say-DYN-ABS	BEN-3PL.ERG-do
'Those who work on this do what(ever) he says for him.'		

Relative clauses are typically used restrictively. In Circassian, relative clauses cannot modify pronouns. In Abkhaz-Abaza, however, non-restrictive relative clauses are also possible, even with pronouns as heads:

(p. 441) (154)

Abaza

<i>[nçra-ta</i>	<i>jə-w-ma-z</i>	<i>zəmʃʷa-g'əj</i>
live-ADV	REL.ABS-2SG.M.IO-be.at-PST	all-ADD
<i>jə-z-z'-əw-z]</i>		<i>wara</i>
3PL.ABS-REL.ERG-lie-IPFV-PST.nFIN		you.M
'you, who lied to me during your whole life' (Anna Sorokina, field notes)		

Relative clause constructions have much greater token frequency in NWC languages than in many other languages. In particular, they are frequently used in pseudo-cleft structures (155) focusing some parts of a proposition (see also section 9.6.2), complement clauses (section 9.7.3), and adjunct clauses (section 9.7.4).

(155)

Kabardian

<i>fe-ra-š</i>	<i>[sə-zə-š'ə-gʷəkə]-r.</i>
you.PL-PRED-DECL	1SG.ABS-REL.IO-LOC-rely-ABS
'I rely on you.' (lit. 'The one(s) whom I rely upon are you.')	

9.7.3 Complement Clauses

All languages of the family employ action nominals (masdars) which may retain some nominal properties (cf. Ershova, 2012, for Circassian and Kulikov, 1999, for Abkhaz). In Circassian, for example, masdars can (but do not have to) take case marking and possessive prefixes:

(156)

Besleney Kabardian

- a. [maxʷe-č̥e žejə-n] s-ja-č'ase-qəm.
day-INS sleep-MSD 1SG.IO-POSS-love-NEG
'I don't like sleeping during the day.'
- b. [w-ja-žejə-nə-r] ja-rjəqʷ-a?
2SG.PR-POSS-sleep-MSD-ABS POSS-enough-PST
'Your sleeping was enough?'

Circassian masdars (and some other nominalizations) can incorporate nominal participants (Ershova, 2012, 2015) (e.g., (157)).

(157)

Temirgoy Adyghe

- nart-me žə-wəč'ə-nə-r x-a-ne-ž'ə-k.
nart-OBL.PL old-kill-MSD-ABS LOC-3PL.ERG-leave-RE-PST
'Narts gave up killing their elderly.'

Clausal complements and indirect wh-questions can be expressed by nominalized relative clauses whose predicate has a dedicated applicative prefix; this prefix introduces a "pseudo-argument" represented by the relative clause.²⁶ Example (158) illustrates the (p. 442) use of a relative clause to form an affirmative complement clause, and (159) shows an indirect question formed on the basis of a relative clause.

(158)

Temirgoy Adyghe

- r-je-d-ke-?ʷe-š't [xase-m
DAT-DAT-1PL.ERG-CAUS-say-FUT council-OBL
zer-je-d-ke-bʒəse-re-r].
REL.FCT-DAT-1PL.ERG-CAUS-near-DYN-ABS
'We will ask him to tell (Warzameg) that we invite him to the council.'

(159)

Temirgoy Adyghe

- č'əlze-r zə-š'ə-š'ə-m-č̥e s-je-wəpčə-k.
boy-ABS REL.IO-LOC-from-OBL-INS 1SG.ABS-DAT-ask-PST
'I asked him from where the boy was.'

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Abkhaz and Abaza have special “nonveridical” nominalization referring to imaginary events as complements to verbs of seeming or pretending (Hewitt, 2005b, pp. 352–353; Tabulova, 1976, p. 171):

(160)

Abaza

<i>a-m̄s</i>	<i>a-çla</i>	<i>jə-z-qə-mə-l-wa-š-ša</i>
DEF-bear	DEF-tree	3SG.N.ABS-BEN-LOC-NEG-climb-IPFV-FUT-IRR
<i>j-ba-n.</i>		

3SG.M.ERG-see-PST.DECL

‘It seemed to him that the bear would not be able to climb the tree.’
(Tabulova, 1976, p. 171)

Reported speech typically retains most properties of direct quotation (including the use of pronouns) but occasionally shows shift in tense marking (cf. Hewitt, 2005b, p. 338, for Abkhaz). In all NWC languages, reported speech may be followed by a citation marker originating from the root ‘say’ (see Ershova, 2013, for Besleney Kabardian) (161). In Abkhaz-Abaza this marker extends its use to the contexts which are not obviously related to reported speech. This is indicated, for example, by its use with complements of verbs like ‘know’, in (162) (see Hewitt, 2005b, pp. 354–356, for details).

(161)

Besleney Kabardian

<i>wə-s-šxə-ne</i>	<i>ž'je-rjə</i>	<i>žə-r-j-e-?e-rjə.</i>
2SG.ABS-1SG.ERG-eat-FUT	QUOT-ADD	PREF-DAT-3SG.ERG-DYN-say-ADD
‘[The eagle] says “I will eat you”.		

(162)

Abkhaz

<i>s-ψəza</i>	<i>d-qəça-bzəja-nə</i>	<i>hʷa</i>	<i>z-dóř-wa-jt.</i>
1SG.IO-friend	3SG.H.ABS-man-good-CVB	QUOT	1SG.ERG-know-IPFV-DECL
‘I know that my friend is a good man.’ (Hewitt, 2005b, p. 355)			

(p. 443) The distribution of different complementation strategies does not necessarily occur in one-to-one correspondence with matrix verbs. For Circassian, Serdobolskaya (2016a) argued that it may depend on whether a subordinate clause refers to a fact, an event, or a proposition. However, even within the range of Circassian dialects, we find some variation in preferences for one or the other strategy, and neither do we observe any strict uniformity among NWC languages.

NWC languages have control structures, and both forward and backward control has been attested (cf. Testelets, 2009b, on Adyghe; and Matasović, 2007, on Kabardian). Potsdam and Polinsky (2012) argued that Adyghe possesses a typologically rare backward-ris-

ing construction, but what they interpret as raising may actually be a control construction (Testelets, 2009b).

9.7.4 Adverbial Clauses

Adverbial clauses in NWC often have a converb as predicate. In all the languages, the same marker appears as the adverbial marker and a general converb, consider the Circassian *-ew* in (163).

(163)

Temirgoy Adyghe

<i>a-pašhe</i>	<i>jə-wəčʷ-jə</i>	<i>z-jə</i>	<i>ə-mə-ʔʷ-ew</i>
3PL.PR-before	LOC-stand.up-ADD	one-ADD	3SG.ERG-NEG-say-ADV
<i>tekʷə-re</i>	<i>š'ə-tə-γ.</i>		

little-DUR LOC-stand-PST

‘She stood up before them and stood for a while not saying a word.’

In addition to the general adverbial marking, there are specialized converbs, for example, converbs of temporal simultaneity like Adyghe *-ze* or Ubykh *-še* and *-mse* (Fenwick, 2011, pp. 160–162), ‘while/until’, converbs like Adyghe *-fe*, as well as conditional, causal, and purposive converbs.

While we assume that converb marking as represented in these examples manifests inflection, some converb markers attach to already-existing forms or even full clauses. For example, the Circassian conditional marker is sometimes added to forms containing dynamic prefix which are otherwise never used in non-finite contexts (164), and the Abaza adverbial marker can follow the declarative marker which normally ends the form and appears only in finite contexts (165).

(164)

Adyghe

<i>bzəwə-r</i>	<i>me-bəbə-me,</i>	<i>me-bəbə</i>	<i>gʷəš'əʔe-r-jə.</i>
bird-ABS	DYN-fly-COND	DYN-fly	word-ABS-ADD

‘If a bird is flying, the word is flying as well.’

(p. 444) (165)

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Abaza

<i>wə-s'tax'ó-la</i>	<i>jə-w-g-áj-t-ta.</i>
2SG.M.IO-behind-INS	3PL.ABS-2SG.M.ERG-carry-PRS-DECL-ADV
<i>jə-š-awá-š</i>	<i>á-pš-ta</i>
3SG.N.ABS-REL.MNR-possible+IPFV-FUT	DAT-similar-ADV
<i>w-bzáz-əj-t.</i>	
2SG.M.ABS-live-PRS-DECL	
'While leaving (lit. carrying) this behind you, you live as if it is allowed.'	

There are also converb-like forms that bear no affixes; in Circassian they lack tense suffixes and mainly occur as the lexical part of auxiliary-verb constructions (Arkadiev and Maisak, 2018; Kimmelman, 2011); in Abkhaz-Abaza, they contain non-finite tense suffixes and head adverbial clauses:

(166)

Abaza

<i>s-a-z-qʷac-wa</i>	<i>s-ʒəl-ç-d.</i>
1SG.ABS-3SG.N.IO-BEN-think-IPFV(nFIN)	1SG.ABS-LOC-pass.AOR-DECL
'I went away, thinking about it.'	

Locative, temporal, manner, and reason adjunct clauses can also be formed based on relative clauses. In such cases the relative prefix on the predicate of the adverbial clause is hosted by an applicative (see also section 9.7.3); the entire adverbial clause can be marked by the oblique, as in (167). Abkhaz and Abaza have dedicated relative prefixes for adjunct relativization (see Hewitt, 2010; Khagba, 2015), while Ubykh uses a different strategy for adverbial clauses, combining the subordinating verb-initial prefix with a suffix or postposition. In examples (167)–(170), the adverbial clauses are shown in brackets.

(167)

Temirgoy Adyghe

<i>[werzemež' wəne-m</i>	<i>qə-z-j-e-ha-ž'ə-m]</i>
Warzameg	house-OBL
<i>setenaje</i>	<i>q-je-wəpčə-β.</i>
Setenaya	CISL-DAT-ask-PST
'When Warzameg returned home, Setenaya asked him.'	

(168)

Abaza

j-šarda-ča-χa-t [j-?a-ta-z].
3PL.ABS-much-EXC-INC(AOR)-DECL 3PL.ABS-REL.LOC-be.at-PST.NFIN
'They became too numerous where they lived.'

(169)

Abaza

[šə-mχə j-šə-r-hʷa-z] j-g'-aʔa-χə-m.
2PL.IO-millet 3SG.N.ABS-REL.MNR-3PL.ERG-say-PST.NFIN 3SG.N-NEG.EMP-be-RE-NEG
'Your millet is no longer such as they told you.' (Sorokina, 2017)

(p. 445) (170)

Ubykh

[a-zekʷé-n de-s-qe-qué-**safe**] a-g'jábž'-qe.
DEF-straight-ADV SBD-1SG.ERG-say-PST-because 3.ABS-get.angry-PST
'He got angry because I told the truth.' (Fenwick, 2011, p. 173)

9.8 Areal and Typological Profile

NWC languages resemble the other languages of the Caucasus in having rich consonant inventories that include glottalized stops and affricates as well as complex consonantal clusters. In morphosyntax, the areally common features include morphological ergativity, use of prefixes as markers of agreement or cross-reference, use of prefixes for encoding spatial relations, predominantly head-final word order, and copious non-finite subordination. Valency-increasing operations are more common than valency-decreasing ones (cf. Nichols, Peterson, & Barnes, 2004). In the domain of TAM categories, the distinction between perfective and imperfective past tenses is fairly trivial, especially in the European context, while the opposition of a neutral and a modalized future tenses can be seen as a North-Caucasian areal phenomenon, with parallels in Turkic languages. The typologically non-trivial pattern of differential case marking attested in Circassian clearly fits the areally widespread phenomenon of referentiality-based differential object marking, even if generalizes it to both grammatical cases and all syntactic positions.

9.9 Outstanding Issues

NWC languages are outstanding in many respects, both against the background of the languages of Western Eurasia and globally as well as among the other languages of the Caucasus. Among the typological peculiarities of NWC one should mention their exuberant consonantism with a number of rare segments such as the Circassian glottalized affricates or the Abaza palatalized uvulars coupled with a severely impoverished "vertical"

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vocalism, both of which have posed challenges to phonological theory. In morphosyntax, one should go beyond the rather vague characterization of NWC languages as “polysynthetic” and point out such more concrete feature as the consistent encoding of a virtually unrestricted number of participants in the verbal complex, especially by means of numerous productive applicative prefixes introducing indirect objects corresponding to optional adjuncts of other languages. This property of NWC challenges the theoretical claims limiting the argument structure of a possible verb in human languages to just three participants (cf. Babby, 2009, and the discussion in Arkadiev, 2014b, pp. 268–270). No less important is the use of relativization encoded morphologically by means of a special series of “operator-bound” personal markers working in some way similar to resumptive pronouns (Lander & Daniel, 2019) as the major morphosyntactic mechanism (p. 446) employed in such syntactic processes as subordination, encoding of information structure, and questions. Surely typologically outstanding if not downright unique are the Abkhaz-Abaza purely morphological strategy of content question formation, also transparently based on relativization (section 9.6.9) and the unrestricted differential case marking in Circassian languages (see Arkadiev & Testelets, 2019).

One should also note the status of quantifiers, which have been best described for Circassian languages (see Nikolaeva, 2012, on Adyghe). Although Circassian languages possess genuine distributive quantifiers like ‘each’, these quantifiers can occur as predicates in pseudo-cleft focus constructions shown in (171) (for details, see Arkadiev and Lander, 2013).

(171)

Temirgoy Adyghe

xaləzʷe qə-zə-tje-fa-ke-r
pie CISL-REL.IO-LOC-fall-PST-ABS
č'abzə-pepč.
boy-every

‘EVERY BOY got a pie.’ (lit. ‘on whom a pie fell is every boy’) (Arkadiev and Lander, 2013, p. 6)

Quantifiers can bind null pronouns, even when the pronoun belongs to a higher clause, as under backward control (see Testelets, 2009b, for a comprehensive description of the phenomenon in Adyghe):

(172)

Temirgoy Adyghe

Ø_i faj-ep [zəpar-m-jə_i] wered q-a-ʔʷe-n-ew].
want-NEG nobody-OBL-ADD song CISL-3SG.ERG-say-MOD-ADV

‘Nobody wants to sing.’ (Testelets, 2009b, pp. 696–697)

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Notes:

(¹) The term “Adyghe” is used now quite widely but somewhat erroneously, since the corresponding local term refers to all Circassians, including both West Circassians and East Circassians (Kabardians). In Russian linguistic terminology, the problem is solved by contrasting between the adjectives *адыгский* ‘Circassian’ and *адыгейский* ‘West Circassian’, but in English no such contrast exists. In this chapter, we use the term “Adyghe” following the conventions of the handbook. However, it is more accurate to use “West Circassian,” as we ourselves and some of our predecessors have done in numerous publications. We recommend using West Circassian in future work.

(²) Ladefoged and Maddieson (1996, p. 161), with reference to Catford’s work.

(³) For correspondences between the sounds presented here and the Cyrillic orthography adopted for the languages other than Ubykh, see Appendix II.

(⁴) The symbols used by Fenwick (2011) for Ubykh appear in parentheses.

(⁵) Throughout this chapter, examples are from our field notes, unless specified otherwise.

(⁶) As opposed to more open [3] in other environments.

(⁷) It is unclear whether the ejectives induce glottalization of the prefix or only its devoicing.

(⁸) Corrected instead of erroneous “ABS” in the original.

(⁹) Many functions carried out by postpositions are fulfilled by verbal morphology (section 9.5.3).

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(¹⁰) See Arkadiev (2014a), Kumakhov (1971), Kuipers (1962), Shagirov (1961b), Taov (1967), and Zekokh (1969) on Circassian case systems.

(¹¹) We provide Adyghe examples here, but the distribution of grammatical cases is similar in Kabardian and Ubykh.

(¹²) The inventory of peripheral cases in Ubykh is unclear, since different sources give different inventories of markers. Fenwick (2011, pp. 40, 43–45) lists only *-ale* as the marker of “comitative-instrumental” and does not comment on the suffix *-onə* which Dumézil (1931, pp. 27–29) and Charachidzé (1989, pp. 370–371) describe as having more or less the same range of functions. Von Mészáros (1934, pp. 49, 51) analyzes *-ale* as the comitative marker, and *-onə* as the instrumental.

(¹³) Hewitt (1979a, p. 156) also postulates an inclusive versus exclusive distinction in the plural pronouns of the first and even second person, but other authors (e.g., Chirikba, 2003a, p. 32) reject this idea.

(¹⁴) Speakers of Abaza also tend to employ demonstratives instead of third person pronouns.

(¹⁵) Indefinite pronouns have only been studied in detail in Adyghe (Kapitonov, 2009).

(¹⁶) See Korotkova and Lander (2010); Lander (2016b, pp. 3519, 3522–3532) on Adyghe.

(¹⁷) See section 9.6.3.

(¹⁸) See section 9.5.5 and chapter 10 on stative versus dynamic verbs.

(¹⁹) On positional verbs in Kabardian, see Ryzhova and Kyuseva (2013).

(²⁰) These numbers include complex preverbs as well as simplex ones.

(²¹) Historically related to verbal roots ‘enter’ and ‘exit’, respectively.

(²²) See Arkadiev (2017a, 2020a), Kumakhov (1971, pp. 253–254), and Testelets (1989). Lomize (2013) is a detailed study of this marker in Besleney Kabardian.

(²³) Historically, this form is probably related to perfect/resultative.

(²⁴) More on Circassian pluperfects and their uses, see Arkadiev (2017b), Klyagina (2018, ch. 3).

(²⁵) See Lander (2010, 2012) for evidence that head nouns in internally headed relative clauses have certain properties of external heads.

(²⁶) The relative prefix can or even must be omitted, which is especially characteristic of Kabardian.

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(p. 1003) References

Names starting with a letter appear first; then names (if any) which start with that letter followed by an apostrophe; then names (if any) which start that letter with a hachek. Thus, the order is C, C', Č, Č'.

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