

# Comprehensive Grammar of Eastern Circassian (Kabardian)

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# Chapter 1

## Introduction

This book is intended to be a living document that will be continuously worked on and updated, thus it will be incomplete for a long time. However, I believe that it is better to have something incomplete than nothing at all. I hope that it motivates others to contribute to this book. Note, that I intend it to be mainly an online document, thus calling it a book might be out of place, nonetheless this document will be referred to as a book.

Because of the nature of this book, it is important to create guidelines as to what this book is about. I decided to write this book with the main overarching goal to make it easier for others to understand Circassian better, be it from a linguistics' or learner's point of view. In my view, it is a big problem that there are so little resources the Circassian language in English, with most good resources being in Russian, Turkish or Circassian itself. While there are still some very good resources in English, they are either incomplete or not very accessible to non-linguists. This is bad, because there is a large Circassian diaspora which doesn't speak Circassian anymore, but wants to relearn the language of their ancestors. Having resources fractured into various languages makes it harder for them to learn Circassian and creates a much bigger barrier than necessary. Since English is the lingua franca of the world, it is the most understandable language for most people.

Because of this, I decided to write a comprehensive grammar. While reading a grammar might not be the most productive way to learn a language, I think in the context of Circassian it is a worthwhile endeavor. The main reason is simply because of how different the language structure is from most other languages (ergative agreement, polypersonality, preverbs, etc). Thus having a comprehensive grammar can be very helpful for linguists and language learners alike to speed up one's understanding.

I intend to write this book in a way that it can be used as a reference for linguists and language learners. First of all, the idea is that the book would have two big parts, the grammar part and the learning part. The grammar part will resemble most other comprehensive grammars, however with the explicit goal to also be a potential learning resource. This would include many examples, maybe even in excessive amount, which might be too much for a comprehensive grammar, however it might give a better feel for the language. In addition, while the book will try to keep a linguistics appropriate language, an attempt will be made to explain the various concepts. The learning part will be much more focused on simply understanding how to form various phrases and meanings without a big emphasis on the grammatical structure.

This book will be about Eastern Circassian (Kabardian), however it will also contain information about Western Circassian (Adyghe) where it is relevant, as well as Ubykh, Abkhaz and Abaza, as comparing them can create more insight. Maybe there will be even their own parts in the book, but that is not certain yet. A secondary goal is to promote everything which is adjacent to the Circassians in some way.

Besides being a linguistics resource, I also intend to include topics about history, culture and society.

For the most part, this book will mainly compile other resources into one place, such that there is a central place for all the information. However, own research will be included as well.



**Part I**

**Society, Culture and History**





# **Part II**

# **Grammar**



**Part III**

**Phonology**



**Part IV**

**Morphology**



## Chapter 2

# Nouns

### 2.1 Case

Kabardian has 4 cases, absolutive (traditionally also called nominative) (-**п** -*r*), ergative (-**м** -*m*), instrumental (-**кІэ** -*tʃʼa*) and adverbial (-**уэ** -*wa*). The case markers are not part of the stem and are only suffixed when the noun is used in a sentence.

Those 4 cases are divided into primary and secondary cases. The primary cases are only used if the noun is definite, while they are absent if the noun is indefinite (basically ‘the man’ vs ‘a man’). The secondary cases are morphological build upon the primary cases. This can be seen in definite nouns, where the instrumental case suffix (-**кІэ** -*tʃʼa*) is added to the ergative suffix (-**м** -*m*) resulting in -**мкІэ** -*mtʃʼa* and the adverbial case suffix (-**уэ** -*wa*) is added to the nominative suffix (-**п** -*r*) resulting in -**рауэ** -*rawa*.

	Absolutive	Ergative	Instr.	Adv.
Indefinite	-Ø -Ø	-Ø -Ø	- <b>кІэ</b> - <i>tʃʼa</i>	- <b>уэ</b> - <i>wa</i> / - <b>у</b> - <i>wə</i>
Definite	- <b>п</b> - <i>r</i>	- <b>м</b> - <i>m</i>	- <b>мкІэ</b> - <i>mtʃʼa</i>	- <b>рауэ</b> - <i>rawa</i>

Below are a few examples:

- (1) a. **пхъащІэм пхъэбгъухэр куэбжэу ищІащ рхаџам рхабвхар кʼабзавэ јэџаџ** ‘the carpenter made a gate out of planks’ (lit. ‘the carpenter made planks like a gate’)

There is also a special interaction with the plural forms of a noun, as in their infinite form they only have the adverbial form, while in their definite form they have all 4 cases. This is inline with the fact that marking the plural is optional and thus also inherently definite.

	Absolutive	Ergative	Instr.	Adv.
Indefinite	not used	not used	not used	- <b>хэу</b> - <i>xawə</i>
Definite	- <b>хэр</b> - <i>xar</i>	- <b>хэм</b> - <i>xam</i>	- <b>хэмкІэ</b> - <i>xamtʃʼa</i>	- <b>хэрауэ</b> - <i>xarawa</i>

However, the plural indefinite form is used in a vocative sense, which is used to address someone. This is also the only case where the plural indefinite form is used, e.g. .

- (2) a. **щІалэхэ, кыызэдэлуэ џаџаха қаздагʼа** ‘boys, listen to me’  
 b. **щІалэхэ, унэмкІэ фынеблагъэт џаџаха вэнаmtʃʼa фэнајбџават** ‘boys, visit the house’

Similar to the plural, other word forms also may require case marking to be grammatical. However note, that it is more accurate to say that not the noun, but the noun phrase is marked for the case.

- (3) a. **сосрыкыуэ нартхэм мафІэ кыазэрыхуихъар sawsrəqʼa nartxam mafʼa qazarəxʼəjhar** ‘how Sosruko brought fire to the Narts’  
 b. **хъуэжэ псым кыызэрикІыжар хʼагза psəm qəzərajtʃʼəzər** ‘how Khaja returned from the river’

### 2.1.1 Absolutive

The absolutive case is marked by the suffix **-p -r**. As is usual for most ergative languages, the absolutive is used as the subject of an intransitive verb and as the direct object of an transitive verb.

It denotes the subject of an intransitive verb.

- (4) a. хъыджэбыр мэбауэ хэдзэбзэр *mabawə ˈxɛdʒabzɛr* ‘the girl breaths’  
 b. фызыр мэзым йоплъ фэзэр *məzəm jəwɔlʔ ˈfɛzɛr* ‘the woman looks at the moon’

It denotes the direct object of a transitive verb.

- (5) a. сэ кьэслыхъуа лпыр кьэзгъуэтац *sə qasɬəxˈuː ɬˈɛr qazɐˈtəːɕ* ‘I have found the man whom I was looking for’

It denotes the nominal predicate in equative sentences.

- (6) a. сэ тыкуэным згъэкIуар си кьуэшырц *sə təkˈanəm zɐkˈuːar sɛj qˈuʃɛrɕ* ‘whom I have sent to the store is my brother’  
 b. а хъыджэбз дахэр си нысэрц *a ˈxɛdʒabz daxar sɛj nəsarɕ* ‘this pretty girl is my bride’  
 c. си кьуэр цакIуэрц *sɛj qˈuːar ɕakˈuːarɕ* ‘my brother is the hunter’

### 2.1.2 Ergative

If used with transitive verbs it denotes the subject.

- (7) a. лIым дыгъужь илъэгъуац *ɬˈəm dɐvˈɤʒ jɛɬakˈuːɕ* ‘the man saw a wolf’

It also denotes the indirect object of intransitive and transitive verbs (mainly because the indirect object is governed by the preverb).

- (8) a. хъэр цIалэм еплъац *har ɕˈaɬam jəɬɬaːɕ* ‘the dog looked at the boy’  
 (9) a. цIалэм мыIэрысэ тхъемадэм иритац *ɕˈaɬam məɬarəsə ˈtɬamɛdam jɛrɛtəːɕ* ‘the boy gave the Tkhamada an applied’

It can also be used to create locative adverbs.

- (10) a. уэ кьалэм письмо птха? *wa qaɬam pɛjstəw ptɬaː* ‘did you write the letter to the city?’  
 b. кьуажэм усшэнц *qˈuːzam wəsʃanɕ* ‘I’ll lead you to the village’

It can also be used to create temporals adverbs.

- (11) a. жэщым хъэр мэбанэ засэм *har mabana ˈzəsɛm* ‘the dog barks at night’

It is also used in possive constructions to denote the possessor.

- (12) a. фызым и нэр *fɛzəm jə nar* ‘the woman’s eyes’

### 2.1.3 Instrumental

It can denote an instrumental meaning.

- (13) a. сабийр кьалэмкIэ матхэ *səbɛjɾ qaɬamɬˈa matɬa* ‘the child writes with the pen’  
 b. дэ тенджызым кхъухълъатэклэ дылъэтац *da tɛndʒɛzəm qɬˈɤhlɛːtəɬˈa dɛɬɬaːɕ* ‘we flew to the sea with a plane’

It can denote the direction.

- (14) a. бгым тет унэмкIэ маплъэ *bɣəm tɛt wənəmɬˈa mapɬa* ‘he looks towards the house standing on a hill’

### 2.1.4 Adverbial



## Chapter 3

# Pronouns

### 3.1 Personal Pronouns

Kabardian has only four personal pronouns. They mark the combination of singular or plural, and first or second person. There is no distinction between inclusive and exclusive first person plural. The third person is marked by demonstrative pronouns.

A peculiarity is that personal pronouns do not differentiate between ergative and absolutive case. One of the reasons might be that the ergative and absolutive case markers also express definiteness, which is redundant with the personal pronouns as they are inherently definite. This can be seen by the example below:

- (15) a. **сэ** **сокІуэ** *sa sawk<sup>w</sup>a* ‘I go’  
b. **уэ** **уошІ** *wa wawɕ* ‘you do’  
c. **сэ** **уэ** **узохъ** *sa wa wəzawħ* ‘I carry you’  
d. **уэ** **сэ** **къызыбот** *wa sa qəzəbawt* ‘you give me Y’

	Erg-Abs	Instr.	Adv.
1. sing.	<b>сэ</b> <i>sa</i>	<b>сэркІэ</b> <i>sartʃa</i>	<b>сэрауэ</b> <i>sara:wa</i>
2. sing.	<b>уэ</b> <i>wa</i>	<b>уэркІэ</b> <i>wartʃa</i>	<b>уэрауэ</b> <i>wara:wa</i>
1. pl.	<b>дэ</b> <i>da</i>	<b>дэркІэ</b> <i>dartʃa</i>	<b>дэрауэ</b> <i>dara:wa</i>
2. pl.	<b>фэ</b> <i>fa</i>	<b>фэркІэ</b> <i>fartʃa</i>	<b>фэрауэ</b> <i>fara:wa</i>

There exist also extended forms of the respective personal pronouns, characterized by the addition of the suffix **-p** *-r* or **-pa** *-ra:*. The instrumental and adverbial case forms use the extended versions.

This happens in predicative use, e.g. **сэраш** *sara:ɕ* ‘I am’.

This happens if it is followed by a postposition, e.g. **сэр папшІэ** *sar papɕa* ‘for me’.

This happens if used in a duplicated form, e.g. **сэр-сэру** *sar-sarəw* ‘me myself’.

### 3.2 Possessive Pronouns

### 3.3 Demonstrative Pronouns

### 3.4 Interrogative Pronouns



## Chapter 4

# Adjective

### 4.1 Qualitative Adjectives

- (16) a. color:
- i. **плъыжъ** *płəʒ* ‘red’
  - ii. **хужъ** *xʷəʒ* ‘white’
  - iii. **щхъуэ** *ɕxʷa* ‘gray’
  - iv. **щыху** *ɕʰəxʷ* ‘blue’
  - v. **щхъуантлэ** *ɕxʷantʰa* ‘green’
- b. fell/hair color:
- i. **гъуэ** *ɣʷa* ‘red’
  - ii. **къуэху** *qʷaxʷ* ‘brown-gray’
  - iii. **брул** *bɤəwɫ* ‘chaly’
  - iv. **тхъуэ** *tχʷa* ‘bulany’
- c. spatial and temporal qualities:
- i. **ин** *jən* ‘big’
  - ii. **бгъуэ** *bɣʷa* ‘wide’
  - iii. **жыжъэ** *ʒəʒa* ‘far’
  - iv. **лъахышэ** *ləχʃa* ‘low’
  - v. **куу** *kʷəw* ‘deep’
- d. properties and qualities of things directly perceived by the senses:
- i. **лэфI** *lʰəf* ‘sweet’
  - ii. **сыр** *sər* ‘bitter’
  - iii. **цабэ** *ɕabə* ‘soft’
  - iv. **хъурей** *χʷəraj* ‘round’
  - v. **псынцлэ** *psənɕʰa* ‘light’
  - vi. **хуабэ** *χʷabə* ‘warm’
- e. physical qualities of people and animals:
- i. **цлалэ** *ɕʰalə* ‘young’
  - ii. **уэд** *wad* ‘thin’
  - iii. **дэгу** *dəɣʷ* ‘deaf’
  - iv. **хуахуэ** *xʷaxʷa* ‘brave’
- f. qualities of character and mental disposition:
- i. **бзаджэ** *bza:dʒa* ‘evil, cunning’
  - ii. **пагэ** *paɣa* ‘proud’
  - iii. **нэпсей** *nəpsaj* ‘greedy’

## 4.2 Relative Adjectives

All relative adjectives are derived in Kabardian. Relative adjectives, unlike qualitative adjectives, do not change by degrees of comparison, do not form the form of evaluations. Native relative adjectives can express:

- (17) a. relation of time:
- i. **нобэрей** *nawbaraj* ‘today’ (cf. **нобэ** *nawba* ‘today’)
  - ii. **дыгъуэпшыхырей** *dəwʷapʃəħəraj* ‘yesterday, evening’ (cf. **дыгъуэпшыхъ** *dəwʷapʃəħ* ‘yesterday evening’)
  - iii. **нэгъабэрей** *naħa:baraj* ‘last year’ (cf. **нэгъабэ** *naħa:ba* ‘last year’)
  - iv. **зымахуэрей** *zəmaħʷaraj* ‘referring to some past day’
  - v. **ещанэгъэрей** *jaħa:naħaraj* ‘referring to the third year’
- b. relation to place:
- i. **ицхъэ** *jəcħa* ‘upper’ (cf. **цхъэ** *cħa* ‘head’)
  - ii. **ипэ/япэ** *jəpa/ja:pa* ‘front’ (cf. **пэ** *pa* ‘nose’)
  - iii. **икIэ** *jətʃa* ‘last’ (cf. **кIэ** *tʃa* ‘tail’)
  - iv. **модрэй** *mawdraj* ‘other’
- c. numerical relations:
- i. **защIэ** *za:cʰa* ‘single’ (cf. **зы** *zə* ‘one’)
  - ii. **тIуащIэ** *tʰwa:cʰa* ‘double’ (cf. **тIу** *tʰw* ‘two’)

# Chapter 5

## Numeral

### 5.1 Cardinal Numerals

1	зы <i>zə</i>
2	тӀу <i>t'əw</i>
3	щы <i>ʃə</i>
4	плӀы <i>pɬ'ə</i>
5	тху <i>tɰ'ə</i>
6	хы <i>xə</i>
7	блы <i>bɣə</i>
8	и <i>jə</i>
9	бгъу <i>bɣ'wə</i>
10	пщӀы <i>pɕ'ə</i>
100	щэ <i>ʃa</i>

Numbers from 11 to 19 are formed in a special way, by putting **-кӀу-** *-k'w-*, between the ten and the units.

11	пщӀыкӀуз <i>pɕ'ək'wəz</i>
12	пщӀыкӀутӀ <i>pɕ'ək'wət'</i>
13	пщӀыкӀущ <i>pɕ'ək'wəʃ</i>
14	пщӀыкӀуплӀ <i>pɕ'ək'wəpɬ'</i>
15	пщӀыкӀутху <i>pɕ'ək'wəɰ</i>
16	пщӀыкӀух <i>pɕ'ək'wəx</i>
17	пщӀыкӀубл <i>pɕ'ək'wəbɣ</i>
18	пщӀыкӀуй <i>pɕ'ək'wəj</i>
19	пщӀыкӀубгъу <i>pɕ'ək'wəbɣ'w</i>

Numbers which represent tens are formed by suffixing **-щӀ** *-ʃ'* to the units (except for 10).

20	тӀощӀ <i>t'awʃ'</i>
30	щэщӀ <i>ʃaʃ'</i>
40	плӀыщӀ <i>pɬ'əʃ'</i>
50	тхущӀ <i>tɰ'əʃ'</i> , щэныкъуэ <i>ʃanəq'wə</i>
60	хыщӀ <i>xəʃ'</i>
70	блыщӀ <i>bɣəʃ'</i>
80	ищӀ <i>jəʃ'</i> , пщӀей <i>pɕ'aj</i>
90	бгъущӀ <i>bɣ'wəʃ'</i>

The word for 80 has another version except its expected form, that is **пщӀей** *pɕ'aj*. **щэныкъуэ** *ʃanəq'wə* (cf. **щэ** *ʃa* 'hundred' + **ныкъуэ** *nəq'wə* 'half') is used less frequently than **тхущӀ** *tɰ'əʃ'*.

Kabardian has still vestiges of a vigesimal system, which is a base-20 numeral system.

20	тІоцІ <i>t'awɕ'</i>
30	щэцІ <i>ɕaɕ'</i> , тІоцІрэ пцІырэ <i>t'awɕ'ra pɕ'əra</i>
40	плЫцІ <i>pɭ'əɕ'</i> , тІоцІитІ <i>t'awɕ'əjt'</i>
50	тхуцІ <i>tɕ'wəɕ'</i>
60	хыцІ <i>xəɕ'</i> , тІоцІиц <i>t'awɕ'əjɕ</i>
70	блыцІ <i>bɭəɕ'</i>
80	ицІ <i>jəɕ'</i>
90	бгъуцІ <i>bɣ'wəɕ'</i>

# Chapter 6

## Verb

The verb is the

### 6.1 Transitivity

The main overarching category for a verb is transitivity. A verb can be transitive (**лѣтѣс** *lɛtɛs*) and intransitive (**лѣтѣс** *lɛtɛs*). The main difference is that a base intransitive verb governs only over 1 argument, the subject in the absolutive/nominative case (**-р -r**), while a base transitive verb governs over 2 arguments, the subject in the ergative case (**-м -m**) and the direct object in the absolutive/nominative case (**-р -r**).

Below the intransitive verb **лѣтѣс** *lɛtɛs* 'to look' and transitive verb **лѣтѣс** *lɛtɛs* 'to see' are used to demonstrate that. With **лѣтѣс** 'man' man and **лѣтѣс** 'tree'.

- (18) a. **лѣтѣс лѣтѣс лѣтѣс** *lɛtɛs lɛtɛs lɛtɛs* 'the man will look'  
b. **лѣтѣс лѣтѣс лѣтѣс** *lɛtɛs lɛtɛs lɛtɛs* 'the man will see the tree'

However, in both cases, those base verbs can get indirect objects in the ergative case (**-м -m**), usually by deploying preverbs. A frequent example is the use of the preverb **е- ja-** with intransitive verbs, which is a very generic way to add an indirect object. In many ways it is equivalent to 'to' or 'at' or the French 'à'. Thus leading to the verb **е-лѣтѣс** *ja-lɛtɛs* (not that **а** became **ѣ**).

- (19) a. **лѣтѣс лѣтѣс е-лѣтѣс** *lɛtɛs lɛtɛs ja-lɛtɛs* 'the man will look at the tree'  
b. **лѣтѣс лѣтѣс лѣтѣс** *lɛtɛs lɛtɛs lɛtɛs* 'the man will see the tree'

As one can see, intransitive and transitive verbs can have 2 arguments and if that is the case the cases are switched. While with an intransitive with 2 arguments the subject is in the absolutive/nominative with an (indirect) object in the ergative, the transitive verb has it the other way around, the subject is in the ergative case while the (direct) object is in the absolutive/nominative.

Important to note, that while morphologically there is only one ergative case, it is useful to differentiate between the 'pure' ergative and the oblique case. The 'pure' usage would be only in regards to the use as subject, while the oblique usage would be everything else. More on that later.

### 6.2 Potential Form

There are two potential forms which modify the verb in a such a way that it expresses a potential. One form is formed through the prefix **хѣ-** *xɛ-* while the other is formed through the suffix **-ѣ** *-f*. The latter can only be used with transitive verbs (as it makes them intransitive) and the latter can be used by all verbs.

### 6.2.1 Suffix -ф -f

- (20) a. бзу мэлъэтэф *bzaw maɫataf* ‘birds can fly’  
 b. сыжейфкъым *səzajfqəm* ‘I can’t sleep’  
 c. сыжейфынутэкъым *səzajfənəwtaqəm* ‘I can’t sleep’

### 6.2.2 Prefix хуэ- х<sup>а</sup>-

The prefix potential form is morphologically more complex. It only works with transitive verbs, since it works by ‘deleting’ the subject in the ergative and transfers the subject role to the argument of the prefix хуэ- х<sup>а</sup>-.

- (21) a. схуошх *sx<sup>а</sup>awfx* ‘I can’t eat it’  
 b. мышцэ сэ сыхуошх *məsa sa səx<sup>а</sup>awfx* ‘the bear can eat me’  
 c. бзу цыкӀур кытхуэгъуэтакъым *bzaw ts’ək<sup>а</sup>ər qətx<sup>а</sup>aw<sup>а</sup>ataqəm* ‘we couldn’t find the small bird’

It seems possible that this prefix and the benefactive хуэ- х<sup>а</sup>- are related.

- (22) a. X сэ сишхащ ‘X ate me’  
 b. X сэ Z сыхуишхащ ‘X ate me for Z’  
 c. сэ Z сыхуэшхащ ‘ate me for Z’ or ‘I was eaten for Z’  
 d. сэ Z сыхуэшхащ ‘Z was able to eat me’

## 6.3 Participles

Kabardian has a rich participle morphology. In fact, Kabardian is a very participle heavy language and one can even argue that many verb forms, which are usually not regarded as participles, are in fact participles.

The various participle types are divided into whether they represent an argument of a verb, where in this case they take on the slot of that argument, or whether they represent something else, usually more adverbial in nature, like place, time, reason, manner, etc.

Other than not being able to change the grammatical category of mood, participle can mark for everything else what normal verbs can.

### 6.3.1 Absolute Participle

The absolute participle denotes the absolute argument of a verb. If that verb is intransitive, it refers to the subject, if it is transitive it refers to the direct object. Absolute participles are marked by a null morpheme.

Intransitive verbs:

- (23) a. кӀуэр *k<sup>а</sup>ar* ‘one, who goes’ (cf. кӀуэн *k<sup>а</sup>an* ‘to go’)  
 b. жэр *zar* ‘one, who runs’ (cf. жэн *zan* ‘to run’)

Intransitive verbs with preverbs:

- (24) a. ежэр *jazar* ‘one who waits for Y’ (cf. ежэн *jazan* ‘to wait for Y’)  
 b. еплыр *japɫər* ‘one who looks at Y’ (cf. еплын *japɫən* ‘to look at Y’)  
 c. едӀуэр *jadaɽ<sup>а</sup>ar* ‘one who listens to Y’ (cf. едӀуэн *jadaɽ<sup>а</sup>an* ‘to listen to Y’)

Transitive verbs:

- (25) a. илӀэгъур *jɫak<sup>а</sup>ər* ‘one, whom X sees’ (cf. лӀагъун *ɫak<sup>а</sup>ən* ‘to see Y’)  
 b. ишэр *jəsar* ‘one, whom X leads’ (cf. шэн *san* ‘to lead Y’)  
 c. итыр *jətər* ‘that, what X gives’ (cf. тын *tən* ‘to give Y’)



Transitive verbs with preverb:

- (26) a. **зэхихыр** *захəjxər* ‘one, whom X hears’ (cf. **зэхэхын** *захəxən* ‘to hear Y’)  
 b. **жылар** *зəpʔar* ‘that, what you said’ (cf. **жылэн** *зəʔan* ‘to say Y’)  
 c. **иритыр** *jəɾəjtər* ‘that, what X gives to Z’ (cf. **етын** *jatən* ‘to give Y to Z’)

### 6.3.2 Ergative Participle

The ergative participle denotes the ergative argument of a verb. This participle is only present in transitive verbs and refers to the subject. It is marked by **зы-** *zə-*.

Transitive verbs:

- (27) a. **зылгэгьур** *зəʔakʷər* ‘one, who sees Y’ (cf. **лгэгьун** *ʔakʷən* ‘to see Y’)  
 b. **зышэр** *зəʃar* ‘one, who leads Y’ (cf. **шэн** *ʃan* ‘to lead Y’)  
 c. **зытыр** *зətər* ‘one, who gives Y’ (cf. **тын** *tən* ‘to give Y’)

Transitive verbs with preverb:

- (28) a. **зэхэзыхыр** *захəzəxər* ‘one, who hears Y’ (cf. **зэхэхын** *захəxən* ‘to hear Y’)  
 b. **жызылар** *зəzəʔar* ‘one, who said Y’ (cf. **жылэн** *зəʔan* ‘to say Y’)  
 c. **езытыр** *jəzətər* ‘one, who gives Y to Z’ (cf. **етын** *jatən* ‘to give Y to Z’)

### 6.3.3 Oblique Participle

The oblique participle denotes the oblique argument of a verb. This participle is present in every verb which has an oblique argument, usually only possible by having a preverb. It is marked by **зы-** *zə-*. One can argue that it is simply the ergative participle, but simply applied on a preverb, however it may be useful to differentiate them, because oblique participles don’t denote the subject of a verb (the ergative participle can only denote the subject) in addition they exist for transitive and intransitive verbs (the ergative participle only exists for transitive verbs).

Intransitive verbs with preverbs:

- (29) a. **зэжэр** *zəʒar* ‘one, whom X waits for’ (cf. **эжэн** *jəʒan* ‘to wait for Y’)  
 b. **зэлгьыр** *zəpʔər* ‘one, who X looks at’ (cf. **елгьын** *jəpʔən* ‘to look at Y’)  
 c. **зэдэюэр** *zədaʔʷar* ‘one, who X listens to’ (cf. **едэюэн** *jədaʔʷan* ‘to listen to Y’)  
 d. **сызгытесыр** *səzəʔajəsər* ‘that, what I sit on’ (cf. **тесын** *təʒən* ‘to sit on Y’)

Transitive verbs with preverb:

- (30) a. **зыритыр** *zəɾəjtər* ‘one, to whom X gives Y’ (cf. **етын** *jatən* ‘to give Y to Z’)

Sentence Examples:

- (31) a. **дыгьуасэ хьыджэбз сызыхуэзар дахэщ** *dəʒʷa:sa xədʒəbz səzəxʷazar da:xəʃ* ‘the girl, whom I met yesterday is pretty’ (cf. **хуэзэн** *xʷazan* ‘to meet Y’)

### 6.3.4 Temporal Participle **щы-** *ʃə-*

This participle denotes time as well as location, depending on the context. It is marked by **щы-** *ʃə-*.

- (32) a. **щылажэр** *ʃəʒa:ʒar* ‘when X works’ (cf. **лэжэн** *ʒəʒan* ‘to work’)

Sentence Examples:

- (33) a. **ар щылажэр унэрщ ар** *ʃəʒa:ʒar wənəɾʃ* ‘he works at home’ (lit. ‘where he works is home’)  
 b. **ар щылажэр сощлэ ар** *ʃəʒa:ʒar sawʃ’a* ‘I know where/when he works’  
 c. **уэ укыщыкьуэжам щыгьуэ сэ унэм сыщылактым** *wa wəqəʃəkʷʷəʒəʔm səʃəʔa:qəʔm* ‘I wasn’t home when you arrived’  
 d. **сыщилгэгьум, ар жаш** *səʃəʔʔakʷəʔm, ar ʒa:ʃ* ‘When he saw me, he ran away’

### 6.3.5 Adverbial Participle зэры- *zarə-*

The manner participle denotes the manner. It is marked by зэры- *zarə-*.

- (34) a. зэрылажээр *zarəḡaːzar* ‘how, X works’ (cf. лажэн *ḡaːzan* ‘to work’)  
 b. зэрильэгээр *zarəjɫavːər* ‘how, X sees’ (cf. льягун *ɫavːən* ‘to see Y’)

This is frequently used in complement clauses as a generic complementizer.

- (35) a. укызэрыфэр слъэгъуащ *wəqəzarəfar slavːaːɕ* ‘I saw, that you danced’  
 b. анэм ещІэ и кІуэр кызэрыкІуэжынуp *aːnam jaɕˈa jə kːˈar qəzarəkːˈaʒənəwr* ‘mother knows, that her son will return (home)’  
 c. щІалэм хъыбар сигъэщІащ фызэрысымаджар *ɕˈaːḡam χəbaːr səjbaɕˈaːɕ fəzarəsəmaːdʒaːr* ‘the boy let me know, that you were sick’  
 d. сэ сщыгъушцэнкым узэрылэжэнуp *sa sɕəvːəpɕanqəm wəzarəḡaːzanəwr* ‘I won’t forget, that you’ll work’

## **Chapter 7**

# **Postpositions**



## Chapter 8

# Vocabulary

This chapter will explore the vocabulary.

### 8.1 Semantic Categories

#### 8.1.1 Kinship

This category is about family.

Table 8.1: Kinship Terms

Term	Translation	Notes
адэ <i>a:da</i>	‘father’	
анэ <i>ana</i>	‘mother’	
дадэ <i>da:da</i>	‘grandfather’	
нанэ <i>nana</i>	‘grandmother’	
адэшхуэ <i>a:daʃxʷa</i>	‘grandfather’	more formal
анэшхуэ <i>anaʃxʷa</i>	‘grandmother’	more formal
бын <i>bən</i>	‘child’	
кѳуэ <i>qʷa</i>	‘son’	
пхѳу <i>pχʷə</i>	‘daughter’	
кѳуэш <i>qʷaʃ</i>	‘brother’	said by males
дэлѳху <i>daʔxʷ</i>	‘brother’	said by females
шыпхѳу <i>ʃəpχʷ</i>	‘sister’	
зэтІолѳхуэныкѳуэ <i>zatʰawʔxʷanəqʷa</i>	‘twins’	

The terms **адэ** *a:da* and **анэ** *ana* denote ‘father’ and ‘mother’, respectively.

The generation above, the parents’ parents, is denoted by **адэшхуэ** *a:daʃxʷa* ‘grandfather’ and **анэшхуэ** *anaʃxʷa* ‘grandmother’, respectively, derived with the suffix **-шхуэ** *-ʃxʷa* which denotes bigness, thus literally ‘big father’ and ‘big mother’. There is no differentiation made between the maternal and paternal grandparents. On the other hand, **дадэ** *da:da* and **нанэ** *nana* are the more endearing forms of the former and are also used when referring to them.

The terms describing the direct offspring are **бын** *bən* ‘child’, **кѳуэ** *qʷa* ‘son’ and **пхѳу** *pχʷə* ‘daughter’. The term **пхѳу** *pχʷə* ‘daughter’ had likely ‘woman’ as its main meaning, as it is frequently combined with other words to refer to females, some of them will be seen below.

The terms describing siblings are **кѳуэш** *qʷaʃ*, **дэлѳху** *daʔxʷ* for ‘brother’ and **шыпхѳу** *ʃəpχʷ* ‘sister’. Females always refer to their brother as **дэлѳху** *daʔxʷ* (roughly ‘one, who is born with’), while males as **кѳуэш** *qʷaʃ*. The term **кѳуэш** *qʷaʃ* ‘brother’ appears to be a compound word of **кѳуэ** *qʷa* ‘son’ and **шы** *ʃə* which is an archaic way to refer to ‘brother’, as it is still used in Western Circassian **шы** *ʃə* ‘brother’. The term **шыпхѳу** *ʃəpχʷ* ‘sister’ is a compound word of **шы** *ʃə* ‘brother’ and **пхѳу** *pχʷə* ‘daughter’. This and some other uses suggest that the original meaning of **шы** *ʃə* was closer to ‘relative’, ‘kin’ or ‘sibling’.

Table 8.2: Kinship Terms

Term	Translation	Notes
бынырылыху <i>bənərətɬʷ</i>	‘child’s offspring’	
кѳуэрылыху <i>qʷarətɬʷ</i>	‘son’s offspring’	
пхѳурылыху <i>pɬʷərətɬʷ</i>	‘daughter’s offspring’	
кѳуэшырылыху <i>qʷaʃərətɬʷ</i>	‘brother’s offspring’	
шыпхѳурылыху <i>ʃəpɬʷərətɬʷ</i>	‘sister’s offspring’	

The suffix **-рылыху** *-rətɬʷ* denotes the offspring of the base noun.

Table 8.3: Kinship Terms

Term	Translation	Notes
тхѳэмадѳ <i>thamada</i>	‘husband’s father’	
гуащѳ <i>gʷaʃa</i>	‘husband’s mother’	
пщыкѳуѳ <i>pʃəqʷa</i>	‘husband’s brother’	
пщыпхѳу <i>pʃəpɬʷ</i>	‘husband’s sister’	
щыкѳу адѳ <i>ʃəqʷ ada</i>	‘wife’s father’	
щыкѳу анѳ <i>ʃəqʷ ana</i>	‘wife’s mother’	
щыкѳу щѳалѳ <i>ʃəqʷ ʃʷaʃa</i>	‘wife’s son’	
щыкѳу хѳыджѳбѳ <i>ʃəqʷ ɬədʒabʒ</i>	‘wife’s daughter’	
фѳызабѳ <i>fəzaʒa</i>	‘widow’	
лѳыгѳуабѳ <i>ʔəʒʷaʒa</i>	‘widower’	
зѳиншѳ <i>zəjənʃa</i>	‘orphan’	
ибѳ <i>jəba</i>	‘orphan’	

**Part V**

**Syntax**





## **Chapter 9**

# **Relative Clause**



## **Chapter 10**

# **Adverbial Clause**



## **Chapter 11**

# **Complement Clause**



## Chapter 12

# Comparing the Circassian Dialects

This chapter is about comparing the Circassian dialects. The main focus will be on the Baksan and Temirgoy dialects, the two dialects on which the standardized literary languages, Kabardian (East Circassian) and Adyghe (Western Circassian), are based on. The others will be also mentioned but not in as much detail. This chapter is a good way to quickly get a grasp on Adyghe if one already knows Kabardian (and possibly vice versa), since

Table 12.1: Kinship Terms			
Meaning	Kabardian (Baksan)	Basleney	Adyghe (Termingoy)
chicken	джэд <i>dʒad</i>	гяд <i>gʲad</i>	чэты <i>tʃatə</i>
cat	джэду <i>dʒadəw</i>	гяду <i>gʲadəw</i>	





**Part VI**

**Learning Guide**



# **Chapter 13**

## **Learning**